

Transition Times



Helpful Links

Thurston/Mason County DD
Publications

<https://www.co.thurston.wa.us/health/ssdd/publications.html>

Supplemental Security Income
Information about Supplemental Security
Income and how to apply.

<https://www.ssa.gov/ssi/>

Medicaid (Apple Health)

Information on eligibility, benefits,
services, and how to apply.

<https://www.hca.wa.gov/health-care-services-supports/apple-health-medicaid-coverage>

Welcome to *High School Transition Times*

Welcome to the first edition of *High School Transition Times*, published by Thurston/Mason County Developmental Disabilities (TCMDD). This newsletter is meant to serve as a central hub for resources, program updates, success stories, and helpful information for the Thurston/Mason County DD high school transition community.

The transition period presents many challenges as well as opportunities. As each of us enters into adulthood, there are so many different choices we can make, so many different doors we can go through. It is our hope that this newsletter will connect you to resources that will help you make informed decisions and assist you and your transition student(s) in making choices that will lead them to fulfilling productive lives in the community.

Upcoming TCMDD Events

Both events are virtual

DDA Application Night
October 6, 2022, 4-6 p.m.

Apply and possibly get an eligibility determination that evening. This process usually takes three months.

Click [here](#) for flyer with more details and registration information.

High School Transition Forum
October 11, 2022, 6-8 p.m.

- Social Security Overview
- Guardianship
- A Parent's Perspective
- Job Foundation/School to Work/Pre-ETS

Click [here](#) for flyer and link to the event.

Hannah's Success Story



Hannah was born with a developmental disability as well as vision and hearing impairments. In her last year of high school transition, she participated in the School to Work program.

In School to Work, Hannah worked with an employment consultant. Through a discovery process and internships, the consultant identified Hannah's strengths and learned that she enjoyed working in a physically active job that helped others. This process culminated in the consultant working with businesses in the community to develop a job that was uniquely suited to Hannah's abilities and interests.

Hannah accepted a job at The Firs, a senior living community, working three hours per day, three days per week. She collects trash and recycling from refuse rooms spread throughout the large four-story building, as well as vacuums, sanitizes, and washes windows.

At first, because of her disabilities, some of these tasks presented a challenge. However, through Hannah's sheer determination and strategies developed by her consultant, she overcame many obstacles, one of which was operating the elevator independently.

While her consultant is with her every day, Hannah does the bulk of the work with her consultant providing partial support with tasks like clocking in/out, communicating with her supervisor, monitoring her safety, and supplying training when new tasks are assigned.

What Hannah enjoys most about her job is dumping the trash into the dumpster and interacting with her coworkers.

Hannah's mom stated, "Working has increased Hannah's confidence and independence. In fact, Hannah recently started riding Dial-A-Lift to and from work. Having a job has given her a sense of purpose and belonging."

Isn't that what everyone wants for their child?

Business Spotlight

*By Christene Adams,
Executive Director, The Firs*

The Firs has been involved in hiring team members with I/DD since 2017. These team members have been hired for a variety of positions at The Firs,

specifically in our housekeeping and kitchen departments. When team members are hired in our housekeeping department, tasks may include disinfecting, vacuuming and sweeping in our common areas, along with collecting the trash in our "refuse" rooms. Team members hired in our kitchen department are typically responsible for disinfecting dirty dishes, running them through the dishwasher, sorting and putting away dishes, utensils, etc. If extra help is needed in the dining room, employees assist with collecting dishes and disinfecting tables, etc.

We hire team members with I/DD to provide them with a good job, great environment to work in, and it helps provide needed services to our seniors. This is a win-win situation for both!

I'm an advocate for other senior living communities and businesses hiring people with disabilities. The Firs has had a good experience the past 5 years, and we look forward to working with other team members with I/DD in the future.

Job Foundation vs. School to Work

As students evolve into adults and look toward finding employment, individuals with I/DD may need additional assistance to ensure their success. Job Foundation and School to Work are two programs that the County offers in partnership with DDA and DVR to aid in this effort. Read the chart below to see who is eligible and what each program offers.

JOB FOUNDATION	SCHOOL TO WORK
<p><i>What is the purpose of Job Foundation?</i></p> <p>Engage students earlier in targeted employment planning by gathering information about the student's skills, interests, and supports needed for a job that results in actionable next steps for employment and transition into life after school.</p>	<p><i>What is the purpose of School to Work?</i></p> <p>Increase the number of students with developmental disabilities who leave school with paid employment and provide a smooth transition into adult services and community life.</p>
<p><i>What is it?</i></p> <p>A pilot project through OSPI, school districts, DDA, DVR, and Thurston/Mason County Developmental Disabilities</p> <p>Gives employment providers increased discovery time with second-year transition students to prepare for employment and explore options for achieving individual student goals</p> <p>A bridge to School to Work</p>	<p><i>What is it?</i></p> <p>A job placement program that helps build on the student's strengths and goals, identifies support needs, and includes individualized job preparation/placement services</p> <p>Occurs over the course of a student's third/final year in a transition or life skills program</p> <p>The goal is paid employment when the student exits school</p>
<p><i>Who is it for?</i></p> <p>Students who are DDA eligible</p> <p>Students who are applying for or are currently receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI)</p> <p>Students ages 19-20 in their second year of a transition or life skills program</p>	<p><i>Who is it for?</i></p> <p>Students who are DDA and DVR eligible</p> <p>Students who are applying for or are receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI)</p> <p>Students ages 20-21 in their third/final year of a transition or life skills program</p> <p>Students who have made finding employment a priority</p>
<p><i>When is it available?</i></p> <p>Student's second year of a transition or life skills program</p>	<p><i>When is it available?</i></p> <p>Student's third/final year of a transition or life skills program</p>
<p><i>Who is involved? Who are the partners?</i></p> <p>Student/family</p> <p>Schools/Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)</p> <p>Thurston/Mason County HST Coordinator</p> <p>Employment Provider</p> <p>State Agencies (DDA and DVR)</p>	<p><i>Who is involved? Who are the partners?</i></p> <p>Student/family</p> <p>Teachers/school specialists</p> <p>Thurston/Mason County HST Coordinator</p> <p>Employment Provider</p> <p>State Agencies (DDA and DVR)</p>
<p><i>In summary...</i></p> <p>A report is completed by an employment provider working with the student's support team</p> <p>County HST Coordinator approves the report and shares it with DDA, DVR, the student/family and teachers</p> <p>The report is a guide for identifying further supports, assists with IEP/PCSP/ DVR plan development, and helps to transition the student to School to Work in the student's third/final year</p>	<p><i>In summary...</i></p> <p>Student works with employment team (DVR, DDA, teachers, family, etc.) to develop employment goals</p> <p>Job Foundation Report is used, if applicable, to assist with planning, discovery, and identifying community-based assessments (internships)</p> <p>Job development occurs</p> <p>Goal is for the student to be employed by June</p> <p>Student will transition to ongoing career path services through DDA</p>

Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA)

Who does DDA serve?

DDA serves individuals who have a developmental disability as defined by [RCW 71A.10.020\(6\)](#), which defines a developmental disability as:

Intellectual Disability, Cerebral Palsy, Epilepsy, Autism or another neurological or other condition similar to Intellectual Disability

The disability must:

- ◆ Have originated before the individual attained age 18
- ◆ Continued or can be expected to continue indefinitely, and
- ◆ **Results in substantial limitations to an individual's intellectual and/or adaptive functioning**

Why apply for DDA eligibility?

There are a number of reasons to enroll with DDA:

1. DDA eligibility is required for some programs like Job Foundation and School to Work.
2. Receive services such as supported employment, assistive technology, respite care, staff/family consultation, environmental adaptations, and much more.
3. Access to Developmental Disabilities Endowment Trust Fund—a special needs trust providing a way to save money without affecting eligibility for government benefits.
4. Discounted passes with Washington State Parks.
5. Affordable housing options.
6. Most importantly, while you may not need services now, eligibility puts you a step ahead in the event there is a crisis. It is important to establish eligibility early so that when you do need services, you will be able to access them more quickly.



If you, or someone you know with a disability, is not currently eligible for DDA, click [here](#) to download the required documents and participate in DDA App Night. For more information, see Upcoming Events on page 1.



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