



Naperville North High School

899 North Mill Street

Naperville, Illinois 60563

Graduating Seniors

TO: NNHS Parents/Guardians Seniors Graduating

RE: DRS Major Update: College funding is now extended to students attending 4-year universities

Self-Referral Link: <https://wr.dhs.illinois.gov/wrpublic/wr/dynamic/referral.jsf>

Dear Senior Students and Parents/Guardians:

The Department of Rehabilitation Services has recently had a Policy update that addresses the changes on funding for 4-year and private/out-of-state institutions. Please see the attached Policy Update along with an Example of Customer Letter that would be received from DRS once a case manager is assigned.

In order to begin the process for services you will need to complete the online referral form <https://wr.dhs.illinois.gov/wrpublic/wr/dynamic/referral.jsf>

There are specific deadlines outlined in the sample of the *Customer Letter*, so please take the time to read through the included information carefully.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this process, please call me at 630-420-5683 or email at dmrozinski@naperville203.org.

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Division of Rehabilitation Services

100 South Grand Avenue East - 2nd Floor • P.O. Box 19429 • Springfield, Illinois 62794-9429

UPDATE: Administrative Rule Change That May Impact Your Case

On 10-21-2024, the Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Rehabilitation (IDHS-DRS) revised and adopted several Vocational Rehabilitation administrative rules, improving the way in which we are able to process and financially support education and training programs.

Guidance for Illinois Public Institutions

IDHS-DRS may now cover the majority of costs for students attending public college training programs located in Illinois (i.e., Illinois Community Colleges, Illinois Undergraduate and Graduate programs, other advanced degrees, and technical programs). IDHS-DRS wants to help you understand your unique training situation, and how these rule changes could impact your financial participation.

The change to these administrative rules no longer requires IDHS-DRS to review your or your family's income, taxes, or other financial documentation. Please know, you are **still required to complete your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**. Grants or scholarships awarded through FAFSA and other merit-based scholarships must be applied prior to any IDHS-DRS support.

Examples of costs include:

1. Tuition and fees
2. Books and supplies
3. Tools and equipment
4. Room and board at the college, or off campus rental
5. Health insurance

Customers are still required to pay a small portion of living expenses (room and board) if you relocate to the college program you are attending.

Specific Information Regarding Private Colleges and Universities

Students attending private or out-of-state colleges and universities are subject to maximum tuition thresholds comparable to the cost of attending most Illinois public colleges and universities. Therefore, customers will be responsible for paying any amount above the tuition maximum but may use any private scholarships they receive to cover the balance.

Your DRS Counselor will be reaching out to you soon to discuss any changes that will impact your case for any new terms from 10/21/24 forward.

If you typically take out student loans to pay for your college expenses, you may want to reconsider until you know the balance of your remaining costs.

Should you have any questions please reach out to your IDHS-DRS counselor **(NAME)** at **(NUMBER)** or **(EMAIL)**.



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Additional training related costs covered by DRS

In addition to tuition and fees, IDHS-DRS can cover other costs associated with attending college. Some of these costs include computers, special equipment, transportation, mandatory health insurance, and room and board. In some cases, customers may choose provisions costing more than the IDHS-DRS base amount. In these instances, customers may be responsible for the difference in price.

Transportation to and from the institution if the customer does not relocate – DRS will pay their established rate of .67 per mile for one round trip per day. If public transportation is accessible to the customer and meets the customer’s schedule, the maximum IDHS-DRS will pay is the cost of public transportation.

Normal Living Expenses

IDHS-DRS may cover housing and food costs above normal living expenses when customers relocate to attend training. A customer’s normal living expense is the amount the customer must pay towards their room and board per month. The current normal living amount is a fixed rate of \$198 for room and \$189 for meal plan, or \$387 per month, or approximately \$1548 per semester. Normal living expenses are based on a standard shared room and the basic comprehensive meal plan amount. If the customer elects to purchase plans above the standard amount, they may be responsible for the increase in the normal living expenses.

For students living off campus in non-institution housing, IDHS-DRS sets a maximum amount to pay towards the rent based on the fair market rent of a one-bedroom apartment, as established by Housing and Urban Development (HUD), in the county of the institution, less the normal cost of living. If the customer desires to live in off campus housing costing more than the IDHS-DRS maximum amount, the customer would be responsible for paying that additional amount.

Special Considerations for Private Scholarships

Private scholarships received by the customer can be used to pay their share of any cost above the DRS tuition maximum. Any remaining amounts that are intended for the customer's training would then be used to reduce any DRS participation.



JB Pritzker, Governor

Dulce M. Quintero, Secretary Designate

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2024-2025 School Year	Maximum Tuition Threshold
Private, and Out-of-State Universities	
Academic Year	\$16,020
Per Semester	\$8,010
Per Credit Hour For 11 or Fewer Hours	\$534
Private, and Out-of-State Graduate School	
Academic Year	\$22,504
Per Semester	\$11,252
Per Credit Hour For 9 or Fewer Hours	\$750
Non-Degree Training with No Comparable Illinois Public Community College Program	
Academic Year	\$6,650
Per Semester	\$3,325
Per Credit Hour For 11 or Fewer Hours	\$222



Dear Customer,

You are receiving this letter because you have a desire to receive sponsorship towards your college education from the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS). **DRS is able to assist you with this endeavor however there are steps that must be taken to find you eligible for financial assistance as it is NOT automatically given; DRS is who makes the decision in this matter.** The most critical part of this process is the timely submission of the required documentation on your part. This information is needed every semester to be considered for DRS sponsorship, it is **required and not optional**. It is your responsibility (the customer) to supply this information, not the school though they can assist. It must be submitted by the designated deadline, unless you contact your counselor, requesting additional time to supply them. It is important that you understand, failure to supply the documentation in a timely fashion will result in non-payment towards your education by the Division of Rehabilitation for that semester, no exceptions will be made. **You, the customer, must have an identified vocational goal that requires post-secondary education.**

The required documentation that you must submit is as follows:

- ACT/SAT scores
- College Acceptance Letter (major must be declared and relates to intended vocational goal)
- HS Transcripts (Can be unofficial)
- Parents Tax Returns (1040 not W2s) – *if applicable for non-EXEMPT services
- FAFSA Award letter (Financial Aid)
- Career Statement (including answers to the college essay questions provided by Counselor)
- Course Outline for targeted degree

Please submit these documents **at the same time** via email, mail, or fax, with the preferred method being email, using the primary email address listed on the case. **Deadline is December 15th for Spring admission, May 15th for Summer admission, and July 15th for Fall admission.**

Financial Analysis Breakdown: DRS conducts financial analyses every year because it is required for all DRS Cases. This document helps us know if the customer has an annual financial participation as well as if we can or cannot cover costs. Based off the number of individuals in the home, there is a median household budget allowance that is taken into consideration when collecting household income tax returns from all family members. These amounts let the



counselor know what can be paid for or if you have a participation. If you have a participation, you will have to pay the school the amount, which may change annually, before DRS can pay.

After you submit your college checklist

If your DRS counselor has approved your funding request for your education, you need to submit the following:

Copy of class schedule

Course Outline for Targeted Degree

Itemized tuition bill and Financial Aid Award Letter

Required book list from college bookstore website and/or syllabus with costs
(*LEAST EXPENSIVE OPTION ONLY)

Prior to the start of school, the DRS counselor and the student will meet to complete the following:

- INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT form must show your college and who will pay what--signed and dated.
- NOTIFICATION OF TRAINING SERVICES APPROVED form signed each semester
- Read and understand INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENTS RECEIVING DHS-DRS FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION form

Student must be aware of and understand the following rules:

- Student must fill out Financial Aid Application every year in January/February prior to next school year in order to continue school the following fall semester (i.e. January 2025 for Fall 2025 and Spring 2026 semester).
- Student is responsible for making an appointment with DHS-DRS counselor if they want to continue attending school for the following semester.
- Student understands that he/she/they **must** inform DRS counselor **BEFORE** adding, dropping or withdrawing from a class.
- Submit these documents each semester to continue funding:
 - Copy of class schedule
 - Itemized tuition bill and Financial Aid Award Letter



- Required book list from college bookstore website with costs (**LEAST EXPENSIVE OPTION).
- Previous semester FINAL grades (with NAME, STUDENT ID#, AND G.P.A.)

Thank you for your cooperation,