

SATELLITE PROGRAM

Project SEARCH

Transitioning students with disabilities to work

Project SEARCH is a unique business-led transition program for students with disabilities. It provides students who want to work a chance to explore careers and develop transferable job skills. The ultimate goal: Independent adults working in a competitive environment.

Designed as an unpaid internship program, Project SEARCH places students in real-world situations where they learn all aspects of gaining and maintaining a job. Large organizations—such as banks, hospitals, or universities—host the program.

This process of immersion facilitates the teaching and learning of new work skills on-site.



Individualized job development and placement occurs based on the student's experiences, strengths, and skills. A series of job rotations lasting up to 10 weeks allow students to find positions that best suit their preferences. They receive support with accommodations, adaptations, and on-the-job coaching.

Students who have completed all requirements for graduation from high school may apply for enrollment in Project SEARCH. Participants may be 18 to 21 years old.

East Dakota provides Project SEARCH through a partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Services to the Blind and Visually Impaired and Avera McKennan.



Time required Full days for one school year

Grade levels Upon completion of high School credits, ages 18-21

Current Project SEARCH host site



INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Patient Services Assistant
Food Services Worker
Sterile Processing Technician
Admissions Representative

Trayline Worker
Housekeeper
Linen Technician

Laundry Worker

Learning *works!*

Project SEARCH



A typical day's schedule

- School day: August through May, Monday through Friday, 8:15 am to 2:45 pm.
- 8:15-9 a.m.—Students attend employability skills class at the job site. Lessons are based on daily living such as check writing, nutrition, and resume writing.
- 9-11:30 a.m.—Students participate in non-paid job rotations throughout the location.
- 11:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m.—Lunch
- 12:15-2:00 p.m.—Students return to job rotations.
- 2:00-2:45 p.m.—Students return to classroom for journal writing/reflection.

Job rotations

- Job rotations last about 10—12 weeks.
- Students are matched to the most appropriate job site based on interest and skills.
- A job coach works with the student until the tasks assigned can be performed independently. The time and instruction is individualized.
- Students are evaluated by the job coach, the instructor, and the department supervisor.

Job placement

Job placement is the final goal of the program. Students can be employed at any time throughout the school year. The IEP team—which includes the student, family, Project SEARCH instructor, affiliated school representative, and vocational rehabilitation counselor—meets regularly to discuss progress and issues at work sites. The team assists each student in defining a career goal.

Eligibility criteria

- 18-21 years old
- In last year of school eligibility
- All academic requirements for graduation met
- At least second grade reading and math skills
- Basic communication skills
- Appropriate social, grooming, and hygiene skills
- Independent toileting and feeding skills
- Passed drug screening and background checks
- Updated immunizations



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