

Project SEARCH Adult Model

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Structure

- Same as the structure for the high school transition model including:
 - 3 unpaid internships to build skills
 - Employability curriculum
 - Full immersion in the host business
- Designed for those no longer enrolled in high school or a high school transition program
 - Age range of 18-35 years is advised (consider cohesiveness of the group when selecting)



Structure

- In blended programs: includes high school transition students and young adults not in high school
 - Most often gives priority to students in high school
 - Includes adults, not in high school, when needed to have enough interns to meet program costs
- Blended programs are called 'hybrid' in the Project SEARCH database



Funding

- Varies across cities and states
- Must meet the costs of the program in order to sustain the program
 - Site should enroll enough interns to meet the costs of the program
 - Site should not rely on grant funding or other soft resources to fund the program



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Funding

- Is based on eligibility of interns and comes from a combination of sources
 - Often includes a combination of vocational rehabilitation, Workforce Innovation Opportunities Act, developmental disabilities/ long term support/ Medicaid waiver services
 - Skills trainers are most often hired by the community rehabilitation provider partner and funded through the vocational rehabilitation or long term support funding agencies
 - Sites create agreements for job development services prior to and after program completion



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Funding

- For blended programs, the school partner that employs the instructor develops agreements with the adult funding agencies that serve the interns in order to receive the program fees
 - Adults are not typically eligible for funding from the high school system
 - In some cases, the high school can re-enroll students that exited school
 - In rare cases, high schools may accept adults without receiving funding



Funding

- In full adult programs, the community rehabilitation provider partner may also employ the instructor
- Rarely, some or all of the cost of the program is paid by a family or intern
 - ex: an adult intern that was a veteran used some veteran funding for the program



Funding

- Note: Per Federal Home and Community Based Services regulations, the adult program model may be used to help transition adults in a facility based day or employment program to community employment



Instructors

- Must have training, experience, and a background in adult basic education, special education, rehabilitation, or a related field that meets the Project SEARCH model
- Are not required to have a special education license or teacher certification



Length

- Program should be the same number of days as a 9 month high school transition program
 - Often 8 months due to lack of school holidays
- Program should begin in the fall and end in the spring (try to match the typical school year)



Adult Education Partner

- Adult programs should be affiliated with an adult education provider that is active in the planning, development, and ongoing improvement of the program
 - This is often a post-secondary educational institution such as: a community college, technical college, adult education or a 4 year institution
- The education partner consults on instruction and provides support to the instructor



Adult Education Partner

- Some sites enroll the interns and give credit/a certificate when they complete Project SEARCH
- Note: This adult education provider affiliation and adherence to an academic calendar follows the U.S. Department of Labor Wage and Hour Division's Fair Labor Standards Act guidelines for Unpaid Interns and Students



Stipends

- May be given to interns in some cases
- Cannot be tied to hours in skills training, like a wage
- May be tied to attendance or some other performance indicator
- Can be used to offset the cost of transportation, lunch, uniforms, etc.



Stipends

- Can be included in the curriculum about financial literacy
- May be needed for sites without an adult education partner
- Are not paid by the host business
- Are paid by one of the adult services funding partners



Example: Wisconsin

- Wisconsin's DVR has a statewide fee structure for all Project SEARCH interns
 - This funds skills trainer positions and other expenses
 - The long term care system provides funding for non-high school adult interns
 - Goes toward the instructor position and other expenses, such as transportation
 - Funding is coded under Community Based Prevocational Services or Consumer Education and Training
- The state agencies work together on policy guidance to all Project SEARCH sites in the state



Example: Wisconsin

- All of the adults in the program are enrolled in a Project SEARCH specific course at the University of Wisconsin (UW) Whitewater
- DVR Counselors enroll the interns in the course
- Interns get official student status
- Graduates receive 1 non-degree credit per semester on a University transcript
 - 2017-18 school year cost for the credit was \$362.43 per student, per semester
 - Wisconsin DVR pays the tuition



Example: Wisconsin

- Course syllabus includes assignments that interns complete and instructors submit to UW
 - Assignments are components of a typical Project SEARCH curriculum and are cross-walked to the Project SEARCH curriculum so that it is practical for the Project SEARCH instructors
- UW staff monitors their progress and does at least 1 site visit per year to meet with all interns enrolled



Example: Wisconsin

- Note: The UW Whitewater program is willing to work with programs in other states to provide the credit structure for their interns
- For blended programs, WI DVR requires that sites make all efforts to enroll high school students before taking adults
 - Selection teams look closely at applications to ensure students are not being exited from high school before the end of their eligibility to be able to participate as adult interns



Links

- Project SEARCH 101: <https://projectsearch.us/project-search-academy/>
- US Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division, Fact Sheet #71: <https://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.htm>
- Wisconsin Project SEARCH website: https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/service_providers/projects/default.htm



Links

- Wisconsin DVR fee schedule (pays for credits and funds skills trainers):
 - <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/programs/project-search/project-search-fees.htm>
- Long term support programs (pay for the instructor):
 - Family Care:
<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/familycare/mcos/communication/rs13-02.pdf>
 - IRIS: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p0/p00708a.pdf>



Questions or Comments?

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