



NTACT

National Technical Assistance Center on Transition

NTACT Webinar: VR and School Partnerships: Community Based Work Experiences Opportunities for Students and Youth with Complex Support Needs

The following responses are the questions asked during the webinar that time did not permit for the presenters to answer. They have provided contact information or links for further information. Please let NTACT know if you need any further assistance with this topic.

1. Who could pay a stipend to a student?

Answer: Training stipends could either be paid directly by Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) or another entity such as a community rehabilitation provider, if VR had contracted with that provider to provide a paid work based learning experience.

As indicated in the training, if work-based learning experiences are paid, students with disabilities must be paid competitive wages to the same extent competitive wages are paid to students without disabilities in similar experiences. Training stipends are permissible for students with disabilities participating in unpaid work-based learning experiences commensurate with and to the same extent that they are provided to students without disabilities participating in these experiences.

Page 55629 and 55694 of the final VR regulations preamble discussion talks about the payment of wages and stipends for students participating in work-based learning experiences.

2. Will these be individual services or group sessions?

Answer: Although we are not sure exactly what service this question is in reference to, work-based learning experiences and work-place readiness training activities both include activities that may be provided in a group setting or individually to students with disabilities who are eligible or potentially eligible for VR services.

3. And these wages are part of the PreETS expenditures, correct?

Answer: Yes, competitive wages or training stipends paid by VR for work-based learning experiences can be an allowable expenditure for pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities. Page 55629 and 55694 of the final VR regulations preamble discussion talks about the payment of wages and stipends for students participating in work-based learning experiences.

4. I'm wondering how other states are handling the fact that 1:1 job coaching based upon an individuals' disability is not permissible with pre-ETS funding. That must be covered under 'regular' VR funds.

Answer: You are correct, if a student with a disability needs a job coach due to the disability, or needs more individualized services to access these types of work experiences, then they would have to apply and be determined eligible for VR services, and develop and have an approved individualized plan for employment; and job coaching is not considered an allowable expenditure under the pre-employment transition service reserve funds.

That is a great question for States. We will post it on our new Community of Practice Pre-Employment Transition Services website to solicit feedback from States.

5. Is Project Search normally implemented by teachers or vendors from VR?

Answer: Project Search requires a team approach with designated partners to include a community rehabilitation provider, and an on-site teacher. Exactly how these positions are funded or provided may look different in every State, and in various locations throughout the State. We encourage you to contact your State VR agency to review and discuss how Project Search is implemented.

6. VR can support short term employment? Such as part-time while in school even if it might not be their 'career' goal?

Answer: Yes, VR can support work experiences to enable students with disabilities to explore a variety of career fields prior to identifying a specific employment goal.

7. In our state VR does not come on board until after graduation, therefore how do you get the opportunity for these work experience while still in the education system?

Answer: Although an application for VR services may or may not be taken prior to high school graduation or exit, depending upon the student's need for individualized VR services; pre-employment transition services can be provided to eligible or potentially eligible (non-applicants) students with a disability. The Rehabilitation Act, as amended by WIOA, now requires that VR make available pre-employment transition services, including work-based learning experiences, to all students with disabilities in need of such services, regardless of whether a student has applied for VR services.

VR agencies may provide these services directly or through contracts or arrangements with school systems and/or private vendors to offer all 5 required pre-employment services to students with disabilities that meet the age range requirements.

The minimum age requirements for a student with a disability is not younger than the earliest age to receive transition services under IDEA; or not younger than the earliest age, if determined by the State as being different, to receive pre-employment transition services. See section 113 of the Act and 361.48 for further explanation. We encourage you to contact your local VR district office or VR counselor for more information regarding how students with disabilities in your school are receiving pre-employment transition services, including work-based learning experiences.

8. Can workplace readiness be taught by a special ed teacher and the school seek a per student payment for students that fall under PreETS? In other words, can the school be a vendor instead of bringing in vendors?

Answer: Yes, VR may contract with the school district to provide some or all of the workplace readiness training activities. Services provided by the teacher/school would either need to be an expansion or enhancement of services currently provided; or provided to a new target population of students with disabilities. Alaska VR has a program that contracts with teachers to provide workplace readiness as an after school activity (<http://labor.alaska.gov/dvr/transition.htm>). The decision to contract with a teacher/school to provide workplace readiness training is made at the State level by each individual State VR agency. We encourage you to contact your State VR agency for further information.

9. I'm with VR and we can work with students as young as 14 in my state. It's not always appropriate to refer someone that young for VR services, so that effectively precludes many students from receiving these very valuable work based learning experiences if they need individualized job coaching.

Answer: As we discussed in the training, work-based learning experiences are provided along a continuum. For students with significant or complex support needs, these activities at age 14 may not begin with individual work experiences, but rather group activities such as job shadowing or informational interviews, which may not require individualized job coaching to access those services. In addition, please keep in mind if a student does require individualized services, a VR application may be taken at any time.

10. Can I get a contact for someone at the University of Missouri or the higher ed entity carrying out the workplace readiness training in Missouri

Answer: Yes, you may contact Bob Simpson, Director of Pre-Employment Transition Services at the Hook Center for Educational Renewal at the University of Missouri. His contact information is simpsonra@missouri.edu or 573-356-1682.

11. So did I understand that Missouri is using PreETS \$ to contract with higher ed to help teach Missouri K-12 school staff how to work with these students?

Answer: No, Missouri VR has contracted with the Hook Center for Educational Renewal at the University of Missouri to provide the five required pre-employment transition services directly to students with disabilities who are potentially eligible for VR services. In some situations, this may require the pre-employment transition service specialist to work in collaboration with the classroom teacher to provide these services, but they are not being paid to teach school staff.

12. Email contacts for panelists

Answer:
Brenda Simmons bksimmons@gwu.edu.

Michelle Krefft: michelle.krefft@iowa.gov

You can email Michelle to obtain a copy of the Iowa Manual for Business Development

Document Name

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www.TransitionTA.org