

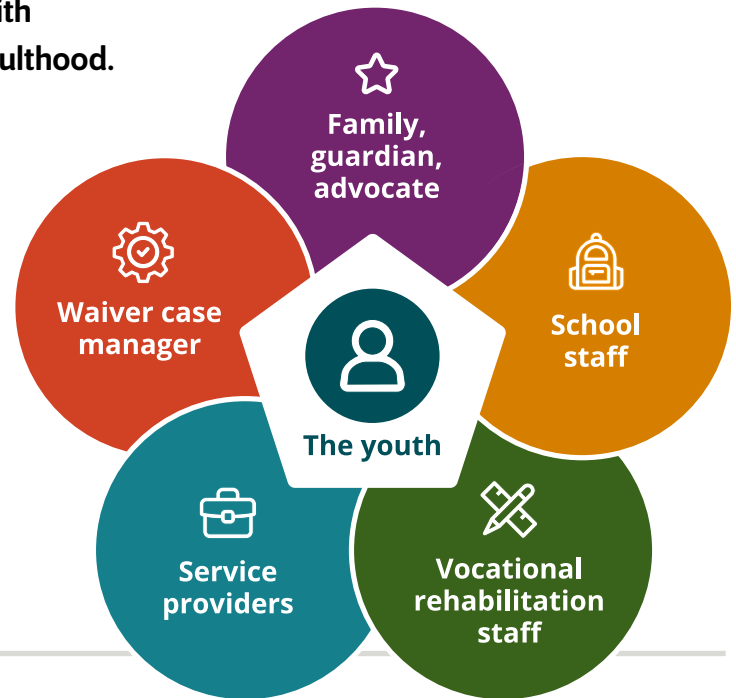
The roles of people who support youth in transition

Many people play a role in supporting youth with disabilities as they plan for and transition to adulthood.

This guide provides an overview of the roles and responsibilities of people that may be on a youth's transition team, including:

- The youth
- Family members, guardians and advocates
- School staff
- Vocational rehabilitation staff
- Service providers
- Waiver case managers

Learn about each role on the following pages.



The youth

Driving the transition process

The youth drives transition planning and supports. They may rely on other team members to explain services, processes and options, but the youth is the decision maker. If the youth is a minor or under guardianship, the family or guardian must also be involved in these decisions.

The youth:

- **Communicates interests and chooses supports**
The youth shares their goals and describes what help they would like to reach those goals. One way they can do this is by using the activities in the Best Life Paths in My Vault (see sidebar on page 2 for more information). The youth is also central in helping the team complete the Transition/Pre-ETS Inventory (see sidebar on page 2), deciding which learning stage they are in and which transition/Pre-ETS topics they would like to prioritize for the year.

- **Helps identify team members**

The youth identifies who's in their life that they rely on for help. The My Core Team activity in the Best Life Path in My Vault can help the youth (with help from their team members as needed) gather names and contact information of people they trust most and share the list with team members they choose. Their list may include people like parents/guardians, other advocates, school staff like IEP case manager, school counselor, work coordinator, school nurse, etc., Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) or State Services for the Blind (SSB) staff, waiver case manager, and service provider staff. The youth may need help thinking through who isn't currently on their team but who they might want to add. The youth is the main player on their team and it's up to them to say who they want to participate in conversations and planning.

The youth *(continued)*

- **Engages in transition planning**

The youth participates in planning meetings and leads these meetings when possible. They share their goals and describe what help they want to reach those goals. The youth is supported in understanding their options and weighing the risks and rewards of those options to make an informed choice. The youth is supported to understand their options, including learning about available services and program rules, and weighing any risks.

- **Participates in services and activities**

The youth participates in the services and does the activities with the support of their team members. They are an active partner in planning, participating in services and following up on next steps to help reach their transition and Pre-Employment Transition Service (Pre-ETS) goals.

- **Communicates with team members**

The youth actively communicates with all team members throughout their planning process in whatever way is most accessible to them. The youth lets team members know how services are going and is supported to provide feedback. As they move through learning stages within each transition/Pre-ETS topic, their needs will change. The youth communicates with their team members so that plans and services can address their changing needs. They can create a My Vault account to store and share planning activities and relevant documents with their transition support team. This helps the youth and their team to coordinate and get services that meet their needs.

- **Reflects at the end of the year**

The youth leads or participates in a discussion with team members to reflect on the overall progress within each transition topic and what they want to focus on next year.

Key resources mentioned in this guide:

1. My Vault

My Vault is a free, private, secure personal account that students can use to explore options, store and share files, and plan for their future.*

Learn more: disabilityhubmn.org/hub-tools/online-resources/my-vault/

2. My Vault: Planning path activities

My Vault's planning paths have activities that can help a youth and their family develop a vision and identify goals for their life. There are paths to help think about overall life goals (Best Life paths) and about specific things like benefits, work and in(ter)dependent living/housing. Family members and other team members can help youth with these activities.

3. My Vault: My Core Team activity

This activity, which can be found in My Vault's "How do I get started" Best Life path, can help the youth (with help from their team members as needed) gather names and contact information of people they trust most and share the list with team members they choose.

4. Transition/Pre-ETS Inventory

This tool helps the youth and their support team identify the youth's strengths and needs and which learning stage(s) they are in for each of the transition/Pre-ETS topics, and also prioritize which topics they would like to focus on during a given year.

Check out the inventory: disabilityhubmn.org/media/qddb40wy/e1mn_transition_preet_inventory.pdf

** If the youth chooses not to create a My Vault account, transition team members must help the youth get and share their information in another way.*

Note: A release of information is required for team members to directly share the youth's information with each other. Best practice is to have the youth share their own information, when possible.



Family members, guardians and advocates

Supporting the decision-making process

Family members, guardians and other people who help are critical for the youth's transition success. The youth is the decision maker. They may rely on close contacts — like family members, guardians or friends — to help them make decisions. These people help the youth make their own decisions, rather than making decisions for them.

Family members, guardians and other people who help can:

- **Help the youth make decisions**

They can help the youth make decisions, like which learning stage they are in for each transition/Pre-ETS topic, which topics the youth wants to prioritize for the year, which services the youth wants, and who is on their support team. The youth can ask them to attend planning meetings and assist in setting goals in their Individualized Education Program (IEP) and other agency plans.

- **Help the youth communicate**

They can provide information and insight about the youth's strengths and needs and help the youth communicate when completing the Transition/Pre-ETS Inventory. One way they can do this is by using the activities in the Best Life Paths in My Vault. They can also help communicate questions or concerns to the support team and ensure the youth's voice is heard during the process. The youth may ask family

members and others to help them let team members know how services are progressing and support the youth to provide feedback as they move through learning stages within each transition/Pre-ETS topic they are focusing on during the year. As the youth's needs change, they can help update all team members so that plans and services can address those needs.

Family members and guardians can also create their own My Vault accounts to store and share planning activities and documents with the youth and their support team. This helps coordinate and ensure youth get services that meet their needs.

- **Help the youth identify team members**

They can help the youth share names and contact information for all current team members, and help the youth think through who isn't currently on their team but who they might want to add. One way they can do this is by helping the youth use the My Core Team activity in My Vault (see sidebar on page 2).

- **Reflect at the end of the year**

They can participate in a discussion with team members to reflect on the overall progress within each transition topic and help the youth decide what they want to focus on next year.



School staff

Facilitating the planning process and teaching transition skills

School staff help youth plan and prepare for future success. A main school staff person is identified for each student. This person coordinates services a student needs and ensures other school staff are included on the planning team. For students in special education, the main school staff would be their IEP case manager. For students with a 504 plan, this would be their 504 coordinator. For other students with disabilities that do not have an IEP or 504 plan, it could be their school counselor, school social worker, school nurse, etc.

School staff:

- **Leads transition planning**

The main school staff facilitates transition planning meetings (like IEP or 504 plan meetings). They bring the youth into the planning process and prepare them to lead the meeting whenever possible. They schedule meetings 30 days ahead of time, ensuring all support team members the youth want to attend are invited. They create the meeting agenda in consultation with the youth and other support team members and prepare the youth to lead their meeting. The main school staff works with the youth and team to develop goals within the areas of in(ter)dependent living,

School staff (continued)

employment, and postsecondary education and training, determine accommodations to reach those goals, and reflect this information in the youth's plan.

- **Ensures the youth has a support team**

The main school staff person is the primary person responsible for ensuring that the student has a team of support, all members are identified and information is shared between them, as the youth directs. At the beginning of each school year, the main school staff person asks the youth and parents/guardians about who is on the youth's support team. The main school staff also helps the youth think through who isn't currently on their team but who they might want to add and helps the youth share names and contact information for all current team members. To help ensure team members are identified, school staff can help the youth complete the My Core Team activity in My Vault and keep it up to date as needed (see sidebar on page 2).

- **Helps youth identify transition/Pre-ETS strengths and needs**

With input from the youth, the main school staff takes the lead in completing the Transition/Pre-ETS Inventory with the entire support team. They facilitate a discussion about which learning stage the youth is in for each transition/Pre-ETS topic as well as which topics the youth wants to prioritize for the year. One way school staff can help youth think about these topics and identify their needs and goals is by using the planning path activities in My Vault (see sidebar on page 2).

- **Implements the plan**

School staff utilize their knowledge and resources to support the implementation of transition services.

- **Tracks progress**

School staff communicate with the youth and use the learning stages for each transition/Pre-ETS topic to track the youth's progress within transition services. As the youth's needs change, they update the transition plan and services accordingly.

- **Reflects at the end of the year**

Main school staff facilitates a meeting with the youth and all the team members the youth chooses to reflect on the youth's progress through the learning stages within each transition/Pre-ETS topic focused on during the past year.

- **Helps youth maintain planning documents**

The main school staff helps the youth have their own electronic copy of their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and 504 plans, which outline the youth's educational goals and transition plan plus strategies to reach those goals. They help the youth create and use their own My Vault account to store and share their plans.

- **Collaborates with team members**

They actively communicate with all team members, including VRS/SSB staff and waiver case managers, throughout the planning process. They can create a My Vault account to create contacts, store and share relevant documents with the youth and their support team, as the student chooses. This helps team members coordinate and ensure youth get services that meet their needs. Main school staff may also participate in or provide information for VRS/SSB and waiver planning meetings.



Vocational rehabilitation staff

Providing Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) and other supports to prepare for, find, keep, and advance in competitive integrated employment

Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) and State Services for the Blind (SSB) staff help youth prepare for and find competitive integrated employment. Services are provided using a person-centered approach and vary depending on the youth's specific needs. VRS/SSB staff are assigned to every high school and age 18-22 transition program in the state.

VRS/SSB staff:

- **Helps youth and families know VRS/SSB services are available**

VRS/SSB staff works with school staff to introduce VRS/SSB services and provides application packets to all youth and families referred to them.

Vocational rehabilitation staff *(continued)*

- **Helps the youth complete the application, intake and eligibility process**
VRS/SSB helps the youth complete the VRS/SSB application and intake process. They determine eligibility and communicate that with the youth and their team, as the youth directs.
- **Learns who is on the youth's team**
Once a youth is enrolled in VRS/SSB services, the VRS/SSB staff works with the youth, parents/guardians, and school staff to understand who is on the youth's support team to coordinate services. VRS/SSB staff also help the youth think through who isn't currently on their team but who they might want to add. One way to do this is for the youth to share their My Core Team activity (see sidebar on page 2) with VRS/SSB staff through My Vault. VRS/SSB staff can also help the youth update the information in the activity as needed.
- **Helps youth identify transition/Pre-ETS strengths and needs**
VRS/SSB staff reviews the Transition/Pre-ETS Inventory with the youth, school staff, and other support team members to identify which services VRS/SSB will provide. They may also participate in discussion about which learning stage the youth is in and which topics the youth wants to prioritize for the year.
- **Helps the youth plan their services**
VRS/SSB works with the youth and other support team members to plan how VRS/SSB services will be provided. VRS/SSB may work with the youth to choose a service provider to help provide VRS/SSB services. To help coordinate services, if the youth wants them to, VRS/SSB staff attend school facilitated transition planning meetings (like IEP or 504 plan meetings) and waiver support plan meetings.
- **Implements the plan**
VRS/SSB staff utilize their knowledge and resources to support the implementation of transition/Pre-ETS services.
- **Tracks progress**
VRS/SSB staff use the learning stages for each transition topic to track the youth's progress within transition/Pre-ETS services. As the youth's needs change they update the employment plan and services accordingly.
- **Collaborates with team members**
They actively communicate with all team members, including school staff and waiver case managers, throughout the planning process. They can create a My Vault account to create contacts, store and share relevant documents with the youth and their support team, as the student chooses. VRS/SSB staff may also participate in or provide information for school and waiver planning meetings.
- **Reflects**
VRS/SSB staff attend the meetings with youth, school staff and other support team members to reflect on the youth's progress through the learning stages within each transition topic focused on the past year.
- **Continues services after graduation, if needed**
VRS/SSB can continue to provide services after the youth graduates from high school or age 18-22 transition programming. An employment goal is created with the youth which is reflected in the youth's Employment Plan along with the services the youth needs to reach that goal. Services can include postsecondary education/training, job placement, and supports to keep a job. Once a youth graduates from high school or 18-22 transition programming, if they have a waiver they work closely with the waiver case manager to identify who will fund and provide the needed employment services.



Service providers

Providing support to help youth engage, explore, prepare for, and implement plans for in(ter)dependent living, postsecondary education or training, and employment

VRS/SSB and the Minnesota Department of Human Services contract with service providers across the state. VRS/SSB staff and waiver case managers work with the youth (and parents or guardians as applicable) to make informed decisions about which provider(s) will deliver services.*

Service providers:

- **Convene intake or “first meetings”**

After receiving a referral from VRS/SSB or a waiver case manager, the service provider will convene a meeting with the youth and their team to learn about the desired services, complete initial paperwork, and discuss how the team will coordinate and communicate going forward.

- **Learn who is on the team**

Service provider staff works with the youth, parents/guardians, school staff, VRS/SSB, and/or waiver case manager to understand who is on the youth's support team in order to coordinate services. One way to do this is for the youth to share their My Core Team activity (see sidebar on page 2) with service providers through My Vault. Service providers can also help the youth update the information in the activity as needed.

- **Understand the youth's strengths and needs**

The service provider staff reviews the completed Transition/Pre-ETS Inventory to understand the youth's strengths and needs and the services they have been asked to provide.

- **Participate in meetings to ensure coordination of services and progress toward transition/Pre-ETS goals**

Service providers participate in all transition planning meetings, including IEP meetings, VRS/SSB employment

plan meetings and waiver service plan progress meetings in order to report on the youth's progress within the services they are providing and ensure that the services are coordinated with other supports the youth receives.

- **Track progress**

Service providers include the youth's progress through the learning stages for each transition/Pre-ETS topic they are addressing in progress reports they submit to VRS/SSB and/or waiver case managers. As the youth's needs change, they help the youth communicate those needs with the support team and adjust their services accordingly.

- **Collaborate with team members**

They actively communicate with all team members, including school staff, VRS/SSB staff, and waiver case managers, throughout the planning process. They can create a My Vault account to create contacts, store and share relevant documents with the youth and their support team, as the student chooses. Service providers may also participate in or provide information for school, VRS/SSB, and waiver planning meetings.

- **Reflect**

Service provider staff participate in discussions with youth, school staff and other support team members to reflect on the youth's progress through the learning stages within each transition topic focused on during the past year.

* For youth on waivers, home and community-based services needed outside of school hours (evenings, weekends, school breaks, etc.) are provided by waiver service providers. Youth who are on waivers and need employment services provided by VRS/SSB may want to consider service providers that are enrolled with both VRS/SSB and waiver services so they don't have to change providers.



Waiver case managers

Assessing needs, creating service plans, offering referrals

Waiver case managers help youth who are on a waiver identify their in(ter)dependent living needs and access and navigate supports and services to meet those needs. Waiver case managers are responsible for providing the information a youth needs to make informed choices about the supports and services they want. This includes social, health, educational, vocational, housing, and financial services.

The waiver case manager:

- **Helps youth identify strengths and needs**

Waiver case managers work with the youth and their family to identify their strengths and needs. The Transition/Pre-ETS Inventory can be reviewed with the youth, school staff, and other support team members to help identify strengths and needs.

- **Learns who is on the team**

Waiver case managers work with the youth, parents/guardians, and school staff to understand who is on the youth's support team in order to coordinate services. They also help the youth think through who isn't on their team but who they might want to add. One way to do this is for the youth to share their My Core Team activity (see sidebar on page 2) with their waiver case manager through My Vault. Waiver case managers can also help the youth update the information in the activity as needed.

- **Works with the youth to create a support plan**

Waiver case managers work with the youth to identify supports and services needed to meet their needs. They participate in transition planning meetings (like IEP or 504 plan meetings) to coordinate services and identify which services can be provided through the waiver. They create a support plan and share it with the youth and other team members the youth chooses.

- **Implements the plan**

Waiver case managers help the youth choose waiver service providers and authorize those providers to implement the waiver support plan.

- **Tracks progress**

Waiver case managers get regular updates from the youth, waiver service providers and other team members on the youth's progress within the learning stages. As the youth's needs change, they update the waiver support plan and services accordingly.

- **Reflects**

Waiver case managers hold and attend meetings with youth, school staff and other support team members to reflect on the youth's progress through the learning stages within waiver services provided during the past year.

- **Collaborates with team members**

They actively communicate with all team members, including school and VRS/SSB staff, throughout the planning process. They can create a My Vault account to create contacts, store and share relevant documents with the youth and their support team, as the student chooses. Case managers also participate in or provide information for school and VRS/SSB planning meetings.

- **Continues services after graduation**

Waiver case managers continue to work with the youth, assessing needs, and authorizing needed services and supports after the youth graduates from high school or age 18-22 transition programming. They continue to work with the other members of the youth's support team. As it relates to employment, they work together to identify which employment services the youth needs and which of those the waiver will provide and when.