

About Public Agencies

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The public agencies described below offer assistance to people with disabilities and their families. NICHCY's *State Resource Sheet* will tell you who they are and where to find them in your state.

Find your state sheet online, at: www.nichcy.org/families-community/states/

- If your child is an **infant**, please refer to NICHCY's *State Resource Sheet* for your state. Contact the office listed under PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES: AGES BIRTH THROUGH 2 YEARS.
- If your child is of **preschool age**, the office you'll want to contact is listed on the *State Resource Sheet* under PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES: AGES 3 THROUGH 5 YEARS. Ask for the Child Find Coordinator in your community. This person will be able to connect you with the type of assistance you need, including where to have your child evaluated free of charge.
- If your child is **school-aged**: One of the best resources for finding help for your child with a disability is the school system in your area. If your child is enrolled in public school and you think he or she needs special help, discuss your concerns with your child's teacher or school principal. Ask to have your child evaluated under IDEA, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. This evaluation will be provided free of charge.



STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

The State Department staff can answer questions about special education and related services in your state. Many states have special manuals explaining the steps to take. Check to see if such a manual is available online. State Department officials are responsible for special education and related services programs in their state for preschool, elementary, and secondary children.

STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AGENCY

The state vocational rehabilitation (VR) agency provides medical, therapeutic, counseling, education, training, and other services needed to prepare people with disabilities for work. This state agency will refer you to the nearest rehabilitation office where you can discuss issues of eligibility and services with a counselor. The state VR agency can also refer you to an independent living program in your state. Independent living programs provide services that enable adults with disabilities to live productively as members of their communities. The services might include, but are not limited to: information and referral, peer counseling, workshops, attendant care, and technical assistance.

OFFICE OF STATE COORDINATOR OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

States receiving Federal funds used for vocational education must assure that funding is used in programs that include students with disabilities. This office can tell you how your state funds are being used and provide you with information on current programs.

STATE INTELLECTUAL/DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AGENCIES

The functions of state intellectual disabilities/developmental disabilities agencies vary from state to state. Generally, this office plans and administers state/local programs for individuals with intellectual disabilities or developmental disabilities. This office provides information about available services to families, consumers, educators, and other professionals.

STATE DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL

State DD councils plan and advocate for inclusive communities and self-directed services and supports for individuals with developmental disabilities.

STATE MENTAL HEALTH AGENCIES

The duties of state mental health agencies differ from state to state. Generally, these offices plan, administer, and develop standards for state and local mental health programs such as state hospitals and community health centers. They provide information to consumers about mental illness and a resource list of contacts to turn to for help.

PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY AGENCY & CLIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Protection and Advocacy systems are responsible for pursuing legal, administrative, and other remedies to protect the rights of people who have developmentally disabilities or mental illness, regardless of their age. Protection and Advocacy agencies may provide information about health, residential, and social services in your area. Legal assistance is also available.

The Client Assistance Program provides assistance to individuals seeking and receiving vocational rehabilitation services. These services, provided under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, include assisting in the pursuit of legal, administrative, and other appropriate remedies to insure that the rights of individuals with developmental disabilities are protected.

PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL HEALTH CARE NEEDS

States also operate programs to address the health of mothers, infants, children, adolescents, and children with special health care needs. These are made possible through the Title V Maternal and Child Health Block Grant to States program, which is responsible for core public health functions for mothers and children. The NICHCY state sheet identifies the program in your state. Additional information is available from:

<https://perfddata.hrsa.gov/mchb/TVISReports/ContactInfo/StateContactSearch.aspx>

UNIVERSITY CENTERS FOR EXCELLENCE IN DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Your state may have a University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD), which is part of a national network of programs affiliated with universities and teaching hospitals. UCEDDs engage in research, education, and service designed to further independence, productivity, and full community participation of people with developmental disabilities. The centers have a unique strength in training professional leaders, individuals with disabilities, and family

members in fields such as early intervention and education, health care, special education, and innovative housing and employment programs.

If your state has a UCEDD, it will be listed on NICHCY's *State Resource Sheet*. More information on the network, including a list of all centers, is available from:

Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD)
<http://www.aucd.org>

PARENT TRAINING AND INFORMATION CENTERS

Each state has a parent training and information center or PTI that is funded through our nation's special education law, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Many states also have a Community Parent Resource Center (CPRC). PTIs and CPRCs are valuable resources for parents. They provide training and information on different disabilities, educational rights under the law, how to work with the schools, where to find resources in your state and community, and much, much more. They are most certainly listed on the NICHCY *State Resource Sheet*! Find your state's PTI and CPRC under "Organizations Especially for Parents."



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