

## This Month's Issue

E-News is published on a monthly basis during the school year. Each issue focuses on a specific topic or theme. This month's theme is **EMPLOYMENT—Part One**.

### Students with Disabilities Entering Adult Employment

Students with disabilities must be aware of their rights and responsibilities when they leave the secondary school environment and enter the adult employment world. Students in primary and secondary schools are entitled to accommodations and supports under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). However, these supports do **not** continue after high school, although many students and parents believe that they do.

Accommodations and supports **may** be provided to persons with disabilities by employers under the Americans with Disabilities Act. The ADA prohibits discrimination on the basis of a disability and requires employers to make “reasonable accommodation...to otherwise qualified individuals with disabilities, unless it results in undue hardship” (U.S. Department of Justice, 2009, July).

The number of organizations that provide employment and related support services to persons with disabilities varies by locality. It is up to the student and family to determine the following:

- The services they may need
- Whether they qualify for the services
- How to apply for the services for which they qualify

Information and contacts can be provided by school transition staff. In addition, most Florida school districts have an Interagency Council that provides brochures and information on a variety of services in each area. It is important that students have information and application processes in place **prior** to leaving high school. Planning activities for postsecondary employment and support services typically occur during the junior and/or senior year at Transition Individual Education Plan meetings.

Students with disabilities seeking employment should be connected to Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) prior to leaving high school. VR is a federal-state program that works with people who have physical or mental disabilities to prepare for, gain, or retain employment. VR is committed to helping people with disabilities find meaningful careers. Examples of VR services include the following:

- Medical and Psychological Assessment
- Vocational Evaluation and Planning
- Career Counseling and Guidance
- Training and Education After High School
- Job-Site Assessment and Accommodations
- Job Placement
- Job Coaching
- On-the-Job Training
- Supported Employment
- Assistive Technology and Devices
- Time-Limited Medical and/or Psychological Treatment (Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation website, n.d.)

School guidance counselors and/or transition staff may provide additional information on services provided by the local Vocational Rehabilitation office.

### References

Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. (n.d.) *Vocational Rehabilitation*. Tallahassee, FL: Florida Department of Education. Available at <http://www.rehabworks.org/>

U.S. Department of Justice. (2009, July). *A guide to disability rights laws*. Washington, DC: U.S. Disability Rights Section, Civil Rights Division, U.S. Department of Justice. Available at <http://www.ada.gov/cguide.pdf>

## Types of Employment

**(Regular) Employment** – The employer pays a worker a wage or salary based on the prevailing rate for that job and the worker’s experience. The worker must be paid at least minimum wage. (The current federal minimum wage is \$7.23; Florida’s minimum wage is \$7.79.)

**Subsidized Employment** – The employer is paid a subsidy, often by a government program or agency, to employ a worker or a particular type of worker. The subsidized position must not displace or replace regular employees or negatively impact their wages, hours, or benefits.

**Apprenticeships** – Apprentices receive on-the-job training and related classroom instruction and are paid a graduated wage that increases as their knowledge and skills increase. Most apprenticeships recognized by the U.S. Department of Labor range from one to four years.

**Internships/Work Experiences** – Internships and work experiences are time limited and provide exposure to particular positions or jobs. They may be paid or unpaid. Unpaid internships may not displace or replace regular employees—and may not benefit the business or organization.

**Self-Employment** – Individuals who own their own businesses and earn their income based on business revenues are self employed.

### Reference/Resources

Florida Employment Guide (for job seekers and employers)

<http://www.stateoflouisiana.com/Portal/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabid=10>

Florida (and federal) Minimum Wage Information

<http://www.floridajobs.org/minimumwage/FloridaMinimumWageHistory2000-2013.pdf>

---

## Project SEARCH

An example of a school-to-work transition program that is available in some school districts is Project SEARCH, a unique, business-led, one year program that takes place entirely at the workplace. The goal for each student participant is competitive employment, and total workplace immersion is offered through worksite rotations that provide a seamless combination of classroom instruction, career exploration and hands-on training. The program provides real-life work experience combined with training in employability and independent living skills to help youths with significant intellectual disabilities make successful transitions from school to productive adult life.

Project SEARCH was developed at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center beginning in 1996. It includes an extensive period of training and career exploration, innovative adaptations, long-term job coaching, and continuous feedback from teachers, job coaches, and employers. The final months of the program emphasize refining skills, achieving the career goal, and carrying out individualized job placement. The Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor becomes an even more important part of the team as the job search process begins. Job development and placement are based on student experiences, strengths, and skills. Linkages to appropriate services in the community are critical as students prepare to graduate from the program to ensure a successful transition to employment and adult life. Services are identified in the community that provide assistance with necessary adaptations required to perform a specific job, job coaching, and long-term follow along are arranged usually through the local Developmental Disability organization. Upon satisfactory completion of the program (95% or better attendance, good attitude, successful skill acquisition at each job site) students receive a Career Portfolio, and most are employed in nontraditional, complex, and rewarding jobs. The contents of the Portfolio may vary among program sites but generally contain a resume, letters of recommendation, a competency profile, and any awards or special recognition received while in the program.

In addition to providing training and job placement assistance to students with disabilities, the presence of Project SEARCH in a community can bring about long-term changes in business culture that have far-reaching effects on attitudes about hiring people with disabilities and the range of jobs in which they can be successful. For more information on Project SEARCH, visit <http://www.projectsearch.us/>

---

## Additional Employment Resources

### Project 10 Employment

<http://www.project10.info/Employment.php>

This section of the Project 10 web site contains resources for school professionals on the employment of students with disabilities in the areas of job searching & development, applying for a job, disclosing a disability, accepting a job offer, benefits planning, keeping a job, employing youth with significant disabilities, supporting youth with disabilities on the job, and more.

### Let's Get Everyone to Work

<http://www.fddc.org/publications> (scroll down to Employment)

These employment and training videos were developed by the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council (FDDC) and include a Resource Toolkit for Students and Families, a Teaching Toolkit for Pre-Service Professionals, and a Marketing Toolkit for Employers. The videos discuss employment and independence strategies, high expectations, person-centered planning, support networks for people with developmental disabilities, benefits of hiring people with developmental disabilities, available employer supports, and success stories for ten "super employees."

### Skills to Pay the Bills

<http://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills/>

This curriculum was developed by the Office of Disability Employment Policy in the U.S. Department of Labor and provides videos and instructional modules for teaching communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and professionalism skills to youth ages 14-21.

### Disability Employment Initiative

<http://www.dei-ideas.org>

DEI's mission is to improve the effective and meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in the workforce system. Resources include the American Job Center Toolkit Resources of the Week and more.

### Youth Employment Rate

<http://www.dol.gov/odep/categories/youth/youthemployment.htm>

This web page from the Office of Disability Employment Policy in the U.S. Department of Labor tracks the monthly Bureau of Labor Statistics employment rate for youth with and without disabilities. Users can also link to a variety of employment resources from accommodations and apprenticeship through Universal Design and the Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP) for College Students with Disabilities.

### New LEAD Center Website

<http://www.leadcenter.org/>

The LEAD Center, a national training and technical assistance center funded by ODEP, launched its national website in April 2013. The website features the latest LEAD Center news and initiatives, a comprehensive resource center, a national calendar of events and trainings, and information on a free webinar series promoting public policy, employment and economic advancement outcomes for all people across the spectrum of disability. New resources, events, news and information will be added to the site regularly.

### Child Labor Laws

<http://www.myfloridalicense.com/dbpr/childlabor/index.html>

This web page from the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation addresses issues related to the employment of youth ages 14-17 including work hours, prohibited occupations, safety, enforcement, training, and more.

### Employment Checklist for Students with Disabilities

<http://www.project10.info/DetailPage.php?MainPageID=100>

### Employment Checklist for Students with Significant Disabilities

<http://www.project10.info/DetailPage.php?MainPageID=101>

These checklists for students exiting high school summarize the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to find and keep good jobs.

## Additional Employment Resources (continued)

### School to Work Transition Program, Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

<http://www.rehabworks.org/stw.shtml>

The School to Work Transition program helps students achieve meaningful career goals by training for a job, continuing their education, and/or finding work after leaving high school. Services include financial assistance for training and education; a checklist of goals and activities for moving from school to adult life; a focus on the individual's needs, preferences, and interests; counseling and job training to prepare for employment and life after school, living skills training; an outline of possible career choices; and guidance and assistance throughout the hiring process until employment is achieved. All young people with disabilities should be encouraged to apply for Vocational Rehabilitation services.

---

## Other News, Events, and Resources

### National ADA Symposium, May 12-15, 2013

<http://www.adasympposium.org/>

The 16th Annual National Americans with Disabilities Act Symposium will be May 12-15, 2013, in San Antonio, TX. The Symposium will provide practical, expert training on implementation of the ADA and related laws will be presented by nationally recognized experts and representatives from the U.S. Department of Justice, the Access Board, and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

### *Florida Statutes and State Board of Education Rules: Excerpts Related to Exceptional Student Education (Vol. I-B)*

<http://www.fldoe.org/ese/pub-home.asp>

The 2013 "Red Book" is now available online as a PDF download on the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEES) Presentations and Publications page.

---

## Project 10 Website Updates

The following items were recently updated or added to the Project 10 website at <http://www.project10.info>:

### Conference Presentations

Added the Project 10 Update presented at the State Secondary Transition Interagency Council meeting in Tallahassee on April 18, 2013.

### What's New

Added "Grants Available for Improving Juvenile Justice Employment Outcomes."

Updated VISIONS XX registration information (time is running out).

---

## About Project 10 E-News

*Project 10 E-News* provides short information summaries and resource links related to secondary transition. Have a question? Want to find or recommend a resource? Have some great news to share? Send us an email at [project10@stpete.usf.edu](mailto:project10@stpete.usf.edu), and we'll take it from there!

For back issues of *Project 10 E-News*, visit the *E-News* page on the Project 10 website at <http://www.project10.info/Newsletter.php>.

---

Project 10: Transition Education Network assists Florida school districts and relevant stakeholders in building capacity to provide secondary transition services to students with disabilities in order to improve their academic success and post-school outcomes.

**Project 10: Transition Education Network**  
**University of South Florida St. Petersburg**

Questions or comments? Email us at [project10@stpete.usf.edu](mailto:project10@stpete.usf.edu)  
[www.project10.info](http://www.project10.info)