



Texas Parent to Parent

Pathways to Adulthood:

Thinking about Post-Secondary Opportunities

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If you are thinking that a competitive college degree is not in your child's future but you would still like for your child to have post-secondary learning opportunities, here are some options in Texas and information on what DARS will pay for:

DARS (Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services) can help pay for college if the individual meets the eligibility criteria to receive services, college is a reasonable and necessary part of preparing them for work (and their specific goal), and they are functioning at an appropriate level to successfully complete college courses. The money does not have to be paid back. To be eligible for DARS services, a person has to have a physical or mental impairment, the impairment must constitute a substantial impediment to employment, the individual must require vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, enter, engage in or retain gainful employment, and be capable of achieving an employment goal.

Appropriateness for college is most often determined by reviewing testing/records from the school, as well as testing done by DARS. Once it has been determined that DARS will sponsor someone for college, the student must go to school full time (minimum 12 semester hours), apply for the Pell Grant, and maintain at least a 2.0 grade point average.

Here are some of the current college options for Texans with disabilities:

College Living Experience: in Austin, TX

Students are enrolled in area college programs and live in supervised apartments.

“Students at College Living Experience are encouraged to pursue their post secondary program of interest so services can be tailored specifically to their educational needs.

As such, CLE collaborates with a variety of schools and programs including universities, community colleges, and vocational programs, while students work towards their Bachelor’s Degree, Associates Degree, or certificate.

Each week, our student’s CLE schedules are filled with one-on-one content-specific tutoring, group tutoring, and supervised study halls. With guidance and instruction from professional tutors, students also receive coaching in planning, organizing, managing time, strategizing, and executing. “

<http://experiencecle.com>

Austin Community College: STEPS — Skills, Training and Education for Personal Success: in

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Austin, TX

STEPS is a program for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities interested in gaining skills to enter the workforce or continue to develop their education. STEPS provides a wealth of support to help adults achieve their individualized goals. Working together with agencies and schools, we provide comprehensive supports through their entire two years leading towards increased independence and employ-ability.

STEPS offers many levels of support, choices and plans for students. Please contact <http://austincc.wix.com/accsteps> for information on how to apply.

West Texas A&M University: Where the Learning Continues (WTAMU): in Canyon, TX

Created in 2004, WTLC provides a post-high school educational experience for high functioning young adults with intellectual disabilities. The four-year program reinforces subjects learned in high school, like math and vocabulary, and further builds skills for independence. Students attend class Monday through Thursday from 8 am to 11 am on the WT campus during the fall and spring semesters. After completing 8 semesters, students participate in the WTAMU commencement ceremonies earning a certificate of completion. <http://wtamu.edu/academics/eod-where-the-learning-continues.aspx>

Texas A&M University: Post-secondary Access and Training in Human Services (PATHS): in College Station, TX

The PATHS Certificate Program is your path to a successful career as a Direct Support Professional working with people with disabilities. The PATHS Certificate Program is a program offered at the [Center on Disability and Development at Texas A&M University](#) that will prepare graduates to be *Direct Support Professionals*. This two semester certificate program prepares graduates for employment in a career serving people with disabilities. <http://paths.tamu.edu/>

Houston Community College: VAST Academy: at the Central VAST Academy Location in Houston and the Northwest VAST Academy at the Spring Branch Campus

VAST Academy provides post-secondary transition programs and comprehensive support services which lead to meaningful credentials, employment and independence for differently-abled individuals. Opportunities include vocational certificates, pre-college and freshman success “bridge” courses, career readiness credentials, internships and employment assistance offered through an inclusive, relevant and affordable avenue. <http://vast.hccs.edu/>

Lone Star College-CyFair: CCDEL: in Cypress, TX - one of 5 colleges in the Lone Star College System, Houston area

Lone Star College-CyFair offers students with disabilities the opportunity to gain a Customer Service Certificate through the College of Careers and Development for Exceptional Learners (CCDEL.)

“Through this certificate program, students learn the skills necessary to run a help desk, to deal with challenging customers, as well as to communicate more effectively with co-workers,” said Director of Continuing Education Kenya White.

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CCDEL is a unique program designed to meet the needs of motivated adults with developmental disabilities who wish to further their education beyond a high school level in order to provide skills that can be utilized for employment. Students complete an internship on campus to learn real life applications in a customer support environment.

“All CCDEL courses are tailored to provide successful life application skills that can be utilized for employment,” said White. “Our purpose is to not only provide students with exceptional workforce training and skills, but to foster social and financial independence.”

<http://www.lonestar.edu/news/20518.htm>

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