

Planning for Postsecondary Education Out of High School Timeline

Step 1:

Building Academic Skills

- I have completed high school and have a high school diploma.
- I need to improve my basic academic skills. I will contact adult basic education programs in my community.

Need a GED?

- I do not have a high school diploma. I need to get a diploma by passing the GED (General Education Development) test.

Get Career Counseling

- I have printed a copy of my “Plan of Study” for my career interest in Lesson 2. I have reviewed the suggested coursework and postsecondary training options.
- I have taken a career interest or ability survey.
- I have contacted my state office of vocational rehabilitation and asked how they might help me develop my employment plan.

Build Your Self-Advocacy Skills

- I understand my vision loss and any other disabilities I may have. I have learned how to explain them to other people.
- I know the accommodations I may need in a postsecondary setting. (For example: Braille, notetakers, large print, audio description, preferred seating, test accommodations, etc.)

Step 2:

Get Information

- Identify possible career goals. Begin searching for possible postsecondary schools that can help you meet these goals. Get information from a variety of sources.
- Create a checklist of the steps each school requires for admission. Keep all of your school information in one place!
- Learn about financial aid options (scholarships, loans, grants).
- Research the cost of community colleges, private career schools, and 4-year colleges and universities.

Visit Programs

- I have set up visits to the campuses of the schools on my list. While I am setting up my visit, I have asked for the accommodations that I will need for my tour.
- I have scheduled meetings with the admissions, financial aid, and disability service offices.

Step 3:

Get Applications

- The semester before you plan to go to school, contact schools that interest you. Request an application. Most will be online!
- Find people to write your letters of recommendation. Begin writing your application essays early. Ask friends, family, or other support staff to help proofread them.
- Before sending in college applications, make sure you have followed all the requirements carefully. Ask someone else to review them, too.
- Most schools have application deadlines. Be sure to pay attention! Check your response mail and email from schools immediately. A letter might contain directions for admittance or steps you need to follow to receive housing or financial aid. School letters usually include important details.

Take Tests

- *For Community and Technical Colleges:* Find out the placement test that is required, when you need to take the test, and how you can study for it. **If you need accommodations for these tests, request them as early as possible.*
- *For 4-year Colleges and Universities:* The two standardized entrance exams are the ACT and SAT. Some schools accept both; others accept only one. Make sure you know which test is required for admission at the colleges where you are applying. Register to take the test at least one year to six months before you are interested in enrolling at the college/university. **If you need accommodations for these tests, request them as early as possible.*

Step 4:

Apply for Financial Aid

- I have filled out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. *(As soon as possible after January 1st. Late applications can mean less money in aid!)*
- I know the types of financial aid I **qualify** for and which I need to **apply** for. These options include: Grants, scholarships, loans, and work study.
- I have created a financial plan and budget for paying for my postsecondary education. I have shared this plan with a trusted family member, friend, or community support staff for their advice and input.

Make Your Decision!

- Pick the program that is a good “fit” for you. Then let the college or school know that you are coming!
- As soon as you are accepted, contact the disability services offices. Find out how to request accommodations for the fall semester and housing.
- Make a list of the accommodations and technology you will need in college. Be sure you have updated documentation of your hearing loss and other disabilities.