

participating students will receive the benefits of earlier involvement with the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) and other employment support services.

Project Sites:

Maryland Schools for the Blind,
Baltimore County, Wicomico County
Mississippi

Title: The Mississippi Youth Transition Innovations Project (MYTI).
Awardee: Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services (MDRS).

Summary: The Mississippi Youth Transition Innovations Project (MYTI) will serve youth ages 10–25 who receive SSI, SSDI, CDB, or youth at risk of receiving such benefits. MYTI will address the following issues: (a) The need for development of a model transition process that will facilitate optimal passage from school to work; (b) The elimination of barriers when feasible to effect transition at the local, state, and federal levels through interagency collaboration and elimination of policies, procedures, regulations, and statutory requirements that impede progress; and, (c) The development of natural and new/innovative supports at all levels as needed. The MYTI Project will be based upon individual person-centered planning, including the use of individual training accounts involving prospective employer buy-in to pre-career development, such as training opportunities required to earn an Occupational Diploma. As issues arise that impede the ability to accomplish this, local-level Transition Specialists will address these on an individualized basis and, if necessary, bring them to the state-level Coordination Council to facilitate barrier removal. In the final year in the local school system, participants will be referred to the appropriate MDRS program for vocational rehabilitation, supported employment, and independent living services. The program will be evaluated in terms of progress and outcome variables. Participation analysis will compare the experiences of the project group with a similar group of students with disabilities who did not receive project services.

Project Sites: Gulfport City and Harrison County Schools in years 1–3 and then add the Durant Public School in year 4.

New York

Title: Transition WORKS.

Awardee: Erie 1 Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) with the Office of Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with

Disabilities, New York State Department of Education.

Summary: Transition WORKS project is designed to increase the post-school transition success experienced by youth and young adults ages 14–25 who receive SSI, SSDI or CDB or youth at risk of receiving such benefits. Transition WORKS proposes to provide a comprehensive, collaborative transition planning and services model comprised of the most effective, research-based transition practices. A research design will test the efficacy of the component services and statistically test several hypotheses regarding transition services. The project will provide student- and family-centered planning for all participants (in and out-of-school), coordination of services, parent and family education and support, benefits advisement and work incentives advisement in addition to waivers of SSA regulations, and participation in career exploration activities as well as community-based work experiences. Youth with potential for postsecondary education will receive assistance to plan for and to enter and participate successfully in postsecondary education.

Project Site: Erie County.

Title: CUNY's Youth Transition Demonstration Project.

Awardee: City University of New York.

Summary: CUNY's Youth Transition Demonstration Project is designed to prepare youth aged 16–19, who receive SSI benefits, to achieve economic self-sufficiency. The project plans to increase coordination among public agencies and private organizations that have resources, funding, and a mandate to provide transition services. As a forum to deliver transition services, integrate systems and tap resources, the project will convene an annual, four-week, Summer Institute for participating youth. There will be a variety of workshops, information sessions, and professional development seminars to support transition. All students will be trained in self-determination skills. Tutoring in basic skills, vocational assessments, benefits counseling, and work-based learning will also be provided. College students with disabilities will serve as peer mentors. Year round activities will include student self-advocacy groups, parent support groups, and a four-course, twelve-credit Certificate in Transition Services for school personnel, staff at public and private agencies, as well as parents and CUNY students. The project will be evaluated by comparing the progress the experimental group makes, versus the control group, in completing

specific and objective milestones in the transition process.

Project Site: Bronx County.

Alternative SSI Program Rules that Apply to Participants in the YTPD

Section 1110(b) of the Act authorizes the Commissioner of Social Security to waive any requirements of title XVI of the Act necessary to carry out demonstrations that, in the Commissioner's judgment, are likely to promote the objectives or facilitate the administration of the SSI program.

The following alternative SSI program rules will apply to certain project participants who receive SSI benefits or a combination of SSI and SSDI benefits.

1. Despite the finding of a continuing disability review conducted in accordance with section 221(i) or section 1614(a)(3)(H) of the Act or an age-18 medical redetermination conducted in accordance with section 1614(a)(3)(I) of the Act that an individual is no longer eligible for benefits, SSA will continue paying benefits for as long as the individual continues to be a YTPD participant.

2. The student earned-income exclusion (section 1612(b)(1) of the Act), which normally applies only to students who are age 21 or younger and neither married nor the head of a household (20 CFR 416.1866) will apply to all participants who meet school attendance requirements, without regard to their age or whether they are married or the head of a household.

3. The general earned-income exclusion (section 1612(b)(4)) normally permits the exclusion of \$65 plus half of what an individual earns in excess of \$65. For the YTPD, SSA will exclude the first \$65 plus three-fourths of any additional earnings.

4. SSA will extend the SSI program's treatment of federally supported individual development accounts (IDAs) (section 404(h) of the Act) to IDAs that do not involve federal funds.

An IDA is a trust-like savings account. Except for certain emergencies, funds in a federally supported IDA can be used only for going to college, buying a first home, or starting a business. The individual makes deposits from his or her earned income. The individual's contributions are matched, at rates that can vary from 1:1 to 8:1, usually depending on the availability of funding.

Social Security excludes federally-supported IDAs when it determines whether someone's resources exceed the SSI limit. It also excludes matching contributions when it determines countable income. Further, Social Security deducts the beneficiary's own