

Guidelines for Aligning High School & Beyond Plans (HSBP) and IEP Transition Plans

APPENDIX E: POST-SECONDARY EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS



POST-SECONDARY EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS

Congress enacted two key statutes that address the provision of transition services: the IDEA and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by Title IV of the [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act \(WIOA\)](#). The IDEA is administered by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), and Titles I, III, and VI, section 509, and chapter 2 of Title VII of the Rehabilitation Act are administered by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). Both the IDEA and the Rehabilitation Act make clear that transition services require a coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability within an outcome-oriented process. This process promotes movement from school to postsecondary activities, such as postsecondary education, and includes vocational training, and competitive integrated employment. Active student involvement, family engagement, and cooperative implementation of transition activities, as well as coordination and collaboration between DVR, OSPI and school districts are essential to the creation of a process that results in no undue delay or disruption in service delivery. The student's transition from school to postsecondary activities is a shared responsibility.

For more than two decades, one of the principal goals of disability policy in the United States, as it influenced special education, vocational rehabilitation, and employment services nationwide, has been to improve employment opportunities for young people with disabilities as they exit secondary education programs.¹ As noted in the Rehabilitation Act, as amended by WIOA, one of the primary purposes of the Rehabilitation Act is to maximize opportunities for individuals with disabilities, including individuals with significant disabilities, for competitive integrated employment.

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¹ Johnson, D. R. (2009). Foreword. In R. G. Luecking, The way to work: How to facilitate work experiences for youth in transition. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.

POST-SECONDARY EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS

Preparing for Careers

DVR agencies value early engagement with students with disabilities to assist them in preparing for a satisfying career. Early participation in job readiness training can provide the tools and guidance that the student with a disability need to successfully seek, find, advance in, or maintain employment. Job readiness training refers to developing job-seeking skills, such as preparing resumes or completing job applications, practicing interview techniques, honing workplace behaviors, or participating in a job club. Many models of career development identify stages that are widely accepted as leading to a satisfying and productive career.² These stages include:

- Career awareness - When individuals begin to develop self-awareness and learn about work values and roles in work, usually in elementary school;
- Career exploration - When individuals gather information to explore work interest, skills, abilities, and the requirements of various employment options, usually starting in middle school or early high school; career decision making when individuals begin to select job and career areas that match interests and aptitudes, usually beginning in high school, but often continuing well into adulthood;
- Career preparation - When youth begin to understand their strengths and challenges and make informed choices about preparation activities that will lead to a chosen career area, usually throughout high school and postsecondary school; and
- Career placement - When youth begin to participate responsibly and productively in a job and a career area. DVR counselors have specialized training to assist the youth in developing an IPE.

The DVR counselor gathers as much information as possible about the youth's work history, education and training, abilities and interests, rehabilitation needs, and possible career goals. In gathering the information, the counselor will first look to existing information to assist in both DVR eligibility determination and plan development. DVR agencies, SEAs, community rehabilitation programs, and other community partners work together to provide a range of resources to facilitate the objectives and goals of the IPE. The following work opportunities and options assist students with disabilities to achieve their desired career goals.

On-the-Job Training as a Path to Employment:

[On-the-job training](#) (OJT) is one type of community-based work experience that is often associated with an existing job opportunity. Through OJT, an individual learns a specific skill taught by an employer in the work environment. OJT offers an opportunity for the individual to be hired at the end of the training period. A DVR counselor and a student with a disability often use the OJT approach as a career exploration opportunity or work experience to obtain entry-level work skills. This training is designed to be short-term and offers a paid or unpaid work experience. DVR counselors identify and arrange for the

² Brolin, D. (1995). Career education: A functional life skills approach (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

OJT with employers, and frequently provide transportation or other employment related services and supports while the individual is participating in OJT.

Supported Employment

Supported employment refers to competitive integrated employment or employment in an integrated work setting in which individuals are working on a short-term basis toward competitive integrated employment. Supported employment services, including job coaching, are designed for individuals with the most significant disabilities who need ongoing support services because of the nature and severity of their disability in order to perform the work involved. A job coach provides intensive training and ongoing support to an individual to learn and perform job tasks at the work site, to teach and reinforce acceptable work behaviors, and to develop positive working relationships with his or her co-workers. As needed, the job coach can develop individualized accommodation tools for use on the job, such as picture albums of the sequence of steps in a job or communication aids for individuals with speech or hearing deficits.

As the student with a disability learns and demonstrates progress in these areas, the job coach decreases the support and time spent with the individual on the job. The job coach makes follow-up or check-in visits on the job site to determine if the individual is performing well on the job and to provide additional job coaching when job tasks change, or the student needs repeated training on a particular task. Sometimes, the job coach, family member, or student will identify a co-worker who can provide assistance rather than the job coach. This assistance offers natural support for the individual while working.

However, when there is no natural support available and the individual needs ongoing support services, a family member, or another agency such as developmental disabilities, Medicaid, or DVR, provides the job coaching or other services. Other services frequently include transportation, daily living, or counseling services relating to attendance or arriving to work on time. Ongoing support services needed by an individual to maintain a job, such as job placement follow-up, counseling, and training, are considered "extended services." These services are identified on the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), along with the service provider that will fund and provide these services.

Once a student is determined eligible for DVR services, the student, or his or her representative, develops a written IPE. The individual with a disability, including a student or youth, must be given the opportunity to make an informed choice in selecting an employment outcome, needed DVR services, providers of those DVR services, and related components of the IPE. For students with disabilities who receive special education and related services under IDEA, the IPE must be developed and approved (i.e., agreed to and signed by the student, or the student's representative, and the DVR agency counselor) no later than the time each DVR-eligible student leaves the school setting.³ Also, the IPE for a student with a disability who receives special education and related services under Part B of IDEA or

³ If the DVR agency is operating under an order of selection, the IPE must be developed and approved before each eligible student meeting the order of selection criteria leaves the school setting. Section 101(a)(9)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR § 361.22(a)(2).

educational services under section 504 must be developed so that it is consistent with and complementary to the student's IEP or plan for section 504 services. DVR agencies may provide extended services to a youth with a most significant disability for a period up to four years or until the youth turns 25 years old.

Customized Employment

While supported employment matches the individual with a position and trains him or her to perform the essential tasks in that position, customized employment designs or tailors job tasks to meet the individual's interests, skills, and capabilities, as well as the needs of the employer. Customized employment is accomplished by using various strategies, including:

- Customizing a job description based on current employer needs or on previously unidentified and unmet employer needs;
- Developing a set of job duties, a work schedule and job arrangement, and specifics of supervision (including performance evaluation and review), and determining a job location;
- Using a professional representative chosen by the individual, or if elected self-representation, to work with an employer to facilitate placement; and
- Providing services and supports at the job location. Examples of individuals in customized employment across the country are included in "[Customized Employment Works Everywhere](#)."

Self-Employment

Self-employment refers to an individual working for him or herself and being responsible for earning his or her own income from a trade or business rather than working for an employer and being paid a salary or wage. A student with a disability could choose self-employment in a business that matches his or her career strengths and interests. Individuals choose self-employment for many reasons, whether it is to work in or out of the home to meet family care responsibilities, or to control work schedules or to meet their accessibility needs. The range of occupations for self-employment is vast. For example, individuals with disabilities may choose to be a self-employed certified public accountant, medical billing services provider, comic book artist, or lunch cart operator, among many other options. DVR agencies offer services and guidance to assist a student with a disability to prepare for self-employment, such as training or start-up costs for their business. Typically, the DVR counselor will recommend that the individual develop a business plan that includes a market analysis supporting the self-employment venture, the individual's work role in the business, anticipated income based on local market information, identification of the support services needed, and the tools, equipment or supplies needed and their cost. In many cases, the DVR counselor refers the student to local community organizations that provide technical assistance to develop the business plan or pay for the development of a business plan. The student and the DVR counselor will use the collected information to identify the objectives and goals in their IPE. Learn more about self-employment in the fact sheet, [Self-Employment Q & A: Accessing Vocational Rehabilitation Services to Facilitate Self-Employment as an Employment Outcome](#), which discusses the DVR process and how to develop a plan for self-employment.



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