

Project Skills: Step-by-Step - for Special Ed Teachers

1. If a student is at least 16 and has a work-related goal on his or her IEP, then contact your Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor to inquire about Project Skills. (Project Skills is for students that need support in getting or keeping a job). Your VR counselor will need these items to determine eligibility for Project Skills:
 - IEP
 - Latest adult psychological exam & achievement testing results
 - Student medical records (Voc Rehab will get these from the student's doctor)

Sioux Falls VR Office: 1-800-265-9679 **Yankton VR:** 1-800-265-9677 **Brookings VR:** 688-4280
2. Once the VR office has determined the student is eligible, the next step is to secure a jobsite. Think about:
 - Will your district provide **transportation** to the Project Skills job if the student needs it?
 - Who will be the student's **job coach**? Many schools use an educational assistant/paraprofessional.
 - Who is monitoring the success of the job placement throughout the year?
 - What kind of **schedule** will work best for your student? Can the business accommodate this?
3. While the student is waiting for the job to be set up, the student can work on these forms:
 - Voc Rehab will require: IPE form signed by the student
 - **Cornbelt will handle:** W-4, I-9, payroll form, and work agreement (Cornbelt: ph: 271-0218)

**Cornbelt & your Voc Rehab counselor will make ensure that these are completed correctly.*
4. Teachers: remember to track how much time you are spending on your Project Skills work. Monthly reports are required, but we'll help you get started. These monthly reports serve two purposes: 1) ensuring that your school is meeting the 30% match that is required by the VR office. 2) Helping to ensure that adult services are available if needed. Cornbelt and/or your Voc Rehab counselor can help you to start these reports.

EXAMPLES: These are the kinds of work that should be documented on your monthly reports:

- Job Development (finding a job, sitting in the contract meeting, phone calls related to the job hunt, etc.)
- Job Coaching (teaching the student how to do the job or how to fill out the time card)
- Site Monitoring (phone calls, site visits, emails to the supervisor; time spent following up with both the student & the supervisor to ensure the student is doing well on the job)

Other points of interest:

- Student earns minimum wage; currently \$8.50/hour. Paychecks: every two weeks. Timecards are turned in weekly.
- Student becomes a "temporary employee" of the State of South Dakota, regardless of their job site.
- Voc Rehab pays the student's wages & worker's compensation insurance (in case they are injured at work)
- Students generally are awarded 250 hours of Project Skills work, and those hours are worked during the school year
- The Project Skills job cannot be at a church, or at the student's school. Cannot work for family, either.
- Students that are approved for Project Skills can start working after Oct.1. Some schools use Aug/Sept for lining up the job and job coach, and for filling out the payroll paperwork. But students can start jobs anytime throughout the year.

For More Information Contact:

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