



Youth in Transition

*A guide for young adults with disabilities
transitioning into adulthood*

Organized by: Jackson County Community on Transition Members (CCOT)

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A guide for young adults with disabilities transitioning into adulthood

This guide is designed to educate young adults with disabilities, turning age 18, about the many programs and services available for their future care. The following topics are covered:

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WITRANSITION

Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRC)

Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs') are the first place to contact for information and assistance about physical or developmental disabilities, mental health or substance abuse issues. ADRC's are staffed with social workers and benefit specialists who can assist individuals to navigate the systems that provide services and benefits. ADRC services are confidential and free of charge.

You can contact the ADRC of Jackson County by calling (715) 834-3978 or (844) 493-4245 or visit our website at <http://www.adrcjacksoncounty.org/>. You can also visit our office listed below.

Jackson County Office:

420 Highway 54 West

PO Box 457

Black River Falls, WI 54615



Disability Resources

Family Care and IRIS (Include, Respect, I Self-Direct)

Family Care and IRIS provide a wide range of health and long-term support services to eligible members. Potential members are adults over the age of 18 with physical and developmental disabilities and elderly people with long term conditions requiring care. You must be both functionally and financially eligible in order to enroll in either the Family Care or IRIS programs.

Family Care in this region consists of two components, the Aging and Disability Resource Center of Jackson County and a managed care program. The Aging and Disability Resource Center conducts screenings and assesses the potential member's eligibility for Family Care or the IRIS program. When you reach 17 years and 9 months of age, you should contact the Aging and Disability Resource Center of Jackson County (715-284-3978 or 844-493-4245) for information and assistance about available services, costs of these services and to determine potential eligibility for Family Care or IRIS.

If, after meeting with the Aging and Disability Resource Center staff, you are determined to be eligible and wish to enroll in either program you will be assisted to complete the enrollment process. These programs provide a broad array of long term care services that are coordinated in different ways. In Family Care, a team made up of yourself, a nurse, a social worker and others you feel are important in your life work together to plan for service needs. In IRIS, you are empowered to self-direct your care needs with information and support provided through an independent consultant agency staff person. Staff from the Aging and Disability Resource Center of Jackson County can further discuss the differences between the programs to help you choose the one that you prefer.



Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)

Wisconsin Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) is a federal/state program designed to assist individuals with disabilities to obtain, maintain, or improve employment. DVR is for people with disabilities who need services to prepare for work, or to find or keep a job. You may be able to receive vocational services from DVR if you have a physical or mental impairment that makes it difficult for you to maintain a job.

To learn if your disability interferes with employment, your DVR counselor may request and review your medical and/or educational records. DVR may pay for the purchase of needed records or any medical, psychological, or vocational evaluations. There is no charge for evaluation, counseling, job placements or follow-up assistance.

If you need long term job supports, DVR may ask you to contact the Aging and Disability Resource Center of Jackson County (715-284-3978 or 844-493-4245) to determine if you are eligible for long term supports funded by Family Care or IRIS. You may be required to share the cost of some services, depending on your financial situation. Your counselor will discuss any further responsibilities with you before you begin.

Both DVR and services through Family Care or IRIS can contract with agencies (such as ORC Industries, Riverfront, etc.) to assist with individuals with job development, placement, and ongoing supports. If you are going to continue school after your 18th birthday, you should talk with your teacher about working with DVR and getting some job experience while you are still in school. Job training and experience should be addressed in your IEP (Individualized Educational Plan) meetings even prior to age 18.

To meet with an employment counselor, contact the DVR office service your county. Contact can be received through the Aging and Disability Resource Center of Jackson County.



Medical Assistance (MA)

Medical Assistance is also known as Medicaid, MA, BadgerCare Plus and Title 19. Medical Assistance pays for hospital stays, doctor bills, prescription drugs and other health care costs. You may qualify for Medicaid if you are a citizen of the United States or an “eligible” alien, meet the financial eligibility requirements, and are in one of the following categories:

- Age 65 or older
- Blind or disabled
- Under age 19
- Pregnant
- You are a young adult exiting from out-of-home care (such as foster care)
- You are a parent of relative who lives with and takes care of a child
-

Wisconsin MA financial requirements limit the amount of income and assets you can have. Some MA also has limits on family assets, such as vehicles, real property, personal property, savings, life insurance policies, stocks and bonds. A home, or a mobile home and the land where it is located, and household possessions are not counted. To qualify for MA, your total assets cannot exceed 2,000 for a single person.

Wisconsin MA is not the same as Medicare. Medicare is a federal health insurance program for people age 65 or older and people with disabilities who have been entitled to Social Security disability checks for two consecutive years or more.

You may currently receive MA as a child under BadgerCare Plus, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Katie Beckett MA. If you receive MA under BadgerCare Plus, you can continue to receive MA until you are 19 if you live alone or with your parent(s). If you are a young adult exiting out of home care (such as foster care), you may receive coverage until you are 21. However, after these timeframes, you will need to be determined disabled by the Social Security Administration in order to continue receiving MA. You will need to apply through Social Security Office for a disability determination. If you are determined to be disabled you will be eligible for MA and a cash payment under Social Security Disability or SSI. It is very important that you apply for disability as soon as you are allowed to in order to receive and/or continue benefits. It can take three to six months for the Social Security Administration to make a disability determination.

If you currently receive SSI you need to contact Social Security during the month of your 8th birthday to determine if you need to reapply or in a renewal should be conducted. If you qualify for SSI you will receive MA.

If you receive Katie Beckett MA you will need to apply at the Social Security Office for SSI and/or Social Security disability the month you turn 18. Katie Beckett MA stays in effect until age 19. As stated above, it is best to apply for benefits as soon as you are eligible.

You may be eligible to receive MA when you turn 18 and up until your 19th birthday even if you don't have a disability. Contact your county's Economic Support department to apply for MA when you turn 18 and before you receive a disability determination.

Social Security & Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

Social Security programs provide financial protection to workers and their families, and pay monthly Social Security retirement, disability, or survivor benefits to individuals. The Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program pays monthly benefits to individuals who have little or no resources and who are aged, blind, or disabled. The Social Security Administration administers both programs. Most young disabled adults receive SSI unless a parent is deceased or retired.

SSI is different from Social Security in the following ways:

- 1) SSI benefits are not based on your prior work or a family members' prior work
- 2) To get SSI, you must have limited income and resources (\$2000 or less in assets)
- 3) SSI recipients also receive Medical Assistance
- 4) To get SSI you must be at least 65 years old, blind, or disabled
- 5) SSI is funded by General Revenue. It is not funded through the Social Security taxes withheld under the Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA)

You can apply for SSI during the month that you will be turning 18 (i.e. birthday is March 29th, you can apply March 1st). It is important you apply as soon as possible so that you do not lose your benefits.

To apply for SSI, you may contact the local office in Jackson County at 715-284-3978 or 844-493-4245. You can apply by phone, in person, or on-line.

Social Security encourages you to make your initial application online at www.ssa.gov. Under the heading of "Disability and SSI", click on the "Qualify & Apply" link. Complete the "Online adult disability application and work history report". Once you have completed and sent the application, call Social Security to schedule the face-to-face or phone interview. You will need to bring a cover sheet and release of information from the online report that you will mail to Social Security or take with you to the interview.

If you choose to meet in person for the interview, you will need to go to the Social Security office, located at 4120 Oakwood Hills Pkwy, Eau Claire, WI 54701. If you will be paying rent/household expenses, even while living with a parent, let Social Security know because it will increase the monthly payment. Having birth certificates, financial, diagnostic, medical, and educational records available at the time of the interview will expedite the application process.

If you begin working and are receiving SSI, your cash benefit will change upon how much you earn each month. Generally, the more income you have the less you will receive from your SSI cash benefit. The first \$20 of all your income is not counted when determining your benefit amount. The first \$65 of your earnings and one-half of earnings over \$65 received in a month are also not counted. Because every situation is different, it is best to discuss the specifics of your situation with Social Security directly. There are several work incentive programs available to assist you in keeping some SSI cash benefits or more importantly keeping your Medical Assistance as you are employed. The Medical Assistance Purchase Plan (MAPP) allows you to work and receive Medical Assistance. You may or may not have to pay a premium based on your earnings.

Representative Payee

People who receive SSI or disability benefits may need someone to help them manage their money. When a person needs this kind of help the Social Security Administration can appoint a relative, friend or another interested party to serve as the beneficiary's "representative payee". The person's benefits are then paid to the payee's name on the beneficiary's behalf.

The representative payee must use the SSI benefits for current basic needs of food, clothing, and shelter. The payee must provide a simple accounting report of how the money was spent (usually on an annual basis) to Social Security and to the beneficiary. The payee should respond to the Social Security's requests for action or information. The payee's authority is limited to the handling of financial matters relating to benefits administered by Social Security. The payee does not have the authority over any other finances or income.

The representative payee must also report any change in circumstances (income, resources, living arrangements, return to work, etc.) to Social Security. The beneficiary and/or payee may at any time request that Social Security change or terminate the payee arrangements. Social Security will then review the request and make a determination.



Guardianship...What is it? Who needs it?

Did you know that parents do not automatically become guardians of a disabled child once he or she turns eighteen? Guardianship is set up when a person does not have the mental capacity to make informed decisions about their own care or finances. In these situations an alternative decision maker is needed.

It is important to pursue guardianship, if needed, so parents will continue to have the legal ability to make medical and financial decisions for their child. It also ensures that their son or daughter's rights remain protected. A guardian is to act and represent the best interests of the person under guardianship.

The need for guardianship is determined through a legal proceeding by a judge. A judge makes a legal determination that the person under guardianship is incompetent and unable to make his or her own decisions. Physical disability and/or using poor judgement without mental incapacity are not sufficient reasons to establish guardianship. Guardianship may not be appropriate in all circumstances. In many cases, a person may be able to retain their rights and independence through the support of family, friends or with other assistance. Even when guardianships are established, certain rights may be retained by the individual rather than being the responsibility of the guardian.

A guardianship of the person must attempt to "secure necessary care, services or appropriate protective placement of the ward." This does not mean that the guardian must provide or pay for care directly; rather it requires the guardian to learn what services, treatments, living options, etc. are available and pursue needed treatment and services.

The Guardian of Person does not have the power over the ward's property (including finances) unless he or she is also the ward's Guardian of Estate and/or Representative Payee.

A guardianship proceeding usually includes:

- 1) An examination by a psychologist to establish mental capacity
- 2) An assessment by the court and intervention worker to establish appropriateness of guardianship
- 3) Training of the proposed guardian
- 4) A court hearing

A "guardian ad litem" is also appointed for the proposed ward. The guardian ad litem is an attorney who represents the best interests of the proposed ward during court proceedings. If you feel that guardianship may be appropriate for your situation it is recommended that you make a referral for guardianship six months prior to your son or daughter's 18th birthday. A referral can be made in the following ways:

- 1) If you are currently involved with a social worker, ask him/her to make a referral to the Human Services section that handles guardianship proceedings.
- 2) If you want to contact the Human Services section directly, the contact information is as follows:
 - a. Jackson County – 715-284-4301 or 844-493-4245
- 3) You may also contact a private attorney of your choice to establish guardianship. You will be responsible for attorney and court costs if you use a private attorney.