

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)
Office of Adult Learning and Rehabilitation Services, Vocational Rehabilitation
and
Office of Special Education
and
Office of College and Career Readiness
and
Missouri Department of Social Services (DSS)
Family Support Division, Rehabilitation Services for the Blind
Inter-agency Transition Agreement

I. Definition of Transition Services

Section 103(a)(15) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (Rehabilitation Act), and its implementing regulation, 34 CFR 361.48 (r), identify transition services as a coordinated set of activities for a student, designed within an outcome-oriented process that promotes movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation.

The coordinated set of activities shall be based upon the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests, and shall include instruction, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

Transition services must facilitate the achievement of the employment outcome identified in the student's Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

II. Term of Agreement/Modifications

- This agreement shall continue in full force and should be reviewed annually by all parties.
- Any changes to this agreement must be by formal amendment reviewed, approved and signed by the parties. No other documents, including correspondence, acts and oral communications by or from any person, shall be construed as an amendment to the agreement.
- Either party may terminate this agreement after providing a minimum of thirty (30) days written notice to the other party.
- All parties of this agreement will collaborate and keep each other informed on state and federal activities as relevant to the delivery of transition services.

III. Collaboration with Education

The Rehabilitation Act requires a state's vocational rehabilitation programs to enter into formal interagency agreements with the state's education agency (SEA), by describing how they will collaboratively plan and coordinate transition services for students with disabilities needing these services. (See, section 101(a)(11)(D) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.22(b)). The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) also requires the SEA and VR to plan and

coordinate transition services for students who receive special education services. (See, section 601(d)(1) of IDEA and 34 CFR 300.1(a)).

These statutory and regulatory provisions authorize VR to provide eligible students with disabilities necessary transition services, and to form the foundation on which the VR program can assist these youth to attain their post-school goals, including the achievement of an employment outcome.

The DESE Office of Adult Learning and Rehabilitation Services, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), DSS Rehabilitation Services for the Blind (RSB), and the DESE Office of Special Education (OSE), with the assistance of the DESE Office of College and Career Readiness (OCCR), share responsibility in preparing youth with disabilities for successful employment upon graduating or exiting high school. This agreement outlines a process for the coordination of services between these entities, including the resolution of disagreements, and the allocation of resources to ensure students with disabilities are served. No client-specific confidential information will be shared between the parties without a signed authorization from the client or, if applicable, his/her parent or legal guardian, authorizing the disclosure.

IV. Purpose

The purpose of this agreement is to enhance cooperation and collaboration among the SEA offices -- OSE, OCCR, VR and RSB, to ensure effective and efficient transition planning/services from school to post-secondary education and/or employment for youth with disabilities who are still enrolled in high school and who are, or may be, eligible to receive vocational rehabilitation services.

This will be accomplished by reaching out to and identifying students with disabilities who are in need of transition services; by consulting with and providing technical assistance to educational agencies in planning for the transition of students from school to post-high school activities; by engaging in transition planning that facilitates the development and completion of the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and Individual Plan of Employment (IPE); by identifying the roles and responsibilities of each agency, including financial responsibilities, and those responsible for providing transition services.

V. Outreach (Referral and Identification)

VR counselors will provide outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who are in need of transition services. This will take place as early as possible in the transition planning process. Students are not required to have an open case with VR to participate in outreach activities.

RSB counselors will provide outreach to and identification of students with visual disabilities in need of transition services.

VR and RSB outreach will inform education staff, students, and as appropriate, families, and possible other authorized representatives about the general vocational rehabilitation program and may include at a minimum, the following:

- Purpose of the vocational rehabilitation program
- VR and RSB eligibility requirements
- Application procedures

- Scope and services that may be provided to an eligible individual.

VR, RSB, the SEA, and the local education agency (LEA) will also provide students, and their family, with general information about other available resources designed to assist students as they transition from high school to post-secondary education and employment, such as:

- Information regarding a student's right to accommodation(s) under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Disability support services available through colleges and universities
- Resources available for the provision of benefits counseling to students receiving supplemental security income (SSI).

Information about the VR program and other disability-related support services may be shared with potential VR or RSB applicants and their family, and include:

- VR informational materials
- Community /agency resource sharing
- One-on-one consultation
- Group presentations regarding general VR eligibility and services to youth/families
- VR presentations at career/college and transition fairs, college financial aid meetings, and/or school in-service/professional development meetings
- Participation in IEP/504 meetings, with parent/guardian consent
- Scheduled on-site school visits with identified school personnel

Any youth with a disability may be referred to VR. Youth who are blind or have progressive visual impairments should be referred to RSB. This includes, but is not limited to:

- youth with a 504 plan
- youth with a physical or mental impairment
- youth receiving services through an IEP

A referral to VR or RSB may be initiated by school district personnel (teacher, work experience coordinator, high school guidance counselor, special education director, 504 coordinator, nurse, etc.), by youth self-referral, by a family member, or by other educational or community resource agency or organization.

There is no specific time frame or age when a youth may be referred or have their vocational rehabilitation case opened with VR. Referral to VR or RSB should be based upon the youth's individual employment-related needs, and is typically made when the focus turns to post-secondary education or training and planning for employment.

Outreach activities conducted by VR/RSB should facilitate timely referrals. The vocational rehabilitation counselor will work with the LEA to develop a referral packet for students/families, and to identify application procedures that will enable the counselor to act as quickly as possible in obtaining written parent or guardian consent to meet with the student, open a case, and proceed with an eligibility determination.

VI. Eligibility

A referral to VR or RSB does not presume eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services, unless the individual is already receiving social security benefits based on the individual's disability. Youth with disabilities are not entitled to vocational rehabilitation services; they must be determined eligible for services.

To be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services, a person must have a physical or mental impairment that creates a substantial impediment to employment and requires vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, enter into, engage in or retain gainful employment. To be eligible for RSB VR services, a person must have a physical or mental impairment one of which must be a visual impairment, which creates a substantial impediment to employment and requires VR services to prepare for, enter into, engage in or retain gainful employment for the person.

Information needed to help determine eligibility or for vocational planning purposes may include but is not limited to copies of school records such as an IEP or 504 plan, educational placement, high school transcript, diagnostic summary or vocational evaluations, the most current IQ or achievement test scores, and/or other school or medical records may be requested from the LEA. The VR or RSB counselor shall submit a signed release of information provided by the student and/or parent or guardian in order to obtain the necessary records from the LEA. If records obtained from the LEA are insufficient to determine eligibility, the VR or RSB counselor may obtain documentation through other means per established program guidelines and policy which can be found at <http://dese.mo.gov/adult-learningrehab-services/vocational-rehabilitation/client-services-guide-csg> for VR and for RSB at <http://dss.mo.gov/fsd/rsb/manual/vrman/>.

VII. Consultation and Technical Assistance

To assist the transition of students with disabilities to post-secondary education or training, and employment, VR and RSB will provide consultation and technical assistance to the SEA and LEAs.

VR will provide consultation and technical assistance to assist local and state education staff in planning the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities. This may include business outreach and the identification of work experience opportunities, such as internships, apprenticeships, employer-driven skills training; as well as employment, the exploration of various types of post-secondary training programs, and connecting schools to other community agencies/resources. It may also include presentations at state or local education conferences, transition/career fairs, in-service and departmental staff meetings, college financial aid nights, and/or other school-related informational events and functions.

RSB will provide consultation and technical assistance to assist local and state education staff in planning transition of students with visual disabilities from school to post-school activities. Consultation and technical assistance will be provided by RSB staff as appropriate, and includes the sharing of general information regarding VR eligibility, VR services and specialized services for the blind. Specific information may be presented during in-service training, conferences, local career fairs, IEP/504 meetings, and/or other school-related informational events and functions.

VIII. Transition Planning

The LEA shall be primarily responsible for providing transition-related services while youth are still enrolled in the secondary school setting. In partnership with the LEA, transition planning for vocational rehabilitation eligible youth includes:

- Identifying the youth's assistive or rehabilitation technology needs.
- Determining the youth's strengths, skills, and interests through career exploration activities.
- Counseling youth, along with their families, about goals for life after high school, and to develop a personal plan of study or plan for employment to get there.
- Designing the high school experience to ensure that youth gain the skills and competencies needed to achieve their desired post-secondary goals and career pathway.
- Identifying and linking youth and their families to any needed post-secondary services, supports or programs before they exit the school system.

For VR or RSB eligible youth with disabilities who are also receiving special education services in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEIA):

- The LEA will inform the Educational Decision maker, i.e., the student's parent or guardian, of VR or RSB participation, and obtain consent from the Educational Decision maker prior to inviting VR or RSB to the IEP meeting. Specific notification procedures may vary for each school.
- The VR or RSB counselor should participate in the IEP meeting. VR or RSB involvement in IEP development and completion will be determined by the youth's employment-related needs, not the youth's age or grade level.
- The youth's IPE developed in partnership with VR or RSB, should be coordinated with their IEP goals/objectives, personal plan of study, and transition-related services and should be completed before the student graduates or exits from the secondary school setting.
- IEP teams and VR or RSB counselors should work together, along with the youth and their parents/guardian, to determine when employment preparation should begin and the exact nature of the scope of services should be provided.

IX. Roles, Responsibilities, and Financial Obligations

The Office of Special Education (OSE):

The OSE shall monitor school districts in their responsibility to allocate resources and provide transition services under the IDEA to youth with disabilities while they are still enrolled in the secondary school setting. Transition services may include, but not be limited to; school and community-based work experiences, vocational/career technical training, career exploration, preparation for post-school activities, specialized transportation, and assistive technology services. These services will be provided through the individual's annual IEP.

It is the school district's responsibility to allocate the resources to implement the services agreed upon in the IEP. School districts will also include other agencies that may assist in providing or paying for transition services to IEP planning sessions. If an outside agency fails to provide agreed upon services in

the IEP, it is the school district's responsibility to reconvene the IEP team to determine how these services might now be provided. The school district is not responsible for providing and paying for those services that another agency agreed upon, but failed to provide.

In collaboration with the IEP team, the special education teacher's role in transition includes providing specific information regarding the individual's strengths, past achievements, and current progress in school. The teacher is also responsible for discussing and identifying courses which address their selected program of study and work experiences that might be beneficial given the individual's interests and identifying any strategies or accommodations/modifications to access the general curriculum. It is the special education teacher's role to link youth with disabilities and their families to appropriate post-secondary services, supports, adult service agencies or programs prior to the student's graduation or exit from school.

The Office of College and Career Readiness (OCCR):

The OCCR shall monitor school districts to ensure youth with disabilities still enrolled in the secondary school setting, who are interested in pursuing a training program offered through a local career/vocational technical school, have access to that opportunity, if appropriate. Through the school's comprehensive guidance and counseling program's individual student planning process, all students, including students with disabilities develop personal plans of study that should be reviewed and monitored at least annually and revised as necessary. For students with disabilities the plan should be reviewed in collaboration with the student, family, and either the IEP or 504 team.

The individual planning process should include career exploration and the understanding of all post-secondary pathways, including; the military, technical schools, apprenticeships, community colleges, and four year colleges. Missouri Connections is a free education and career planning tool that can assist with this process.

The Office of Adult Learning and Rehabilitation Services, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and Rehabilitation Services for the Blind:

VR and RSB's role in the transition process involves planning and preparation for when a youth with disabilities graduates or exits secondary school. VR provides transition services when they are beyond the scope of special education and/or the LEA, and are necessary for the youth to reach a successful post-secondary employment outcome.

- A vocational Rehabilitation counselor is assigned to every LEA to provide outreach and vocational rehabilitation services to eligible youth.
- VR and RSB will communicate and collaborate with the LEA to ensure a smooth transition for eligible youth as they move from secondary school to post-secondary employment, education or training, and independent living. Once the youth has graduated or exited the secondary school setting, VR and RSB will continue to provide required services identified in the IPE to assist the youth in achieving an employment outcome.
- VR and RSB will provide services to youth determined eligible for vocational rehabilitation services and who meet the order of selection criteria, if VR or RSB has implemented an order.

- VR and RSB will develop and approve an IPE as early as possible during the transition planning process, for each eligible youth with a disability, who also meets the order of selection criteria, if applicable, but, at the latest, by the time each eligible youth exits the school system.
- The IPE of a student receiving special education and related services will also be developed, in coordination with the youth's IEP in terms of the goals, objectives, and services.
- Only upon approval of the IPE, is VR or RSB permitted to provide individualized services that are necessary for the youth to prepare for, secure, regain, or retain employment, and can only be provided as specified in an IPE.
- IPE services and the employment outcome can be mutually amended with the youth, as needed. To ensure timeliness in the development of the youth's IPE, the vocational rehabilitation counselor may work with the youth to identify an initial employment outcome that may be broad (though it must still be appropriate for that student and should be within their career pathway of interest); but with the understanding it may be amended later to a more specific post-secondary employment goal that reflects career exploration that is consistent with vocational growth and development.
- Vocational rehabilitation services which may be provided to eligible youth include, but are not limited to, career exploration, vocational planning, guidance and counseling, work experience such as job shadowing, apprenticeships, internships, on-the-job training, employer based skills training, cooperative work experience (COOP), assistance in finding employment/job search activities, supported employment job coaching/job supports, assistive technology devices or services, post-secondary education or training, and other services based on individual needs.

Work-Based Learning Experiences (WBLE):

VR and RSB works in partnership with the state and local education agencies to prepare youth with disabilities for successful competitive employment through the coordination of work-based learning experiences (WBLE), as determined appropriate based on their individualized strengths, needs, and interests.

WBLE are typically developed, coordinated, and supervised in accordance with policies/guidelines set forth by designated school staff at the LEA, and include, but are not limited to job shadowing, internships, apprenticeships, on-the-job training, and paid employment. The vocational rehabilitation counselor and high school counselor may also be involved in the design/coordination of the WBLE if it is a part of the youth's IPE, meets their individual goals/objectives in the IEP or 504 plan, is in accordance with college and career readiness standards, is a part of their personal plan of study, and/or helps meet their high school graduation requirements.

WBLE provide youth with disabilities opportunities to:

- be exposed to a variety of workplace and career skills that are common to all jobs
- learn job skills that apply/relate back to the common core state standards
- learn specific trade and technical skills

The following ~~two~~ DESE approved VR WBLE programs are available in various LEAs throughout Missouri:

1. **Employer Based Transition Training Programs [Includes Project Search Programs]** –

These are one-year school to work training programs for youth with intellectual disabilities, who are in their final year of high school, and whose goal is competitive employment. These programs typically take place in a healthcare, government or business setting where total immersion in the workplace facilitates the teaching and learning process as well as the acquisition of employability and marketable job skills. Youth participate in one to three training rotations at a host business over a one year period to explore a variety of career paths, and receive customized job search assistance.

Youth selected for these programs are typically 18-21 years old, in their last year of high school eligibility, may qualify for services through DMH-DD, and must be eligible for vocational rehabilitation. Youth in this program work with a team that includes at minimum, their family, a special education teacher/certified instructor, a VR counselor, and an employment specialist from a local community rehabilitation provider (CRP).

VR may assist with some costs for VR eligible youth to participate in these programs. When VR funding is necessary for the youth to participate in an employer based transition training program, a local memorandum of understanding or agreement (MOU/MOA) is required outlining each partner agency's roles and responsibilities, and individual program objectives. The MOU/MOA must be approved and signed by a designee from each partner, and reviewed on an annual basis.

2. **The Cooperative Work Experience Program (COOP)** – This program is for youth with disabilities who are receiving services through an IEP, have been determined eligible for VR, have demonstrated the skills and abilities to be able to work independently, and whose IEP reflects the need for work experience in a competitive setting. The IEP and the IPE must set forth specific measurable objectives to be achieved by the youth in this program, and describe a coordinated plan for evaluating their performance. The COOP program is a partnership with local businesses to provide VR eligible youth learning opportunities and hands-on experience as they transition into the work force. This program links high school common core state standards with the youth's career interests, and local labor market needs.

The COOP work experience must be provided under the supervision of a certified special education teacher who has been designated and approved as the work experience coordinator.

Youth may be approved to participate in the COOP program through one of the following options:

- They are released from school at least one hour per day (part of their course schedule) to work in a competitive employment setting, where job skills learned

will be related to the common core state standards; and they will receive high school credit for the number of hours they work, as identified through the goals and objectives listed in their IEP and IPE. Participants must be enrolled in high school and “related vocational and academic instruction in the classroom” to be awarded COOP credit, or

- They learn and apply job skills in a competitive employment setting before school, after school, or during the summer months, as identified through the goals and objectives listed in their IEP and IPE.

Youth participating in the COOP must be earning at least minimum wage in an integrated, competitive employment setting.

3. **Unpaid Internship Program** – This program is for youth with disabilities who are VR eligible, and have an opportunity to participate in an internship program in accordance with Department of Labor (DOL) Guidelines and Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). For the purpose of unpaid internships, all parties are in agreement that the work experience meets the guidelines for an unpaid internship (Fact Sheet #71 <http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.pdf>).

Other Agencies:

Other agencies, such as the Centers for Independent Living, the Department of Mental Health - Division of Developmental Disabilities, and Community Rehabilitation Programs, may also be invited to participate in transition planning to discuss supports and services they may be able to provide. Consent from the student’s Educational Decision-maker must be obtained for each individual agency for each IEP meeting. These agencies will identify and provide information regarding the specific services, application processes, and eligibility criteria.

Financial Responsibilities and Dispute Resolution:

Vocational rehabilitation services are individualized and based upon the needs and employment goal of each eligible youth. Therefore, some services may only be provided during the final year of high school or after the individual leaves high school.

The LEA is primarily responsible for providing and paying for those services related to transition planning for educational purposes while the student is still in school. VR and RSB are primarily responsible for the cost of transition planning for employment purposes. In some cases, VR or RSB and the LEA share responsibilities for the provision of transition services, which sometimes requires sharing the financial responsibility of providing services within the parameters of both the Rehabilitation Act and IDEA.

If there is a dispute between the student/client and the LEA regarding his/her IEP, the student will follow the process provided for in the LEA’s school board adopted policy for this purpose. If there is a dispute between the student/client and VR regarding his/her IPE, the student will follow the process provided for in VR regulations and procedure.

Rehabilitation Services for the Blind:

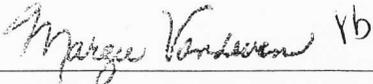
1. Most vocational rehabilitation services are provided at no cost to the youth and the youth's family. However, comparable services may be used prior to the provision of transition services.
2. When a student with a disability is both in school and has an IPE with RSB, the cost of services necessary for both the student's education and for the student to become employed, will be delineated between the LEA in terms of services related to educational purposes and RSB in terms of services necessary for employment purposes per the student's IPE.

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR):

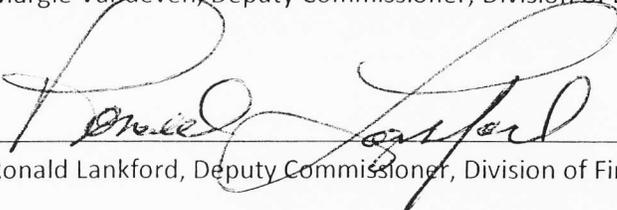
1. Most VR services are provided at no cost to the youth and the youth's family; however, payment for some VR services is based on individual and family income/resources and the ability to pay for costs associated with a specific service. VR may also be required to conduct a search for other comparable services prior to the provision of transition services.
2. The youth's financial resources and needs and, if the youth is a dependent, the financial needs and resources of his/her family are considered in determining participation in the cost of services based on need.
3. When a student with a disability is both in school and has an IPE with VR, the cost of services necessary for both the student's education and for the student to become employed, will be delineated between the LEA in terms of what accommodation the student needs to complete his/her high school coursework and VR in terms of what the student requires to attain employment per the student's IPE. The VR counselor will work with the LEA representative in determining which is needed to complete high school coursework and which services pertain to fulfilling the IPE.

X. Signatures

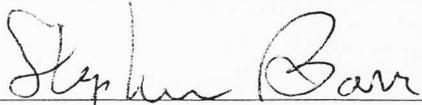
This agreement shall be effective upon signatures by all parties.

 Yb

Dr. Margie Vandeven, Deputy Commissioner, Division of Learning Services
12/18/14
Date



Dr. Ronald Lankford, Deputy Commissioner, Division of Financial and Administrative Services
Date



Dr. Stephen Barr, Assistant Commissioner, Office of Special Education
12-17-14
Date

C. Jeanne Loyd 12/8/14
Dr. C. Jeanne Loyd, Assistant Commissioner, Office of Adult Learning and Rehabilitation Services Date

Sharon Helwig 12-17-14
Dr. Sharon Helwig, Assistant Commissioner, Office of College and Career Readiness Date

K 20 11/18/14
Kevin Faust, Acting Director, Rehabilitation Services for the Blind Date

Joseph R. Kinkade B. Brian Kinkade
Brian Kinkade, Director, Department of Social Services Date