

Let's Go to College

Information for Students with Intellectual Disabilities and Families

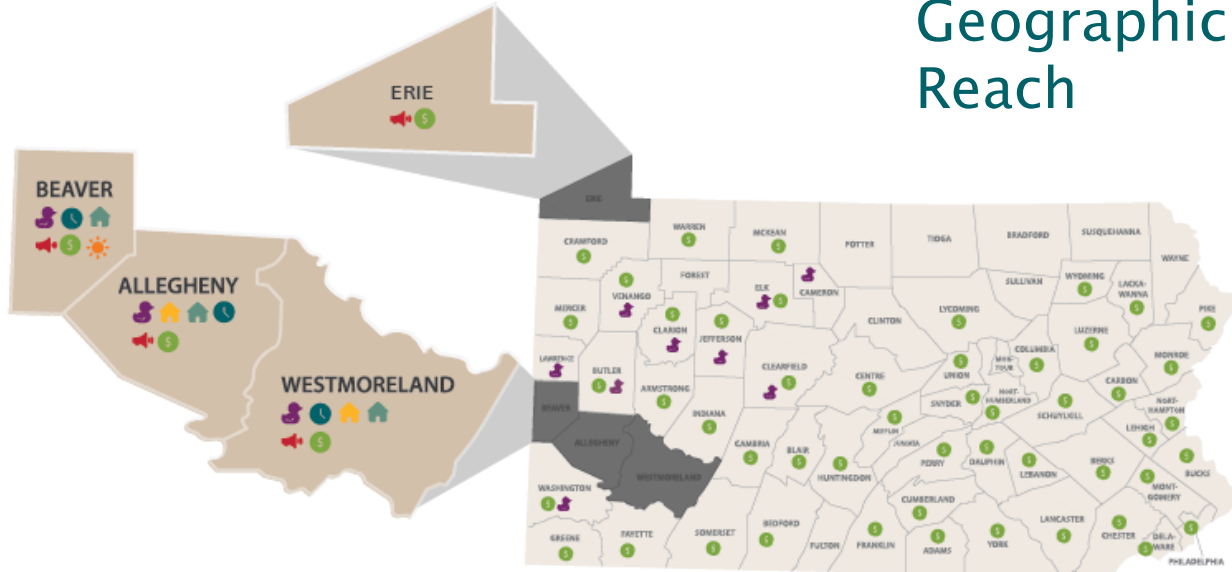
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Our Family of Organizations



Geographic Reach



Achieva Support

-  Community Supported Living
-  Early Intervention
-  Employment Supports
-  Home and Community Supports

The Arc of Greater Pittsburgh* The Arc Erie County

-  Advocacy & Family Supports
-  Recreation*

Achieva Family Trust



Mission and Vision

Mission

“Achieva advocates for, empowers, and supports people with disabilities and their families throughout their lives.”

Vision

“Achieva envisions a community where all people with disabilities lead lives of personal significance.”

Core Values

Respect: Value and celebrate everyone.

Passion: Be dedicated to Achieva's mission and vision.

Ethics: Infuse integrity, quality and best practices in everything we do.

Change: Embrace and drive innovation toward inclusive person-centered practices.

Team: Inspire, challenge and support each other.

The Benefits of a Post Secondary Education

- Youth with intellectual disabilities who participated in a college program and vocational rehabilitation had a 73% higher income than those who received only vocational rehabilitation services.
- Nearly 80% of students participating in college programs were paid at or above the minimum wage.
- Of the students employed upon leaving their college program, 90% were in jobs that are integrated and in the competitive labor market.

Think College

The Benefits of an On Campus Experience

Students have the opportunity to learn, practice and experience:

- Time management
- Nutrition and wellness
- Social experiences (roommates and friends)
- Budgeting and money management
- Independent but supported living

Types of College Programs

- There are over 300 programs in the United States (19 in Pennsylvania) that offer a non-degree program for students with intellectual disability, located at public and private, 4 year and 2 year colleges and universities, as well as a few located at technical colleges. Program length ranges from one year to four years. The number of students in the programs varies as well. Some programs are focused on a general certificate and others have a more specific career focus certificate. Some provide residential living for students with intellectual disability in the campus dorms, though many offer only commuter opportunities.
- Other ways that the programs can vary: some serve students who are over 18 but still in high school for the ages of 18 to 21 (these are called "dual enrollment" or "concurrent enrollment" programs). Others only serve students who have left high school. Programs also offer varying degrees of participation in regular college classes with students without disabilities. Some are fully inclusive, while other programs offer a more separate experience, where students may be on a college campus, but participate in some or most classes and experiences only with other students with intellectual disability.

Think College

Admission Requirements

- The admission process for non-degree programs generally is different than that of degree programs.
- For non-degree programs, students generally do not need a standard high school diploma. An IEP diploma, certificate of attendance or other alternative diplomas are accepted for admission into college programs for students with intellectual disability. Also, standardized test scores such as from ACT or SAT will not be required.
- However, students in non degree programs will need documentation of intellectual disability, and information that describes their strengths and their support needs. Some sort of documentation is required because there is a different admission process for students with intellectual disability, as well as special access to federal financial aid.
- Other than these important considerations, there will be a variety of other requirements that can differ from program to program. Some typical requirements include employment goals and the ability to manage medications and use a cell phone. Most programs cater to students in the age range of 18-26, but not all programs have an upper age limit.

Getting Started

- Make college exploration part of your student's transition plan, no later than age 14.
- Include IEP goals that will lead to success on a college campus (time management, money management, digital skills, decision making and self advocacy).
- Use person-centered planning and enable the student to participate in developing goals based on the student's unique strengths, interests, and abilities.
- Research colleges and universities.

Throughout High School

- Build your college readiness skills.
- Take general education classes to make your academic skills stronger.
- Understand your disability and your learning style so you can share this information with your college advisor and disability services specialist.
- Develop a person centered plan.
- Participate in extra curricular activities.
- Volunteer. Work. Be an intern.

Junior Year

- Learn about the difference between high school and college, think about living away from home, think about a career after college.
- Go to Think College's College Search. Once you have a list of potential colleges, visit each college or university's website for more details. Many programs offer online and in-person Open Houses that can be a great way to learn more.
- Visit college campuses (virtually or in person).

Senior Year

(or the year before accepting your diploma)

- Complete and submit your applications by deadline dates.
- Meet with your IEP team and support coordinator to get documentation of your disability. This will help in planning for any accommodations you may need.
- Meet with a counselor at your college's Office of Disability Services.
- Research and decide which classes you would like to take.
- Attend new student orientation.

Paying for College

Primary Resources:

- Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)
- Medicaid Home & Community Based Waiver (ODP)
- Federal Financial Aid (if the post secondary program is an approved Comprehensive Transition Program)

Secondary Resources:

- Social Security Income (SSI)
 - Scholarships (Pittsburgh Promise, DREAM, Ruby's Rainbow)
 - Private Pay (Student wages, ABLE Accounts, 529 Plans and Parent Employment Programs)
 - Special Needs Trusts
 - Dual enrollment
 - PA Assistive Technology Foundation (PATF)
-

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

- Request an application beginning two years prior to graduation or aging out of high school.
- A student must be deemed eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services to receive support for college.
- An OVR authorization to a college or university may be used to pay for a portion of a student's educational costs for tuition, fees, books and supplies, on or off campus room and board and transportation allowances.
- All funds are paid directly to the college or university.
- Classes in which students are enrolled must be related to an competitive employment goal.

Medicaid Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Waivers

- In Pennsylvania, Medicaid waiver funds can be used for the following services:
 - In home and community support
 - Education support
 - Employment services
 - Assistive technology

In Home and Community Support

Designed to assist a person in acquiring, maintaining and enhancing community living skills, to live more independently and to participate meaningfully in community life:

- Self care
- Health, wellness and nutrition
- Self direction (time management)
- Paying bills
- Transportation
- Relationships and community connections
- Money management.
- Accessibility such as assistance in navigating the campus

Education Support Services

- Services are limited to payment for the following:
 - Tuition (at least 75% of the time on camps must be integrated with the general student population).
 - Fees charged to all students such as technology and facility fees.
 - On campus peer support staff who are available to assist with homework and study skills,
 - Waivers cannot pay for books, room and board and recreational activities
 - Must not be available through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or OVR

On Campus Peer Support Services

- On campus peer support is a component that the college can voluntarily provide and bill as a Education Support Service.
- It may include assessments on campus job development (finding/coaching), internships, and travel instruction.
- It cannot replace the support that the college or university is required to offer via the Office of Disability Services.

Achieva Can Help You Plan

- Information about existing programs
- Introductions to program directors
- Connections with families and students with intellectual disabilities currently attending college
- Resources to help pay for college
- IEP and Transition Plan reviews
- College-focused transition goals
- Skill-building recommendations specific to the college experience
- Person centered planning

The Journey to an Inclusive College Program for students with ID/DD: One Family's Experience



Transition Planning-

Though IEPs officially begin addressing this at age 14, it's never too early to start planning.

- **Person-centered planning:**

Nurture strengths and interests, especially with respect to post-secondary education, employment, and independent living.

Be creative-

- Build in IEP supports (e.g., extracurricular activities)
- Utilize family / community connections for volunteering and other experiences

- **Learn what resources are available:**

- [PaTTAN Secondary Transition](#)
- [Transition Discoveries](#)
- School District Transition Coordinator

- **High expectations paired with appropriate supports**

Planning for the Future Checklist









Use this checklist as a discussion guide in preparing for life after high school. Bring it to your meetings with your school and/or agency supporters to talk about your progress and how best to plan for your future. The checklist is meant to be individualized and not all of the items listed may pertain to you.

Name: _____ Date: _____

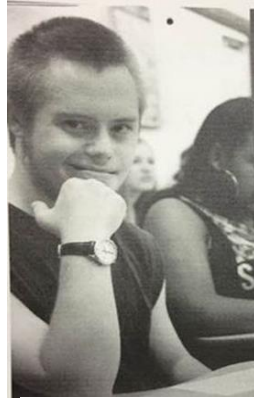
Every Year

1. Meet with your agency and school supporters.
2. Take time to talk about information learned from any assessments about your abilities and interests.
3. Ask about accommodations and technology you can use to meet your school, work, and other life goals.
4. Use your individualized education program (IEP) to create the right goals to help you get ready for life after high school (transition).
5. Build on what you started the year before.

	14-15 Year Olds	15-16 Year Olds
Education/Training After High School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Talk with your school and/or agency supporters about your interests and what you want to study after high school. <input type="checkbox"/> Study websites to learn about training, technical school, college programs and classes where you can explore an interest or hobby. Visit at least one of these educational programs. <input type="checkbox"/> Meet with your school's transition coordinator to make sure you are taking the right classes for your goals. <input type="checkbox"/> Understand your disability. Ask for your own accommodations and/or assistive technology. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Learn how accommodations may be different at the educational program you've chosen for after high school, so you can start to prepare. <input type="checkbox"/> If you've chosen college, sign-up for the PSAT test (given in fall of sophomore and junior years) and make an appointment with your guidance counselor to talk about colleges and your plan for applying. <input type="checkbox"/> Visit technical schools or certificate programs you may be interested in. 
Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Sign up to volunteer and job shadow during school and/or summer months. <input type="checkbox"/> Start keeping a list of the names, email addresses, and phone numbers of people who can be references for jobs. <input type="checkbox"/> Learn about programs at your local career and technical education (CTE) centers. If you are interested, ask to visit. If you like it, learn how to apply. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> To get ready for a job, practice filling out job applications and answering questions an employer might ask you. <input type="checkbox"/> Ask your school and/or agency supporters for help with on-the-job training, job exploration, and/or part-time employment in your areas of interest. Your school can help you get this experience during school and during the summer. <input type="checkbox"/> Ask your parents/guardians to sign forms that will allow Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) and/or other adult agencies to come to your transition meetings. 
Community Living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Join an activity at your school, community, or place of worship. <input type="checkbox"/> Practice asking for what you need during your IEP and other meetings. <input type="checkbox"/> Ask about certified transportation training at your IEP meeting. <input type="checkbox"/> Know the medications you take (names, dosage, why you're taking them). Talk with your doctor about sexuality and boundaries, and about how behaviors like smoking and drinking affect our bodies. <input type="checkbox"/> If you have an intellectual disability and no one has contacted the County's Office of Intellectual Disabilities (OID), ask your parents/guardians to call the county to complete an intake to register for services. <input type="checkbox"/> If needed, create an Individual Health Plan with your doctor and school nurse. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Talk with your school and/or agency supporters about the possibility of funding through Medicaid Waivers. <input type="checkbox"/> Keep a list of your medical conditions and physicians. Be able to describe your health needs. <input type="checkbox"/> If you have questions about your emotional or mental health, talk to your parents/guardians, school or agency supporters, and your medical team. You can also call the county crisis line for help. <input type="checkbox"/> Find out about adult agencies (like OVR) that can help you prepare for work, training, and independent living. The back of this checklist has a list of these agencies. <input type="checkbox"/> Keep copies of your medical, education, and government papers in a file to have ready when you need them. <input type="checkbox"/> Learn the differences between wants and needs, and the differences between earned and unearned income. 

Skills we targeted for development in the IEP via classes and extracurricular activities

- Communication
- Social Skills
- Self-Advocacy
- Safety awareness
- Organization
- Listening comprehension/ processing
- Following multi-step directions
- Following a schedule/ telling time
- Using money
- Reading comprehension
- Written expression



High School Senior Year: What's next?

- * Students who have mastered their IEP goals may be ready to accept their diploma after grade 12.
- * Students who have not mastered their IEP goals: It may be appropriate to have the student "bank" their diploma and continue to receive special education programming until age 21.

Programs where students ages 18-21 can continue working on skills needed for their adult life

School district-run programs

- Pittsburgh Public Schools' CITY Connections- With six classrooms across the city, including two at CCAC's Allegheny campus, students get community-based experience to address educational, employment, and independent living goals.
- Ben took two classes at CCAC while there.

Inclusive College programs for Students with ID/DD

Ensure that Agencies are involved in IEP meetings for a smoother transition to Adult Systems

- Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)
- Office of Developmental Programs (ID/ Autism)



Ben had the opportunity to do two Paid Work Experiences through OVR while attending CITY Connections.

Turning 21, exiting special education programs (aka Falling off the Cliff... to a soft landing)

Because we knew Ben was interested in attending college, we visited several programs in Fall 2018:

University of Kansas' TAP program; Slippery Rock University's Rock Life; Duquesne University's Compass Program.

Communication with his OVR counselor and Supports Coordinator ensured that the documents needed for those services (IEP, IPE, ISP) were (and still are) aligned with Ben's goals.

- OVR funding for tuition and Assistive Technology
- Medicaid ID Waiver funding for tuition and habilitation services
- Scholarships: Pittsburgh Promise (for PPS students), DREAM Partnership, Ruby's Rainbow

Applied/ Accepted to Duquesne Compass Program, Fall, 2019:

- Six credits per semester for two or four years
- Content-area courses with modifications (e.g., with Ben's interest in plants, he has taken several biology courses.)
- Peer tutors and mentors (many from the Occupational Therapy department)
- Internships
- Option to live on campus or commute
- Person-centered plan to develop schedule aligned to his interests and strengths



Co-presenter at Duquesne Undergraduate Research and scholarship Symposium



The team determined that the best way for Ben to demonstrate his learning was through presentations; this is his Biology final.

Internship at Pittsburgh Botanic Garden



Duquesne Swim Club welcomes Compass students.

Resources

- ▶ Planning for College with Achieva: www.achieva.info/college-planning
- ▶ Achieva Family Trust: www.achieva.info/family-trust
- ▶ Think College: thinkcollege.net
- ▶ Pennsylvania Inclusive Higher Ed Consortium: pihec.com
- ▶ PA Assistive Technology Foundation: www.patf.us
- ▶ PA Office of Vocational Rehabilitation: <https://www.dli.pa.gov/Individuals/Disability-Services/ovr>
- ▶ PA Office of Developmental Programs: <https://www.dhs.pa.gov/Services/Disabilities-Aging/Pages/Intellectual-Disabilities-Services.aspx>

Thank You!

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