

## ADULT SERVICES FUNDING

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### Typical State Agency Funding Sources

Students with deaf-blindness in need of long-term support are usually served by vocational rehabilitation, blind or low vision, developmental disabilities, or mental health services. Vocational rehabilitation and blind and low vision services provide funding to receive training, obtain work, and access technology needed for a job. Developmental disabilities programs provide funding to support people to work, live, and participate in their communities. Vocational rehabilitation funds are time limited. Developmental disabilities and mental health services are more likely to be available long term.

### Medicaid Waivers

Medicaid Waiver programs are the typical funding source for long-term residential, day support, or community employment. Waivers allow states to provide these services in communities, rather than institutions. They are usually offered through developmental disabilities or mental health agencies. Characteristics and requirements vary from state to state. Eligibility requirements are also state specific.

While all states have home and community-based services, funded by Medicaid Waivers, most have long waiting lists, so it is important for students to get on the lists as early as possible. Each state decides what their waivers provide and who they serve. For example, in some states students who exit school with jobs are given priority to receive waiver services for employment. To find out more about your state's waiver system, visit your state's department of health and human services website or one of the following:

- [Medicaid Contact Information by State](#) - Representatives may be able to assist you by answering questions about Medicaid, direct you to agencies that provide adult services, or assist in the waiver application process ([www.medicaid.gov/about-us/contact-us/contact-state-page.html](http://www.medicaid.gov/about-us/contact-us/contact-state-page.html)).
- [Independent Living Centers \(ILC\) by State or U.S. Territory](#) - Independent Living Centers can provide information on local and state adult agencies that can assist with the waiver application process ([www.ilru.org/projects/cil-net/cil-center-and-association-directory](http://www.ilru.org/projects/cil-net/cil-center-and-association-directory)).

- [Family-to-Family Health Information Centers \(F2Fs\) by State](#) - F2Fs are family-led centers that provide guidance from knowledgeable family members who have first-hand experience on navigating the waiver application process ([familyvoices.org/affiliates/](http://familyvoices.org/affiliates/)).

Find information about current and concluded waiver programs in your state on this [State Waivers List](#) ([www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/section-1115-demo/demonstration-and-waiver-list/index.html](http://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/section-1115-demo/demonstration-and-waiver-list/index.html)). Filter by state in the column on the right.

## Alternative Funding Sources

Because most states have long waiting lists for ongoing supports provided by developmental disabilities or mental health services funding, and available public funding may not meet all of a person's needs, families and students should become knowledgeable about alternative funding sources, including Achieving Better Life Experience (ABLE) accounts, Social Security Work Incentives such as PASS Plans and Impairment-Related Work Expenses (IRWE), and non-disability supports such as low-income housing and first time home buyers' incentives.

### Achieving Better Life Experience (ABLE)

The ABLE Act, passed in 2014, allows a person who has incurred a significant disability before age 26 to accumulate money for disability-related expenditures not counted as a "resource" by Social Security and therefore not jeopardizing financial or medical insurance benefits for those receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Eligible individuals can accumulate up to \$100,000 without risking their Medicaid eligibility, but annual contributions to the account cannot exceed \$15,000. The account is used to fund the costs of living with a disability including employment supports, living supports, or a home. For more information, see [The Road Map to Enrollment](#) ([ablenrc.org/road-map-enrollment](http://ablenrc.org/road-map-enrollment)).

### Plan to Achieve Self-Support (PASS) program

[PASS plans](#) ([www.ssa.gov/disabilityresearch/wi/pass.htm](http://www.ssa.gov/disabilityresearch/wi/pass.htm)) fund time-limited supports, services, or supplies needed to gain employment or increase an individual's self-sufficiency at work. They have been used to support recent high school graduates in paid community employment until they receive funding for long-term support needs. A project in Montana piloted the use of PASS plans for this purpose (Condon & Callahan, 2008). Students with ongoing support needs on waiting lists for developmental disabilities waiver services used PASS plans to pay for job coaching, transportation, and on-the-job supports. This enabled them to transition from school directly to employment even though publicly funded, long-term supports had not yet kicked in.

### **Impairment-Related Work Expenses (IRWE)**

**IRWEs** ([secure.ssa.gov/poms.nsf/lnx/0410520001](https://secure.ssa.gov/poms.nsf/lnx/0410520001)) are not time-limited and reduce the impact of wages on SSI. Impairment-related work expenses (e.g., transportation, medical devices, service animals) are deducted from income when calculating monthly SSI payments, resulting in a lower impact of wages on an individual's SSI check.

### **Ticket to Work Program**

The **Ticket to Work program** ([www.ssa.gov/work](http://www.ssa.gov/work)) is a free, voluntary program that can help Social Security beneficiaries go to work, get a good job that may lead to a career, and become financially independent, all while they keep their Medicare or Medicaid.

## Reference

Condon, E. & Callahan, M. (2008). Individualized career planning for students with significant support needs utilizing the Discovery and Vocational Profile process, cross-agency collaborative funding and Social Security Work Incentives. *Journal of Vocational rehabilitation, 28(2)*, 85-96.

**National Center on Deaf-Blindness, 2018**

[nationaldb.org](http://nationaldb.org)

The contents of this fact sheet were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, #H326T180026. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. Project Officer, Susan Weigert.

