



**Dane County  
Department of Human Services  
Division of Adult Community Services**

Director – Lynn Green  
Division Administrator - Fran Genter

**KATHLEEN FALK**  
DANE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

**Dane County Transition Policy regarding High School Graduates with Developmental Disabilities**

In response to extremely long waiting lists for vocational services, the Dane County Board has established a policy affecting young adults with developmental disabilities attending school districts in Dane County. Previously, schools were spending energy and resources training young people in jobs, only to find that when the individual left the school system at age 21 there were no follow-up services available. The person was usually placed on Dane County's vocational waiting list. The result was that these productive workers lost skills, jobs and income as they sat at home, often for many years, waiting for services.

The Dane County Board decided that it is sound fiscal and ethical policy to continue the on-the-job training and support after the person turns 21 years old, when the schools were no longer responsible for students with developmental disabilities. However in order to be fair to the waiting list, the policy emphasizes continuity of service as opposed to new or increased service. This means that students for whom taxpayer funds have provided job training and placement will receive the needed support to maintain that job schedule when the student has completed school services.

The following conditions need to be met in order for a student to receive county-funded community vocational services at age 21:

- 1) The student remains within the school system throughout the year that the individual turns 21 years old
- 2) The student is working in paid employment at the time of transition.

Funding for vocational supports from Dane County will continue for as long as needed. It is expected that other funding sources will be utilized if available, specifically DVR and Medicaid waiver programs.

This policy is contingent on the availability of Dane County funds.

This policy is a tremendous advantage for the young people with developmental disabilities who are leaving the school systems; the alternative could be years of waiting for county funding for vocational services. In order to make this policy work for students, the county, school systems and families need to work together to provide a solid and meaningful transition.

Donna Winnick, Developmental Disabilities Program Specialist  
6/26/03