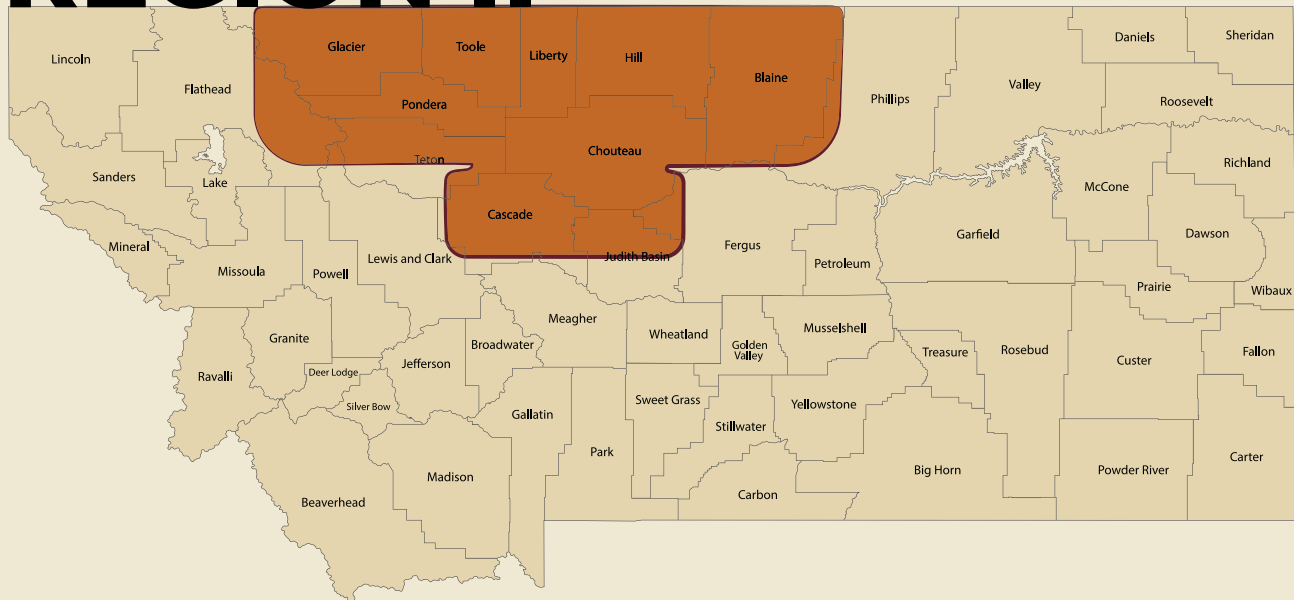


MONTANA POSTSECONDARY TRANSITION GUIDANCE 2026

REGION II



2026 Region II Youth Transitions Resource Guide

Region II

Youth Transitions

Resource Guide-Contents

2026

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We thank the following for their support in producing this Guide!

MT Transitions Resource Guide Committee
GF Career & College Readiness Center
Optimist Club of Great Falls
Great Falls Public Schools
Montana Empowerment Center
North Central Independent Living Services

Region II

Community Resources

Businesses and Organizations

Alluvion Health

Purpose of Agency:

At Alluvion Health, we are committed to doing healthcare differently, based on the needs of the community and with the hearts of our patients at the forefront of our decisions. We have found innovative and creative ways to bring healthcare to our patients, all the while addressing the barriers that keep our community in poor health – from access to food, housing, employment, and civil legal assistance – to the actual location of places to deliver healthcare and have fundamentally reinvented how care is delivered. We are committed to delivering better care by treating the whole life, getting much better outcomes, and demonstrating that there is indeed a better way. Alluvion Health is a not-for-profit Federally Qualified Health Center focusing on providing high-quality, cost-effective, comprehensive primary and preventive medical, dental and behavioral healthcare.

Key Services Provided:

- Medical Services
- Behavioral Health
- Speech Pathology
- Dental Services
- Substance Use Disorder
- School Based Health Centers
- Pediatrics
- Pharmacy
- Prevention Services (vaccinations, screenings)

Eligibility Criteria:

Alluvion Health accepts private insurance, Medicare, Medicaid, Healthy Montana Kids, and the Montana HELP Plan (Medicaid expansion). We are committed to providing the highest quality medical, dental, behavioral health, and substance use disorder services at a cost affordable to you. No one will be denied access to services due to inability to pay; and there is a discounted/sliding fee schedule available based on family size and income.

Contact Information:

Alluvion Health Main Clinic

601 1st Ave N

Great Falls, MT 59401

Phone: (406) 454-6973 Voice/TDD

Hours: Monday-Friday: 7:00 am – 6:00 pm

Saturday: 8:00 am – 5:00 pm



AWARE

Purpose of Agency:

We help people live independent lives. AWARE is a statewide nonprofit organization that offers quality, community-based support for people with mental health and/or developmental disabilities and early intervention through Early Head Start programs.

Key Services Provided:

- Applied Behavioral Analysis
- Case Management
- FACT-Preventative mental health services for youth and families
- Psychiatry (in-person & telehealth)
- Recreational Therapy
- Residential Services for youth and adults with mental health and/or developmental disabilities
- School-Based Mental Health services

Eligibility Criteria:

AWARE's list of services is extensive and was intentionally created to ensure each person receives the exact care they need. Eligibility varies by service. Please contact us for more information.

Contact Information:

AWARE

3360 10th Avenue South

Great Falls, MT 59405

Phone: (406) 563-8117

Website: www.aware-inc.org



BENCHMARK HUMAN SERVICES

Purpose of Agency:

BENCHMARK provides early intervention support for families of children from birth-3 years that have social-emotional, cognitive, communication, adaptive, physical delays.

Key Services Provided:

- Intervention Support
- Free Support wherever caregiver prefers at least once a month
- Free developmental screening assessments for individual children, daycares and preschools for children birth -2 years, 11 mos.

Eligibility Criteria:

Anyone can refer a child, birth – 3 years, to our services with guardian permission.

Contact Information:

BENCHMARK HUMAN SERVICES

1601 2nd Ave. N, Suite 349

Great Falls, MT 59401

Phone: (406) 403-0087, (866) 235-4700

mtregion2@benchmarkhs.com



Cascade County Office of Public Assistance

Purpose of Agency:

The mission of the Human and Community Services Division (HCSD) of the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services is to support the strengths of families and communities by promoting employment and providing the assistance necessary to help families and individuals meet basic needs and work their way out of poverty.

Key Services Provided:

- **TANF** (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) – a temporary time limited cash assistance program for low-income families with minor children in the household. The Pathways Program provides employment and training services to individuals receiving cash assistance.
- **SNAP** (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – formerly Food Stamps) A program to supplement an individual or families with their food budgets. and increase their ability to purchase healthy foods. A SNAP Nutrition Education (SNAP-Ed), operated jointly with Montana State University, teaches participants to use their food stamp benefits wisely.
- **MEDICAID** – Health care coverage for some low-income individuals and families. The division determines eligibility for more than 38 Medicaid programs for children, pregnant women, the elderly, the disabled, and other eligible adults.
- **LIHEAP** (Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program) provides heating assistance to low-income people, while The Weatherization Program supplies the labor and materials needed to make homes more energy efficient.

Through the Commodity Food Distribution Programs, HCSD delivers nutritional foods to Montana 's Indian reservations, food banks, emergency-feeding organizations, and senior centers. It also provides monthly food packages to low-income women, children, and seniors.



The division administers a federal Community Services Block Grant to fund local projects aimed at addressing the causes and conditions of poverty in under-resourced communities, as well as a Homelessness Prevention Grant to assist individuals and families experiencing homelessness, or who are at risk of homelessness, find safe, decent, and sanitary housing, as well as connect eligible individuals with the supportive services they need to improve their situation and maintain permanent housing.

Eligibility Criteria:

Each program has its own eligibility criteria. Eligibility is determined by reviewing the applicant's resources and income to see if they meet the established state or federal guidelines for each program.

Contact Information:

Great Falls Field Office of Public Assistance
201 1st Street South, Suite One
Great Falls, MT 59405

Phone: 1-888-706-1535

Fax: 1-877-418-4533

People may apply online by going to www.dphhs.mt.gov



City-County Health Department

Purpose of Agency:

The Cascade City-County Health Department plays an important role in helping county residents achieve and maintain health, safety, and self-sufficiency. A responsive agency that strives to prevent disease and illness, ensure a healthy environment, promote healthy choices, and deliver quality services to all in Cascade County.

Key Services Provided:

- **Family Health Services:**
 - WIC (Women, Infants and Children Supplemental Nutrition Program)
 - Home Visiting (Parents as Teachers, Safe Care, Montana Asthma Program)
 - Car Seat Program
 - Circle of Security Parenting Classes
 - CONNECT Referral System
 - Foster Child Health Program
- **Prevention Services:**
 - Cancer Control (Including Tobacco, Breast, Cervical Health and Colorectal Cancer)
 - Chronic Disease Management
 - Communicable Disease and Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)
 - Emergency Preparedness
 - Health Promotion and Wellness
 - HIV Prevention and Case Management
 - Immunizations

- **Environmental Health:**

- Environmental Health is a branch of public health that focuses on preventing illnesses and injuries associated with the environments people work and live in. Environmental Health includes food safety, water quality, air quality, sanitation and hygiene, and other programs that promotes a healthy environment. Environmental Health licenses, inspects, enforces rules, and provides education for programs regulated by (DPHHS) the Department of Public Health and Human Services.

Eligibility Criteria:

Anyone is eligible to come to the City-County Health Department. In order to be eligible for the sliding fee scale, household income has to be below 200% Federal Poverty Level.

The vaccine for children program allows us to provide immunizations to children between the ages of 0 and 18 for low cost, if paying for them would be a hardship.

To be eligible for WIC the Household income has to be at 185% of the Federal Poverty Level or less.

The home visiting programs are more about the need of the parent/guardian or the child then it is about income eligibility. If a child has a special need or the pregnant woman is at high risk than we provide education and support.

Contact Information:

City County Health Department

115 4th Street S

Great Falls, MT 59401

Phone: 406-454-6950

WIC – 406-454-6953

Home visiting or Immunizations – 406-454-6950

Tobacco Prevention – 1-800-QUIT-NOW or 406-452-0881, x307

Fax: 406-454-6959

Website: www.cchdmt.org

**DEAP-Developmental Educational Assistance
Program / FES Family Education and Support**

Purpose of Agency:

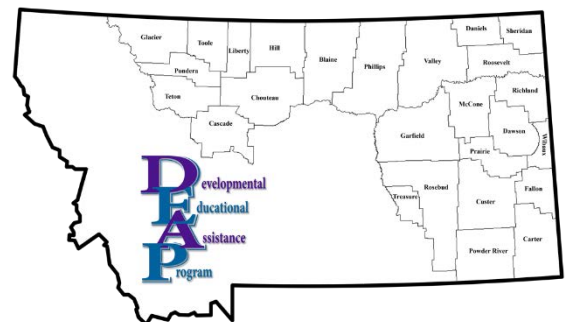
The **Mission** of DEAP is to provide community-based services which support individuals and families to strengthen their skills and abilities and to enhance care and quality of life. ***Connecting individuals, families and communities.***

Key Services Provided:

DEAP provides education, encouragement and opportunities to build skills through a variety of services across 26 counties in eastern and northcentral Montana, DEAP continues to respond to opportunities to expand services that will strengthen communities.

FES works with children that have special needs and their families by:

- Helping children reach their maximum potential within their most natural environment
- Assessing children's and family needs and assisting them in maximizing skills, abilities and community resources
- Coordinating services with schools and other team members (specialists) working with the child
- Helping you and your child apply for the Developmental Disabilities 0208 Waiver



Eligibility Criteria:

To qualify for the FES program, your child must demonstrate a 25% delay in two (2) of the following areas of development or demonstrate a 50% delay in one (1) of the areas.

- **Social Emotional:** playing, feeling secure and happy
- **Cognitive:** thinking, learning, solving problems
- **Communication:** talking, (including speech, speech-like sounds, gestures, and sign language) listening, understanding
- **Adaptive:** also known as self-help skills-eating, dressing, toileting, hygiene
- **Physical:** big muscle movements like walking, small muscle movements like writing and drawing

Contact Information:

DEAP of Northcentral Montana
1601 2nd Ave. N., Ste 207
Great Falls, MT 59401

Phone: 406-234-6034

Email: deap2200@gmail.com

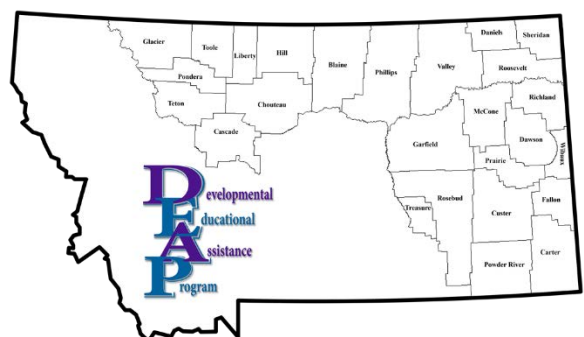
Website: deapmt.org

How to refer a child:

Contact: Early Intervention Director

Phone: 406-981-1073

Fax: 406-234-7018



Family Education and Support Provider	Contact Information
Developmental Educational Assistance Program	deapmontana.org <u>Deap</u> <u>2200 Box Elder St, Miles City, MT 59301</u> <u>(406) 234-6034</u>
STEP Inc	<u>STEP: Support and Techniques for Empowering People – Enhancing The Power Of People (step-inc.org)</u> Step Inc <u>11 N 26th St, Billings, MT 59101</u> <u>(406) 248-2055</u> info@step-inc.org
Family Outreach	www.familyoutreach.org <u>Family Outreach, Inc., Children's Services</u> <u>1212 Helena Ave, Helena, MT 59601</u> <u>(406) 442-1571</u>

Developmental Disabilities Program

Purpose of the Agency

Developmental Disabilities Program, Region II Funding for Non-Profit and For-Profit businesses that provide services to those persons determined eligible under the State of Montana Eligibility Definition. Provide funding for services to Children and Adults

Key Services Provided:

- Residential Services (In-Home; Congregate Living and Supported Living)
- Day Services (Facility Based)
- Supported Employment
- Transportation
- Respite

Eligibility Criteria

A disability that is attributable to mental retardation, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, autism or any other neurology handicapping condition closely related to mental retardation and that requires treatment similar to that required by mentally individuals. A developmental disability is a disability that originated prior to age 18, that has continued or can be expected to continue indefinitely, and that constitutes a substantial handicap of the individual. Eligibility is established on an individual bases, based on the in-depth review of psychological information, educational records, medical records, adaptive behavior assessment and other assessment that may be requested.

Contact Information:

Developmental Disabilities Program
201 1st St So. #3
Great Falls, MT 59405

Phone: 406.454.6085

Fax: 406.454.6082

2/2023



Easterseals-Goodwill Northern Rocky Mountain, Inc

Purpose of Agency:

Easterseals-Goodwill changes people's lives across our four-state region through job skills training, disability, health care and children's services. Every day, we create opportunities for individuals with diverse needs and backgrounds to live as independently as possible. Together, we're empowering people with disabilities, families and communities to be full and equal participants in society.

Key Services Provided:

- Adult Day Services
- Disability Services
- Day Services
- Goodwill Stores
- Supported Living
- Individualized Employment Program
- Medallion Home Health Care
- Personal Care Services
- Senior Employment Services (SCSEP)

Eligibility Criteria:

Eligibility varies by program. Please contact us for more information.

Contact Information:

Easterseals-Goodwill Northern Rocky Mountain Inc.

Main Office: 425 1st Ave No,
Great Falls, MT 59401

Adult Day: 4400 Central Ave,
Great Falls, MT 59405

Phone: (406) 761-3680 Main Office
(406) 771-2810 Personal Care
(406) 791-4345 Adult Day

Fax: (406) 453-5110

Website: www.easterseals.com



Great Falls Housing Authority

Purpose of the Agency:

The Great Falls Housing Authority (GFHA) will responsibly and respectfully make safe, basic, affordable housing for qualifying residents.

GFHA owns and operates five Public Housing complexes, a Section 8/Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program, and 32 units of Affordable Housing in Great Falls, MT. The Public Housing and Section 8/HCV programs provide rental assistance to income-eligible individuals.

Key Services Provided:

- Housing assistance for moderate to low income families.

Eligibility Criteria:

Families must meet income eligibility requirements. Applicants must also pass a criminal background investigation and have a favorable rental history.

Contact Information:

Great Falls Housing Authority
1500 Chowen Springs Loop
Great Falls, MT 59405

Phone: 406-453-4311



Great Falls Job Service Workforce Center

Purpose of Agency:

Job Service Montana offices are part of a statewide network of workforce development centers that collaborate with community partners to provide customer focused employment and training opportunities. These centers assist in preparing, training, and connecting a highly skilled workforce to local businesses.

Key Services Provided:

Your local Job Service Montana offices are a one-stop shop to help you with your job search, including support with:

- Building resumes, cover letters and practice interviews
- Funding for training.

Resources available include:

- Computers
- Internet access
- Copy and fax machines, printers, telephones
- Career planning resources

Eligibility Criteria:

None

Contact Information:

Great Falls Job Service, Workforce Center
1018 7th Street South
Great Falls, MT 59405

Phone: 406-791-5800

TTY: 406-791-5882

Web: jobs.mt.gov or greatfallsjobs.mt.gov

GFPS Career & College Readiness Center

Purpose of Agency:

The **Mission** of the CCRC is to understand, serve and empower the adult student to meet personal, educational and career goals by providing the adult learner with the academic and transitional resources for career and college pathways. Our **Vision** is to help our community of adults to become goal oriented, contributing and responsible citizens and life-long learners.

Key Services Provided:

- **Path to High School Equivalency Diploma**
- **Connections 101**
 - **Path to Higher Education & Training**
 - **Path to Employment**
- **Path to Citizenship and English Language acquisition**
- **Community Programs** (*Adult Driver Education, Safety Town*)

Eligibility Criteria:

- 16 & up and **not** enrolled in high school
- Pre-assessment is required

Contact Information:

Great Falls Career & College Readiness Center

Great Falls College G30

2100 16th Avenue South

Great Falls, MT 59405

Phone: 406-771-5108

Fax: 406-771-5109

Email: gfccrc@gfps.k12.mt.us

Website: gfps.k12.mt.us/GFCCRC

Facebook: fb.gfccrc.com



KAIROS CHAFEE

Purpose of Agency:

The Montana Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) (**CHAFEE**) is a part of the Child and Family Services Division of the Department of Public Health and Human Services. Youth in foster care face unique and difficult challenges as they turn eighteen and leave the foster care system. Studies indicate that they are less likely to finish high school and become self-supporting. They are also more likely to be homeless or to become parents at a young age. Chafee strives to assist youth in the foster care system by offering benefits to eligible youth in order to avoid these circumstances.

The services offered by the CHAFEE are intended to help Montana foster youth get the life skills they need to make a successful transition into adulthood. By assisting youth in achieving self-sufficiency and obtaining future goals, CHAFEE enables youth in the foster care system create a healthy lifestyle and a successful future.

Key Services Provided:

- Education and Vocational Assistance
- Life skills assessments and instruction
- Mentoring
- Transitional Living Plans
- Assistance with high school and postsecondary education
- Assistance with housing

Eligibility Criteria:

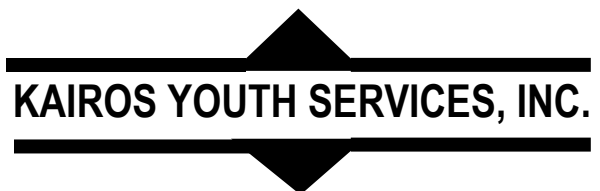
Youth must be between the ages of 14-21, currently in foster care, likely to "age out" of the foster care system, OR has aged out of the foster care system or has achieved guardianship or adoption after the age of 16.

Contact Information:

Kairos Main Office
625 Central Ave West, Suite 205
Great Falls, MT 59404

Phone: 406-761-2135

WEBSITES: www.kairosyouthservices.org
dphhs.mt.gov/CFSD/FosterCareIndependence/



KAIROS YOUTH SERVICES, INC.

KAIROS Shelter Home

Purpose of Agency:

Behavior change is the goal at the Missouri River Youth and Shelter Home. Up to twelve boys, ages 10 to 18, reside in the home where they are guided to achieve individualized goals. Missouri River Youth and Shelter Home is a 24-hour shelter facility, offering emergency placements for youth in crisis as well as long term care. Youth are placed in the home by the Department of Health and Human Services and Youth Court Services as a result of emotional, social, legal, or family issues. Through a structured behavioral management system, these youth achieve a foundation of accountability, responsibility, integrity, respect, and self-esteem. Individualized goals are developed to meet each youth's unique needs, addressing the problems requiring placement. Open to male youth ages 10 to 18.

Key Services Provided:

- Short and Long term Care for Male youth ages 10-18
- Referral to community resources
- Sheltering Youth in Crisis

Eligibility Criteria:

Youth must be male and between the ages of 10-18. They must be placed by Youth Court Services or Child and Family Services.

Contact Information:

Kairos Main Office
625 Central Ave West, Suite 205
Great Falls, MT 59404
Phone: 406-761-2135
FAX: 406-452-8382
WEBSITE: www.kairosyouthservices.org
PHONE: 406-761-2135

The logo for Kairos Youth Services, Inc. features a stylized diamond shape with a horizontal line passing through its center. The text "KAIROS YOUTH SERVICES, INC." is written in a bold, sans-serif font across the middle of the diamond.

KAIROS YOUTH SERVICES, INC.

Montana Empowerment Center

Purpose of the Agency:

As Montana's Parent Training and Information (PTI) Center, we assist families with children who have disabilities ages 0-26 increase their knowledge of their educational rights and provide access to information, resources, and training to enable them to make informed decisions about special education services for their child.

Key Services Provided:

- Information and training for people with disabilities around the topics of special education, transition, employment and self-advocacy
- Training to better understand how to navigate the Special Education Process
- One-on-one confidential assistance with individual needs around Special Education and Transition
- Assistance with the transition process from high school to the adult world out of high school
- Free trainings and tip sheets available at our website (www.mtempowermentcenter.org) on a variety of topics related to special education, transition, and early intervention services.
- Free services. All Services are free to families and professionals

Eligibility Criteria:

- Must be a parent/caretaker of a child ages 0-26 years with any type of disability (physical, mental, cognitive, etc.) whether diagnosed or not
- Must be a Youth/Young Adult up to age 26 with a disability whether diagnosed or not

Contact Information:

Montana Empowerment Center, Inc.
1601 Second Ave North, Suite 232
Great Falls MT 59401
1-877-870-1190

info@mtempowermentcenter.org
www.mtempowermentcenter.org/contact



MAFB-Military & Family Readiness Center

Purpose of Agency:

To equip military members and their families to adapt and overcome the unique demands of military life through programs, support and services.

Key Services Provided:

- **Air Force Aid Society** *(Relieve financial distress/support educational goals)*
- **Air Force Families Forever** *(Link families/guardians of fallen Airman)*
- **Air Force Exceptional Family Member Program** *(Family Support)*
- **Employment Assistance** *(Support short/long term career/employment goals)*
- **Personal & Work Life** *(Provide personal/work life education)*
- **Personal Financial Readiness** *(Fostering financial literacy)*
- **Readiness** *(Support services to assist w/all phases of a deployment)*
- **Relocation** *(Facilitate every stage of the relocation process)*
- **Transition Assistance Program** *(Career readiness upon leaving the military)*
- **Volunteer Resources** *(Help explore volunteer opportunities)*
- **Voting Assistance** *(Right to vote awareness from anywhere in the world)*

Eligibility Criteria:

Active duty and retired service members and their qualifying family members.

Contact Information:

MILITARY & FAMILY READINESS CENTER

7317 Goddard Drive

Building 1145

Malmstrom AFB, MT 59402

Phone: (406) 731-4900

EFMP Medical Special Needs: 406-731-4393

EFMP: <https://daffamilyvector.us.af.mil/membersite>



Many Rivers Whole Health

Purpose of Agency:

Many Rivers Whole Health partners with people and communities to serve the whole person's body, mind, spirit by providing wellness expertise in mental health and substance abuse services.

Key Services Provided:

- Quality of Life Management
- Mental Health Services
- Relationship Coaching
- Substance Use and Addiction Recovery

Eligibility Criteria:

Many Rivers Whole Health serves a broad spectrum of individuals with severe behavioral health, as well as emotional and physical challenges ranging from children and adolescents to adults. Contact us to determine insurance coverage or to discuss sliding fee scale.

Contact Information:

Great Falls Regional Office

915 1st Ave South

P.O. Box 3089

Great Falls, MT 59403

Phone: (406) 761-2100, (888) 718-2100

Website: <https://manyriverswholehealth.org>



MSDB-Montana School for the Deaf and Blind

Purpose of Agency:

To foster the learning and growth of the whole child with hearing and/or vision loss, preparing them to become successful citizens.

To be Montana's leading resource for the stakeholders of MSDB by providing support & services that empower individuals to attain their highest potential.

All children are capable and confident and will receive an education through the whole-child education philosophy, which includes sensory specific access to communication and curriculum in safe learning & living environments.

Key Services Provided:

- Education
- Residential
- Outreach
- Students
- Parents
- Transition Services

Eligibility Criteria:

The MSDB Admissions Team will help determine if placement at MSDB is an appropriate way to meet the individual child's/student's needs.

- Children in the Great Falls area, aged 18 months to 3 years old, will need a letter of referral to the Campus Education Program by their Part C Provider to the Preschool Program.
- Students aged three (3) and above will need a letter of referral to the Campus Education Program by the Public School they attend or the district in which they reside.

Contact Information:

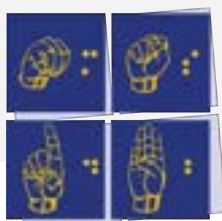
Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind

3911 Central Avenue

Great Falls, MT 59405

Phone: [406-771-6000](tel:406-771-6000)

Videophone: [406-205-0016](tel:406-205-0016)



MONTANA SCHOOL
for the Deaf & the Blind

North Central Independent Living Services Inc. (NCILS)

Purpose of the Agency:

To provide access to an independent lifestyle for people with disabilities through advocacy, education, coordination of services and information as directed by consumer need.

Key Services Provided:

- Information and Referral
- Independent Living Skills Training
- Peer Counseling
- Advocacy/Service Coordination
- Rehabilitation Technology and Engineering Services
- Living Well with a Disability Workshop
- Benefits Planning including Social Security, Medicaid, Medicare
- Self-Directed Personal Assistant Program

Eligibility Criteria:

To qualify for services through NCILS an individual must have a reportable disability. Information and Referral Services are provided to any individual who requests information.

Contact Information:

North Central Independent Living Services Inc.
1120 25th Ave. NE
Black Eagle, MT 59414

(406) 452-9834

Voice/TDD: 1-800-823-6245

nclis.org

8/2025

North Central Independent Living Services



Opportunities, Inc.

Purpose of Agency:

Opportunities, INC partners within the community to respectfully support and educate low-income individuals to achieve self-reliance.

Key Services Provided:

- **Housing Services-** Helps with emergency shelter placement, emergency housing, permanent housing and supportive services.
- **Energy Assistance-** Provides LIEAP and weatherization services that helps to offset high energy costs for those experiencing financial hardship.
- **Employment and Training-** Helps youth develop and meet their goals and become workforce ready by developing leadership skills, financial literacy, gain work experiences, mentorships, and sharpening existing skills.
- **Education-** Offers high-quality childcare and preschool services for children birth to 5 in Early Head Start and Head Start Programs.
- **Emergency Services-** Offers help for emergency needs as they arise, they are also the main community referral source through community resource centers.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Individual in need of support due to financial hardship

Contact Information:

Opportunities, INC
905 1st Ave North
Great Falls, MT 59405

406-761-0310

oppincchanginglives.org



Opportunities, Inc. / Youth Services

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

Purpose of Agency:

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act's goal is to increase the focus on career pathways, longer-term academic and occupational learning opportunities, and provide long-term comprehensive service strategies.

Key Services Provided:

- Tutoring, study skills training, and instruction leading to the completion of secondary schooling including dropout prevention strategies
- Alternative secondary school offerings
- Paid and unpaid work experience
- Occupational skill training
- Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation
- Leadership development opportunities
- Adult mentoring during participation in the program
- Follow-up for up to a year after completion of program
- Comprehensive guidance and counseling, including drug and alcohol counseling
- Financial Literacy Education
- Entrepreneurial skills training
- Employment information about in-demand industries or occupations
- Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to post-secondary education

Eligibility Criteria:

- Youth In-School ages 14-21
- Youth Out-of-School ages 16-24

Contact Information:

OPPORTUNITIES, INC: Youth Services
622 1st Ave South
Great Falls, MT 59405

406-761-8462 **OR** Contact the
Vocational Resource Educator at your school



Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

Purpose of Agency:

Pre-Employment Transition Services give you an introduction to work, helping you make informed job choices, learn good work habits, and get real work experience.

Key Services Provided:

- **Job Exploration Counseling-** We help you choose a job that matches your interests, strengths, and abilities.
- **Work-Based Learning Experiences-** We set up informational interviews, job site tours, and paid work experiences.
- **Counseling on Postsecondary Programs-** We provide information about college and set up campus tours to help you decide if college is right for you. If it is, we help you enroll, get accommodations you need, and apply for financial aid.
- **Workplace Readiness Training-** We teach you how to apply for a job and teach you the work habits employers expect.
- **Instruction in Self-Advocacy-** We teach you about your rights and responsibilities, how to ask for the accommodations and services you need, and how to be a leader in your own life.

Eligibility Criteria:

- A student with a disability
- Between 14 and 21 years of age
- In high school, college, or another recognized education program

Contact Information:

Vocational Rehabilitation & Blind Services

201 1st Street South, Suite #2

Great Falls, MT 59405

406-454-6060 **OR**

Contact the Vocational Resource Educator at your school



Quality Life Concepts

Purpose of Agency:

Established in 1977, Quality Life Concepts is a private non-profit organization that is dedicated to providing specialized and individualized services and supports to people with developmental needs and their families. We seek to protect the sanctity of home life, and to promote personal independence and choice to the fullest extent possible.

Our mission is to support children and adults with developmental needs within their homes and the community by providing creative supports and choices that stimulate lifelong growth and development. We provide a supportive and safe environment so individuals may attain their maximum level of personal achievement and empower and support families.

Key Services Provided:

- Community and Family Services
- Adult Residential Services
- Vocational Supports and Day Programs

Eligibility Criteria:

Eligibility is determined through the Developmental Disabilities Program.

Contact Information:

Quality Life Concepts
215 Smelter Ave NE Suite 1
Great Falls, MT 59404

Phone: 406-452-9531

Fax: 406-453-5930

Website: <https://qlc-gtf.org/>



RDI-Rural Dynamics, Inc.

Purpose of Agency:

Rural Dynamics, Inc. (RDI) is a statewide financial empowerment center that helps people achieve financial wellness.

We are working towards a future where everyone has access to equitable economic opportunities in our communities.

Key Services Provided:

- Organizational Representative Payee
- Pooled Trust
- MT Assistive Technology Loans
- Free Tax Assistance
- Financial Coaching
- Financial Education
- AmeriCorps / Vista

Eligibility Criteria:

We have a variety of eligibility requirements for multiple programs. Our nonprofit provides all services and programs statewide in Montana.

Contact Information:

Rural Dynamics, Inc.
5 Second Street North, Suite 201
P.O. Box 2326
Great Falls, MT 59401
Phone: (406) 403-8162
info@ruraldynamics.org



Vocational Rehabilitation & Blind Services (VRBS)

Purpose of Agency:

Vocational Rehabilitation and Blind Services helps you to prepare for, get, and keep a job compatible with your interests and abilities.

Key Services Provided:

- **Evaluation-** To help you understand your interests, abilities, and choices.
- **Career Guidance and Counseling-** To help you select a meaningful job goal and/or adjust to disability.
- **Medical and Psychological Services-** To help you overcome barriers to employment.
- **Training-** To help you prepare for the job of your choice. May include on-the-job-training, job coaching, or classroom training.
- **Job Placement Assistance-** To provide you structure and support during your job search.
- **Rehabilitation Technology-** To help you identify and obtain adaptive equipment necessary for a job.

Eligibility Criteria:

- You have a physical or mental disability **AND**
- Your disability prevents you from getting or keeping a job **AND**
- You want to work but need Vocational Rehabilitation Services to help you get or keep a job **OR**
- You currently receive Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits.

Contact Information:

Vocational Rehabilitation & Blind Services
201 1st Street South, Suite #2
Great Falls, MT 59405

406-454-6060 **OR**

Contact the Vocational Resource Educator at your school



Region II

Timelines for Transition

Supporting Individuals with Disabilities

Region II Timeline for Transition-18 mos.-5 yrs.

Supporting Individuals with Disabilities

“Transition is the passage from one stage of development to another. For young adults with disabilities this transition stage is critical to the rest of their lives. It requires preparation.” -J. Cobb (modified)

18 months – 5 years old

- _____○ Apply for Early Intervention Services (Part C) 0-3 years at Benchmark
- _____○ Obtain diagnosis for child
- _____○ Participate in community Child Find screenings to monitor milestones Birth - 3 years
- _____○ Beginning at 18 months, apply for DD wait lists (Benchmark for help/referral)

Region II Timeline for Transition - 6-14 years

Supporting Individuals with Disabilities

6-14 years old

Note: *If student was not part of early intervention services speak with Benchmark or DDP to determine DD eligibility and be put on the wait list for the 0208 Waiver. Should start process by 7 years old*

- Participate in the planning, development, and implementation of your child's IEP
- Seek IQ testing if school doesn't need
- Teach functional independence skills in school and at home. (Examples: sorting items, social skills, taking turns, cooking, doing laundry, money management)
- Support academic skills and identify academic strengths
- Learn to use assistive technology if appropriate
- Encourage involvement in age-appropriate recreational activities
- Introduce and encourage self-advocacy skills

Note: *Diagnosis can take place at any age. Since waiting lists for waiver and waiver service can extend for years, it is best to apply for the waiver as soon as diagnosis occurs, whether that happens at 2 or 17.*

Region II Timeline for Transition - 14-15 years

Supporting Individuals with Disabilities

14-15 years old

- Sign up for Vocational Rehabilitation. Student may qualify for Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)
- Meet with AWARE Developmental Disabilities Case Management to discuss what supports might be available, if applicable
- Find opportunities for community involvement. (Examples: volunteer positions, job shadowing, or extracurricular activities)
- Continue practicing communication skills and skills for independence (examples: grocery shopping, taking public transit, menu planning, budgeting money, hygiene)
- Teach responsibility and self-advocacy for health care (taking medications, talking with a Dr., making and keeping appointments). This should be continued into adulthood.
- Students should start taking an active role in IEPs and understanding needed accommodations
- Teach variety of transportation options (bus/transit, calling others for rides, safe use of bicycles, driver's license, etc.)

Region II Timeline for Transition - 15-17 years

Supporting Individuals with Disabilities

15-17 years old

- Establish a Transitions Documents file for records (examples-504 plans, IEP's, evaluation reports, etc.)
- Meet with IEP team to create transition goals (in Montana team must be in place by age 16)
- Make sure case management services are in place through AWARE or Spectrum. Ensure student is on any waiting lists for services (if appropriate)
- Keep all appointments with Vocational Rehabilitation (or sign up if you haven't already)
- Identify post-secondary training or workplaces that are a good match for the student's transition goals and abilities
- Continue practicing social and functional skills during the school day and at home.
- Encourage independent responsibilities
- Begin discussing where the student wants to live after high school (some housing has long waitlists)
- If appropriate, Parents should look into supported decision making or other alternatives to guardianship (Guardianship should be a last option as it removes all rights of the person)
- Promote financial literacy (credit cards, debt, budgeting, etc.)
- Obtain State ID or Driver's License
- Create emergency contact wallet card with phone numbers
- Explore adult medical providers
- Identify individuals to write letters of support and request them. (Letter describes how disability effects daily functional living.)

Region II Timeline for Transition - **18-21 years** Supporting Individuals with Disabilities

18-21 years old

- Register to vote and Selective Service (if applicable)
- If student was eligible for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) under the definition of disability for children, you must have the eligibility redetermined upon age 18.
- If accessing SSA benefits, investigate Representative Payee options for SSA payments if needed
- Verify student is on the waiting list for the Developmental Disabilities Waiver (0208) and that case management services are in place (if appropriate)
- Keep appointments with Vocational Rehabilitation.
- Create and act on career interests, life goals, and employment plan utilizing strengths, skills and support team
- Prepare for interviews and complete applications for employment
- Investigate post-secondary education/training programs (Explore disability services and TRIO programs)
- Contact outside agencies such as North Central Independent Living Services for transition support
- Identify post HS resources and begin filling out applications
- Compile medical contact list and learn about medical coverage (rules and options)
- Apply for mental health services and housing
- Update Transitions File

Turning 18 years

SSI - Redetermination

Living Situations

Transfer of Rights

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Benefits - Changing from Childhood to Adult Status

What is SSI?

Supplemental Security Income” (SSI) provides monthly income to people who are either disabled, blind or age 65 or older, and have limited income and financial resources.

The SSI payment for an eligible individual or an eligible couple is paid monthly, and the dollar amount may change yearly due to cost-of-living increases. *(Check with the Social Security office for correct totals \$\$)*

Resource Limit—Financial resources (savings and assets you own) cannot exceed a specific dollar amount for individuals and those married. *(Verify the amounts with the Social Security office.)* Medicaid is effective from the date of eligibility.

What is age 18 re-determination?

All Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients who turn 18 years of age must have their eligibility reviewed under the adult SSI rules, without consideration of previous disability determinations.

Who needs to prepare?

Any youth on SSI, it is best to start preparing at 16 years of age.

If not on SSI before age 18:

If a youth was not eligible for SSI before his or her 18th birthday because parents were over income or resource limits, he or she may become eligible for SSI as an adult at age 18.

Title II Childhood Disability Benefits (CDB)

The Title II program pays benefits to adults who have a disability that began before they became 22 years old. SSA considers this SSDI benefit as a Child Disability Benefit because it is paid on a parent’s Social Security earning record.



Living Situations

Residing Independently:

If an individual who receives Supplemental Security Income (SSI) only and lives on their own, they should get the full federal benefit rate.

Residing at Home:

- No/room/board - If an individual receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) does not pay toward housing, utilities or food expenses, their SSI benefit will be reduced by one-third.
- Room/Board - If an individual contributes toward mortgage/rent, utilities, and food, it is important to let Social Security know so they can get credit for contributing to household expenses.

Contact Information:

Social Security Administration - Great Falls: 877-583-4114
- National: 800-772-1213



Transfer of Rights

- Parents to Adult Students

This is intended to provide information on some of the available options. All decisions should be made by families and legal counsel.

What does Transfer of Rights mean for parents?

Under Montana State law, all rights of parents of students with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (I.D.E.A. 2004) transfer to the student on his or her 18th birthday, unless parents have been granted legal guardianship for education of the adult student.

What does Transfer of Rights mean for students?

At age 18, students with disabilities have the right to make their own decisions about their current and future educational services as well as other legal choices.

What are the responsibilities of the school?

Beginning at least one year before the student reaches the age of 18, the school will provide notice to both the student and parents of the transfer of rights. The Student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) must include a statement that the student has been informed of the rights that will transfer to him or her at the age of 18. Unless alternative arrangements are made, all of the educational rights previously provided to the parents transfer to the student.

Can parents continue to retain educational rights after a student reaches the age of 18?

In certain circumstances a court can appoint the student's parent, or another appropriate individual as the legal guardian. Guardianship is the legal process of determining a person's capacity to make his or her decisions about personal affairs. If the guardianship is awarded for educational purposes, the guardian will make educational decisions for the adult student as a member of the IEP team.

Legal choices and arrangements concerning a person with diminished capacity. Alternatives to Guardianship, including Supported Decision Making should always be identified and considered whenever possible prior to the beginning of guardianship proceedings.

Guardian:

A guardian is a person appointed by the court to handle the affairs of a person who has been judged to be incapacitated (i.e. not capable of handling his or her personal affairs). A guardian has the duty of taking care of someone who is incapacitated.

Supported Decision Making:

Supported decision making (SDM) is an alternative to guardianship. SDM is rooted in the belief that all people have the right to make choices and decisions about their own lives. Although SDM may involve different forms and processes, the key is that the individual who will be directly impacted is supported to decide based on their needs, wants and preferences.

Conservator:

A conservator is a person appointed by the court to manage the financial affairs of someone who is incapacitated. (Montana State Extension Mont Guide MT199001HR Revised 3/13) Incapacitated means anyone who suffers from mental or physical illness or disability to the extent that he/she lacks sufficient understanding or capacity to make or communicate responsible decisions.

Power of Attorney:

Is a document in which one person gives another person the power to conduct certain actions on his or her behalf as specifically described in the document?

Who might need a guardian or conservator?

If a young person is unable to plan ahead regarding their personal care, medical care and financial matters and finds it hard to make everyday decisions independently, then it may be necessary to appoint a guardian and/or conservator to make those decisions and handle those matters. For example, a young adult with significant cognitive delay who is unable to live or work independently may benefit from the appointment of a guardian and/or conservator.

Who might need a Power of Attorney?

Power of Attorney gives certain individuals limited responsibilities to act on the part of another. An example of a situation in which a written Power of Attorney could be useful might be where a young adult with a cognitive or mental health disability may live and work independently, but needs assistance with financial decisions.

How do parents obtain guardianship?

Guardianship is a legal process and parents may wish to seek the assistance of an attorney who practices family law.

What documents should I bring to a meeting with a family attorney?

Helpful documents to take to a meeting with a family attorney include:

- The young person's birth certificate
- Current educational records such as the young adult's Individual Education Plan (IEP)
- Medical records
- A letter from a Doctor including any current diagnosis and implications for independent adult living.

Who can parents contact to discuss questions regarding the Transfer of Rights process?

The Office of Public Instruction, Special Education Division

- Telephone: 406-444-5661

Acronyms
Community Contacts
Websites/Additional Information

Acronyms

Acronyms:

AT: Assistive Technology

DD: Developmental Disability

IEP: Individualized Education Plan

IPE: Individualized Plan for Employment

PCA: Personal Care Attendant

PD: Physical Disabilities

QLC: Quality Life Concepts

SSA: Social Security Administration

VR: Vocational Rehabilitation

Group or Agency	Food	Clothing & Furniture	Financial	Housing	Transportation	Employment	Physical & Mental Health	Child Ed & Care	Child Healthcare Dev	Legal	Education or Training	Financial or Knowledge & Skills	Safety
2-1-1 (211) Resources in the community			😊	😊			😊						
Aging Services Commodity Supplemental Food Program, Meals on Wheels, & Transportation	😊				😊		😊						
Alliance for Youth 3220 11th Ave S 406-952-0018							😊						
Alluvion 601 1st Ave North 406-454-6973							😊						
AWARE, Inc. 3360 10th Ave South 406-563-8117							😊						
Benefis Health System Main Location 1101 26th St S 406-455-5000							😊						
Benefis Urgent Care 25 14th Ave Northwest 406-455-5000							😊						
Best Med Urgent Care 609 10th Ave South 406-403-1040							😊						
BlackedOut 406 Taxi 406-781-5218					😊								
CASA CAN-Children's Advocate Network 415, 325 2nd Ave N Ste 100 406-315-1799										😊			
Cascade County Law Clinic 401 3rd Ave N 406-452-6269										😊			
Cascade County Office of Public Assistance 201 1st Street South, Suite 1 406-454-5640 or 888-706-1535	😊		😊			😊	😊		😊				
Child Abuse Hotline P.O. Box 6005 Helena, MT 59601 1-800-820-KIDS (5437)													😊
Child Abuse Hotline 1-866-820-5437										😊			
Child Support Enforcement 201 1st St. S, Suite 1A 406-727-7449										😊			
Children's Bereavement Services 406-455-3060							😊						
Children's Receiving Home 406-727-4842										😊			

Group or Agency	Food	Clothing & Furniture	Financial	Housing	Transportation	Employment	Physical & Mental Health	Child Ed & Care	Child Healthcare Dev	Legal	Education or Training	Financial or Knowledge & Skills	Safety
City County Health 115 4th St S 406-454-6950			☺					☺	☺		☺		☺
Crime Victims Compensation Program										☺			
Dandelion Foundation 406-231-1397										☺			
Diamond Cab Services 1005 11th St N 406-453-3241					☺								
Disability Rights Montana www.disabilityrightsmt.org 1-800-245-4743										☺			
MT State Department Family Services (DPHHS-Dept. Public Health & Human Services) 2300 12th Ave S, #211 406-727-7746 Cascade County Child and Family Services 406-268-3783 Great Falls Office of Public Assistance 201 1st Street South Suite 1 888-706-1535	☺		☺	☺			☺	☺	☺	☺	☺		☺
Easter Seals/Goodwill 425 1st Ave N 406-761-3680			☺										
Eating Disorder Task Force 406-727-7831							☺						
Echoz Pregnancy Center 1323 9th Ave South 406-727-1850							☺						
Elder Abuse Hotline 1-844-277-9300										☺			
Family Connections 202 2nd Ave S, Suite 201 406-761-6010			☺				☺	☺			☺		
Family Promise 1019 Central Ave 406-564-5267				☺									
Gateway Community Services 26 4th Street North 406-727-2512							☺		☺				
Great Falls Clinic Immediate Care Center 3000 15th Ave South 406-454-7200							☺						
Great Falls Clinic Main Location 1400 29th Street South 406-205-2699							☺						

Group or Agency	Food	Clothing & Furniture	Financial	Housing	Transportation	Employment	Physical & Mental Health	Child Ed & Care	Child Healthcare Dev	Legal	Education or Training	Financial or Knowledge & Skills	Safety
Great Falls Clinic Northwest 1600 Division Road 406-268-1600							😊						
Great Falls Community Food Bank 1620 12th Ave N 406-452-9029	😊												
Great Falls Fair Housing Authority 1500 Chowen Spings Loop 406-453-4311				😊									
Great Falls Clinic Hospital 3010 15th Ave South 406-216-8000							😊						
Great Falls Job Service 1018 7th St S 406-791-5800			😊										
Great Falls Public Schools 406-268-6600							😊						
Great Falls Senior Citizen Center 1004 Central Ave 406-454-6995	😊												
Great Falls Transit 3905 N Star Blvd 406-727-0382					😊								
Great Falls VA Clinic 1400 29th Street South Suite 1 406-771-5800							😊						
Habitat for Humanity 905 1st Ave N 406-453-5972				😊									
Head Start 1220 3rd Ave S 406-453-5415								😊			😊		
Healthy Montana Kids-HMK (Children's Health Insurance Plan) 888-706-1535	😊						😊						
Human Trafficking Hotline 888-373-7888 Text 233733							😊						
Indian Family Health Clinic 1220 Central Ave, Suite 1B 406-268-1510							😊						
Job Service/ Work Force Center 1018 7th St S 406-791-5800						😊					😊		
LGBTQ+ Center 525 Central Ave Suite U2 406-266-6272							😊						
Little Shell Tribe Health Department 425 Smelter Ave NE 406-247-7130							😊						

[illegible]

[illegible]

Group or Agency	Food	Clothing & Furniture	Financial	Housing	Transportation	Employment	Physical & Mental Health	Child Ed & Care	Child Healthcare Dev	Legal	Education or Training	Financial or Knowledge & Skills	Safety
Set Free 216 9th St N 406-453-4479	😊	😊											
Social Security Office 2008 23rd Street South 406-0661 or 1-800-772-1213			😊				😊						
St. Vincent de Paul 426 Central Ave W 406-761-0870	😊	😊		😊									
Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Admin. (SAMHSA) 877-726-4727							😊						
The Great Falls Holistic Health Clinic 1309 9th Ave South 406-727-4777							😊						
Toby's House 421 5th Street North 406-770-3191								😊					😊
Unemployment Insurance Office 406-247-1000 or 406-444-2545						😊							
Veteran Affairs- Fort Harrison 3687 Veterans Dr, Fort Harrison, MT 406-442-6410							😊						
Veteran's Affairs Division 104 2nd st S, Suite 200 406-452-2265			😊				😊						
Victim-Witness Assistance Services 401 3rd Ave N 406-315-1111										😊			
Vocational Rehabilitation & Blind Services 201 1st St. S, Suite 2 406-454-6060			😊			😊					😊		
Voices of Hope 24/7 Crisis Line 406-453-4357							😊						
WIC/Better Beginnings 115 4th St. S 406-454-6953	😊						😊	😊			😊		
Young Parents Education Center 2400 Central Ave 406-268-6600											😊		
Youth Dynamics 225 7th Ave S Ste 1 877-458-7022							😊						
YWCA 202 2nd St N 406-452-1315 Mercy Home (Domestic Violence Shelter)* 406-453-1018		😊		😊			😊						😊

[illegible]

Websites/Additional Information

Advocacy & Legal

Office for Civil Rights

- <https://www.seattle.gov/civil-rights>

Disability Rights MT

- <https://disabilityrightsmt.org/contact-us/>

Human Rights Bureau

- <https://erd.dli.mt.gov/human-rights/>

Montana Legal Services Association

- <https://mtlsa.org>

Financial

Green Path Financial Wellness

-Debt Counseling, SSA Rep. Payee Services & AT loans

- https://www.greenpath.com/?utm_source=greenpath.org&utm_medium=redirect

Montana Able – Able Accounts

- <https://savewithable.com/mt/home.html>

Service Providers

Assistive Technology (AT)

- <https://montech.ruralinstitute.umt.edu>

Montana Counsel on Developmental Disabilities-MTCDD/ Provider Resources

- mtcdd.org

Rural Institute

- <https://www.umt.edu/rural-institute/>

School Related Issues - IEPs, 504s, and transition services

- <https://mtempowermentcenter.org/>

Service Providers (cont.)

Waiver Services- PD Waiver Services; PCA Services /Mountain Pacific

- <http://mpqhf.com>

SILC- State Independent Council - help connecting or Concerns with independent living center

- <https://dphhs.mt.gov/detd/independentliving/MTSILC>

SRC- State Rehabilitation Council - help with or connect with vocational rehabilitation programs

- <https://dphhs.mt.gov/detd/vocrehab/>

Social Security Office - Social Security Application, Eligibility and Information

- www.ssa.gov

STEP: Support and Techniques for Empowering People

- 11 N 26th St, Billings, MT 59101
- (406) 248-2055
- www.step-inc.org

Family Outreach, Inc., Children's Services

- 1212 Helena Ave, Helena, MT 59601
- (406) 442-1571
- www.familyoutreach.org

Transition Services

MSU Life Scholars

- <https://www.montana.edu/ehhd/lifescholars/index.html>

Think College - connecting youth with disabilities to college programs

- [https://thinkcollege.net/college-search?fulltext=&state\[MT\]=MT](https://thinkcollege.net/college-search?fulltext=&state[MT]=MT)

Transition Planning

- montanayouthtransitions.org

Supplementary Options

Mylife-Montana Youth Leadership Forum

MYT-Montana Youth Transitions

Living Well in the Community Workshop

MSDB-LEAP Post Secondary Transitions Program

Making the Transition from High School to College

CCRC-Career & College Readiness Center

Moving On in MT-Experience and Camp

Other

MYLIFE MISSION

TO IDENTIFY STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES WHO HAVE EXHIBITED LEADERSHIP SKILLS AND EQUIP THEM WITH ADDITIONAL TRAINING SO THAT THEY MAY BECOME LEADERS BY EXAMPLE.

Mylife Students will expand their knowledge of the culture of disability, learn about all types of disabilities, and meet adults who are living successfully with disabilities.

“It’s not possible for people with disabilities to truly integrate until we are recognized as having pride in who we are as disabled people.”

– Steve Brown, Founder of Institute on Disability Culture

MYLIFE GOALS

DEVELOP INDIVIDUAL:

- Leadership Plans to use upon return to his/her community
- Academic and Career Goals
- Work ethics and a belief that work is not only a right but also a social obligation to reach his/her full potential
- Resource Development Plan in order to attain continued or more complete independence through the following: Technology, Community Support, Peer Mentoring, Civil Rights

“Regardless of our individual experiences and superficial appearances we all share one integral human similarity, the need to feel valued, productive and connected.”

– Catherine Kelly Baird

A UNIQUE LEADERSHIP AND CAREER TRAINING PROGRAM SUMMER CAMP OPTIONS:

- **STEP I-LEADERSHIP SKILLS & SELF ADVOCACY / JULY**
- **STEP II-VOCATIONAL FOCUS / JUNE**

Montana Youth Transitions

Purpose of Agency:

To improve transition services and increase the number of youths with disabilities who achieve their desired post-school outcomes.

Key Services Provided:

- **Employment-** Employment brings with it financial independence and self-esteem for the accomplishments made.
- **Education** Take advantage of the opportunities and resources that are offered during your school years to plan what you want for the future.
- **Social and Recreation-** In order for one to “live the Dream” you must also be able to access Social and recreational opportunities.
- **Independent Living-** Living independently requires planning. Learn more about housing, financial literacy (money!), transportation and how to plan for your own health care needs.
- **Hosts Annual Conference** - November

Eligibility Criteria:

- You have a physical or mental disability.

Contact Information:

Montana Youth Transitions
1617 Euclid Avenue, Suite #1
Helena, MT 59601

Phone: 406-442-2576

Fax: 406-443-3796

Email: montanayouthtransitions@gmail.com

Website: <https://montanayouthtransitions.org/>

Living Well in The Community

Purpose of the Workshop:

The Living Well in the Community Workshop is an 11-week workshop series that is designed for people with disabilities who want to get more out of life.

Key Topics:

- Goal Setting
- Building Support
- Healthy Reactions
- Staying On Course
- Healthy Communication
- Seeking Information
- Eating Well
- Physical Activity
- Advocacy

Eligibility Criteria:

Any individual who would like to strengthen their skills that they already have so that they can live well. This includes helping one to maximize the health to both your mind and body.

Contact Information:

North Central Independent Services Inc.

1120 25th Ave.NE

Black Eagles, MT 594 07

Phone: (406) 454-6973 Voice/TDD

Hours: Monday-Friday: 8:00 am – 6:00 pm

Saturday: 8:00 am – 5:00 pm

North Central Independent Living Services



MSDB-LEAP Post Secondary Transition Program

The Living, Employment, and Academic Planning (LEAP) Program is designed to assist 18 -21-year-old, high school graduates, with visual and/ or hearing losses, in transitioning from high school to the rest of their lives. While living in a safe residential space, participants will be offered guidance and training in the areas of independent living, employment, and academic planning. Individual needs will be addressed depending upon whether you are dreaming of college, the world of work, or both!

Key Services Provided:

- Participation
- Individual Goals
- Training Sessions
- Community Work Experiences
- Community Involvement
- Residential Living on Campus
- Independent Travel

Program Goals:

To provide a safe and productive learning environment in which participants will have opportunities to exercise independence, experience individualized training, and foster positive interpersonal relationships. Training is designed to enhance the participant's current skills in managing self, home, food, time, transportation, money, and so much more. Decision - making skills and the use of accommodations in the work/ education environment are also addressed. Work experience will be provided based on the interest of each participant. Unstructured and unsupervised time is built into the program to allow participants to learn to balance responsibilities, leisure activities, and interpersonal relationships.

Contact Information:

Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind / LEAP

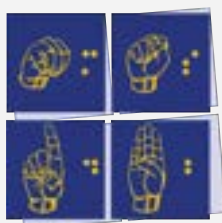
3911 Central Avenue
Great Falls, MT 59405

Phone: 406-468-8119

Phone: 406-468-8013

FAX: 406-771-6164

Email: leap@msdb.k12.mt.us



MONTANA SCHOOL
for the Deaf & the Blind

Making the Transition from High School to College

Students will find that there are many changes during the transition between high school and college and/or career training. Contact the Student Services Center at the post-secondary school to see if they offer accommodations. Make an appointment with your Advisor to help you make the transition and review the materials below.

Point-By-Point Comparison Between High School and College

Personal Freedom in High School VS. Personal Freedom in College	
HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE
High School is mandatory & free (unless you choose other options).	College is voluntary and expensive
Your time is usually structured by others.	You manage your own time.
You need permission to participate in extracurricular activities.	You must decide whether to participate in extracurricular activities. (Hint: Choose wisely the first semester and then add later.)
You need money for special purchases or events.	You need money to meet basic necessities.
You can count on parents and teachers to remind you of your responsibilities and to guide you in setting priorities.	Guiding principle: You are old enough to take responsibility for what you do and don't do, as well as for the consequences of your decisions.
High School Teachers VS. College Professors	
HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE
Teachers check your completed homework	Professors may not always check completed homework, but they will assume you can perform the same tasks on tests.

Making the Transition from High School to College

High School Teachers VS. College Professors (cont.)	
HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE
Teachers remind you of your incomplete work.	Professors may not remind you of incomplete work.
Teachers approach you if they believe you need assistance	Professors are usually open and helpful, but most expect you to indicate contact if you need assistance.
Teachers are often available for conversation before, during or after class.	Professors expect and want you to attend their scheduled office hours.
Teachers have been trained in teaching methods to assist in imparting knowledge to students.	Professors have been trained as experts in their particular areas of research.
Teachers present material to help you understand the material in the textbook.	Professors may not follow the textbook. Instead, to amplify the text, they may give illustrations, provide background information, or discuss research about the topic you are studying. Or they may expect you to relate the classes to the textbook readings.
Teachers often write information on the board to be copied in your notes.	Professors may lecture nonstop, expecting you to identify the important points in your notes. When professors write on the board, it may be to amplify the lecture, not to summarize it. Good notes are a must.

Making the Transition from High School to College

High School Teachers VS. College Professors (cont.)

HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE
Teachers impart knowledge and facts, sometimes drawings direct connections and leading you through the thinking process.	Professors expect you to think about and synthesize seemingly unrelated topics.
Teachers often take the time to remind you of assignments and due dates.	Professors expect you to read, save, and consult the course syllabus (outline); the syllabus spells out exactly what is expected of you, when it is due and how you will be graded.

Tests in High School VS. Tests in College

HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE
Testing is frequent and covers small amounts of material.	Testing is usually infrequent and may be cumulative, covering large amounts of material. You, not the Professor, need to organize the material to prepare for the test. A particular course may have only 2 or 3 tests in a semester.
Makeup tests are often available.	Makeup tests are seldom an option; if they are, you need to request them.
Teachers frequently rearrange test dates to avoid conflict with school events	Professors in different courses usually schedule tests without regard to the demands of other courses or outside activities.

Making the Transition from High School to College

Tests in High School VS. Tests in College (cont.)

HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE
Teachers frequently conduct review sessions, pointing out the most important concepts.	Professors rarely offer review sessions, and when they do, they expect you to be an active participant, one who comes prepared with questions.
Mastery is usually seen as the ability to reproduce what you were taught in the form in which it was presented to you, or to solve the kinds of problems you were shown how to solve.	Mastery is often seen as the ability to apply what you've learned to new situations or to solve new kinds of problems.

Grades in High School VS. Grades in College

HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE
Grades are given for most assigned work.	Grades may not be provided for all assigned work.
Consistently good homework grades may help raise your overall grade when test grades are low.	Grades on tests and major papers usually provide most of the course grade.
Initial test grades, especially when they are low, may not have an adverse effect on your final grade.	Watch out for your first tests. These are usually "wake-up calls" to let you know what is expected-but they also may account for a substantial part of your course grade. You may be shocked when you get your grades.
You may graduate as long as you have passed all required courses with a grade of 'D' or higher.	You may graduate only if your average in classes meets the departmental standard-typically 2.0 or 'C'.

Making the Transition from High School to College

Grades in High School VS. Grades in College (cont.)

Guiding principle: “Effort counts.”
Courses are usually structured to reward a “good-faith effort.”

Guiding principle: “Results count.”
Though “good-faith effort” is important in regard to the professor’s willingness to help you achieve good results, it will not substitute for results in the grading process.

The Shift from High School 504 Services to Higher Education

Federal regulations pertaining to Section 504 in public schools and virtually any other area of public life take somewhat different approaches. Section 504 in public schools, to be fair, is closely aligned with IDEA requirements in federal regulations. This reflects our differing attitudes and expectations of school-aged children as opposed to adults. Here are a few more important distinctions to remember when making the transition from high school 504 services to higher education.

In higher education as well as in employment, public services and public accommodations-the individual with a disability bears the burden of proof. Unlike public schools, there are no requirements for providing evaluation of individuals with disabilities. **The person with a disability must provide the evidence themselves.** In public schools, whether under IDEA or Section 504, the school is responsible for adequate and regular assessments. This is no longer the case once a student leaves high school and attends a college or university.

A 504 Plan from high school or for that matter, an IEP-is in no way binding upon any institution or entity outside of the school in which it was developed. There are no requirements for any plan under Section 504 or the ADA with respect to higher education, employment or other areas of public life. Thus, there are no more meetings each year with counselors, teachers, etc. There is nothing to sign.

Making the Transition from High School to College

The Shift from High School 504 Services to Higher Education (cont.)

“Free and Appropriate Education” (FAPE) first put forth in law under special education legislation in 1975 no longer applies. Though it is still referenced as a requirement for high school under regulations governing Section 504, there are no such references with respect to higher education in any federal regulations for either Section 504 or the ADA. Rather, higher education carries with it necessary costs, and students with disabilities must pay the same as their nondisabled peers. In higher education then FAPE is not regarded as part of 504’s nondiscrimination prohibitions. In all areas outside of public schools’ nondiscrimination is accomplished by means of barrier removal, including “reasonable accommodations.” *(Note: Accommodations may not carry with them an additional charge of any kind, however.)*”

The term “otherwise qualified individual with a disability” carries a different connotation, and subsequently greater weight and responsibility on the part of the individual than may have been the case in high school, and certainly elementary school. It means that students must meet academic standards. In public schools this refers only to the age of the individual as being suitable for elementary or high school. In higher education, it ultimately refers to a student’s academic proficiency and ability to demonstrate learning.

Integration is the order of the day. Terms such as “placement” and “least restrictive environment” are no longer valid. Placement in an environment which is restrictive or protective in any way would be a violation of an individual’s civil rights, and counter to the spirit of Section 504 and the ADA.

Some services provided to high school students under Section 504 may not be provided in higher education, because they in fact reduce the academic standards. Shortening assignments, for example, is viewed as compromising academic standards, and therefore is not “reasonable” to request in college.

Perhaps the most important result of these differences lies in the changes in the expectations for students with disabilities, such as Learning Disabilities and Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorders, aren’t always expected to perform or achieve at the same levels as their peers in high school. In other words, they aren’t always expected to learn as much.

Making the Transition from High School to College

The Shift from High School 504 Services to Higher Education (cont.)

In higher education, therefore, students with disabilities must possess higher level skills in all aspects of learning-skills and strategies commensurate with the academic expectations in higher education and, later, professional careers. These necessitate more sophisticated strategies in many cases. Reasonable accommodations can create a level playing field, but once achieved, the student must then demonstrate their skills and knowledge adequately.

Disability Services for Students

Here is a point-by-point comparison of some services and accommodations and the ways in which they differ between high school and college.

HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE
Under IDEA, children with disabilities are absolutely <i>entitled</i> to a “Free and Appropriate Public Education.”	<i>Equal access</i> to education is the order of the day-no one is <i>entitled</i> to anything, but rather students have <i>civil rights</i> , and they must advocate for themselves in order to enjoy those rights.
Section 504 in the public schools includes “Free and Appropriate Public Education” language, and accommodations may include a shortening of assignments, or the use of notes on tests, when other students cannot use them.	Section 504 is the first civil rights legislation that applied to colleges. It upholds the institution’s right to maintain the academic standards, and no accommodations may be permitted to reduce that standard for any student. Thus, there is no “free” education, and shortening assignments and using notes when other students do not, are not considered “reasonable accommodations.”

Making the Transition from High School to College

Disability Services for Students (cont.)

HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE
Plans, either the IEP or a 504 Plan, drove all services and accommodations, and involved the teachers, counselors, and absolutely required a parent's signature.	There is no plan, and the instructors are not contacted, except by the student. In fact, parents may not receive even a student's grades without the student giving written permission.
"Placement" is determined by the child's "team," and outlined in the plan, and must, by law, be in the least restrictive environment.	Placement integration is assumed and is the order of the day. We adjust the environment through the accommodations, but we don't deliberate and select the environment for the student in advance.
Students were qualified for public education simply by being of the appropriate age, and because they had a disability.	"Otherwise, qualified," in college, means that the student must meet all entrance and academic requirements, whether they receive accommodations or not.
	Disability Student Services (DSS) never contacts a professor without express permission from the student. Thus, the student must initiate all actions regarding accommodation with each professor, for each course, every semester. In addition, students have the civil right to refuse accommodations they don't need or want; and if they do not request an accommodation, it is assumed they do not want it.
Public schools, for the most part, are responsible for appropriate assessment of student's disability.	Higher education does not have to assess the student but can expect that the student will provide proof of their disability within accepted guidelines.

Making the Transition from High School to College

Disability Services for Students (cont.)

HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE
Some subjects may have been waived for a student before graduation, if they were specifically related to the student's disability.	Substitutions for specific graduation requirements may be requested by following a rigorous petition process, but "waivers" for requirements are never granted. Substitutions are also granted typically after the student has both provided adequate verification to DSS of their disability and unsuccessfully attempted the course in question with the appropriate accommodations recommended by DSS.
Labels are a way to categorize people.	Student has a right to disclose to whom and when they choose but must own their disability in order to enjoy a level playing field.
Assessment, physical or other therapy, or personal care is provided by the school while in school.	Student is responsible for personal services-personal care, medical and related requirements, just as if they would if they were living independently and not attending school.
Students often receive "Un-timed tests" if they have a disability.	"Un-timed tests" are not reasonable, but time extensions may be reasonable, typically time-and-a-half but not more than double time.
Teachers may be expected to learn all they can about the disability of a student in one of their classes.	Professors need know only that which applies to the accommodations the student requests.

University of Montana Disability Services

Great Falls
Career & College Readiness Center

Connecting Education to Your Goals

The Career & College Readiness Center plays a key role in developing our current and future workforce by collaborating with our education and training partners, various business sectors, and multiple service organizations. It's through these joint efforts, we are able to create multiple pathway opportunities.

Connections 101

Offered in fall and spring, Connections 101 presents a holistic approach to learning by providing a framework for students to develop and build their:

- **Academic knowledge**
- **Technical expertise**
- **Self-management skills**

At the completion of this program, students will be confident in their ***purpose, plan, and path*** to transition or continue in:

- **Higher Education**
- **Apprenticeship**
- **Short-Term Training**
- **Immediate Job Placement**

Community Enrichment

- **Adult Driver Education**
- **Safety Town**

Additional Opportunities

- **Short-Term Training**
 - **CNA Program** (partner w/GFC)
- **English Learner (EL) Program**
 - Language Skill building
 - Community Awareness
 - U.S. Citizenship / Naturalization
- **College Preparation**
 - Skill building in Reading, Writing, and Math
- **Career Preparation**
 - Skill building for ASVAB
 - Skill building for Apprenticeship Aptitude tests
 - Work Ethics
 - Resume, Cover Letter, Interviewing skills
 - Employment search / application process
 - Digital Literacy-Microsoft Office & Computer Basics (partner w/GF Job Service and GF Public Library)

Moving On in MT – Experience / Camp

Purpose of Program:

The Movin' On in Montana program is a high quality transition experience in post-secondary education for high school students with disabilities. Transitioning from high school to either college or the workforce is an anxiety inducing time for the life of any student, especially one with disabilities. Movin' On in Montana helps alleviate this anxiety by providing mentoring experiences between high school students with disabilities and current MSUB students who also have a disability.

- **E-Mentoring:** Provides mentoring relationships between high school students with disabilities and current MSUB students who also have a disability. Mentoring is delivered through monthly meetings, both through video conferencing and face-to-face seminars.
- **Summer Camp:** Four-day event that will be partially staffed by the MSUB mentors. Students will live in the residential housing, eat in the cafeteria, attend classes on the MSUB and City College campuses, and tour three college campuses. Books, fees, tuition, room, and board will be provided at no charge to students accepted into the program.

Key Topics:

- Job Exploration Counseling
- Work Based Learning
- Workplace readiness training
- Self-advocacy skills
- Counseling on opportunities for enrollment

Eligibility Criteria:

For individual students to be eligible to participate in the Movin' On in Montana: An Enhanced E-Mentoring Experience, a student must: Be between the ages of 14 and 21 Be a student in a high school or other recognized education program, grades 9 through 12 Have a disability - receiving services or accommodations under an IEP or 504 Plan or -has a disability but is currently not being served under an IEP or 504 Plan served under an IEP or 504 Plan

Contact Information:

John Keener, Project Coordinator: john.keener@msubillilngs.edu

Phone: (406) 657-1743

Website: <https://dphhs.mt.gov/detd/PreETS/Educators>.

MY Transitions



CSPD Websites & Contact Information

Region I- Coordinator: Dena Senner

Region II- Coordinator: Tiffany Olsen

Region III- Coordinator: John Keener

Region IV- Coordinator: Denielle Miller

Region V- Coordinator: Cass Rocco

OPI Assistance Contact CSPD State Director: Anne Carpenter, 406-465-0922

2025-2026

Region II Youth Transitions Resource Guide

- **Community Resources**
- **Timelines for Transition**
- **Turning 18 years**
- **Acronyms, Contacts, Websites/Additional Information**
- **Supplementary Options**