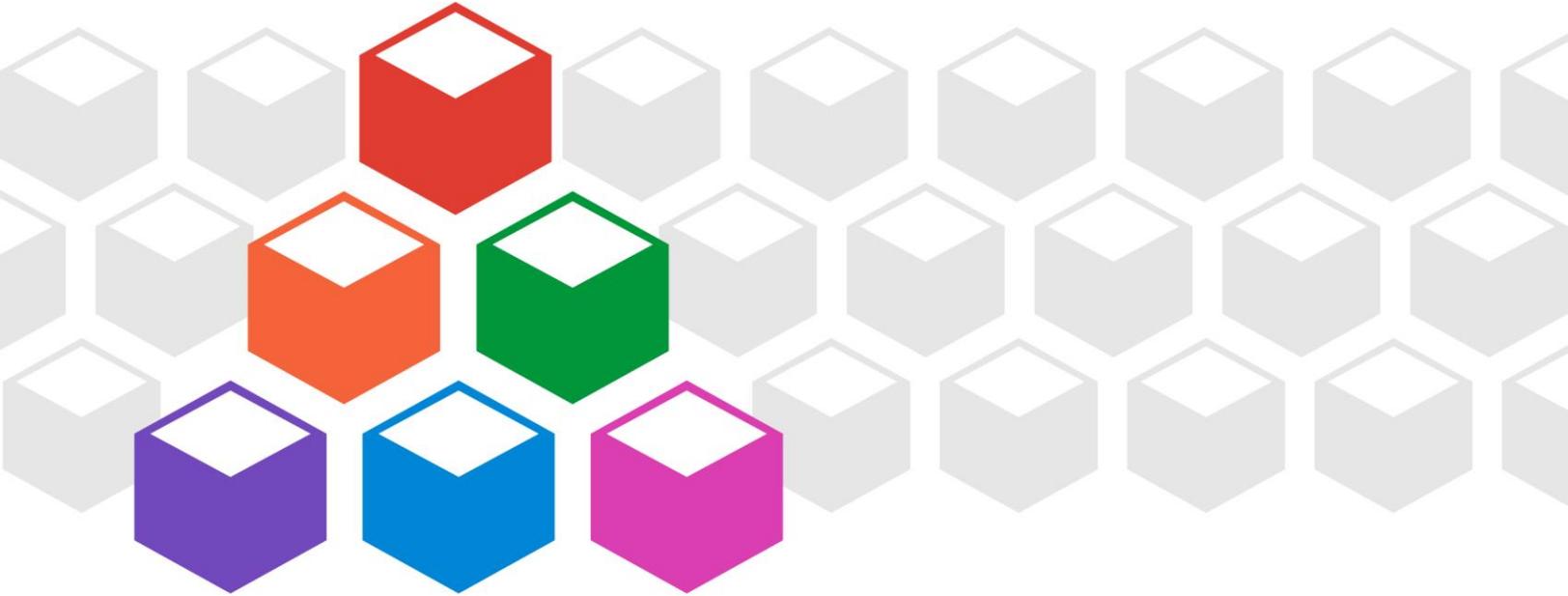




NTACT

National Technical Assistance Center on Transition



A Guide for Teachers/Educators for Collaborating with Vocational Rehabilitation Services for Youth with Disabilities

Prepared by:
National Technical Assistance Center on Transition

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National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (2017). *Teachers Guide to Vocational Rehabilitation*, Kelly A. Clark, Ruth Allison, and Ronica Marable.

Questions to consider when planning for transition services are provided throughout the document.

Space is also provided for notes and additional questions.

This document is meant to be a template for States or districts to be able to input their own information as it applies to their State or district policies and procedures.



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The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA; 2004)

Requires that schools provide coordinated transition services to students with disabilities beginning at age 16 and link students to appropriate adult service providers.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

A 504 Plan is an educational plan developed to ensure a child who has a disability identified under the law and is attending an education institution receives accommodations that will ensure access to the learning environment and assist in academic success.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA; 2014)

Requires state Vocational Rehabilitation agencies to coordinate with schools for students with disabilities regarding Pre-Employment Transition Services.

Introduction

Within education there has been an increased emphasis on educational services that are mindful of optimal post-school outcomes (IDEA, 2004; Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015). Schools are required to begin transition planning for students with disabilities no later than age 16 (age 14 in some states) and earlier if the IEP team determines it's appropriate. This is to ensure time for students to explore career options, participate in work experiences, develop necessary academic and work place skills, access needed transition services that will prepare them for post-school education, training and employment. Introducing students to a VR counselor early and including them on the student's IEP team with appropriate consent will increase the student's ability to access opportunities that address their needs.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (*Rehabilitation Act*), as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (*WIOA*), expands the population of students with disabilities who may receive services and the kinds of services that VR agencies may provide to students with disabilities who are transitioning from school to postsecondary education and employment. It also requires that VR agencies provide, or arrange for the provision of, pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities in need of such services and those services are coordinated with local educational agencies (LEAs).

Although transition planning for students begins at age 16 in most States, State VR agencies may elect to provide pre-employment transition services at an earlier age to students with disabilities who are enrolled in an educational program. These services may be provided to all students with disabilities (including those who have individualized education programs [IEPs] and plans for accommodations or services under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act) in coordination with LEAs to prepare students with disabilities for employment. Congress intended pre-employment transition services to be provided to the broadest population of students with disabilities to ensure that as many students with disabilities as possible are given the opportunity to receive the services necessary in order to prepare for and achieve a competitive employment outcome. In order to accomplish this intent, VR agencies need to work with State educational agencies (SEAs) and LEAs to ensure that the pre-employment transition services and transition services provided under IDEA create a seamless transition for students with

disabilities from secondary education to postsecondary education and employment.

Purpose of Teacher Guide

Educational and vocational rehabilitation programs both have key roles and responsibilities in improving post-school outcomes for students with disabilities. Both entities must be involved in creating opportunities for students to develop skills and knowledge to prepare for careers in the 21st Century. To help facilitate understanding, and promote local discussion and planning, this Teacher’s Guide has been developed for educators to use in partnership with their local VR counselor. The information and planning questions are based on practices that work to facilitate purposeful collaboration, which is focused on improving post-school outcomes for students with disabilities. Even though the implementation of the practices discussed in this guide will take some upfront planning and time, the rewards of this initial commitment will pay dividends down the road as educators and VR counselors are working jointly with students and their families. Specifically, this planning effort will assist with:

1. Promoting a coordinated effort between the LEA and VR counselor;
2. Creating processes to facilitate delivery of transition services, including pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities; and
3. Eliminating duplication of efforts.

Understanding Roles and Responsibilities

VR programs understand that transition planning is an essential function of school personnel, therefore it is important for the VR counselor to become familiar with the transition services the LEA is already providing or obligated to provide, and based on that, identify additional transition-related services VR programs can provide, including pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) that can then enhance the LEA services the students are already receiving.

The current role of VR counselors in providing services to students in the school systems is primarily one of exploring post-school goals and identifying the supports and services that will lead to the student becoming employed. Only students with disabilities are eligible to receive Pre-ETS. “Student with a disability” is defined as an individual who:

- Is enrolled in an educational program; and
- Meets minimum and maximum age requirement; and
- Is eligible for, and receiving special education or related services under Part B of IDEA; or
- Is a student with a disability for purposes of section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

*** See reference section for full definition of student with a disability and age requirements***

Pre-ETS can be provided to students who are eligible or potentially eligible (have not applied or been determined eligible) for VR services. There are five required Pre-ETS services that VR can provide to students with disabilities:

1. Job exploration counseling;

2. Work-based learning experiences which may include in-school or after-school opportunities or experiences outside the traditional school setting;
3. Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education;
4. Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living;
5. Instruction in self-advocacy, which may include peer mentoring.

When students need more individualized or intensive VR services they are encouraged to make a formal application for VR services. Generally, most students are served through Pre-ETS until they desire or require more intensive services, as they get closer to high school graduation. However, pre-ETS should enhance, not delay the transition planning process or the submission of an application for VR services. It is also not required that students with disabilities participate in pre-ETS prior to applying for or receiving VR services. Those students who are determined eligible for VR will develop an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), which will outline the specific services, and supports the students need to achieve their employment goal.

Below is a chart that illustrates best practices in completion of the eligibility process for VR:

Roles/Responsibilities

STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4	STEP 5
<p>Open Case with VR</p> <p>School supports student in completing application materials and consent form.</p> <p>School submits application & provides required documentation to your VR office. Student attends intake interview at school.</p> <p>VR determines eligibility.</p>	<p>Explore what you want to be</p> <p>Student explores interests, strengths, and abilities with support of VR Transition Specialist to develop an employment goal.</p> <p>School provides VR with progress notes, course information, interest-based assessments, etc. for student.</p>	<p>Develop Your IPE</p> <p>Student collaboratively develops Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) with VR Transition Specialist. The IPE is based on the student's informed choice.</p> <p>VR and school collaborate to share information that impacts IEP, transition plans, and IPEs.</p>	<p>Prepare for Employment</p> <p><i>Implement IPE</i> Student receives services identified in IPE that will help build skill-sets and credentials necessary to achieve the employment goal.</p> <p>VR and schools collaborate on how implementation of IPE impacts IEP and transition plan.</p>	<p>Search for a job & get hired</p> <p>Student continues to receive services that will help him/her search for a job and get hired.</p> <p>If student is still in high school during this process, VR and schools communicate student's progress, work-based experiences, employment, etc. which may impact the IEP and transition plan.</p>
<p>UP TO 60 DAYS* (From the date of application)</p>	<p>UP TO 90 DAYS (From the date of eligibility)</p>			

*Unless the individual and VR counselor agree on an extension

Questions:

What is the building check-in procedure that the VR Counselor needs to follow?

What workspace and Internet accessibility will be available to the VR Counselor?

How will students be referred to VR?

How will the VR Counselor access students during the school day?

REFERRAL PROCESS CONTINUED

Who should refer students?

School personnel including, but not limited to special educators, guidance counselors, school nurses, school psychologists, speech/language pathologists, administrators, and general education teachers, as well as parents/guardians may refer students to VR.

Who should be referred?

Students with disabilities verified for special education, students under a 504 Accommodation Plan, and students with a disability for the purposes of section 504 (even if they do not have a 504 accommodation plan in place).

When should a referral be made?

Students may be referred at the earliest age established by the State VR agency for providing pre-employment transition services. In general, the process for the formal application for VR services, eligibility determination and development of an IPE will vary based on individual needs and State specific guidelines.

*Insert your State/district specific process here *

What is the referral process for potentially eligible?

*Insert your State/district specific process here *

What is the referral process for applying to and eligibility determination for the VR program?

*Insert your State/district specific process here *

SCHOOL CONTACT

When will the VR Counselor be invited to come to your school?

*Insert your State/district specific process here *

A few examples of impairments:

Physical/Medical:

Cerebral palsy, hearing impairment, spina bifida, orthopedic impairment, ADHD, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Mental health:

Depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, PTSD, oppositional defiance disorder

Learning: Specific learning disability, intellectual disability, ASD, speech/language impairment.

VR Involvement in the IEP Process:

Describe the process in your district for involving VR in IEP meetings and the appropriate procedures to invite VR (e.g., gaining parental consent to invite VR, sending an invitation to the VR program at least two weeks in advance).

Developing the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)

An IPE (not to be confused with the IEP) is a planning tool VR counselors use to help students plan for their future employment goals. It is structured around the following key questions about the student with a disability:

- What is my job goal?
- What help and services do I need to get to my goal?
- When will I reach my goal?
- Who will help me?
- When will my plan start?
- Who will pay for what?

Examples of Types of Services Vocational Rehabilitation can Offer:

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| € Supported Employment | € Job Exploration Counseling |
| € Diagnostic Testing and Vocational Evaluation | € Workplace Readiness Training |
| € Job Seeking Training | € Trial work experiences |
| € Funds for Work Related Expenses | € Job Placement |
| € Work-Based Learning Experiences | € Assistive Technology |
| € On-The-Job Training | € Interpreter Services |
| € Community-Based Assessments | € Work Opportunities Tax Credit |
| € Counseling on enrollment in PSE | € Tuition Assistance for PSE |
| € Instruction in self-advocacy | € Job Coaching |
| | € Community Rehabilitation Programs |
| | € Job Development |

***Bold: Pre-Employment Transition Services**

VR Summer Pre-Employment Transition Programs

*Describe if your State or district offers pre-employment transition programs during the summer months. If your State does not, then delete this section or describe how practitioners could work with the State VR program to set up their own summer employment training sites in the community or by partnering with local universities. *

STUDENT RELEASE TIME CONSIDERATIONS

- How will time be scheduled for the VR counselor to meet with students?
Insert your State/district specific process here
- When and where will the VR counselor meet with students?
Insert your State/district specific process here
- How will class release time be handled?
Insert your State/district specific process here
- When and where will the VR counselor have access to meet students in groups?
Insert your State/district specific process here

INFORMATION EXCHANGE

It is important to exchange information to ensure services are aligned and there is not a duplication of services. When we work together we can maximize our efforts and resources to assist students in achieving their goals.

How will student's educational/school records be made available?

The VR counselor will need specific data elements to provide pre-employment transition services to potentially eligible students and may use copies of student records, including IEPs and 504 plans, for eligibility purposes. See reference section for required data elements. ***Fill in your State or district's process for sharing of information ***

FEEDBACK TO EDUCATORS AND PARENTS

Establish a method for VR counselors and educators to share updates regarding students participating in pre-employment activities and transition services provided by the school. Also, establish a method to share updates with parents on their student's participation in pre-

Questions:

How will information be exchanged?

From VR to Education:

From Education to VR:

How could VR participate in current school outreach activities such as parent-teacher conferences, freshman orientation, etc.?

Are there any school release forms that need to be completed by the VR Counselor?

Are there any VR related release forms that need to be completed by teachers or education professionals?

employment transition services and activities, and transition services. These methods may vary from school to school and can be customized to align with any current communication strategies in place, as well as address issues with communication in the past. ***Fill in your State, district, or school's process for sharing information between agencies on student progress/participation***

OUTREACH TO STUDENTS AND PARENTS

How will the VR counselor meet with parents and students to share information about pre-employment transition services and employment opportunities? For example, this could include parent and teacher conferences, meetings with parent groups at school or in the community, a newsletter shared with families of upcoming opportunities.

In determining these practices, it is important to try to maximize the time and current school activities the parent is already attending, as well as understand the importance of offering a number of different ways to engage and communicate with families

DEVELOPING A PLAN FOR SERVICE DELIVERY

Having the important components of the partnership in a written document is recommended. This allows all partners to have a reference that outlines the organizational components of the partnerships. Additionally, as partners evaluate the effectiveness of their collaborative efforts, a planning document is a way to reflect on what has been agreed upon, as well as determine what, if any, changes need to be made in moving the work of the partnership forward.

It is also important to determine what data will be used to measure the impact of your collaborative work. Data collected should help answer question about identified performance measures and whether student outcomes are being met.

See Attached Planning Document

ANNUAL EVALUATION OF PARTNERSHIP EFFORTS

Setting-up periodic times to review the progress of the partnership will allow partners an opportunity to assess overall progress to their goals and the impact of their collaborative efforts. For the overall system evaluation, meeting in the fall to set the course of action for the school year is recommended, as well as a spring meeting to evaluate what worked well as well as identify any opportunities for improvement. As improvement opportunities are identified, partners may want to identify one or two areas on which to concentrate their improvement

Examples for Developing a Plan for Service Delivery:

- A chart displaying the flow of services
- Develop a memorandum of understanding (MOU)
- Create interagency teams and agreements

Questions to Consider:

What Data Collection Measures are already in place?

How can data be shared in an effective way?

Examples of Annual Evaluation Methods:

- Analyze Indicator 14 data
- Analyze VR Performance Data
- Compare district employment outcomes and seeing where there are gaps in students with disabilities achieving Competitive Integrated Employment and make a plan to address those gaps.

efforts. Once one or two areas have been identified, partners can strategize on how to best to tackle improvements for the next school year. The intent of this annual evaluation is to set the direction for the next year's planning and promote continuous improvement in the partnership.

See Attached Sample Agenda for a Meeting

TRIBAL VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

The purpose of the American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services (AIVRS) program is to provide vocational rehabilitation (VR) services, including culturally appropriate services, to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing on or near federal or State reservations, consistent with such eligible individuals' strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice, so that such individuals may prepare for, and engage in, high quality employment that will increase opportunities for economic self-sufficiency. The AIVRS program is a five-year discretionary grant program, which means that grants are awarded through a competitive process established by the Department. There are currently 88 active AIVRS programs. In summary, the overall intent for this program is to assist tribes in establishing a program to provide or facilitate the provision of VR services.

Reference Section

Disability Defined: A student with a disability is an individual with a disability in a secondary, postsecondary, or other recognized education program who:

- Is not younger than the earliest age (i.e., 16 years of age) for the provision of transition services under section of the IDEA (2004), unless the State elects a lower minimum age for receipt of pre-employment transition services and is not younger than that minimum age, if different (see table for State specific information below); and
- Is not older than 21 years of age; unless the individual State law provides for a higher maximum age for receipt of services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and is not older than that maximum age; and
- Is eligible for, and receiving, special education or related services under Part B of the IDEA (2004); or
- Is an individual with a disability, for purposes of section 504.

Required Data Elements for Individuals Receiving Pre-Employment Transition services: the data elements listed below are only required if an individual is receiving pre-employment transition service and has not applied for or been determined eligible for VR services

- Unique Identifier
- Social Security Number (if available)
- Date of Birth
- Race –required if student is in elementary or secondary education
- Ethnicity- required if student is in elementary or secondary education
- Student with a Disability
- Start Date of Pre-Employment Transition Services
- Pre-Employment Transition Services

From: Section 116(b) in title I of WIOA and sections 101(a)(10) and 607 of the Act, as amended by WIOA.

Transition Partnership Planning Form for Local School Districts and Vocational Rehabilitation

School Contact:

What is the building check-in procedure?

What workspace and internet usage will be available to the VR counselor/staff person?

What opportunities will be made available to provide a VR orientation to educators and students?

When will the VR staff be scheduled at the school?

Referral Process:

How will students be referred to VR?

How will parents/guardians and students be made aware of VR services, including pre-employment transition services?

What is the process to gain parental permissions?

How will student release time be handled?

How will information be exchanged?

How will partners communicate and coordinate delivery of services to students?

What opportunities are available for VR counselor/staff member to provide services in group settings in the school?

Outcomes Expected

Describe the expected outcomes to be achieved as a result of this partnership.

Annual Evaluation:

What has worked well this year?

What has been a challenge this year?

Describe desired outcomes of the collaboration. Were expected outcomes of the collaboration met this year?

Based on review of processes and data, what is one area you would like to improve for the next school year?

What is your process to improve this area?

SAMPLE MEETING AGENDA

- **Introductions**
- **Purpose of the Meeting**
- **Student Goals**
- **Parent Input/Goals**
- **Roles and Responsibilities**
- **Information Exchange Plan (e.g., data sharing)**
- **Communication Plan**
- **Next Steps**

RESOURCES

[Competitive Integrated Employment Toolkit](#)

- This toolkit provides an overview of (a) what is a transition assessment, (b) why we conduct transition assessments, (c) how to select instruments and methods, and (d) how to conduct an age appropriate transition assessment. Within the next sections of the toolkit there are sample instruments, a survey of transition assessment planning practices, a transition assessment implementation timeline, and informative links and other sources of information.

[Competitive Integrated Employment Quick Guide](#)

- This Quick Guide provides an overview of the definition of competitive integrated employment, including supported employment and customized employment as defined in the Rehabilitation Act, as amended by WIOA (2014). This resource describes the importance of competitive integrated employment, the role it plays in secondary transition, current research, and practices for youth with disabilities.

[A Guide to Developing Collaborative Partnerships](#)

- This guide explains how to implement an effective collaborative process for both individual and systems level outcomes. It provides useful approaches, policies, and strategies to facilitate partnerships that result in better outcomes for students and youth with disabilities and benefits for collaborating partners.
- Visuals of School Community Business Partnership Guide
 - [Business Partner Engagement Strategies](#)
 - [Community Agency and Program Partners](#)
 - [Family Role in Systems and Individual Student](#)
 - [Partners and Benefits](#)
 - [Schools-Community-Business Partners and Roles](#)
 - [Strategies to Engage Education Partners](#)

[Interagency Agreement Toolkit](#)

- This toolkit was developed jointly by WINTAC and NTACTION to provide guidance on the development of the formal interagency agreement between the vocational rehabilitation and education agencies as part of the implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

[Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center \(WINTAC\)](#)

- Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)
 - <http://www.wintac.org/topic-areas/pre-employment-transition-services/resources>
- State VR Agency Liaison list
 - <http://www.wintac.org/content/state-liaisons>

[Youth Pathways to Postsecondary and Employment](#)

- This site includes five different National Youth-Focused Training and Technical Assistance Centers. These five centers are working together to provide technical assistance and training to state and local agencies and programs to build successful to postsecondary and employment opportunities for youth and students with disabilities.

STATE EXAMPLES

Nebraska

http://vr.nebraska.gov/resources/pdfs/TR_Educators_Guide.pdf