

Transition Information: Arizona

Timeline

- *By the age of 14:*
 - The transition planning should begin by the time the student turns 14 years old.
 - A transition team should be assembled and families should gather information regarding the strengths and preferences of the student and the possible paths that the student can take towards a specific long-term goal.
- *Before the age of 16:*
 - The first IEP must be in effect by age 16 and from that point the IEP must include the transition plan. All IEPs should include a statement of needed transition services, which include the strategies and activities associated with the individual's post-secondary education and training
- *Before the age of 17:*
 - By age 17, the transfer of rights must be discussed at the age of majority, which is 18 years old in Arizona.
 - A statement of consent must be placed into the IEP by age 17.
 - If necessary, the guardianship process should begin at or before age 17.
 - The vocational rehabilitation process should begin at least 2 years prior to high school graduation.
 - The individual should meet with a counselor and discuss the best employment and living options for the student.
- *Before the age of 18:*
 - Apply for Social Security benefits, Social Security Disability Insurance and Medicaid.
 - If ineligible for Medicaid, look into other health insurance options, as it is likely the individual will no longer be covered by the parents plan after age 19 if not enrolled in college or covered by Medicaid.
 - Add your name to the waiting list for residential placements in the state.
 - Regardless of future residential plans, it is good to be on the waitlist, as these lists can be extremely long, and it is far easier to remove your name than it is to add it.
- *At age 18:*
 - Register to vote.
 - Male students should register for the draft, no matter the level of functioning.
 - If applicable, individuals should apply to adult agencies for vocational and day programs, as well as for supported living.
 - The guardianship process should be complete.

Starting the Transition Process:

All transition assessments should be done when the student begins the transition planning process, which is usually at 14 years old. The IEP should consist of ideas about post-secondary outcomes pertaining to employment, education and independent living. The plan should be as detailed as possible for the next few years of the student's life.

The first IEP must be in effect by age 16 and from that point the IEP must include the following:

- An invite to the individual to attend their IEP meetings
- Measurable postsecondary goals
- Transition assessments
- Coordinated activities
- Future courses of study
- Annual IEP goals
- Transfer of rights statement (the transfer of rights will occur at age 18)
- Summary of performance

Education:

To graduate, the only main options are to receive the high school graduation diploma or not receive the diploma. Arizona provides minimum requirements and LEAs (local districts) sometimes add to those requirements for students with disabilities. Arizona does allow for alternate courses to be used to earn the required course credits and the performance criteria is often lowered, as long as the disability is addressed individually in the IEP, detailing the differences in the coursework for the specific individual. The individuals are not required to pass the state exit exam in order to receive a high school diploma, if they have a disability. They often use different tests and different score criteria are used with each group of people, dependent on the level of their disorder to exit the school system. If they fail the exam, they are allowed to retake the same exam only twice. They do provide accommodations for those with disabilities to take their exams in appropriate conditions.

Guardianship/Conservatorship:

While the transfer of rights should occur at the age of majority which is 18 years old, if the individual is declared legally incompetent prior to that age, the families have the option to appoint someone to be their guardian over educational decisions. One option is to have the child declared legally incompetent and then placed under the guardianship of a court-assigned individual who will make decisions for the child. However, that is a lengthy and expensive process. If a student is between the age of 18 to 22, and has not been declared legally incompetent and can consent to the transfer of their rights to

another person, they may be allowed to execute *the Declaration of Right to Make Educational Decisions*. This will allow the students to appoint another person (e.g. parent) to make their education decisions for them, but they are also allowed to terminate that agreement at any time:

www.azed.gov/special-education/files/2011/08/prepare-your-child-brochure1.pdf

www.azgovernor.gov/ddpc

Vocational Rehabilitation:

After contacting the Rehabilitation Services Administration, they will assign you with a vocational rehabilitation counselor who will help identify the individual's interests and training requirements, and then help you create an Individualize Plan for Employment (IPE).

To apply, you can contact your local VR office:

www.azdes.gov/main.aspx?menu=32&id=1584.

Social Security:

Benefits should be applied for before the student's 18th birthday and then be re-evaluated after the student's 18th birthday. It is also important that the office be contacted well in advance before the student's 18th birthday to understand that eligibility and application process.

Applicants may apply online or by contacting Social Security directly. Local Social Security offices can be found using SSA's office locator or by calling (voice) 800-772-1213 or (TTY) 800-325-0778.

Social Security Benefit Application: www.socialsecurity.gov/disabilityonline

Social Security Administration: www.socialsecurity.gov/locator

Disability and Supplemental Security Income Information:
www.ssa.gov/dibplan/index.htm#ssi

Housing Resources:

Arizona Public Housing Agency Contact Information:

www.hud.gov/offices/pih/pha/contacts/states/az.cfm

Disability.gov Housing Resources:

www.disability.gov/housing#map

US Department of Housing and Urban Development: HUD in Arizona:

portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/states/arizona

Arizona Department of Housing: www.housingaz.com

Other Arizona Resources

Special Education

Arizona Department of Education
1535 W. Jefferson Street, Bin 24
Phoenix, AZ 85007
(602) 542-4013
www.azed.gov/special-education

High School Transition Resources for Parents: www.azed.gov/special-education/deputy-associate-superintendent/documents/transition

Rehabilitation Services Administration

Arizona Department of Economic Security
1789 W. Jefferson, 2nd Floor, NW (930A)
Phoenix, AZ 85007
(800) 563-1221
(602) 542-3332
www.azdes.gov/rsa

Arizona Department of Housing

1110 W. Washington Street, Suite 310
Phoenix, AZ 85007
(602) 771-1000
www.housingaz.com

Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System

801 E. Jefferson
Phoenix, AZ 85034
602 417 4000
www.ahcccs.state.az.us