



State Board of Education

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Exceptional Student Education Directors
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Area Directors

FROM: Aleisa McKinlay, Director *AM*
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
Monica Verra-Tirado, Chief *MVT*
Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services

DATE: March 9, 2015

SUBJECT: **Third Party Cooperative Arrangements**

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services are committed to assisting students with disabilities successfully transition from school to postsecondary education, training and meaningful careers. Both agencies promote the use of evidence-based practices to improve postsecondary outcomes. Work experience while in high school, especially paid work experience, is the best known predictor that a student will become employed and live independently after high school. We will collaboratively support effective work experience programs for students with disabilities statewide and offer assistance to Florida's school districts with the greatest need.

VR is again offering the Third Party Cooperative Arrangements (TPCA) so that all school districts will have the opportunity to renew current arrangements or apply for a TPCA during the 2015-16 school year. TPCA are written agreements designed to provide paid and non-paid community-based work experiences (CBWE) and is often provided as part of the student's curriculum, including community-based vocational education. The TPCA will go into effect once approved, but no earlier than July 1, 2015. The TPCA will serve students with the most significant disabilities who also require VR Supported Employment (SE) services in order to obtain employment. Students who will require ongoing supports in order to maintain employment, including those participating in 18 – 21 year old programs, will need to be determined eligible for VR SE services and have an Individualized Plan of Employment (IPE) developed with and approved by a VR counselor.

The TPCA will:

- Serve students ages 16 or older, VR eligible and with a VR SE IPE
- Have services delivered by one or two employment specialists (i.e., job coaches)
- Require school districts to provide 21.3 percent matching funds from non-federal, general revenue sources to align with VR formula funding
- Use employment specialists to serve at least six students each during a school year
- Provide funding, based on service deliverables to be performed by the employment specialist

In conjunction with the TPCA process, VR emphasizes the use of On-the-Job Training (OJT) work experiences during the summer or when school is not in session for students with disabilities that do not require the intensive supports offered by the TPCA. Current VR employment contractors provide OJT work experiences to assure that this service is available statewide.

We look forward to collaborating with you as we endeavor to provide students with disabilities CBWE before exiting high school. Additional information regarding the TPCA is available in the attached **TPCA Questions and Answers**. Should you have any questions, please contact Kirk Hall, VR transition program administrator, by email at Kirk.Hall@vr.fldoe.org or by phone at 850-245-3360.

AM/MVT/kgh

Attachment

cc: District Assistant Superintendents for Curriculum and Instruction
District Exceptional Student Education Transition Coordinators
Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System Center Managers
VR Supervisors, Counselors and Technicians