



MEMORANDUM

To: Transitioning Youth and Families
From: Bernard Simons, Deputy Secretary *Bernard Simons*
Developmental Disabilities Administration
Subject: Transitioning Youth Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic
Date: Mary 12, 2020

The Developmental Disabilities Administrations (DDA) acknowledges the challenges that all youth and families face during a typical transition from school to career, college and/or community life. However, beyond the uncertainties of a typical transition, this year's Transitioning Youth (TY) and families are also facing the additional factors associated with the COVID-19 crisis.

During this time, DDA's highest priority continues to be the health, safety, and wellbeing of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their families, staff, and providers. The DDA will continue its commitment to promote collaboration, flexibility and creativity during this time, including as it relates to transition.

OVERVIEW

The DDA will continue to support eligible Maryland Transitioning Youth and families by doing the following:

- Coordinate with local school systems, Coordinators of Community Services (CCS) and partners at the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS), and Autism Waiver Coordinators in identifying students with developmental disabilities who will be exiting school who appear to be eligible for the Governor's Transitioning Youth Initiative (GTI);
- Provide outreach and information to families and students about applying to the DDA for services;
- Complete eligibility screening for DDA services while the student is still in school;
- Facilitate transition to adult services and supports. This may include referral to both generic community services as well as eligibility-specific services;
- Assist eligible youth in accessing the most appropriate Employment and Meaningful Day services to support the transition to career, community or college.

GUIDANCE

Below are some guidance to take into consideration for youth and families during transitioning youth planning:

- Access the appropriate DDA Regional Office eligibility staff for information on eligibility status
- Utilize virtual and remote meetings to continue working with your Coordinator of Community Service (CCS) to create a person-centered plan, assess current needs and identify any appropriate services/supports
- Identify and connect with your CCS at least once a month to provide or receive any necessary updates
- Include your CCS in IEP meetings
- Consider utilizing planning tools found in the [Charting The LifeCourse framework](#) to help create a vision, identify resources and problem solve current and future barriers
- Continue to connect with potential adult service providers virtually when possible, by utilizing remote technology (i.e. Skype, Zoom, Facetime)
- Consider the availability of services when selecting a provider. Service start dates, hours of service, and transportation are all important to know when making a selection to ensure that the services will meet you or your family member's needs.
- Utilize the [DDA's At-A-Glance Documents](#) to learn about new flexibilities in service delivery during the COVID-19 crisis
- [Get on the DDA's Mailing List](#)

All questions or concerns from youth and/or families are welcome and should be directed to your DDA Regional Office Transitioning Youth lead staff noted below:

Region	Transition Youth Lead	Eligibility Coordinator
Southern Maryland Regional Office (SMRO)	Nicole Sheppard nicole.sheppard@maryland.gov	Kendall Cazer kendall.cazer@maryland.gov
Eastern Shore Regional Office (ESRO)	Daniel Sabo daniel.sabo@maryland.gov	Daniel Sabo daniel.sabo@maryland.gov
Western Maryland Regional Office (WMRO)	Brenda Sperow brenda.sperow@maryland.gov	Grace Mac Donnell Eligibility grace.macdonnell@maryland.gov
Central Maryland Regional Office (CMRO)	Beryl Parker beryl.parker@maryland.gov	Kevin Williams kevin.williams3@maryland.gov

Additional Resources

- [Information for Families At A Glance](#)
- [DDA Transitioning Youth Fact Sheet](#)
- [Charting the LifeCourse Focus on Transition](#)

- [DORS - Guidance on the Use of Teleconferencing to Provide Services](#)
- [MDH COVID-19 #16: DDA Waivers Programs Telehealth and Telephonic Guidance - April 13, 2020](#)
- [COVID-19 #17: DDA Meaningful Day Services - Minimum Service - April 25, 2020](#)
- [Register for Maryland Community of Practice for Supporting Families Webinar Series](#)

CC: Patricia Sastoque, Director of Programs

Marlana Hutchinson, Acting Director Office of Long Term Services and Supports

Mary Anne Kane-Breschi, Director of Family Services

Regional Directors

Regional Transitioning Youth Leads