

Chapter 307: Pre-Employment Transition Services

Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
Policy and Procedures Manual

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Section I. Definitions

- A. **“Pre-Employment Transition Services” (Pre-ETS)** are a range of required and authorized activities focused on students with disabilities under an amendment to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, entitled the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA). Pre-ETS are available “to any student with a disability, without regard to type of disability, who needs these services whether or not the student has applied for or been determined eligible for VR services.”
- B. **“Required Pre-ETS Services”** are services and supports that must be provided to students with disabilities. They include:
1. Job exploration counseling;
 2. Work-based learning experiences provided in an integrated environment to the maximum extent possible. This included experiences in school, after school or outside the traditional school setting;
 3. Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or post-secondary educational programs at institutions of higher education;
 4. Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living skills; and
 5. Instruction in self-advocacy skills.
- C. **“Authorized Pre-ETS Services”** are permissible, within funds available, and only after required Pre-ETS are provided. These activities may be used to improve the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-secondary education or an employment outcome by:
1. Implementing effective strategies to increase the likelihood of independent living and inclusion in communities and competitive integrated workplaces;
 2. Developing and improving strategies for individuals with intellectual disabilities and individuals with significant disabilities to live independently, participate in post-secondary education experiences, and obtain and retain competitive integrated employment;
 3. Providing instruction to vocational rehabilitation counselors, school transition personnel, and other persons supporting students with disabilities;
 4. Disseminating information about innovative, effective, and efficient approaches to achieve the goals of the Pre-ETS provisions of the WIOA;
 5. Coordinating activities with transition services provided by local educational agencies under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (See, 20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.);
 6. Applying evidence-based findings to improve policy, procedure, practice, and the preparation of personnel, in order to better achieve the goals of the Pre-ETS provisions of the WIOA;
 7. Developing model transition demonstration projects;
 8. Establishing or supporting multistate or regional partnerships involving States, local educational agencies, designated State units, developmental disability agencies, private businesses, or other participants to achieve the goals of this section; and

9. Disseminating information and strategies to improve the transition to post-secondary activities of individuals who are members of traditionally unserved populations.
- D. **“Student with a disability”** is an individual with a disability who is:
1. In a secondary, post-secondary, or other recognized educational program (includes home schooling and programs offered through the juvenile justice system); and
 2. Not younger than the earliest age for the provision of transition services under the IDEA (14 years old)
 3. Not older than 21; and
 4. Eligible for and receiving supports and services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504).
- E. **“Youth with a disability”** is an individual with a disability who is:
1. Not younger than 14 years of age; and
 2. Not older than 24 years of age.

Guidance — Youth with a Disability

There is no requirement that a “youth with a disability” be participating in an educational program. The definition of youth with disabilities also includes students with disabilities.

End Guidance.

“Local Educational Authority” (LEA) is the local school district or supervisory union responsible for overseeing public education services including special education services and Section 504 services.

Section II. Referral and Eligibility for Pre-ETS Services

- A. Pre-ETS must be available statewide to all students with disabilities, without regard to type of disability, in need of such services whether or not the student has applied for or been determined eligible for VR services. The VR transition counselor will maintain frequent contact with school personnel in area schools and alternative educational sites to ensure identification of students who may benefit from Pre-ETS, as early as age 14 or 9th grade.
- B. Pre-ETS may begin once a student requests or is recommended for one or more Pre-ETS and documentation of a disability is provided. The VR transition counselor will verify the individual meets the definition of a student with a disability by one of the following methods:
1. Verification from LEA official that the student is eligible for services through IDEA or Section 504; or
 2. Receipt of copies of the IEP or 504 plan.

Section III. Provision of Pre-ETS Required Services

- A. VR must provide or arrange for the provision of Pre-ETS for eligible students. VR must also coordinate delivery of Pre-ETS with other community rehabilitation providers, schools, one-stop centers, local workforce development boards, and employers. The VR transition counselor will do this by:
1. Working with Youth Employment Specialists and others to develop work opportunities for students with disabilities, including internships, summer employment opportunities, apprenticeships, and other work opportunities throughout the school year.
 2. Attending IEP and Section 504 team meetings, when invited; and
 3. Coordinating with schools to ensure required Pre-ETS are accessible to all eligible students.
- B. The following Pre-ETS may be provided to students individually or in groups:
1. Job Exploration Counseling in a group may be provided in a classroom or community setting. This may include:
 - a) Information regarding in-demand industry sectors and occupations, as well as nontraditional employment;
 - b) Information about labor market composition;
 - c) Administration of vocational interest inventories; and
 - d) Identification of career pathways of interest to the students.
 2. Job Exploration Counseling on an individual basis may be provided in a school or the community. This includes discussions related to the particular student about:
 - a) The student's vocational interest inventory results;
 - b) In-demand occupations;
 - c) Career pathways; and
 - d) Local labor market information that applies to the student's particular interests.
 3. Work Based Learning Experiences may be provided in school, after school, or outside of the traditional school setting, and must be provided in an integrated setting in the community to the maximum extent possible.
 - a) Work Based Learning Experiences in a group setting may include:
 - (i) Coordinating a school-based program of job training and informational interviews to research employers;
 - (ii) Work-site tours to learn about necessary job skills;
 - (iii) Job shadowing; or
 - (iv) Mentoring opportunities in the community.
 - b) Work Based Learning Experiences on an individual basis may include paid or unpaid:
 - (i) Internships;
 - (ii) Progressive employment training placements in the community;
 - (iii) Apprenticeships;
 - (iv) Part time or summer competitive employment;
 - (v) Fellowships; or
 - (vi) On-the-job trainings located in the community.

4. Counseling on Opportunities for Enrollment in Comprehensive Transition or Post-Secondary Educational Programs.
 - a) Counseling in a group setting may include providing information on:
 - (i) Course offerings;
 - (ii) Career options;
 - (iii) The types of academic and occupational training needed to succeed in the workplace; and
 - (iv) Post-secondary opportunities associated with career fields or pathways.
 - b) Counseling provided on an individual basis may include:
 - (i) Advising students and parents or representatives on academic curricula;
 - (ii) Providing information about college application and admissions processes;
 - (iii) Completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA); and
 - (iv) Providing resources that may be used to support individual student success in education and training (e.g., disability support services).
5. Work Place Readiness Training
 - a) Workplace readiness training services may be provided to help students with disabilities to develop social skills and independent living skills necessary to prepare for eventual employment. Workplace readiness skills may include:
 - (i) Communication and interpersonal skills;
 - (ii) Financial literacy skills;
 - (iii) Group orientation and mobility skills (e.g., to access workplace readiness training or to learn to travel independently);
 - (iv) Job-seeking skills; and
 - (v) Understanding employer expectations for punctuality and performance, as well as other “soft” skills necessary for employment.
 - b) The services discussed above may include:
 - (i) Instruction in a generalized manner within the classroom or other group setting;
 - (ii) Instruction tailored to an individual’s needs in a work readiness training program; and
 - (iii) Opportunities to apply knowledge and skills in a workplace or other setting.
6. Instruction in Self-Advocacy
 - a) Instruction in self-advocacy skills may be provided through generalized classroom lessons in which students:
 - (i) Learn how their disability impacts their daily living, including learning, employment and independent living;
 - (ii) Learn about their rights and responsibilities;
 - (iii) Learn how to request accommodations or services and supports; and
 - (iv) Learn how to communicate their thoughts, concerns, and needs in the workplace and other settings.
 - b) Instruction may provide students with individualized opportunities to apply self-advocacy skills through activities such as:
 - (i) Conducting informational interviews;
 - (ii) Mentoring with educational staff such as principals, nurses, teachers, or office staff; or
 - (iii) Mentoring with individuals employed by or volunteering for employers, boards, associations, or organizations in integrated community settings; and

- (iv) Participating in youth leadership activities offered in educational or community settings.

Section IV. Provision of Pre-ETS Authorized Services

If VR has determined that the agency can move from providing the required Pre-ETS services to authorized Pre-ETS, VR Transition counselors with management approval may participate in one or more of the authorized services outlined in Section I.

Guidance – Providing Authorized Services

For example, an authorized service a VR Transition counselor might provide is the development and coordination of a local core transition team including local VR staff, LEA staff, community providers and advocates.

End Guidance.

Section V. Transition Services for Youth with Disabilities

- A. In the following sections, it is important to note the definition of youth with disabilities also includes students with a disability as defined in Section I. When the term “youth” is used it applies to youth ages 14 through 24. When the term “student” is used it applies to youth ages 14 through 22 attending school.
- B. VR offers a continuum of services for youth with disabilities beginning with Pre-ETS and generally progressing to individualized VR transition services. Pre-ETS are intended to prepare students to engage in more individualized VR services. Individualized VR transition services may be provided to youth determined eligible for the VR program and in accordance with an approved IPE. Any allowable VR service for an adult can be provided as a transition service for a youth with a disability under an IPE. In certain circumstances, a student with a disability may need Pre-ETS and individualized VR services. In such cases, the student must apply and be determined eligible for the VR program and have an approved IPE.

Guidance – Providing Pre-ETS Services

It is recommended that VR Transition Counselors open students under Pre-ETS before having them apply for individualized DVR services. This will protect the student’s eligibility to continue to receive Pre-ETS in the event they apply for DVR services and are found eligible, but placed in a closed Order of Selection Priority Category (See Section VIII). The provision of Pre-ETS also allows the student more time and opportunities to develop career interests and goals before engaging in more individualized VR transition services.

End Guidance.

Section VI. Referral, Application, Eligibility, and Individual Plan for Employment for VR Transition Services.

- A. A student with a disability, family member or school professional can make a referral for individualized VR Transition services at any time. The referral and application procedures are the same as for any other applicant. (See Chapter 201).

Guidance – Application for VR Transition Services

While the timing of VR application may vary according to the student's needs and interests, it is recommended that most students be encouraged to apply no later than their senior year of high school.

End Guidance.

- B. The VR Transition counselor must use the same procedures to determine eligibility as for any other VR applicant (See Chapter 202).
- C. The IPE must be developed as early as possible in the transition process and must not be later than the date the student exits high school. Also, as with any other VR eligible consumer, the IPE must be developed within 90 days of an eligibility determination unless the student agrees to a specific time extension (See Chapter 203). The IPE must outline the services and activities that will guide the individual's career exploration and achievement of his or her employment goal. The IPE may include a projected post-school outcome that:
1. Is based upon the informed choice of the student or youth with a disability eligible for the VR program;
 2. May be amended during the career development process; and
 3. Must be revised to a specific vocational goal once this process is complete.

Guidance – IPE Development

Students may not be able to identify a specific vocational goal or may change their minds frequently about their career goals. This is typical for most students. Therefore, the VR Transition counselor may develop an exploratory IPE with the student using the template developed by DVR.

End Guidance.

- D. Pre-ETS initiated prior to VR application can be continued as part of IPE planned services as long as the participant continues to meet the definition of a student (See Section I). Pre-ETS must be listed on the IPE and documented in the VR case management system.

Section VII. Continuation of the Pre-ETS Under an Order of Selection

- A. If a student with a disability received Pre-ETS prior to being determined eligible for VR services and assigned to a closed Order of Selection Priority Category, he or she may continue to receive Pre-ETS while on the waitlist.

- B. The VR Transition counselor may not begin Pre-Employment Transition Services with students who have not yet received Pre-ETS and are determined eligible for the VR program and placed in a closed Order of Selection Priority Category (waitlist).

Section VIII. Paid Services for In School Students

- A. LEAs are responsible for providing and paying for any transition service that is considered a special education or related service necessary for ensuring a free appropriate public education (FAPE) as required under IDEA and Section 504. Education services that are similar to VR services and the responsibility of the LEA include:
 - 1. Interpreting services;
 - 2. Psychological services;
 - 3. Assessment of a disability;
 - 4. Physical and occupational therapy;
 - 5. Counseling services, including rehabilitation counseling;
 - 6. Orientation and mobility services;
 - 7. Medical services for diagnostic or evaluation purposes;
 - 8. Transportation;
 - 9. Assistive technology; and
 - 10. Vocational-Technical education, including work experiences, job coaching and support services.
- B. Individual paid services are the LEA's responsibility through the student's transition year. The VR Transition counselor may authorize paid services outlined in the IPE if such services are not already available through the LEA.

Guidance – Authorizing Paid Services

It is general VR practice to authorize paid services in the student's last nine months of high school. It is recommended that the counselor seek guidance from the VR Transition Services Director or their immediate supervisor if they are considering authorizing a paid service for a student in their freshman, sophomore, or junior years.

End Guidance.

- C. As determined by the VR Transition counselor, the Regional Manager and/or the Transition Services Director, services may be provided prior to the last year in school if essential to the IPE goals and/or their development, and there are no other funding options.

Guidance – Paid Services

Examples might include work clothes, vehicle adaptations, travel to work sites or other age appropriate services.

End Guidance.

- D. As determined on an individual basis, VR may provide assistive technology (AT) services and devices for a VR-eligible student.

Guidance — Assistive Technology Services

In general, it is not VR practice to fund AT services or devices until the student's senior year. It is recommended that the counselor seek guidance from the VR Transition Services Director or their immediate supervisor if they are considering authorizing the provision of an AT service or device for a student in their freshman, sophomore, or junior years.

End Guidance.

- E. The AT service or device must meet all of the following criteria:
 - 1. The AT is part of an IEP with coordinated transition goals. This would not apply to eligible students with a 504 plan or no educational plan;
 - 2. The AT is part of an approved IPE, and;
 - 3. The AT is necessary to accomplish a successful transition to employment, post-secondary education, or training.

Section IX. Supported Employment Services

- A. The student (or representative, if appropriate), the VR transition counselor, and the IEP/Transition team will make a determination as to the need for supported employment services.
- B. Once this determination has been made, the VR transition counselor may be a resource for the IEP/Transition team, the student, and the family in identifying long term support resources. The student and his or her family should be given information and support that allows them to make an informed choice as to the selection of a supported employment provider. VR may assist in negotiating with a variety of state and local agencies or individuals for the provision of long-term supports and/or to seek other sources for follow-up.
- C. With assistance from the VR transition counselor, the student and the family may choose an appropriate supported employment service for assessment, job development, on-site training, long-term support, and advocacy.
- D. Once a long-term support provider is identified, an IPE can be developed and supported employment services initiated.