

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

KATHLEEN SHANAHAN, Chair
ROBERTO MARTÍNEZ, Vice Chair

Members

SALLY BRADSHAW
GARY CHARTRAND
DR. AKSHAY DESAI
BARBARA S. FEINGOLD
JOHN R. FADGET

Gerard Robinson
Commissioner of Education



July 2, 2012

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Vocational Rehabilitation Staff

FROM: Linda Parnell, Bureau Chief
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

SUBJECT: Guidance for VR Support of Project SEARCH services

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) assists eligible transition age youth with disabilities to attain meaningful employment through training, education and placement. The Rehabilitation Services Administration defines transition age youth as 14 – 24 years old. Transition age youth that are in school at the time of application are served by the VR School to Work Transition Program, while youth that have already exited the school system are served by the General VR Program.

VR prioritizes services to individuals with the most severe disabilities, including those that require Supported Employment (SE) services. VR also places a strong emphasis on the development of needed work and social skills while establishing a network of supports. There are specific services and activities that effectively support transition for youth. The attached Technical Assistance Paper (TAP) provides guidance for VR staff members who assist transition age youth participating in Project SEARCH. The TAP also provides background information on Project SEARCH and outlines the reimbursement process for each service provided through an approved Project SEARCH site as part of a SE Individualized Plan for Employment.

I thank you for your ongoing efforts to improve service delivery and meaningful employment outcomes for this important group of individuals.

ALEISA C. MCKINLAY
Director, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

2002 Old Saint Augustine Road, Building A • Tallahassee, FL 32301-4862
Toll Free: 1-800-451-4327 (Voice or TTY) • In Tallahassee: 850-245-3399 (Voice or TTY) • FAX: 850-245-3392
Florida Relay Service: 1-800-955-8771 (TTY) • 1-800-955-8770 (Voice) • www.rehabworks.org

Please contact Kirk G. Hall, Transition Administrator, by phone at (850) 245-3360 or by email at Kirk.Hall@vr.fl DOE.org if you have any questions regarding the Project SEARCH TAP or Provider Chart.

Enclosure: Project SEARCH Provider Chart
Project SEARCH TAP

Cc: Aleisa McKinlay, Director, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
Susie Rutkowski, Project SEARCH Co-Director
Michael Kiser, Progressive Employment Practices Consultant
Provider Contacts, Project SEARCH, Florida sites

Guidance for Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Support of Project SEARCH services

Technical Assistance Paper (revised 08/11/14)

This Technical Assistance Paper is offered as guidance for VR staff authorizing, reviewing or supporting VR services provided through Project SEARCH sites. It covers background on the Project SEARCH model, services that may be provided by VR to support an eligible customer, and provisions for reimbursement.

Project SEARCH Background

Project SEARCH is a nationally recognized internship program that delivers employment training and education for individuals with disabilities. This hands-on training for employment model is protected under an international trademark and copyright. Each program requires the use of braided funding streams and sharing of partner resources to ensure long term sustainability. Every Project SEARCH program is required to be licensed through the national office based in Cincinnati, OH.

The Project SEARCH model includes:

- A business driven program design imparting students with the work and social skills needed for meaningful careers
- Marketable skills acquired through total immersion in host site occupations
- Success measured by the intern transitioning into year-round, competitive employment in an integrated setting
- Collaboration between the business, school system, VR, and partners

Intern Characteristics:

- Youth with a wide range of disabilities
- Youth with multiple disabilities
- Youth between the ages of 18 and 24 years old
- Youth that are finished with HS credit/graduation requirements
- Youth that use public transportation or other independent means

Classroom Instruction for Skill Acquisition:

- Team Building
- Workplace Safety
- Social Skills
- Technology
- Communication
- Money Management
- Navigating a Worksite
- Health & Wellness
- Employability Skills

Internship Rotation:

The host site provides a series of three or four targeted internships. Interns do not displace current employees. Interns work alongside employees and interact directly with their supervisors. Department mentors provide additional direction. Mastering the core skill set enables the intern to be hired in an entry level position at the host business or in the community. Additional skills are developed once core skills are mastered.

VR Support of Project SEARCH

The Project SEARCH model has been highly effective in assisting students with the most severe disabilities make the transition from high school to meaningful employment. The model provides students the opportunity to engage in various work experiences in different career fields. This allows student interns to identify the opportunity that best matches their individual interests, strengths, and aptitudes. The goal of the program is competitive employment. Any student may elect to exit the program whenever they receive a job offer. About a third of the students are hired at the host site. The remaining students begin placement services immediately after completing their last rotation.

An approved VR Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) is required for VR assistance. The IPE may be either a Regular VR or Supported Employment (SE) IPE. Specific VR services are based on the individual's unique situation as it relates to the employment outcome identified in the IPE* or its amendments. VR is able to provide the Project SEARCH supports as outlined below effective July 2, 2012:

Provisions for Reimbursement

Authorizations:

The VR Counselor will authorize payment to the VR Provider for the following approved IPE services delivered to all **Project SEARCH** participants:

Benchmark	Billing Code	Specifications
On-the-Job (OJT) Evaluation	A10750	Information obtained during the first rotation is used to complete the evaluation
Job Coaching	E10401	Payable up to 40 hours @ \$32/hour
OJT Training Plan & Agreement**	E10403	Payable for the last rotation
OJT Training Final Report	E10407	Payable on completion of the last rotation

The Employer:

The VR Provider will serve as the "employer of record" contracting with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation for Project SEARCH OJT services. The provider will complete all paperwork and sign VR required forms as the "employer of record" while delivering OJT services.

The Host Business:

The host business site is where the VR customer completes Project SEARCH OJT activities. The host business site and its employees will provide information so that the VR Provider may complete the required reports and invoices that will be submitted to VR for approval and reimbursement.

**Before including any service on an IPE, the counselor must assure that the VR Provider is registered in RIMS and is approved to deliver the service in question.*

***Provider and Counselor must sign an OJT Agreement before the last rotation begins.*

Employment Referral and Services:

VR will provide Placement Services or SE Services to Project SEARCH participants who are hired by the host business or with another Employer. The VR Counselor will make the appropriate referral for either VR Placement or SE Services.

Replacement of Benchmarks and Services:

Specific services provided through Project SEARCH take the place of the Supported Employment Career Plan and Placement Services Pre-Placement Training. These services will not be authorized for Project SEARCH participants.

Project SEARCH Benchmark	Takes the place of...
On-the-Job Evaluation report	Supported Employment Career Plan
OJT Services	Placement Services/ Pre-Placement Training

OJT Wage Reimbursement:

VR will not provide wage reimbursement for Project SEARCH participants as part of this transition training program.

Project SEARCH Employer Responsibilities:

VR must receive all required documentation before making payment to the VR Provider.

Questions or Comments:

Contact the VR Transition Administrator at (850) 245-3360 or Kirk.Hall@vr.fldoe.org

