

LRS CHAPTER 4, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE & GUIDANCE MANUAL



Part	Name	Effective Date
412.15.2	Project SEARCH	*March 8, 2021**
Authorization Federal Register, Volume 81, Department of Education, 34 CFR 361, Part VI, State Vocational Rehabilitation Service Program §361.42, §361.45, §361.46, §361.47, §361.48, §361.52, and §361.55		

I. PROJECT SEARCH

Project SEARCH programs are one-year, school-to-work transition training programs for Vocational Rehabilitation eligible consumers who meet the definition of a student with a disability with a variety of intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. Consumers must have completed credits necessary for high school graduation and have a goal of attaining competitive integrated employment. Project SEARCH promotes the successful long-term employment that is stable, meaningful, integrated and competitively compensated.

Project SEARCH is a collaboration of a team of required partners at the local level, which includes the host business, a special education teacher/certified instructor (school district), a VR counselor, and a skills trainer from a community rehabilitation provider (CRP).

Project SEARCH takes place in a business setting where consumers are completely immersed in the workplace. This facilitates teaching and learning, and enables consumers to develop marketable work skills and increase their employability. Consumers selected for Project SEARCH have the opportunity to participate in up to three internships to explore a variety of career paths during the school year

II. PROJECT SEARCH SKILLS ASSESSMENT

- A. The process used to collect information from a consumer applying to participate in Project SEARCH is called a "Skills Assessment." In this process, a skills trainer, along with the Project SEARCH team, meets with the consumer to collect information about the consumer's skills, interests, abilities, learning styles, and support needs. The skills trainer also gathers information on the internship opportunities and needs of the participating host business. The Skills Assessment is used to assist in determining if Project SEARCH is appropriate for the consumer. *The skills assessment must be placed on an IPE.**

B. The skills trainer must:

- review the consumer's Project SEARCH application; and
- complete the Skills Assessment form (PS-1) during the Project SEARCH Skills Assessment

III. SKILLS TRAINING SERVICES

Skills Training Services include training provided to consumers to improve their ability to perform soft and hard skills and to meet the expectations and production standards of the host business, as well as the determination of whether any accommodations and/or compensatory techniques are needed to increase a consumer's independence.

Skills Training Services include:

- Learning about work behaviors
- Work based social skills
- Asking for and receiving training and supervision
- Career exploration
- Issues related to disclosure in the workplace

Skills training is provided daily at the host site by the skills trainer. Intensive skills training can be provided, as needed, throughout the internship. The skills trainer must provide these services in collaboration with the skills instructor and the designated supervisor from the host business.

The Project SEARCH WBLE Evaluation (PS-2) report must be submitted every 4 weeks by the CRP with an invoice.

IV. PROJECT SEARCH JOB PLACEMENT

Upon completion of the internships, the host business may elect to hire the consumer, or the CRP may provide job placement services in the community upon completion of Project SEARCH if not hired by the host business. Job Placement rates can be paid to the CRP providing the placement services per the guidance in the Purchasing Guidelines, Section V. that follows.

V. PURCHASING GUIDELINES FOR PROJECT SEARCH

A. Project SEARCH Skills Assessment

*1. One-time billable rate of \$750, per consumer authorized on an IPE/plan, prior to the start of the assessment; and**

2. Payable upon counselor receipt of the completed PS-1 report and invoice.

B. Skills Trainer Services

1. Authorized on an IPE/plan, prior to the start of the internship. Each internship should be 8 – 10 weeks long.

2. A consumer can complete no more than three internship rotations per academic school year.

3. The CRP may invoice \$1,200 every four weeks of trainer services per consumer upon receipt of the completed PS-2 report and invoice.

4. A partial payment is allowable for consumers that do not complete a full four weeks of training. Example: The partial payment for a consumer that completed 6 weeks at the internship would be \$1,200 paid at the end of the 1st four weeks and then \$1,200 divided by 4= \$300 per week x 2 weeks = \$600 for the additional 2 weeks completed.

C. Project SEARCH Job Placement Rates

The Skills Trainer will submit the Job Development and Placement Activities Log (JP:1) and the Job Placement Feedback Report (JP:2) monthly once the consumer has completed the last internship of the academic school year. Upon obtaining employment, only the JP:2 form will need to be completed monthly until case closure.

1. Job Placement Rates:

\$1,000.00 payable after the 7th day of employment

\$1,500.00 payable after the 90th day of successful employment

2. High Quality Indicators

The CRP may invoice an additional \$1,000.00 for high quality indicators if two of the three following conditions are met and verified on the consumer's most recent pay check stub or other official documentation from the employer:

- The consumer is employed 30 or more hours per week; and/or
- The consumer is compensated at or above \$12.00 per hour; and/or
- Health insurance benefits are made available to the consumer through the employer.

- D. Project SEARCH services are not dependent upon the Consumer's participation in the cost of such services. However, transportation, maintenance and any other ancillary service of this type is subject to both the Consumer's ability to participate in the cost of such services and the exploration and use of comparable services and benefits.
- E. The Counselor must complete the IPE/Plan. Submit to the District Supervisor for approval, including Independent Status Counselors. Upon approval the RCA will enter the authorization(s). See Chapter 4, Part 411.1 for further instructions on Secondary Approval requirements.
- F. If the total of all items/services on any IPE/ Plan is equal to or greater than \$25,000, it shall be considered "high cost." In these instances, all Counselors must have the IPE/Plan approved by both the District Supervisor and the Regional Manager.