




**To:** Transitioning Youth and Families  
**From:** Bernard Simons, Deputy Secretary   
Developmental Disabilities Administration  
**Subject:** Transitioning Youth Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic

**Release Date: November 17, 2021\* (revised)**

Release Date: May 12, 2020

*\*All text in red indicates added/revised language since the prior release date*

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The Developmental Disabilities Administrations (DDA) understands the challenges that all youth and families face during a typical transition from school to career, college and/or community life. However, beyond the uncertainties of a typical transition, this year's Transitioning Youth (TY) and families are also facing the additional factors associated with the COVID-19 crisis.

During this time, DDA's highest priority continues to be the health, safety, and wellbeing of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their families, staff, and providers. The DDA will continue its commitment to promote collaboration, flexibility, and creativity during this time, including as it relates to transition.

On July 1, 2021, Governor Hogan announced the end of the COVID-19 state of emergency in the State of Maryland. This guidance was updated to reflect the unwinding of the temporary modifications to the transitioning youth.

TY eligible for the Governor's Transitioning Youth Initiative (GTI) for July 2020, July 2021, and July 2022 have until June 30, 2022, to complete and submit the DDA Waiver application in order to be considered for DDA funding and services.

## OVERVIEW

The DDA is continuing to support eligible Maryland Transitioning Youth and families by doing the following:

- Coordinate with local school systems, Coordinators of Community Services (CCS) and partners at the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS), and Autism Waiver Coordinators in identifying students with developmental disabilities who will be exiting school who appear to be eligible for

the Governor’s Transitioning Youth Initiative (GTI);

- Provide outreach and information to families and students about applying to the DDA for services;
- Complete eligibility screening for DDA services while the student is still in school;
- Facilitate transition to adult services and supports. This may include referral to both generic community services as well as eligibility-specific services;
- Assist eligible youth in accessing the most appropriate Employment and Meaningful Day services to support the transition to career, community, or college.

## GUIDANCE

Below are some guidance to take into consideration for youth and families during TY planning:

- Access the appropriate DDA Regional Office eligibility staff for information on eligibility status
- Utilize virtual and remote meetings to continue working with your Coordinator of Community Service (CCS) to create a person-centered plan, assess current needs and identify any appropriate services/supports
- Identify and connect with your CCS at least once a month to provide or receive any necessary updates
- Include your CCS in IEP meetings
- Consider utilizing planning tools found in the [Charting The LifeCourse framework](#) to help create a vision, identify resources and problem solve current and future barriers
- Continue to connect with potential adult service providers virtually when possible, by utilizing remote technology (i.e., Skype, Zoom, Facetime)
- Consider the availability of services when selecting a provider. Service start dates, hours of service, and transportation are all important to know when making a selection to ensure that the services will meet you or your family member's needs.
- Utilize the [DDA Amendment #3 - 2020 Memo/Guidance](#) to learn about new flexibilities in service delivery
- [Get on the DDA's Mailing List](#)

All questions or concerns from youth and/or families are welcome and should be directed to your DDA Regional Office Transitioning Youth lead staff noted below:

Region	Transition Youth Lead	Eligibility Coordinator
<b>Southern Maryland Regional Office (SMRO)</b>	Nicole Sheppard <a href="mailto:nicole.sheppard@maryland.gov">nicole.sheppard@maryland.gov</a>	Kendall Cazer <a href="mailto:kendall.cazer@maryland.gov">kendall.cazer@maryland.gov</a>
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<b>Western Maryland Regional Office (WMRO)</b>	Danielle Anderson <a href="mailto:danielle.anderson@maryland.gov">danielle.anderson@maryland.gov</a>	Tina Swink <a href="mailto:tina.swink@maryland.gov">tina.swink@maryland.gov</a>

<b>Central Maryland Regional Office (CMRO)</b>	Beryl Parker <a href="mailto:beryl.parker@maryland.gov">beryl.parker@maryland.gov</a>	Nicolette Paparoidamis <a href="mailto:nicolette.paparoidamis@maryland.gov">nicolette.paparoidamis@maryland.gov</a> and Bianca Renwick <a href="mailto:bianca.renwick@maryland.gov">bianca.renwick@maryland.gov</a>
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**Additional Resources**

- [DDA Transitioning Youth Fact Sheet](#)
- [DORS - Guidance on the Use of Teleconferencing to Provide Services](#)