



A Transition Guide for Young Adults to
Adult Mental Health Services in Winnebago County

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. Introduction Letter

B. Housing

C. Emergency Housing

D. School

E. Employment/DVR

F. Social Security

G. Health Insurance

H. ADRC

I. Military

J. Mental Health Treatment/Medication

K. Adult Health and Mental Health Providers

L. Rights and Responsibilities

M. Health Care Decision-Making Support

N. Financial Decision Making Support

O. Next Steps

A. Are You Getting Ready To Transition From High School To the Adult World?

Every successful transition starts with a plan. This involves planning for things like employment, independent living, and post-secondary education. This can be an overwhelming process.

Most people who know only the children's system are surprised to discover what the adult mental health system is like. The adult system expects people to provide for themselves to a much greater extent than the children's system did. At age 18, services will look different. The entitlement element in children's services isn't present; eligibility, not entitlement, is the key to adult services.

This resource guide is designed to provide information to young adults and their families to prepare for adult life. This guide will cover things like- housing, school, social security, employment, and mental health services.

ADRC Is Here To Help!

The Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) of Winnebago County is here to help you and your family with the transition from high school to the adult world.

Whether you need help with getting a job, information on finding a place to live, or are not sure what you may need, the ADRC can provide resources, FREE OF CHARGE. This guide will list a lot of internet links. If you need help accessing the resources, you can call the ADRC at 877-886-2372. They can meet with you or send you the information. You can also check out their website on youth transitions:

<https://www.co.winnebago.wi.us/adrc/youth-transition>

Or find the specific resources you are looking for, such as housing, employment, here:

<https://www.co.winnebago.wi.us/adrc/resource-library>

B. Housing

If moving into your own place is one of your goals, you may need some help finding an apartment.

Independent Living Apartments are apartment complexes for those that are capable of managing their own lives. The monthly rent for these apartments will vary - some are subsidized for low income individuals, while others are not. Some buildings will have recreation rooms and meal sites.

You can find a list of independent living apartments in Winnebago County, here:

<https://www.co.winnebago.wi.us/adrc/resource-library/housing-options>

The website lists different types of apartment options where the rent is based on the person's income. There is no organization that will call to find an apartment for you. You will need to find out about current availability/ complete the application.

If this is your first time renting, getting involved with the Rent Smart Program would be helpful.

Rent Smart is designed to help those individuals who have little to no rental experience. *Rent Smart* provides practical education to help people looking for rental housing find, get, and keep suitable housing. The program focuses on the knowledge and skills essential for a successful renting experience. It challenges participants to know and understand their rights and responsibilities as a tenant, as well as know and understand the rights and responsibilities of their landlord. *Rent Smart* workshops are held various times throughout the year. See their [website](#) for more details.

<https://winnebago.extension.wisc.edu/hdr/rent-smart/>

If moving out is not a current goal, clear expectations for everyone need to be discussed. Will rent be charged? How much? Different rules? Employment expectations? Talk about these and perhaps put them in writing.

C. Emergency Housing

If you find yourself in need of immediate emergency housing, the options can be limited to places such as shelters and rooming houses. The Winnebago County ADRC Resource guide can help you locate local options such as Father Carr's, COTS, and warming shelters. You can find them at <http://www.co.winnebago.wi.us/adrc/resource-manual> or call the ADRC at 877-886-2372.

D. School

Getting a high school diploma is very beneficial to having a successful transition. If you are receiving special education services, there should be a clear transition plan in the IEP (Individual Education Plan) based on your strengths, needs, and goals. Work with your school on coming up with what your specific goal is! Whether that is working – full time or part time or continuing your education.

- Some students will continue to stay in high school past their 12th year. Usually if a student stays until they are 21, days are not spent at the high school but can be “off campus” learning independent living skills.
- For some students, the traditional classroom is not the best way to learn. There are alternate options that may be a better fit, such as online school or getting a General

Educational Development (GED). Talk with your current teacher or transition coordinator to see if this a better fit for your needs and goals.

- DPI is a good resource to get more information on GED, Challenge Academy, and alternative educations options as well:
 - <https://dpi.wi.gov/ged>
 - <https://dpi.wi.gov/alternative-education>
- If your goal is postsecondary education (technical college, 2 or 4 year college) after graduation, it is important to know there are many differences between high school and college. Postsecondary education is governed by different laws and formal special programming for your needs may not available. Most colleges have a Special Needs Office where students can go for support and assistance with accommodations.

In order to succeed in college, it is important that you have developed important skills in self-advocacy and independent living. The "Opening Doors to Postsecondary Education and Training" is an excellent tool to help you evaluate and build the necessary skills that will allow you to be successful in college. You can find the checklist online at:

<https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sped/pdf/tranopndrs.pdf>

- Another program is WIA Youth Services Program through Workforce Development. This is a program that serves individuals 16-21. Participants gain valuable work experience, have access to career exploration opportunities, and gain resources for further academic development such as obtaining a GED/HSED, advanced training, and enrollment into post secondary education. Contact (920) 470-5245 or go to <http://www.foxvalleywork.org/WIOAYouth.html> if you are interested in finding out more.

The DPI website is an excellent resource to find out more and prepare for the transition from high school to what is next:

https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sped/pdf/Transition_Programming_Beyond_Age_18.pdf

E. Employment

Working is a way to become independent, self-sufficient, and build self confidence. If you need assistance to obtain, retain, and/or advance in employment, you should consider contacting:

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)

The Wisconsin Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) is a federally and state funded program designed to assist individuals with disabilities in preparing for, finding and keeping employment. You may be eligible to receive vocational services from DVR if you have a disability that makes it difficult for you to work. If you are planning to transition to employment after graduation, you should get connected with DVR at least two years before leaving school. If you haven't already, you can speak to your teachers about inviting DVR to one of your Individualized Education Program meetings.

DVR is located at:

- Vocational Rehabilitation
219 Washington Avenue, Suite 105
Oshkosh, WI 54901
920-930-6735
- Fox Cities Workforce Development Center
1802 Appleton Road
Menasha, WI 54952
Phone: 920-930-6736
- Online information is available at:
<https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/DVRAPPLY/Presentation/Eligibility/DVRMission.aspx>

F. Social Security

When you turn 18, your parents no longer have the legal responsibility to support you financially. It is important to think about how you will support yourself and manage your own money. If you are unable to earn enough money to support yourself because of your mental health, you might be eligible for one or more of the benefit programs discussed below.

The Social Security Administration (SSA) administers benefits paid through Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). You need to be determined disabled in order to receive one of these.

A disability determination is a finding made by disability examiners and medical professionals that an individual has an illness, injury, or condition that meets the legal definition of a disability in the Social Security Act. This may take 60-120 days or longer.

SSI and SSDI are forms of cash assistance payments and medical benefits (Medicaid) available to persons with a disability who have limited income and resources.

Just because you are receiving SSI or SSDI, does not mean that you are unable to work. Below are some programs that assist individuals who are receiving Social Security, and want to work:

- Social Security Employment Supports Employment
- "Ticket to Work"
- Plan to Achieve Self-Support (PASS)
- SSDI Employment Supports
- SSI Employment Supports
- Student Earned Income Exclusion

There are Social Security Offices Located at:

- 400 City Center B
Oshkosh WI 54901
(877)445-0834
- 607 W Northland Ave
Appleton, WI 54911
(877)694-5495
- Online information is available at: <https://www.ssa.gov/>

What if I need help applying for Social Security?

The ADRC has Disability Benefit Specialists that help people apply for SSI, SSDI, or appeal a denial of benefits. For more information about the Disability Benefit Specialist Program, contact the ADRC at 1-877-886-2372.

G. Health Care

Once you turn 18, your eligibility for health insurance coverage may change. Health insurance helps pay for medical expenses including office visits with your doctors, hospital stays, and medications. Without health insurance, most people cannot afford the cost of these things. Below is a brief description of possible insurance options for young adults.

- **Private health insurance through employment**

If you decide to go straight into the workforce after high school, you may qualify for health insurance coverage through your place of employment. Most, but not all, employers offer health benefits, so it is important to ask what benefits are offered before accepting a job. All insurance plans are different, but most require you to pay monthly premiums and a yearly deductible.

- **Private Insurance through Health Insurance Marketplace**

Get answers about affordable health insurance at www.healthcare.gov or 1-800-318-2596.

- **Continuation of family plan as dependent adult**

You might be able to remain as a dependent on your parents' insurance until the age of 26.

- **Medicaid/BadgerCare**

Medicaid pays for medical services such as hospital stays, doctor appointments and prescription drugs. You may qualify for Medicaid or BadgerCare if you are a citizen of the United States or a qualifying immigrant and meet the financial eligibility requirements. There are several different Medicaid programs available in Wisconsin and each one has slightly different criteria. For more information about Medicaid or BadgerCare, contact the East Central Income Maintenance Partnership at 1-888-256-4563 or online at <https://access.wisconsin.gov>.

What if I need help figuring out what type of health insurance I am eligible for?

The ADRC has Disability Benefit Specialists that provide current, accurate information about eligibility for different forms of health insurance such as Medicaid and Medicare. For more information, contact the ADRC at 1-877-886-2372.

H. Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) of Winnebago County

There are several different things that the ADRC can assist with when turning 18, such as applying for SSI, health insurance, housing, employment information, and transportation.

A **Disability Benefit Specialist** provides free and confidential assistance to people with disabilities between the ages of 18 and 59.

They can inform individuals of eligibility for programs and benefits, as well as help people apply for benefits or appeal a denial of a program such as:

- Medicaid
- Social Security Disability Income (SSDI)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Medicare
- Other financial assistance programs you may qualify for

An **ADRC Specialist** provides free and confidential information on a wide range of resources to individuals 17 years and 6 months and up, such as:

- Housing
- Financial assistance
- Transportation
- Employment
- Assess for eligibility for adult long-term care programs for individuals that have a long term physical or developmental delay.

To find out more, contact the ADRC Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at 1-877-886-2372 or go to their website <https://www.co.winnebago.wi.us/adrc>

The receptionist will ensure that you speak to the most appropriate person, based on your questions/ needs.

I. Military

Most people join the military by enlisting in one of its branches. They receive training in a job specialty and complete hands-on work. Signing up usually involves four years of active duty and four years inactive. There are options to continue to serve after this time frame, if desired as well.

The U.S. military has six branches of service:

- U.S. Air Force (USAF)
- U.S. Army (USA)
- U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)
- U.S. Marine Corps (USMC)
- U.S. Navy (USN)
- U.S. Space Force (USSF)

The requirements to join are similar for all six. The main differences are in age limits, test scores, and fitness levels. Men and women meet different fitness standards.

To join you need to:

- Be at least 17
- Have a high school diploma or a GED
- Pass a military entrance medical exam. This includes a physical exam, hearing test, vision test, and height and weight measurements.

For more information, call 1-844-872-4681 to ask any question for free.

J. Mental Health Treatment

There are several different forms of treatment, as well as places to be seen when 18 for your mental well-being. You will need to ensure that where you go for treatment and counseling is covered by your insurance provider. You will want to find a provider that is knowledgeable about your diagnosis and someone with whom you feel comfortable communicating. You can find a list of options here:

<https://www.co.winnebago.wi.us/adrc/mental-healthaoda>

Based on your needs, Winnebago County Behavioral Health has additional programs for adults, that may be a good fit. For those with severe and persistent mental illness that need ongoing treatment, the Comprehensive Community Services (CCS), or Community Support Program (CSP) may be an option. Connect with the Winnebago County Behavioral Health Team to discuss further:

- (920) 236-4600 – Oshkosh location
- (920) 727-2882 for the Neenah location.
- You can also find out more on their website:

<https://www.co.winnebago.wi.us/human-services/divisions/behavioral-health>

Crisis Services

If you are suffering from a mental health, or substance use crisis, there is a Crisis Intervention Hotline available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. The hotline operator will ask simple questions about your situation and provide brief counseling and suggestions over the phone. Based on the information gathered, a face to face meeting may be arranged with you and a crisis mental health specialist. During this meeting, options and potential resources will be discussed.

If you feel the Crisis Intervention team could help you, call (920) 233-7707.

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) is an excellent source of support for those affected by mental illness. NAMI provides education, advocacy, outreach, respite and support programs for people living with mental illness and their loved ones.

Contact NAMI for more information regarding their resources and support groups.

[Fox Valley \(link is external\) https://www.namifoxvalley.org/](https://www.namifoxvalley.org/)

- 920-954-1550
- 211 E Franklin St, Appleton

[Oshkosh \(link is external\) https://www.namioshosh.org/](https://www.namioshosh.org/)

- 920-651-1148
- 525 N Main St, Oshkosh

K. Adult Health and Mental Health Providers

Every young adult will transition from pediatrics to adult health care. However, if you have always gone to a family doctor who sees patients throughout the lifespan, you will not need to switch doctors. You will want to find a provider that is knowledgeable about your diagnosis and someone with whom you feel comfortable communicating.

Finding adult providers early will help you coordinate your health care and make your transition a smooth one. There are several ways to find adult medical providers. Listed below are some ideas to help you get started:

- Ask your pediatrician for referrals
- Ask friends and family for referrals
- Call your health insurance company
- Contact the ADRC (the ADRC will not endorse any single provider, but can direct you to physician referral hotlines or other referral sources)

It is perfectly acceptable to schedule an “interview” appointment with a new doctor so that you have a chance to meet him/her in person. This interview appointment allows you to ask questions and make sure you are comfortable with the doctor before making your final decision.

Once you have found a new doctor, you will need to have your medical records transferred. You can usually do that by contacting your current doctor’s office. You will need to fill out a “Medical Release Form” and sign it before any information will be disclosed to your new provider. Transferring records can take some time, so be sure to do it well before your first real appointment with your new doctor.

It is a good idea to make your first appointment while you are still being seen by your current doctor, in case there are any questions or concerns about your treatment or medications.

Taking Control of Your Health Care

Now that you are an adult and are in control of your medical treatment, it is very important to have the skills necessary to keep yourself safe and healthy. The "Transition Health Care Checklist: Preparing for Life as an Adult" is an excellent tool to help you evaluate and build necessary skills that will allow you to take charge of your health care. You can find the checklist online at:

<https://dzp4370ojv4q1.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/74/2017/05/THCL.pdf>

L. Turning 18: Right and Responsibilities of Becoming an Adult

On the day of your 18th birthday, you legally become an adult. Unless you have been determined "incompetent" by a judge and have been appointed a guardian, you have the same rights and responsibilities as everyone else. This is a very exciting time because you now have certain new rights that allow you to be more independent. In Wisconsin, you are automatically given the following rights when you turn 18:

- The right to vote
- The right to get married
- The right to make a contract
- The right to apply for credit
- The right to obtain a driver's license (if you do not have a driver's license you should get a state issued photo ID from the DMV)
- The right to obtain medical treatment without your parents' consent

With those rights also come new responsibilities, and as an adult, you are personally accountable for your actions. The following are new responsibilities that you did not have before turning 18:

- If you break the law, you will be tried in adult criminal court
- Your parents are no longer required to support you
- You may be sued by others
- You're eligible for jury duty
- All males must register for Selective Service

For more information on your rights and responsibilities as an adult, click here:

<https://www.wisbar.org/forPublic/ForEducators/Documents/What-You-Should-Know.pdf>

Registering for the Selective Service

Selective Service registration is the process that the U.S. Government uses to collect names and addresses of men ages 18 through 25 to use in case of a national emergency that requires rapid expansion of the Armed Forces.

Every male citizen residing in the United States, regardless of disability, must register for the draft within 30 days of his 18th birthday. If you want to, you can register as early as 120 days before that date.

How to Register

You can choose to register one of the following ways:

- Online at www.sss.gov
- At a post office where you can pick up a "mail-back" registration card
- By mail, most young men will receive a reminder "mail-back" card around the time they turn 18.

For more information about the Selective Service, go to their website at www.sss.gov

The Right to Vote

Unless you have been determined "incompetent" and your right to vote has specifically been revoked in your guardianship papers, you now have the right to vote in state and local elections. It is important for people with disabilities to vote because it is your chance to let your voice be heard. Your vote tells elected officials what you think about how they are running the government. Every vote counts and this is one opportunity to make a difference in your community.

All municipalities in Wisconsin require voter registration before you are allowed to vote. You can register by mail, in person or at your polling place the day of the election. You will be required to provide proof of residency and a form of identification such as a driver's license or state ID card with your registration application. Polling places can change, so please contact the County Clerks Office if you have questions about how to register or where your polling place is located.

The County Clerks Office for Winnebago County is located at:

- 112 Otter Ave, Oshkosh, WI 54901
- Phone: 920-232-3430 or 920-727-2880
- You can also go to <https://myvote.wi.gov>. This site provides voting information and allows you to type in your address to find out the location of your polling place.

Federal and state laws require that every polling place in Wisconsin be fully accessible to voters with disabilities. If you have problems with polling place accessibility or discrimination, you should contact your municipal clerk to file a complaint.

M. Health Care Decision-Making Support

Managing your health care can be a complex and difficult thing to do, so it is important for you to ask for help if you need it. You can get health care decision-making support in a number of different ways. Brief descriptions of options are discussed below and are listed from the least restrictive to the most restrictive.

Release of Medical Records and Information

HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act), otherwise known as the “privacy law” is a federal law that protects your confidentiality when it comes to your health care. Once you become an adult, your health care providers can no longer give information to anyone without your permission, including your parents. If you would like to grant your doctor permission to release all or a portion of your medical records to your parents or another person you can fill out a “Medical Release Form” and sign it. This is one way to give a trusted adult access to your medical information so that they can help you understand and make decisions regarding your health care.

Supported Decision Making

Support Decision-Making is a way for people with disabilities to get help from trusted family members, friends, and professionals, to help them understand the situations and choices they face so they can make their own decisions. Supported Decision-Making enables people with disabilities to ask for support where and when they need it. Supported Decision-Making is not a form of Guardianship or Power of Attorney. Powers of attorney, representative payees and release of information forms can also help families provide the needed supports and safeguards without going to court for Guardianship, when appropriate. The Board for People with Developmental Disabilities has additional information on Support Decision-Making available at:

<http://wi-bpdd.org/index.php/SupportedDecision-Making/>. You can get the form online at <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/forms/f02377.pdf> or at the ADRC at 1-877-886-2372.

Health Care Power of Attorney (HCPOA)

This is an important document that should be filled out by every capable adult, regardless of disability. The form allows you to name a trusted adult as your health care decision maker (agent) in the event you become incapacitated and cannot make decisions for yourself. It also provides the opportunity for you to express preferences about your care. You can list a second adult as a backup in the event that the first person listed as agent is not available. This document only takes effect when two doctors agree that you are indeed incapacitated and cannot make your own decisions. You can get this legal form online at <http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/forms/advdirectives/index.htm> or at the ADRC 1-877-886-2372.

Guardian of the Person

The most restrictive decision-making support is Guardian of the Person. This type of guardianship is set up when a person is unable to make decisions that meet their needs for physical health and safety. If this is the situation, an alternative decision maker (called a guardian) is legally appointed to make decisions for that person (called the ward).

Who determines the need for guardianship?

The need for guardianship is determined by a judge through a legal proceeding. A medical doctor (MD) or a PhD level psychologist must conduct an evaluation of a person's competence. The doctor makes recommendations to the court, but it is the judge that makes the legal determination that the person placed under guardianship is incompetent and unable to make his or her own decisions. Physical disability and/or poor judgment without a legal finding of mental incompetence **are not** sufficient reasons to establish guardianship.

Who can be a guardian?

Any competent adult (age 18 and over) is eligible to serve as a guardian. Usually this includes family members, friends and advocates. It is generally not a good idea for paid staff to assume the role of guardian, since it presents a conflict of interest. Parents do not automatically become guardians of a disabled child once he or she turns eighteen. A parent's legal responsibility and authority ends at their child's 18th birthday.

What does a guardian do?

A Guardian of the Person has responsibility for overseeing the care and living situation of the ward, as well as medical decision-making. The guardian should encourage the ward to participate in the decision-making process whenever possible. The guardian must have regular visits, in person, to observe the ward's condition, surroundings and treatment. He or she must review treatment records, attend staffing and consult with providers of health care and social services in making all necessary treatment decisions. A guardian is expected to make decisions based on what is in the best interest of the ward and is required to file a report with the court once a year explaining how the ward is doing. A Guardian of the Person does not have decision-making powers over the ward's property (including finances) unless he or she is also appointed Guardian of the Estate or Representative Payee.

What is a Guardian Ad Litem?

A Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) is an attorney who is appointed by the court to represent the best interests of the proposed ward during the court process. The GAL is a neutral party who will interview the proposed ward and make professional recommendations to the judge about the ward's best interest.

How does the guardianship process work?

The process and paperwork involved in obtaining a guardianship is generally completed by a private attorney. The proposed ward and petitioner may incur costs for attorney fees, filing fees, a Guardian Ad Litem and a doctor or psychologist's evaluation. If you feel that guardianship may be appropriate in your situation and you have questions, you can contact the ADRC for more information at 1-877-886-2372 six months prior to the potential ward's 18th birthday. If you currently have a case worker through Winnebago County, talk with your case worker about guardianship options.

The process of appointing a guardianship includes:

1. Completion of a competency evaluation by a psychologist or physician.
2. Filing a petition with the courts (usually completed by a private attorney).
3. A court hearing.

How can I learn more about guardianship?

The Wisconsin Guardianship Support Center (GSC) provides information and assistance on issues related to guardianship, protective placement, advance directives and more. They also offer information on advance directives and guardianship on their website:

<https://gwaar.org/guardianship-resources>

N. Financial Decision Making Support

Managing finances and budgeting are difficult things to do for many young adults, so it is important for you to ask for help if you need it. You can get financial decision-making support in a number of different ways. A brief description of options are discussed below and are listed from the least restrictive to the most restrictive.

Voluntary Banking Restrictions

If you need help with your finances, it may be a good idea to give a parent or another trusted adult access to your bank accounts, records and bills so that they can provide the assistance that you need. It is very important that the person you give this access to is a trusted adult and someone who is looking out for your best interest. There are several different banking options that would allow you extra support managing your money and paying your bills. Some options may include: direct deposit, joint bank accounts, dual signature checking accounts and automatic bill paying programs online. You can talk to a representative at your bank for more information about these options.

Power of Attorney for Finances

A Power of Attorney for Finances allows you to choose a trusted adult who will manage or help you manage your money and assets. You determine what money or assets you want that person (called an agent) to have authority over.

The point at which your agent's authority becomes effective depends on the language you use in your Power of Attorney for Finances. If you give your agent "immediate power," your agent's power will start when you sign the document. Even if you sign a document granting your agent immediate power, you may continue to handle all of your own property and finances as long as you are able. Essentially, either you or your agent makes decisions about your finances.

How do I get a Power of Attorney for Finances?

You can visit the website: www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/forms/AdvDirectives/index.htm to print the form. The form will need to be notarized. The ADRC also provide you with this document. You may hire a lawyer to draft a document that fits your needs as well.

Representative Payee

If you receive SSI or SSDI benefits and need help managing your money, Social Security Administration can appoint a relative, friend, another interested party or a professional agency to serve as your representative payee. Your benefits are then paid to your payee on your behalf.

The representative payee must use your benefits for current basic needs of food, clothing and shelter. The payee must provide a simple accounting report of how the money was spent (usually on an annual basis) to Social Security and to the beneficiary. A payee only has authority over the SSI or Social Security benefits, not over any other finances and income. The representative payee must also report any change in circumstances (income, resources, living arrangements, return to work, etc.) to Social Security.

How can I get a Representative Payee?

If you would like help managing your benefits, you or someone interested in becoming your payee can contact the Social Security Administration and make a request to have one appointed. If you do not have a relative, friend or another interested party who can assume the role of representative payee, there are private agencies in Winnebago County that can provide this service for a small monthly fee. These agencies will work with Social Security and help individuals budget their benefits, pay bills and save for emergencies. If you have questions or would like to discuss these options, please call the ADRC at 1-877-866-2372.

Guardian of the Estate

The most restrictive option for financial decision-making is Guardian of the Estate. This type of guardianship is set up after a person has been determined "incompetent" by a judge and therefore does not have the capacity to make financial decisions on his/her behalf. A court will only appoint a Guardian of the Estate if it finds that there is no less restrictive intervention available that the individual needing help will accept.

The process to get a court-appointed Guardian of the Estate is very similar to the process used to appoint a Guardian of the Person discussed in section "L". Once a Guardian of the Estate has been appointed, the "Letters of Guardianship" will be issued to the Guardian by the court and will explain the scope of the guardian's authority. The Guardian must submit an annual report to the court which can account for all funds received and spent on behalf of the Ward.

O. Next Steps

1. Records

It is extremely important for you to develop a good recordkeeping system in order to keep track of important documents that you may need now and in the future.

Before you leave high school, obtain a copy of all transcripts, evaluations, tests and transition Individualized Education Programs. Often times, these records will be needed when coordinating adult services. Schools do not keep student records very long, so it is important that you request your own copies before, or right after, leaving high school.

In addition to keeping school records, it is just as important to keep medical records including any documentation from therapists, counselors, psychologists, pediatricians, and specialists. Keeping these types of documents organized and easily accessible will save you time and make your transition into the adult world a much smoother one.

2. Income

Whether that is applying for Social Security Income, applying for a job, or working with DVR for assistance with getting a job, this will be an important step to being an adult/ more independent. You can still work if you are applying for SSI, but there is a limit to the amount of earned income you are able to make.

3. Insurance

Make sure you have health insurance. Based on your income, the options will vary.

4. Diagnosis and treatment

- Make sure you have current mental health diagnosis. You may need to have an evaluation completed to do this. It is important that you have an accurate diagnosis, so your providers can provide you with the best, most appropriate treatment.
- Make sure you have the support you need. Ensure you have a medical and mental health provider that is covered by your insurance that you feel is a good fit.
- If you have serious and persistent major mental illness, seek out long term case management services through Winnebago County's Programs such as CCS and CSP.
- Fill out a "Medical Release Form" and sign it so your records can be transferred from your old providers, to your new ones or so your providers can communicate with each other.

5. Housing

If your goal is to live independently, applying for an apartment through Winnebago County Housing Authority would be beneficial. Even if you are not interested in an apartment immediately, getting your name on the wait list may help you in the future. It may take some time to find an apartment and you may need to apply to several.

6. Decision Making Support

Determine what level of assistance you will need to make financial and health care decisions. This may be completing a Release of Medical Records and Information, supported decision making document, or power of attorney. The ADRC can assist with completing these documents, if needed.

7. Get connected

Your social support/ friends may change once you finish school. Having a good support network will help with your transition. Connecting with organizations such as NAMI, can help you find a support network with people you can relate to.

8. If needed, have a **crisis plan** worked out through Winnebago County Behavioral Health Department or Crisis Intervention Services. Make sure all those involved know the plan and has a copy of it. It should include all important names – like parents, doctors, case worker, etc. - and how to reach them.

Reach out for help if needed and ask questions! There are people that want to help you succeed!