

TRANSITION AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES (PRE-ETS)

I. Purpose

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) must collaborate with local educational agencies (LEA's) to provide and arrange for the provision of Pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) for all students with disabilities.

II. Definitions

Students with Disabilities (SWD):

- Are not younger than age 14 and in 9th grade, and not older than age 21; and in secondary, post-secondary and other recognized education programs.
- Are eligible for and receiving special education or related services Under Part 8 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); a student with a disability for purposes of section 504; or other students with disabilities including but not limited to physical, sensory, intellectual, mental health, and communication.

Potentially Eligible (PE) Students:

- Are students with disabilities who have not applied for or been determined eligible for VR.

Transition Services:

- Is a coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability.
- Designed within an outcome-oriented process that promotes movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational training, competitive integrated employment, supported employment, continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation.
- Based upon the individual student's needs, considering the student's preferences and interests.
- Include:
 - instruction, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.
 - promoting or facilitating the achievement of the employment outcome identified in the student's individualized plan for employment; and
 - outreach to and engagement of the parents, or, as appropriate, the representative of such a student with a disability.

III. Pre-ETS

Pre-ETS are the earliest set of services available for students with disabilities under the VR program, are short term in nature, and are designed to help students identify career interests. Pre-ETS are provided to students with disabilities to:

- Further develop an awareness of career and education opportunities
- Gain the general skills needed for employment success in any field.
- Gain the skills needed to effectively advocate for themselves as they prepare to exit secondary education and enter the workforce or other post-school activities.

Pre-ETS can be provided through contracts with local high schools or through direct provision of services by a VR counselor. Pre-ETS may be provided in a group and/or an individualized setting in collaboration with VR, LEAs, community rehabilitation providers, independent living programs, and other post-secondary training programs.

Services will be made available to eligible and potentially eligible students with disabilities statewide. These services are:

1. Job Exploration Counseling - career counseling designed to assist students explore career options, develop motivation for employment, and understand the role of high school and post-secondary education.
2. Work-Based Learning Experiences (WBLE) - use the workplace or realistic work situations to provide students with the knowledge and skill that will help them connect school to future career opportunities. WBLE can be provided, outside of school hours during the school year, and during the summer. It is not meant to replace work experience schools provide. Counselors should work with school staff to coordinate what types of VR work experience would complement the student's goals.
3. Counseling on Post-Secondary Education - counseling and guidance on a variety of post-secondary education and training opportunities including community colleges, colleges, and universities; career pathway related workshops/training programs; trade/technical schools; military; and post-secondary programs at community colleges, colleges, and universities for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
4. Workplace Readiness Training - provided to develop the skills and behaviors that are necessary in any job, including specific social or interpersonal skills and independent living skills that are required for employment success; and
5. Training in Self-Advocacy - supports a student's ability to effectively communicate, negotiate, and/or assert his or her own interests and/or desires, including the development of the skills necessary for self-determination.

If Auxiliary aids (qualified interpreters, acquisition of assistive technology, braille materials etc.) are needed by a student with a sensory or communicative disability to access or participate in Pre-ETS, it would constitute an allowable Pre-ETS expenditure.

IV. Consultation/Technical Assistance

VR will provide consultation and technical assistance to school personnel in planning for the transition of SWDs from school to post-school activities.

- Provide consultation and technical assistance preferably in person or through alternative means, such as conference calls and virtual venues.
- Identify and disseminate information about transition services, employment services, effective practices, training, and funding strategies that create positive employment outcomes for individuals, partners, families, agency staff, and public and private stakeholders.
- Provide technical assistance to identify potentially eligible and VR eligible students.

V. Outreach

VR is required to make Pre-ETS available to all students with disabilities. Therefore, VR will initiate outreach to students with disabilities attending public or private schools or are home schooled to identify those who need transition services.

VR will provide information to school personnel, students, and, as appropriate, families and authorized representatives regarding:

1. the purpose of the vocational rehabilitation program.
2. VR eligibility requirements.
3. application procedures; and
4. Information about the scope of services that may be available.
5. Information about the Client Assistant Program.

When VR staff are invited to attend a student meeting such as an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meeting, the staff should consider how his or her involvement could be beneficial regarding consultation, technical assistance, referral to VR, and the planning and coordination of service provision.

In addition to student-related meetings, other opportunities to interact with school personnel, students, and families exist for VR participation. These may include parent nights, education staff meetings, school-based events, career fairs, and others. Attendance at these events fosters collaboration.

Secondary schools across the state are given the opportunity to submit a proposal to provide Pre-ETS. When a contract is developed, VR staff are required to maintain monthly contact with contract partners to coordinate services.

VR Regional Administrators and rehabilitation counselors have the responsibility to liaison with the local school districts, cultivate relationships, and provide education and information to partners. The VR Regional Administrator assigns specific counselors to function as liaisons with each school in the state as well as home schooled students. Staff will develop and coordinate a routine schedule with school personnel for appointments and meeting with students at the school. In addition, the counselor will schedule appointments with home schooled students and their parent.

VI. Referral and Application

VR and school personnel will identify a consistent system for referrals to VR. Typically, SWDs should be referred two years before exiting school. The team will determine if an earlier referral is warranted.

PE students with disabilities do not need to apply and be determined eligible for the VR program to receive Pre-ETS. Pre-ETS for potentially eligible students may begin when the following has been met:

- VR receives a signed Authorization to Disclose Information to allow mutual exchange of information between the school and VR, and
- VR receives the data collection tool (SFN 680) which identifies a disability and is signed by a school representative, and

Referrals to VR from school systems are typically students who receive services under an IEP or 504. Students not receiving services under an IEP or 504 may also be appropriate for referral to VR and for Pre-ETS. Students with disabilities who are not recipients of special education services could be referred from related education providers including school administrators, counselors, therapists, nurses, general education teachers, and others. These may be students with a disability that do not present a barrier in the academic environment but may present impediments to employment.

Students who have applied and been determined eligible for the VR program and have a completed Transition Assessment Individualized Plan for Employment (TA-IPE) are able to receive VR services, including Pre-ETS necessary to assist them in achieving their employment outcome. The Pre-ETS services may be provided by a Pre-ETS contract provider or directly from VR.

If a student is considering withdrawing from high school, encourage the individual to stay in school and obtain a high school diploma. If a student decides to withdraw from school, VR staff will encourage him or her to obtain a GED. Whenever possible, VR will work with the high school staff to plan and support collaborative services that will lead to completion of an appropriate course of study and a successful employment outcome.

Open communication between VR and education staff, the student, and his or her family members will help to ensure a comprehensive and collaborative approach to transition services that fully address the student's needs, which may also require coordination with services available from other community organizations.

VII. Records

School personnel have a wealth of information about a student's disability. This information should be used when considering functional limitations for VR eligibility and developing the TA-IPE and Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE.)

VR staff will obtain school records relating to the student's disability and functional limitations. Utilize all available school records before purchasing additional assessments.

For VR eligibility and TA-IPE or IPE development, types of information requested from a school may include:

- Individualized Education Plan (IEP)
- Summary of Performance (SOP)
- Standardized Tests
- Assistive Technology (AT) record
- Transition-focused assessment
- Work experience information
- Resume
- Interest inventories
- Psychological assessments
- Occupational, Physical, Speech, and Health
- Pre-ETS
- Transcripts

VIII. Planning and Coordination

The VR counselor reviews and considers a student's IEP during the development of the TA-IPE or IPE. Collaboration will enhance services and avoid duplication.

Typically, students will need a TA-IPE as they participate in career exploration and other assessments needed to assist them in identifying their long-term goal. When the student has an employment goal that is agreed upon by the VR counselor, the IPE is developed. Either type of IPE needs to be developed within 90 days from eligibility determination, and the IPE must be developed prior to the student exiting school.

Once either type of IPE is developed and approved, there will be two active plans for the client, the IPE and the IEP, each reflecting coordinated goals and a range of services for a period of time. Collaborating with education staff to align the two plans can contribute in a positive manner for the student to gain basic workplace skills, knowledge of specific occupational skills, and an understanding of different industries to make an informed choice.

There may be times when either the school or VR could provide a service. In those cases, the team should consider the following factors:

- Does the school have the capacity to provide the service?
- What is the most efficient and effective way to serve the student?
- Can the student be served through a Pre-ETS contract?
- Comparable benefits (are there other agencies that can provide the service)