

# The Discovery Process & Pre-Employment Transition Services: Implementation and School Contribution

Vocational Rehabilitation Services

# Your Host

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# Presentation Overview

- Transition guidelines & VR overview
- Discovery process with school contribution
- Pre-employment transition services overview
- Panel discussion



# VRCs: Planning your year in transition

- Initial meeting with school personnel
- VR 101 presentations
- Transition fairs
- Scheduling intakes: office or school?
- Attending case conferences



# Referral

Transition referrals can be taken in person at the school by the VRC Liaison or by phone or fax.

- Referral Sources:
  - Self Referral
  - Social Workers
  - Physicians
  - Therapists
  - Teachers
  - Case Managers
  - Parents
  - Friends
  - Other
- Referral information (*at minimum*):
  - Name (first, middle initial, last)
  - Date of Birth
  - Address
  - Telephone #
  - *Additional important information for transition age students:*
    - IEP/504plan/collateral information
    - Name of school
    - Expected year of graduation
    - Parent/guardian name and contact info
  - Stated disability



# Application

## What happens after the referral?

- Once VRS receives the necessary referral information, the referred individual is contacted by that school's assigned Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor in order to schedule an application appointment.
- Appointments can occur at the school if appropriate for the situation.
- If the transition student is under the age of 18 years and/or has a court appointed guardian, the guardian must attend the application appointment.
- School personnel can help facilitate the appointment by providing as much collateral information as possible (i.e., IEP, 504 plan, medical/psych reports).



# Application

What happens during the Application Appointment?

- Referral will meet the assigned Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor.
- Application interview includes a thorough discussion regarding referral's history in the areas of medical, psychological, academic, employment, family, etc....
- Necessary Release of Information forms are signed

What happens after the Application Appointment?

- Collateral information is obtained
- If necessary, new diagnostic tests/evaluations are scheduled
- Eligibility Determination is made within 60 days from the date of the Application Appointment




# Eligibility

- Eligibility determination is made within 60 days of application.
- Eligibility is determined in a *sequential* manner based on the following:
  - 1) Does the individual have a physical or mental impairment?
  - 2) Does the applicant's physical or mental impairment constitute or result in a substantial impediment to employment?
  - 3) Does the applicant require VR services to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment consistent with the applicant's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice?
  - 4) Will the applicant benefit in terms of an employment outcome from VR services?

**NOTE:** There is a *presumption* that the applicant will benefit from VR services, unless VR demonstrates based on clear and convincing evidence that the applicant is incapable of benefiting due to the severity of the applicant's disability.





# Individual Plan for Employment (IPE)

What happens after an Applicant is determined eligible for VR Services?

- Comprehensive Assessment
- IPE Development begins
  - Joint effort between VR Counselor and Client
  - IPE is based upon information gathered during the Comprehensive Assessment
  - Vocational Goal is agreed upon
  - Necessary VR services and providers of services are determined
  - Time frames are formulated

Service Provision Commences



# Employment Services

## ○ Process Overview

- 1) **Referral to Employment Services (ES) Provider**
- 2) **Discovery Process** (activities designed to help identify consumer strengths, skills, interests, abilities, and capabilities to aid in identification of potential vocational themes)
- 3) **Job development and placement** (researching available opportunities, applying for jobs, assistance with resume and/or interviewing skills, and assisting with job placement)
- 4) **Short-Term Retention and Supports** (onsite job coaching and other supports as needed to ensure job retention)
- 5) **Retention** (as needed supports to ensure long-term job retention)
- 6) **Case Closure** (at a minimum of 90 days after consumer has been determined to have achieved maximum level of independence on the job)



# Discovery Activities

- Vocational Testing
- Job Shadowing
- Situational Assessment
- Work Experience
- Vocational Counseling and Guidance
- Other Discovery Activities

# Discovery: Vocational Testing

- Vocational Testing is used to help evaluate and identify an individual's vocational skills for appropriate goals:
  - Strengths
  - Aptitudes
  - Abilities
  - Capabilities
  - Interests
  - Academic skills



# Discovery: Job Shadowing

- Job shadowing consists of job observations with Employment Specialists or others.
- Clients observe different jobs to learn more about what each job entails.
- Can help determine likes and dislikes and broaden ideas for vocational goals.
- If vocational testing was completed, these will generally correspond to the results.



# Discovery: Situational Assessment

- This helps assess strengths and needs through observation of behavior and job task performance.
- This helps to determine if the employment setting would be a good fit.
- It also helps the Employment Specialist determine how an individual learns job tasks to be ready for a new job and helps with teaching methods.



# Discovery: Work Experience

- This allows an individual to explore jobs through hands on learning.
- Assists with gaining insight into the individual's interests, career goals, abilities, skills, ideal work conditions, preferences, support needs, and training strategies.
- Work experience can help to better define employment interests for future job placement and, when appropriate, could potentially result in job offers.
- This can be several hours a week for several weeks and may be paid or unpaid.



# Discovery: Vocational Counseling and Guidance

- VR works with each client regarding concerns, supports and communication with others involved.
- Discussion should include, strengths, interests, needs, priorities, etc.
- Possible review of labor market information.
- Discuss accommodations needed and possible assessments.





# Discovery: Other Discovery Activities

- Career Exploration
- Informational Interviews
- Dealing with Disclosure
- Home Visits (e.g. observations of typical routines and/or typical tasks performed)
- Additional Discovery Activities as Appropriate (e.g. interviewing others who know the job seeker well, observing the job seeker in a variety of settings)



# Information School Personnel Can Provide

- Work portfolio
- Support strategies
- Social stories to support transition to adult provider
- Visual schedules and technology that has been used to support student
- Relationship with family (and support transition to VRC/Adult provider)
- Cross-training of adult agency staff
- Current IEP and present level academically & functionally
- Accommodations
- Transportation training



# WIOA & Pre-ETS

- WIOA: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - law that was signed July of 2014. Replaces Workforce Investment Act of 1998. Emphasis on competitive, integrated employment.
  - Pre-employment Transition Services:
    - 5 focus areas for eligible and potentially eligible students with disabilities. VR is required to set aside 15% of federal VR program funds each year (approximately 9 to 10 million dollars) to provide pre-employment transition services (pre-ETS) to students with disabilities.
    - Potentially eligible is defined as: students receiving services under an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), students receiving accommodations pursuant to a Section 504 plan, or students receiving mainstream educational services who are individuals with a disability as defined in the Rehabilitation Act, including, without limitation, those students identified with a serious emotional disturbance.
    - As the name implies, potentially eligible students will not have applied and been found eligible for VR services.



# Pre-ETS Requirements

1. **Job exploration counseling:** this may include, but is not limited to, interest and ability surveys, transition assessments, reviewing career websites, high school based courses on career choices, or other similar activities.
2. **Work-based learning experiences:** this may include, but is not limited to, paid or non-paid work experiences in the community, volunteer work, job shadows, short or long-term internships, on the job training, apprenticeships and employer mentoring activities.
3. **Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in postsecondary education:** this may include, but is not limited to, exploration of the wide range of career pathways (i.e. agriculture, manufacturing, etc.), counseling on postsecondary training opportunities including community colleges, universities, trade/technical schools, etc., and counseling to support a smooth transition from high school to postsecondary education (i.e. documenting and advocating for accommodations, identifying financial aid options, etc.).
4. **Workplace readiness:** this may include, but is not limited to, soft-skills training, employability skills training, social/interpersonal skills (i.e. communication, problem solving, decision making, conflict resolution, empathy, professionalism, etc.) and independent living skills training (i.e. good hygiene, money management, using transportation, time management, using technology and assistive technology, appropriate dress, appropriate behavior, etc.).
5. **Instruction in self-advocacy:** this may include, but is not limited to, instruction in self-awareness, disability disclosure, requesting accommodations, understanding rights and responsibilities, self-determination, etc.; and mentoring including peer mentoring.



# Students and Youth with Disabilities

- **WIOA defines these differently:**

- Students with disabilities: for Indiana, this means an individual with a disability in secondary education, who is from age 14 to 22. Federal law defines this slightly differently, but defers to the state definition, if it's more inclusive.
- Youth with disabilities: an individual with a disability aged 14 to 24, who may or may not be attending a secondary educational institution.
- So, a student with a disability is also a youth with a disability, but not every youth is a student.
- The distinction is important for the provision of pre-ETS services! Only students with disabilities are eligible. Youth who are not students should be referred to VR for services, if appropriate.



# Pre-ETS Contracts

- VR Received 22 proposals for provision of pre-ETS services.
- Nine proposals were funded for a total of about \$7 million over 2 years.
- Contracts began October 1, 2016.
  - Opportunity Enterprises, Inc.
  - Easter Seals Crossroads
  - New Horizons Rehabilitation
  - PEAK Community Services
  - Stone Belt ARC
  - Sycamore Services, Inc.
  - Aspire Indiana, Inc.
  - Bona Vista
  - Easter Seals Arc of North East Indiana



# Pre-ETS Contracts

- Each provider is collaborating with other providers for provision of pre-ETS services.
- Discussion of handout: collaborative partners, a total of 51 counties will be covered, though not all school systems at this time.
- Providers will work with school systems on identifying potential students for pre-ETS services.
- VR Counselors will not be responsible for the provision of pre-ETS services.



# Pre-ETS – Challenges

- Working with class schedules.
- Providers can only bill for direct service provision and there is a lot of upfront preparation.
- Most providers were only able to get started during the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester and then not in all their schools.
- Getting schools on-board takes time and planning.
- Getting accurate information to parents and families.
- Direct service staff knowledge, training & professionalism.
- Adapting materials to meet student needs.





# Pre-ETS – What's working well

- Providers had existing relationships with school systems.
- Having initial meetings with school personnel as well as families (parent info night).
- Working with schools on identifying students or specific population of students to start with (start small and go from there).
- Schools filled out initial consents and sent to providers.
- Developing flyers and brochures explaining pre-ETS and the benefits (no approval process, i.d. potential needs post-high school, working with younger students).
- Services have supplemented school curriculum and activities & provided extra support to teachers.
- Has been well received by students and families.



# Updates: OOS

RSA Guidance: If a student with a disability begins one or more of the required activities prior to being determined eligible for VR services, he or she may continue to receive any and all pre-employment transition services even if the student is assigned to a closed OOS category. However, if the student did not begin any of the pre-ETS activities prior to being assigned to a closed category, the student may not receive any individualized VR services, including individualized pre-employment transition services, until his or her turn for receipt of VR services comes up under the State's order.



# Pre-ETS – Future possibilities

- Collect baseline data on students to determine impact.
- Webinars/conference calls with providers and school staff to share information and gather input.
- Review curricula currently in use and suggest changes.
- Assemble resources (including evidence based practices) for providers to utilize.
- Gather info on what's working and share with all providers.



# Pre-ETS - What's next?

- Pre-ETS web portal is rolling out in phases.
- Identify strategies for increasing access to Pre-ETS in counties not currently covered by contracts.
- Providers are gearing up for summer programs.
- Developing statewide & regional trainings to discuss strengths of the system, concerns, resources, and share information.



# Your Panel

Bruce Schnaith, Easter Seals Crossroads, Vice-President

Dawn Wiseman, Lawrence Central High School,  
Department Chair

Patti Sebanc, Sycamore Services, Director of Special  
Projects

Kurt Frederick, MSD of Wayne Township, Transition  
Coordinator

# Questions for the panel

- How is your school system working with adult service providers for discovery?
- What seems to be working well in this regard and what could be improved?
- How have pre-ETS rolled out in your school – what worked well and what was a little more complicated?
- How were you able to work with existing school schedules to provide services?
- How were you able to incorporate community based experiences?
- How has pre-ETS been received by students/parents?

# Questions for our panel

- What benefits do you see from pre-ETS?
- What do you consider some pre-ETS “best practices”?
- What improvements would you like to see?
- Suggestions for future pre-ETS services?
- What programs are you working on for the summer?
- Questions from our audience?

# Contacting VRS

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If you or someone you know might benefit from Vocational Rehabilitation Services, please call the local office nearest you.

Information available on VRS website: [www.vrs.in.gov](http://www.vrs.in.gov)