

Edition 2: March 2016



OVR Pre-Employment Transition Services Newsletter

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OVR Updates: WIOA Highlights for High School Students with Disabilities

Throughout WIOA, especially in the amendments to the Rehabilitation Act, there is a significant emphasis on the provision of services to youth with disabilities.

Key things to note in WIOA:

- An emphasis on the need for youth with disabilities to have more opportunities to practice and improve their workplace skills, to consider their career interests, and to get real-world work experience.

- A requirement for state VR agencies to set aside at least

15 percent of their Federal VR program funds to provide pre-employment transition services to assist students with disabilities make the transition from secondary school to postsecondary

education programs and competitive integrated employment.

- The ability for state VR agencies to prioritize serving students with disabilities.



Transition Planning Resource: Work Incentive Counseling Allegheny County

The Social Security Administration (SSA) administers two income programs for persons with disabilities: Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI). There are currently over 12 million working-age adults (ages 18-64) receiving one or both of these benefits. While these programs represent essential support, an unintended consequence is that they have also evolved as major barriers to employment and the pursuit of economic self-sufficiency. In addition to these adults, there are more than 1.3 million youth with disabilities who receive these benefits.

Most parents and guardians have no idea how work impacts benefits; special education professionals are not equipped nor inclined to discuss what is considered a personal financial matter. In 2001, the Social Security Administration (SSA) established a cooperative agreement with AHEDD through "Work Incentives Planning and Assistance" (WIPA). The purpose of WIPA is to provide beneficiaries with accurate and timely information about the impact of earned income from employment on SSA and related benefits and to encourage individuals to utilize work incentives associated with the SSA disability programs. Timing is essential to the effective use of work incentives. Rather than waiting until a beneficiary expresses concerns about their benefits, this should be discussed during the transition planning process. This is particularly true for transition aged youth. Work Incentive Counseling includes verifying benefit status, reviewing current and future vocational/employment goals, exploring applicable work incentives and recommending best practices. The Community Work Incentives Coordinator (CWIC) documents the counseling session by providing an individualized report to the beneficiary. With the express permission of the beneficiary, the CWIC may also provide copies of the report to relevant third parties. The CWIC would then follow up with the beneficiary over the duration of the service period to check employment status and use of any work incentives.

So what's recommended?

* School-based transition programs should assertively address career planning for students who currently receive or who are applying for SSA benefits.

* Transition staff should use the existing resources provided by the SSA and others to provide work incentive counseling for young adults and/or their families. It is important that career plans not be limited due to fear and misinformation about SSA eligibility.

* School Transition Programs can make information available about working while receiving SSA benefits on websites and literature provided to students and parents.

For further information, contact Joy Smith, AHEDD WIPA Area Manager, (412) 829-0818, ext. 62001 or ssaworkincentives@ahedd.org



Find additional resources (including a youth-engaging video on SSA benefits) on the Community Legal Services of Philadelphia website: <https://clsphila.org/get-help/ssi-social-security-benefits>

Registered Nurse

What they do:

Maintain accurate, detailed reports and records.

Administer medications to patients and monitor patients for reactions or side effects.

Record patients' medical information and vital signs.

Monitor all aspects of patient care, including diet and physical activity.

Direct or supervise nursing or healthcare personnel or supervise a particular unit.

Prepare patients for and assist with examinations or treatments.

Instruct individuals, families, or other groups on topics such as health education, disease prevention, or childbirth and develop health improvement programs.

Consult and coordinate with healthcare team members to assess, plan, implement, or evaluate patient care plans.

Skills Needed:

Active Listening - Give full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.

Social Perceptiveness - Being aware of others' reactions and understanding why they react as they do.

Service Orientation - Actively looking for ways to help people.

Speaking - Talking to others to convey information effectively.

Coordination - Adjusting actions in relation to others' actions.

Education:

Most occupations in this zone require training in vocational schools, related on-the-job experience, or an associate's degree.

Related Experience:

Previous work-related skill, knowledge, or experience is required for these occupations. For example, an electrician must have completed three or four years of apprenticeship or several years of vocational training, and often must have passed a licensing exam, in order to perform the job.

Job Training:

Employees in these occupations usually need one or two years of training involving both on-the-job experience and informal training with experienced workers. A recognized apprenticeship



program may be associated with these occupations. Licensing required.

How much money does a registered nurse make?:

The national median wage is \$32.04 hourly or \$66,640 per year.

The median wage for the state of Pennsylvania is \$31.30 hourly or \$65,110 per year

Want to know more?: <https://www.pacareerzone.org/profile/29-1141.00>

An Interview with Amy Engbarth

PA OVR Transition Specialist, Western Region

Who are you, and what type of work do you do?

Amy Engbarth. I am the Western Region Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist at the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR). My other roles are the statewide coordinator for pre-employment transition services, supported employment, and discovery and customized employment. I am also the lead on Section 511 "limitations on use of sub-minimum wage." I formerly worked as a vocational rehabilitation counselor at the Pittsburgh OVR Office.



Why did this type of work interest you?

I took the role because I really enjoy collaborating with partners and creating innovative programming to assist students in transition.

How did you get your job? What jobs and experiences have led you to your present position?

Even though I already worked for OVR, I still had to apply and interview for my current position. Thankfully, I was the chosen candidate. My background in job coaching, supported employment, and my time as a VRC working with unique transition programs led me to my current position.

What part of this job do you personally find most satisfying?

I enjoy being able to go out and see the possibility of new things being created for students, collaborating with schools and other agencies to create programs, and seeing everyone come together to make something happen.

How does the work that you do help people with disabilities?

My work involves creating new and innovative programs for students with disabilities, training and technical assistance to OVR district office staff, and providing trainings to agency partners on new initiatives.

What was your first job and how did it prepare you for your current job?

My first job was as a hostess at Texas Roadhouse. It taught me a lot about customer service skills, to treat people with respect, along with the importance of work relationships and being able to get along with your co-workers to get the job done.

What advice would you give to someone just entering the workforce?

Do not get overwhelmed with not knowing how to do everything.
Find a mentor.
Do not be afraid to ask questions and get advice.

Who is a person that you considered a role model early in your life? How and why does this person impact your life?

My grandmother was a huge role model and influence on me. I did not realize it when I was younger, but I look at her today - how she has overcome adversity and how she continues to be a strong independent woman in the later stages of her life.

What traits make a leader successful?

Treat everyone with respect and dignity.
Lots of communication.
If you do not know something, it is okay to say so, and find the answer somewhere else.
Follow through with what you say you will do.
Be willing to challenge the status quo and move towards new ideas.

What do you like to do for fun, or in your spare time?

I love to travel. I enjoy finding a new adventure somewhere - doing something that I have not done before and being able to say that I accomplished it. At the moment, I am looking forward to traveling to Ireland next month!

Advocate's Space

A Parent's Perspective

Looking Back at a Successful Transition

Our son, who has cerebral palsy, will soon reach an important milestone: graduation from school-age services and his first official day without an IEP. It's a big step for him - and his parents - but we feel well prepared, thanks to the excellent transition services of the Pittsburgh Public Schools.

He "banked" his high school diploma from Brashear High School in June 2013. He then enrolled in the school district's "CITY Connections" transition program, which has provided practice in the skills he will need in the adult world, such as job readiness, budgeting money, and travel training. He's covered a lot of territory over three years - geographically (driving his wheelchair all over the city) and metaphorically (learning so many new things).

Above all, the transition process has enabled our son to find "true north" for the next stage of his life - continuing his education at Community College of Allegheny County, holding a job, and living as independently as possible.

As I look back over our son's "transition" years (age 14 to 21), a few things stand out as essential to success:

An active approach to learning about the transition process

- The transition from school-age to adult services and supports has many facets and moving parts. Parents are wise to keep abreast of the rights, opportunities, rules and regulations that affect youth right now - and **will** play a role in adulthood. No question, it's a lot to learn, but outstanding educational sessions and materials are offered by such organizations as United Way 21 and Able, ACHIEVA, and the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

A carefully orchestrated transition from middle school to high school

- Before the move to high school, ask the IEP team leader to arrange for your son or daughter to meet the high school transition counselor and observe a few classes. In many school districts, these "looking ahead" visits are standard. Ideally, the last IEP meeting before leaving middle school is attended by the "sending" team at the middle school and the "receiving team" at the high school. The student - now in the "driver's seat," so to speak - takes a more active role in the IEP team. Over the course of the transition years, the student's active role in the IEP grows.

An IEP team that's always looking ahead

- The student's interests, aptitudes and dreams are of utmost importance in the selection of electives, job experiences, extracurricular activities, social support, post-secondary education and other opportunities that lead to meaningful adult life. Consider asking the IEP team to use a structured "person-centered" planning process to capture what is truly important to your child and his or her vision for the future.

A supportive climate for learning at home

- High school classes - whether regular curriculum or adapted - provide students with a matchless opportunity to reach their fullest potential as learners. Support your child's learning by setting aside time to assist with homework or to practice skills that apply to home and community as well as school.

Accepting the challenge to let go

- During the transition years, parents start seeing their teens as emerging adults. At home, that means handing off responsibilities that formerly were in the parent's domain, such as keeping a calendar of commitments and handling medical appointments. Transferring responsibilities for tasks is not only a growth experience for the young person, but a positive re-inventing of our roles as parents. During transition, a teacher or other professional may encourage you to allow your son or daughter to take on a challenge alone, rather than relying on your support. Be open to that kind of advice.

Tina Calabro is a writer and speaker, specializing in disability issues. She frequently presents a talk for parents entitled "The Art of Letting Go of our Transition-age Sons and Daughters." Contact her at tina.calabro@verizon.net.

News You Can Use

Watch a TED Talk by Rosie King:

[How autism freed me to be myself](#)

Read about four powerful companies that hire people with disabilities:

[Why Hire Disabled Workers? Four Powerful \(and Inclusive\) Companies Answer](#)

Sam is a barista who has autism, and he dances his way through the workday

[Watch as Ellen meets the Dancing Starbucks Barista](#)

Learn about a cafe designed to employ adults with disabilities in Texas:

[Hugs Cafe in McKinney To Open with Special Mission](#)

Learn more about OVR's new projects:

[OVR Announces \\$1.2 Million in Transition Services Contracts](#)

Stevie Wonder calls for disability rights:

[Grammys 2016](#)

See how LEGO takes on cultural perceptions:

[New LEGO Figure Uses Wheelchair](#)

Read about deaf individuals working in a number of different fields:

[DeafTalent Everywhere!](#)



Extended School Year Programming

**Are you looking for interactive, youth friendly programming for the extended school year?
Consider a series on pre-employment topics by the
OVR Early Reach Initiative!**

Early Reach services include:

- *Informational presentations, educational workshops and consultations to school personnel, community agencies, youth with disabilities and their families about services offered by the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) and the process of transition from high school.
- *Education on the benefits of early career planning and the development of independent living skills.
- *Assistance for youth with disabilities in planning for and making application to OVR.
- *Consultation and linkages to resources that will assist youth with disabilities pursue participation in the workforce and independence.

Contact Sarah Vogel, Early Reach Coordinator, at svogel@pa.gov or (412) 392-5973 or Brett Glavey at 412-209-4416 or bglavey@pa.gov for more information.

Pittsburgh *Happenings*

2016 Congressional Art Competition

Are you a high school student interested in showcasing your artwork? The Congressional Art Competition is a wonderful opportunity to showcase the incredible talent in the Twelfth Congressional District. Deadline for submission is March 18, 2016.



Learn more at: <https://rothfus.house.gov/congressional-art-competition>

Pizza!



College for a Day!



Wednesday, May 18th

9:00am-12:30pm

CCAC, South Campus

1750 Clairton Road, West Mifflin, PA 15122

OVR and the Supportive Services Office invite 10th graders with disabilities to join us for this fun, interactive, event!

Students will have an opportunity to learn about:

Supportive Services for Students with Disabilities at CCAC

Info about careers you can pursue at CCAC

CCAC's many programs

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation



To RSVP: Call 412-392-5928 or email RA-LI-OVRPGHPETS@pa.gov

Limit: 15 students per High School



This year's conference is designed to support all those committed to high impact, evidence-based family and community engagement strategies regardless of role.

Parents, students and families, teachers and other educators, school and district administrators, and those working in or with community-based organizations will encounter multiple examples of quality program practice and in-depth exploration that links what we know works from research with successful approaches in a variety of school and community contexts.

Highlighting leadership at all levels and exciting local work in Pittsburgh, the 2016 conference will offer varied perspectives while examining how schools and communities around the country are realizing mutual goals and maximizing impact through productive family-school-community partnerships. Major plenaries, mini-plenaries and over 75 workshops will offer multiple learning opportunities on important themes and topics:

- Early Support and intervention
- Relationship building and trust
- Building adult capacity
- Parent leadership, advocacy and community organizing
- Inclusion, equity and opportunity
- Integrated, systemic approaches

To learn more, visit cvent.com.

Autism Urban Connections

Parent Support Group services Parents/Caregivers raising children with ASD and related disorders

Greater Hazelwood Family Center

5006 Second Avenue

Pittsburgh, PA 15207

5 p.m. – 7 p.m., Monthly: 4th Thursday

Facilitator: Jamie Upshaw, 412-853-0115, Aucofpg@yahoo.com

Empty Bowls 2016

March 20 @ 1:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

To Learn More, visit justharvest.org.

**21st ANNUAL
EMPTY BOWLS**

A SIMPLE MEAL
OF SOUP &
BREAD TO FIGHT
HUNGER

**SUNDAY,
MARCH 20**
1:30 PM - 3:30 PM
4:30 PM - 6:30 PM

RODEF SHALOM
4905 5TH AVENUE
IN OAKLAND

Delicious soups from the city's top chefs. Live entertainment, children's activities, soup-to-go, a bake sale, and a silent auction of world-class ceramic art and celebrity-autographed bowls. Ticket holders choose a beautiful handmade bowl to take home.

TIX \$22
IN ADVANCE
\$25 AT DOOR

**Empty Bowls
DINNER**

**THIS FUNDRAISER BENEFITS
GREATER PITTSBURGH COMMUNITY FOOD BANK & JUST HARVEST**
BUY TICKETS: www.showclix.com/Event/EmptyBowls2016 | (412) 431-8960



YOUTH COACHING WORKSHOP



JOIN *The Mentoring Partnership* and *Citiparks*



Sunday, April 10th from 1 to 4 p.m.

South Side Market House Healthy Living Center
12th and Bingham Streets, Pittsburgh, PA 15203

TRAINING FACILITATED BY Positive Coaching Alliance



Coaches will learn to:

- Strengthen a student athlete's on-field performance, positive attitude and motivation
- Help student athletes learn on-field lessons that make a difference in their success of the field
- Build good relationships with parents and league leaders
- Engage in discussion with fellow coaches and a facilitator with extensive coaching experience



Registration is FREE and includes lunch, as well as:

- **Certification as a Double-Goal Coach**
- *Power of Double-Goal Coaching* book from PCA Executive Director, Jim Thompson



Autism Connection of PA March Workshops

Autism Connection of PA Community Room
35 Wilson Street, Suite 101
Etna, PA 15223

ARE YOU READY FOR COLLEGE LIFE?

Preparing Teens and Family Members
For the College Transition

Presented By: Heather Conroy and Joe Farrell

Monday, March 21, 2016
6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

[More Information and Registration Available HERE](#)

BULLYING. ***THE "WHO", THE "WHAT", AND THE "WHY"***

Presented By: Sharon Greene, M.A.

Tuesday, March 22, 2016
6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

[More Information and Registration Available HERE](#)

The Watson Institute Summer Extended School Year Camp Programs

Camp WISP and Camp STAT application packets are being accepted for school districts and families seeking a summer camp ESY program for their child or teen with an Autism Spectrum diagnosis. Interested families can download camp information/application packets from www.thewatsoninstitute.org or request a paper copy be mailed by emailing Kristine Gorby at Kristineg@thewatsoninstitute.org

For Students Who May Need Support Beyond High School

Northern Area Transition Fair

Sponsored by the Northern Area Public School Districts:

Avonworth
Deer Lakes
Fox Chapel Area

Hampton Township
North Allegheny
North Hills

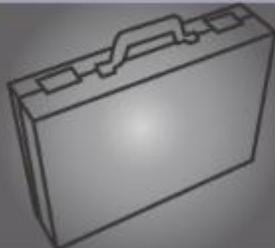
Northgate
Shaler Area
Pine-Richland

Local Representation from:

Employment
Agencies

Post Secondary
Education and
Training

County Resources
and Agencies



Join us for a Night of Food, Raffle Prizes and Networking!

Thursday, April 14, 2016
6:00 - 8:00 PM
9600 Babcock Boulevard

A.W. Beattie Career Center does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age or limited English proficiency in its programs or activities.

Useful Websites

Family and Disability Resources

[Family Resource Guide](#)

[Center on Technology and Disability](#)

[Heath Resource Center](#)

[NCSET](#)

[Pacer](#)

[NCWD for Youth](#)

[VCU Center on Transition Innovations](#)

Community Resources

[PA Secondary Transition](#)

[Allegheny County/Pittsburgh Transition Coordinating Council](#)

[Autism Speaks Transition Toolkit](#)

[Strength of Us](#)

Career Information

[Pennsylvania Career Zone](#)

[PA Job Gateway](#)

[Career One Stop](#)

[GCF Learn Free](#)

[PA Career Guide](#)

Job Search Sites

[Imagine Pittsburgh](#)

[PA Civil Service](#)

[Simply Hired](#)

[Snag A Job](#)

[College Recruiter](#)

[Indeed](#)



We are in an exciting time of new opportunities, and we want you to be informed of what's happening.

Please feel free to forward this newsletter to other transition professionals, parents, or community members. An accessible version is available for users who prefer an all text version. It can also be printed for distribution to students. Any questions or concerns can be emailed to RA-LI-OVRPGHPETS@pa.gov.

Pittsburgh OVR | 412-392-4950 | RA-LI-OVRPGHPETS@pa.gov | www.dli.pa.gov

STAY CONNECTED:

