

Job Development & Community Connections

During the last few months of the program the emphasis is on refining skills, achieving the career goal, and carrying out individualized job development. The Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor becomes an even more important part of the team as the job search process begins. Job development is based on the intern's experiences, strengths, interests, and skills. Linkages to appropriate services in the community are critical at this stage, as interns 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 usually arranged 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) interns receive a Career Portfolio. The contents of the packet will vary among replicated program sites, but generally the packets contain a resume, letters of recommendation, a competency profile, and any awards or special recognition received while in the program.



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Employment for Exceptional Young Adults



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Additional Partners:

Elgin / Marion Harding / Pleasant
River Valley / Ridgedale / North Union
Mt. Gilead / Cardington / Highland



What is Project SEARCH?

Transition-to-Work Program

The goal for each program participant is competitive employment. To reach that goal, the program provides real-life work experience combined with training in employability and independent-living skills to help young people with significant disabilities make successful transitions to productive adult life. The Project SEARCH model involves an extensive period of skills training and career exploration, innovative adaptations, long-term job coaching, and continuous feedback from teachers, skills trainers, and employers. As a result, at the completion of the training program, students with significant intellectual disabilities are employed in nontraditional, complex and rewarding jobs.

In addition, the presence of a Project SEARCH program can bring about long-term changes in business culture that have far-reaching positive effects on attitudes about hiring people with disabilities and the range of jobs in which they can be successful.

Eligibility

Project SEARCH serves young people with significant intellectual and developmental disabilities. Typically, these are high school students who are on an Individual Education Program (IEP) and in their last year of high school eligibility. The program can also be adapted to serve out-of-school youth and young adults who are beyond school age.

The most important criterion for acceptance into Project SEARCH is a desire to achieve competitive employment.

Program Overview

Program participants (interns) attend the program for a full school year in the host business/hospital. The host business provides access to an on-site training room that



can accommodate up to 12 interns. The site is staffed by a special education teacher and one to three skills trainers to meet the educational and training needs of the interns.

Once the program year begins, the first few weeks are focused on intern orientation, hands-on skill assessment, and familiarization with the business environment. Interns develop a career plan, which guides the internship selection process and individualized job search.

Employment Skills Curriculum

Throughout the program year, the interns work on employability and functional skills for approximately one hour of their day. Training room activities are designed around these focus areas: Team Building, Workplace Safety, Technology, Maintaining Employment, Self-Advocacy, Financial Literacy, Health and Wellness, and Preparing for Employment.

Internships

Through a series of three targeted internships the interns acquire competitive, marketable and transferable skills to enable them to apply for a related position. Interns also build communication, teamwork, and problem-solving skills which is important to their overall development as a young worker.

These are unpaid work experiences—analogueous to the clinical rotations that are part of every medical school or business internship program. Potential internship sites are identified through a continuous collaborative process involving the instructor, skills trainers, and business liaison. These internship rotations begin a few weeks after the start of the program. Interns are required to interact with their supervisors via telephone and written communications to arrange a job interview to secure each rotation.

A department mentor is identified at each site. The mentor interacts with the instructor, skills trainers, and the intern as a consistent source of guidance and feedback. Interns spend approximately five hours each day at the internships, which includes a thirty minute lunch. Working from a task list, they acquire the core skills necessary to be hired in an entry-level position at the host business site or in the community. Skills trainers and department staff collaborate to provide support for interns. The Project SEARCH staff delivers the training and develops job accommodations and standard work procedures. Once the interns master the core skills, additional skills are layered on to improve their marketability.



Intern Selection

Interns are typically referred to the program through their schools, a family member, or Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VR) and apply in the winter and spring in the year prior to entering the program. A team representative of all the partners: Project

SEARCH instructor, host business liaison, VR Counselor, community rehabilitation provider staff, and other appropriate personnel carry out the selection process. The process includes tours, student interviews, hands-on assessments at the host business, and scoring on a rubric related to entrance considerations.



Benefits to the Students:

- Increase Independence, confidence, and self-esteem
- Gain employment skills and work experience
- Obtain work-based individualized coaching, instruction, and feedback from the instructor, job coaches, and Marion General Hospital-Ohio Health associates.

For Additional Information



or to request an application, contact your school counselor or Tri-Rivers Project SEARCH Coordinator
Ali Schuster
aschuster@tririvers.com
740-389-8511

Typical Day

School Day: Monday-Friday,
8am-2:30 pm

Calendar: Follow the Tri-Rivers Career Center Calendar

8-9am—Classroom Instruction

Lessons based on daily living and employability skills. Instruction follows Project SEARCH curriculum.

9-11:30am—Internship Sites

Students participate in non-paid job internship sites throughout Marion General Hospital.

11:30-12pm—Lunch

Students may purchase lunch or bring their own lunch.

12-1:30pm—Internship Sites

1:30-2:30 pm Classroom Instruction—Reflection, journal writing, planning

Application is online at tririvers.com in mid-November.

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