



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT FOR AGING
AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

Vocational Rehabilitation & Transition Services

An Overview of the DARS VR and
Transition Program





What is DARS?

The Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS)

- Virginia's federally mandated Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program
- Assists individuals of all ages with disabilities to prepare for, enter, and maintain employment
- Focus is on EMPLOYMENT
- Participation is VOLUNTARY



Schools and DARS

- Schools and DARS share a common goal of successful employment outcomes
- Federal regulations require schools and DARS to work together to deliver Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) within the educational setting
- Pre-ETS works in conjunction with the school's existing transition services and are based on the student's individual need



What are Pre-ETS?



- Early start at developing employability skills and to assist students with identifying career interests starting as early as 14 years old
- Only for Students With Disabilities (Have an IEP or 504 plan)
- DARS collaborates with students, families, schools and community service providers



Pre-ETS Activities

There are Five Required Pre-ETS Activities

- Job exploration counseling
- Work-based learning experiences
- Postsecondary education counseling
- Workplace readiness training
- Instruction in self-advocacy



Job Exploration Counseling

Purpose

Foster motivation, consideration of opportunities, and informed decision making.

Examples

- Explore the world of work
- Explore interests and abilities
- Investigate careers



Work-Based Learning Experiences

Purpose

An educational approach to provide students with knowledge and skills that help them connect school experiences to real-life work activities and future career opportunities

Examples

- Work site tours to learn about necessary job skills
- Job shadowing
- Informational Interviews
- Employer presentations
- Job Fairs
- Arrange guest speakers who have disabilities and are employed



Counseling on Opportunities for Enrolling in Post-Secondary Education

Purpose

Gaining an awareness of the wide range of career pathway options and labor market realities and projections

Examples

- Academic and occupational counseling
- Courses, applications, and admissions processes
- Guidance on the FAFSA process
- Referral to resources
- Campus visits/Tours

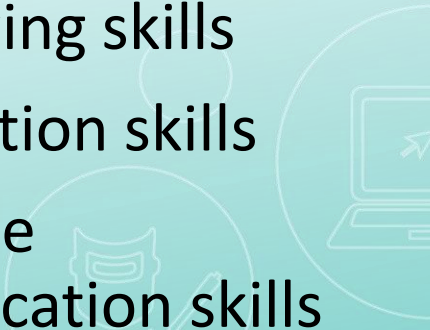


Workplace Readiness Training

Purpose

Prepares students for commonly expected skills that employers seek from most employees. Work readiness skills are a set of skills and behaviors that are necessary for any job. Often called soft skills, employability skills, or job readiness skills.

Examples

- Employer expectations
 - Time management
 - Job seeking/networking
 - Employment application writing skills
 - Interviewing skills
 - Job retention skills
 - Workplace communication skills
- 



Instruction in Self-Advocacy

Purpose

Provide students with the ability to effectively communicate, convey, negotiate or assert his/her own interests and/or desires. These skills will be needed in education, workplace, and community settings.

Examples

- Arrange for speakers from Independent Living Services
- Understanding rights and responsibilities
- Requesting services and accommodations
- Communicating thoughts, needs, and concerns

Pre-ETS are the first step on a continuum of Vocational Rehabilitation services provided by DARS.



How are Students Referred for DARS?

- Students can be referred for VR or Pre-ETS by the school, parents, or other service provider
- Schools will have the referral forms
- Once completed, forms and documentation of disability will be turned in to the DARS counselor

What happens after Pre-ETS?

- When a student is closer to exiting the school system, they may choose to continue to work with DARS through our Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program for continued job placement support
- Students can be referred for VR or Pre-ETS by the school, parents, or other service provider
- This requires them to be able to work competitively and they will work one on one with a counselor until they are successfully placed in a career
- The VR services is open to students or adults with disabilities

**Potentially eligible (PE) students with disabilities (SWDs)
connected with DARS for
Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)**

**Served by PE Counselor;
Pre-ETS provided are based on student need**

Job
Exploration
Counseling

Work-Based
Learning
Experiences

Counseling in Postsecondary
Education/Training
Opportunities

Workplace
Readiness
Training

Instruction in
Self-Advocacy

Apply for VR
(can occur
anytime)

**Decide not to
apply for VR***

*DARS provides
information about
VR application
process in case VR
services are
needed/wanted in
the future

May be jointly
served by a PE
and a VR
counselor

**Eligibility
Determination**

Still in High School:
Receive Pre-ETS and as necessary,
VR transition services

Exited High School:
Receive VR transition services.
Continue to receive needed Pre-ETS
while still an SWD

**Achieves
competitive
integrated
employment!**



Examples of Services Available to Potentially Eligible (PE) Students with Disabilities

(Not an exhaustive list)

- Interest inventories
- Review of labor market information
- Exploration of career pathways
- Informational interviews
- Job shadowing
- Work site tours
- Postsecondary education/training campus tours
- Education in the financial aid process
- Development of soft skills, such as: time management, organization and planning, problem solving, appropriate and effective communication, etc...
- Development of independent living skills
- Financial literacy training
- Teaching how to request accommodations
- Teaching rights and responsibilities
- Teaching employer expectations
- Development of self-advocacy skills
- Education about transportation options and general travel training
- Career Pathways for Individuals with Disabilities academies
- WWRC Pre-ETS Career Day

Examples of Services Available to Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Students with Disabilities*

(Not an exhaustive list)

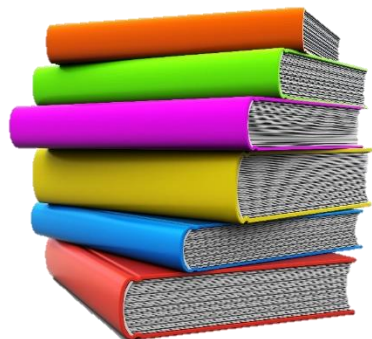
- All Pre-ETS
 - WWRC PERT
 - Project SEARCH
 - Start on Success
 - WWRC PREP
 - Development of the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)
 - Vocational evaluation
 - Situational assessments
 - Individualized assistive technology assessments and services
 - Vocational training
 - Postsecondary education
 - Job development for IPE goal
 - Job placement assistance for IPE goal
 - Supported Employment services (including job coaching)
 - On-the-job training for IPE goal
 - Time-limited transportation assistance
- 

Prepare Students for the **FUTURE**





Leesburg DARS



Main Office Phone Number: 703-771-4775

Fax Number: 703-771-4746

Referral Point of Contact: Linda Barajas

Linda.Barajas@dars.virginia.gov

(571) 293-3082