



**Office for People With
Developmental Disabilities**

**OPWDD & Schools:
Supporting Students and Preparing for
Transition**

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Presenter

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What is OPWDD?

The Office for People With Developmental Disabilities:

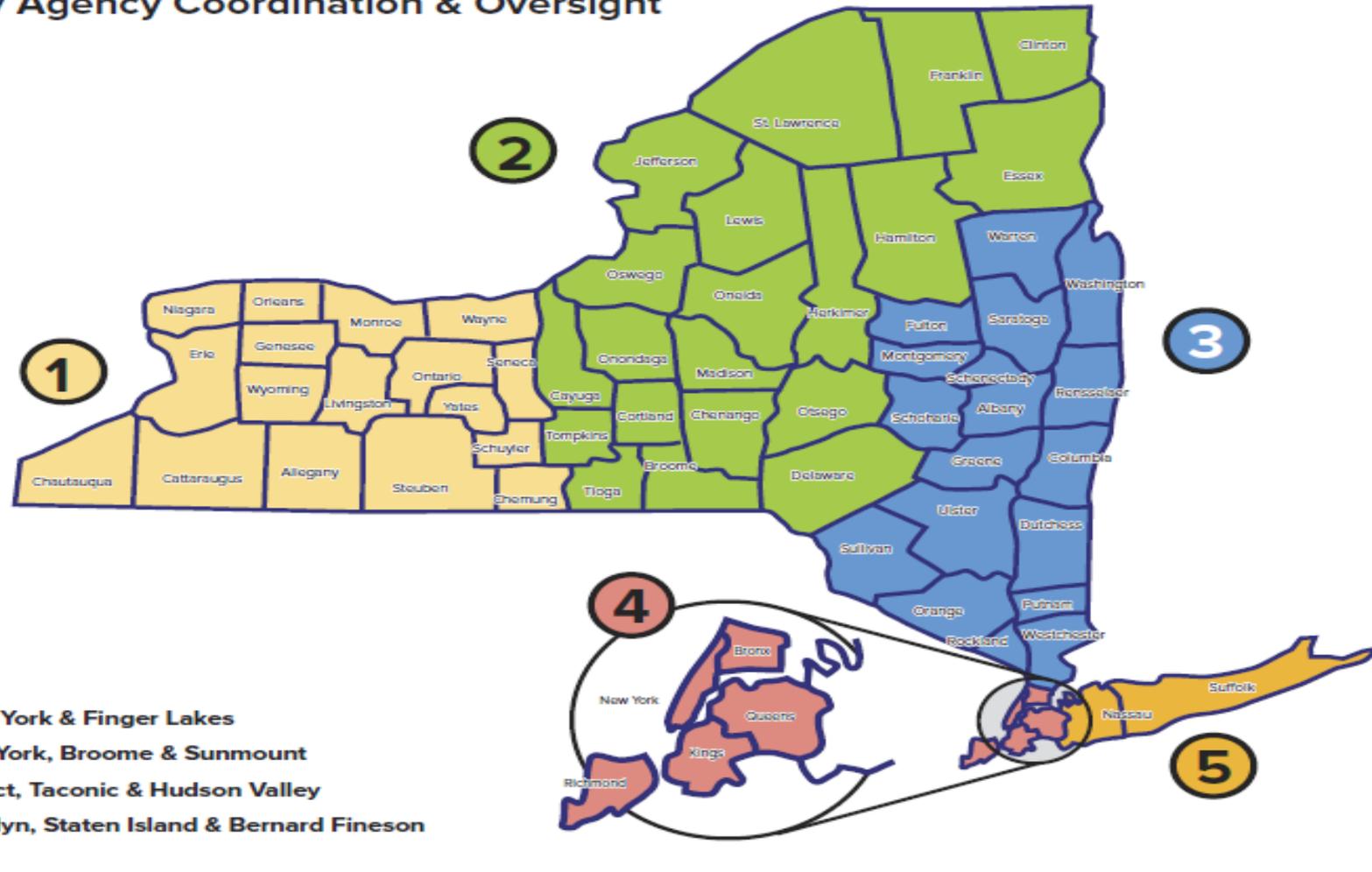
- The New York State agency that authorizes services for people with developmental disabilities
- Helps people with developmental disabilities live richer lives

Our Vision: People with developmental disabilities:

- Enjoy meaningful relationships with friends, family and others in their lives
- Experience personal health and growth
- Live in the home of their choice, and
- Fully participate in their communities

5 Developmental Disabilities Regional Offices

Voluntary Agency Coordination & Oversight



- 1 – Western New York & Finger Lakes
- 2 – Central New York, Broome & Sunmount
- 3 – Capital District, Taconic & Hudson Valley
- 4 – Metro, Brooklyn, Staten Island & Bernard Fineson
- 5 – Long Island

Shared Goals with Local Schools

- Identify and work toward achieving student's short- and long-term goals
- Improve educational outcomes and student/family functioning while students are in school
- Help the student successfully transition from high school to adult life. This may include:
 - Getting a job
 - Continuing their education, and
 - Taking part in other meaningful activities such as volunteer opportunities, and job and life skill development

OPWDD services can assist with achieving these goals.

Early OPWDD Contact

Why contacting OPWDD early can help:

- Improved educational outcomes as OPWDD services may help children do better at school
- OPWDD is an “Employment First” agency:
 - Improving student employment opportunities through internships and supported employment
 - Improving opportunities for employment when the student enters the adult world

What is the Front Door?

- The person-centered process that connects people to services
- A team of staff at the Developmental Disabilities Regional Field Offices (DDRFOs) who help guide the person through the process to access supports and services that are appropriate to meet their needs

Steps in the Front Door Process

Initial Contact



Eligibility



Identify Needs, Goals and Preferences



Plan



Access Services

Care Coordination Organization (CCO) Care Management

CCOs are organizations that:

- Provide person-centered care management, planning and service coordination
- Are staffed by care managers (CM) with training and experience in the field of developmental disabilities

The person chooses the CCO they want to work with from a list of CCOs in their area.

Role of the CCO

To work closely with the person, the DDRFO and any identified service providers through all of steps of the Front Door process including:

- Helping the person/family gather information and apply for OPWDD eligibility and Medicaid
- Helping the person/family identify the services that meet their needs and the agencies that they want to provide their services
- Ensuring services are available to meet their needs
- Helping with any changes needed to their services

What is the OPWDD Eligibility Determination Process?

- The process used by OPWDD to decide if the person has a qualifying developmental disability so they may receive OPWDD supports and services
 - May involve multiple steps of review to ensure that every person receives a fair review
 - All applicants can submit additional information, request reevaluation, appeal a determination and request a fair hearing.
- Please contact the local DDRFO with specific eligibility questions.

What is a Developmental Disability?

- A condition that occurs anytime from birth until the age of 22, including:
 - Intellectual Disability
 - Cerebral Palsy
 - Epilepsy
 - Neurological Impairment
 - Autism Spectrum Disorder
 - Familial Dysautonomia
 - Prader-Willi Syndrome
- Is expected to be permanent
- Affects the person's ability to function in society

OPWDD Supports and Services

- Community-based Services
- Assistive Technology
- Employment Services
- Housing Options
- Behavioral Supports
- Clinic Services

OPWDD services are meant to enhance the support the person receives from their natural supports such as family and friends.

Community-Based Services

Family Supports Services (FSS) help families care for their loved ones residing at home and may include:

- Respite - provides relief to primary caregiver(s)
- Family member training and support groups
- Reimbursement
- Information and referral
- Sibling services
- Recreation and social activities/after school programs

FSS services may be accessed as soon as the person is found OPWDD eligible.

Community-Based Services

OPWDD Housing Subsidy:

- Provides funds to help the person pay for rent and utilities in their own home in the community (person must be over 18 years old).
- Housing subsidies are **ONLY** available to help the person with developmental disabilities live independently.

The person may explore the OPWDD Housing Subsidy as soon as they are found OPWDD eligible.

Community-Based Services

Respite: a break for caregivers

Types of Respite
In-Home Respite
Site-based Respite
Intensive Respite
Recreational Respite
Camp Respite
Family Reimbursed Respite through Family Support Services (FSS)

Community-Based Services

Community Habilitation helps the person:

- Learn and keep the skills they need to live safely and more independently
- Maintain or improve their health
- Work toward other personal goals
- Meet people and make and keep friends
- Be part of their community and take part in community activities
- Live independently or learn about and experience community-based activities

Community-Based Services

Day Habilitation helps the person:

- Learn and keep the skills they need to live safely and more independently
- Be a valued member of their community and participate in community activities
- Identify their interests
- Develop their talents and skills
- Make and keep friends
- Learn basic life skills

Day Habilitation takes place at a set location or in the community (Day Hab Without Walls)

Is the Student Prepared for Employment?

Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR)

- ACCES-VR is a part of the NYS Education Department and provides employment and career planning services.
- After school students may go directly to OPWDD for Pathway to Employment, Community Based Prevocational and the Employment Training Program.
- If a student participates in these OPWDD services, they do not have to go to ACCES-VR and get a denial to get OPWDD employment supports.

Which Employment Service is Right for the Person – ACCES-VR or OPWDD ETP?

A person is appropriate for OPWDD's Employment Training Program (ETP) when the person:

- Is interested in employment but is *limited to working for short periods of time*
- *Requires a highly intensive set of program, behavioral, transportation and/or other supports due to their support needs*
- *Requires a longer period of program, behavioral, and/or other supports to develop their work capacity before it can be determined that they are able to achieve employment*

**No denial letter is needed from ACCES-VR*



Tools in the OPWDD Employment Toolbox

Community Prevocational Services	Pathway to Employment	Employment Training Program	Supported Employment
<p>Prepares people for paid employment or meaningful activities</p> <p>Duration: 2 years or more</p>	<p>Creates a Vocational Plan and prepares people for paid work</p> <p>Duration: 1 year</p>	<p>Provides time-limited paid work experience after Discovery and targeted job development</p> <p>Duration: 1 year or less</p>	<p>Provides job coaching, job development (replacement) and supports on the job</p> <p>Duration: On-Going</p>
<p>Provides supports for Discovery, community vocational & volunteer experiences, work-related skills development and career planning</p>	<p>Provides supports for Discovery, community work experiences and developing a vocational goal</p>	<p>Provides supports for Discovery, job development, and job coaching at a paid internship at a community business that agrees to hire the person</p>	<p>Provides supports for community-based, competitive, integrated employment</p>
<p>Most activities are unpaid community vocational experiences or volunteer work.</p> <p>If work activities are paid, must be subminimum wage according to DOL requirements</p>	<p>Most activities are unpaid community vocational experiences or volunteer work.</p> <p>If work activities are paid, must be paid at least minimum wage</p>	<p>Services are funded by Supported Employment (SEMP).</p> <p>Wages paid by OPWDD at minimum wage until the business hires</p>	<p>Paid by business at minimum wage or higher</p>

What is the Employment Training Program (ETP)?



ETP offers people the opportunity to gain experience with an employer willing to hire them *after a successful internship.*



OPWDD will pay the wages for a period of time with the *expectation* that the employer will then hire the person.



ETP's purpose is to *increase employment for people* by matching jobs to the person's skills and interests and allowing the person to demonstrate their value to the employer.



ETP interns are enrolled in Supported Employment which funds the service.

ETP Can Start in the Schools

- Student completes OPWDD Front Door process.
- School staff provides supports during school hours.
- Students fulfill a paid internship at a community placement that provides experience – wages are paid by OPWDD.
- Student is evaluated on the job.
- Supports align with appropriate OPWDD services prior to graduation.

How Do Students Apply for ETP?

- If a student has two (2) more years of school remaining and the school offers an ETP program, the student should contact the teacher or principal and let them know they are interested.
- If a student is in their last year of school, they should contact their Care Manager to apply for ETP or email employment.vocational.services@opwdd.ny.gov.

ETP for Adults

When students leave high school, the Care Manager can help the student with continuing or newly applying for ETP.

After high school, the Employment Training Program (ETP) activities include:

- Discovery with Job Development Plan or Vocational Development Plan
- Internships are developed based on the person's interests, abilities and Discovery findings to assure a good match.
- Wages are paid by NYS at minimum wage while the intern is learning the job.
- The ETP Supervisor, Worksite Supervisor, Job Coach and other SEMP staff work together to support the internship.
- Interns attend regularly scheduled job readiness classes to enhance their work skills.
- If hired, the person continues to receive ongoing supports as needed from a SEMP agency.

What is OPWDD Supported Employment (SEMP)?

- SEMP provides supports the person needs to gain and retain competitive employment.
- Supported Employment (SEMP) staff can provide:
 - Job development (after ACCES-VR or ETP)
 - Job coaching and training to learn the job
 - Coaching to improve communication skills with supervisors, co-workers, and customers
 - Job retention strategies
 - Support for developing independence on the job
 - Benefits planning
 - Career advancement strategies

Behavioral Supports

Intensive Behavioral (IB) Services:

- Short-term (6 month) services that focus on behavior support strategies for behavioral needs that may put the person at risk of placement in a more restrictive residential setting (such as a group home, residential school or hospital)
- Teaches the person, their family and other caregivers how to respond to challenging behaviors
- The person must live in their own home, their family's home or a Family Care home to be eligible.

Behavioral Supports

Crisis Services for Individuals with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities (CSIDD):

- Community-based program that provides crisis prevention and response services to the person and their family if they have complex behavioral and mental health needs
- Offers training, consultation, therapeutic services and technical assistance to help the person remain in their home

Certified Housing Options

Opportunities to live in certified homes that offer different levels of support:

- **Family Care:** Community-based housing in private family homes certified by OPWDD. Offers the person with developmental disabilities a caring and stable home in a family setting.
- **Individualized Residential Alternatives (IRAs):** Provide room, board and individualized supports in a home-like atmosphere where the person can gain the skills necessary to live as independently as possible.

Assistive Technology

Assistive Technology provides funds for:

- **Environmental Modifications:** Physical changes to the person's home
- **Adaptive Devices:** Communication aides and adaptive devices, including tools used for dining, meal preparation and other tasks
- **Vehicle Modifications:** Physical changes to the person's vehicle to meet specialized transportation needs

Article 16 Clinical Services

- Article 16 Clinics provide clinical services either at main clinic sites or at satellite site locations throughout New York State
- The person may access Article 16 clinics specifically for the purposes of diagnosis and evaluation if they do not have a known diagnosis.
- Services are rehabilitative to improve or limit disabling conditions, disease or illnesses through the provision of therapies.
- Services help the person remain in, or move to, the least restrictive settings.
- **Not** a primary care provider of medical services

Service Delivery Options

Direct Provider Purchased

- Traditional Service option
- The Service Provider manages services
- Provider determines staffing assignment, wages paid and schedule of service delivery

Agency Supported Self-Directed

- The person with I/DD enters into a coemployment agreement with a provider agency
- The person selects staff from the provider or recommends staff to be hired by the provider

Self-Directed

- The person has the most control over how their services are delivered and by whom
- The person enters into a coemployment agreement with a Fiscal Intermediary (FI)
- The person has flexibility in all aspects of service delivery and pay rate

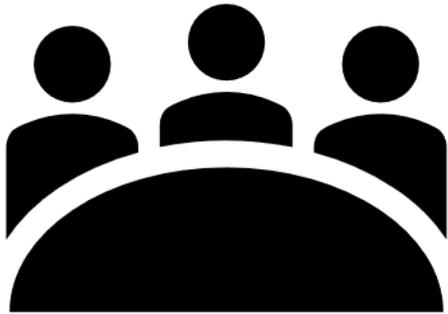
The Provider has Responsibility



The person may customize their service delivery options by using a combination of self-directed and agency-provided services.

The Person has Responsibility

The Transition Planning Team



- Student and their family, guardian, and/or advocate
- CSE and other school staff
- Care manager
- Agencies providing adult developmental disability services
- OPWDD Regional Field Office staff

Transition Planning

The student, family, school & OPWDD plan for transition together:

- Whether the student with developmental disabilities attends school in their community or at a residential school
- Per the New York State Education Department, transition planning by the student, the family and the school should start before the student is 15 years old with the student's goals identified on their Individual Educational Plan (IEP).
- Students interested in OPWDD adult supports should begin working with OPWDD at least 3 years prior to the date they are expected to complete their educational program.

Transition Planning

Planning processes are different but the student, family, school, CCO and OPWDD still plan together:

- **Local School Transition (LST) – Student with developmental disabilities attends school in their community:**
 - The Local School Transition Coordinator (LSTC) or other OPWDD staff may participate in Committee on Special Education (CSE) transition planning when asked by the school or the student/family and with the consent of the student/family.
- **Residential School Transition (RST) – Student lives at and attends a residential school:**
 - Transition planning team:
 - Develops a plan for the student's postschool services
 - Made up of the student/family, the local school Committee on Special Education (CSE), identified provider agencies, the residential school, and the OPWDD Residential School Transition Coordinator (RSTC)

Transition Planning

A NYS student who is eligible for special education has the right to attend school full time until (whichever comes first):

- The student graduates with either a Regent's diploma or a local diploma, or
- When the student's free appropriate public education ends.

A student may also earn:

- Career Development and Occupational Studies Commencement Credential (CDOS), or
- Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential (SACC),
- **But earning these credentials does not end the school district's responsibility** for the student's educational services.

Parents/guardians must be informed that graduation from high school with a local or Regent's diploma will terminate their child's entitlement to a free appropriate public education and their eligibility for special education services.

Importance of Consent

Involvement in Committee on Special Education (CSE) Meetings

- The school district must invite a representative of any agency that is responsible for providing or paying for transition services to the CSE meeting where transition services will be discussed.
- The parent's consent (or the student's, if 18 years of age or older), is required for the representative to attend.
- If the invited agency does not attend the CSE meeting, the school district must take other steps to include the agency in the planning of any transition services for the student.

Obtaining Records for Planning Purposes

- Parents or guardians interested in allowing the school and OPWDD to exchange information must fill out a *Consent to Release Information* form for the school.

Together We Can Improve Student Outcomes

Together we can:

- Ensure that students with developmental disabilities are better prepared to learn and to reach their goals,
- Ensure that students with developmental disabilities leave school better prepared for adult life, and
- Support students to work toward:
 - Reaching their potential, and
 - Participating fully in their communities through employment, volunteering, and activities they are interested in and enjoy.

Need More Information?

- Information about OPWDD, the Front Door, the Front Door Videos, and OPWDD services are on our website:

<https://opwdd.ny.gov>

- More details about the Front Door process are included in the *Access To Services* guide:
 - Available at <https://opwdd.ny.gov/get-started>

To contact OPWDD's Front Door, call

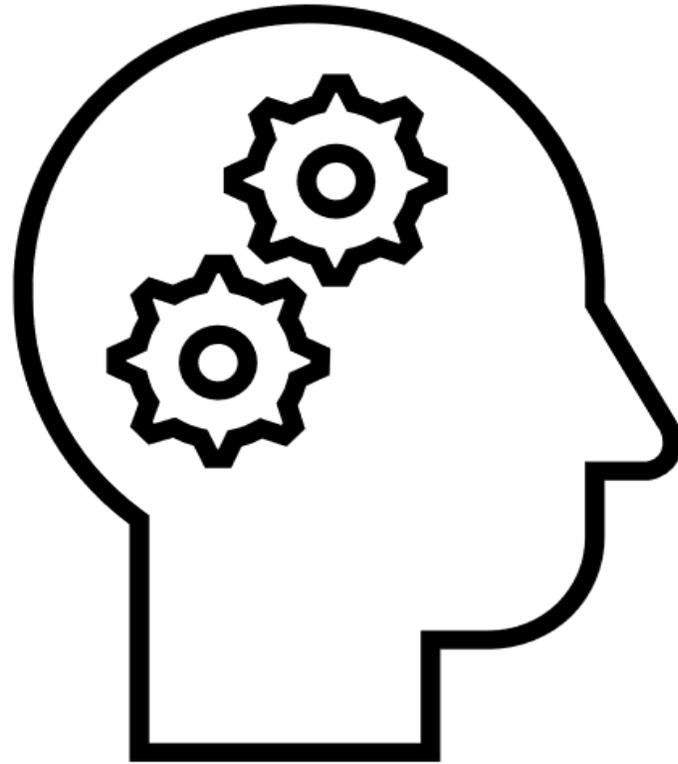
866-946-9733

For questions about:

Local School Transition, email student.transition@opwdd.ny.gov

Residential School Transition, email residential.school@opwdd.ny.gov

Questions?





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