



Missouri VR's Role in Transition Planning for Students with Disabilities

Developed by
Vocational Rehabilitation
Fall, 2010

Why Should VR Focus on Transition?

- Students with disabilities who are leaving the education system represent the single largest source of potential customers for VR services.
- On-going, productive dialogue among students with disabilities and their parents, secondary education staff, and State VR Agency staff is necessary to facilitate every student's successful transition from school to quality competitive employment that provide a living wage and an opportunity to move up the career ladder.



Basic Transition Concept

- Counsel every student, along with his or her family, to think about goals for life after high school and to develop a plan to get there.
- Design the high school experience to ensure that the student gains the skills and competencies needed to achieve his or her desired post-school goals.
- Identify and link students and families to any needed post-school services, supports or programs before the student exits the school system.



VR's Role in Transition Planning

- **What role does VR play in transition?**
 - required partner
 - broker of service
 - vocational expert
 - employment agency
 - vocational/career counselor
 - student/family advocate

VR's Involvement in Transition Planning

- Promotes student self determination and self advocacy.
- Increases graduation rates and lowers drop out rates.
- Promotes student access to a wide array of community services, post-secondary education/training and employment.
- Increases informed parent participation and support.
- Promotes assessment activities focusing on career, aptitude and individual counseling regarding post-school goals.
- Increases work experience opportunities for students prior to graduation/exit from HS.
- Exposes students to careers in high tech industries, scholarship, and mentoring opportunities with a wide range of businesses.

Missouri VR Transition-Related Statewide Agreements

- **Joint Cooperative Memorandum of Understanding (DESE)**
- **Cooperative (COOP) Work Experience Program Agreement**
- **Fast Facts:**
 - FY09 - **6,737** students with disabilities received transition services
 - FY10 – **6,566**

 - FY09 - **399/449** school districts had COOP Agreements
 - FY10 – **344/449**

 - FY09 - **627** eligible transition students reached successful employment outcomes. This number represents **63%** of all eligible transition students who received VR services and exited the program.
 - FY10 - **804 / 68%**

 - FY09 – School referrals represented 16% of VR 26 closures (successfully employed), and 15% of VR 28 closures (unsuccessful).
 - FY10 – School referrals account for 22% of total VR clients.

Transition Performance Standards and Indicators

○ **Standard 1: 1.1 Employment Outcomes**

- Federal Standard 994
- 4th Quarter 09 993
- 4th Quarter 10 1,163

○ **Standard 1: 1.2 Success Rate**

- Federal Standard 55.8%
- 4th Quarter 09 61.3%
- 4th Quarter 10 65.8%

○ **Standard 1: 1.3 % Competitive Employment Outcomes**

- Federal Standard 72.6%
- 4th Quarter 09 99.5%
- 4th Quarter 10 99.7%

○ **Standard 1: 1.4 Avg. Hourly Wages Compared to Mo State Avg.**

- FY10 MO State Avg. for all Workers \$18.87
- Transition Client \$9.03

○ **Standard 2: 2.1 Minority vs. Non-Minority Service Rate**

- Federal Standard 0.80
- 4th Quarter 09 0.81
- 4th Quarter 10 0.79



Making the Connection

- **Who does VR contact in providing transition-related services, or for student referrals?**
 - Director of Special Ed
 - Classroom teachers
 - School nurse
 - HS counselor
 - Work Experience Coordinators (WEC)

Making the Connection

- **How is contact with school personnel typically initiated, and/or student referrals obtained?**
 - VR brochure/Phone Call
 - Scheduled personal visit to the school with staff, student, and/or parent/guardian:
 - Scheduled introductory in-service with school staff
 - Scheduled group informational meeting with all students (i.e. financial aid night/career fair, etc.)
 - Participation in IEP meeting, with parent/guardian consent
 - Scheduled intake interview with student, with parent/guardian consent
 - Scheduled monthly or bi-semester meetings with identified school personnel



Missouri VR Transition-Related General Services

- VR may provide the following transition-related services to students or school districts:
 - **Consultation/Technical Assistance**
 - Consult with school personnel regarding disability-related accommodations and/or modifications, post-secondary training, career options, etc.
 - Provide in-service presentations, participate in career fairs, etc.
 - **Participation in IEP meetings**



VR Participation in the IEP Meeting

- **For students not yet determined eligible for VR services:**
 - the school district will need to obtain consent from the student/parent prior to inviting VR to the IEP meeting.
 - The VR counselor will prioritize their attendance at the IEP meeting based upon the following:
 - the student's age and proximity to services
 - the complexity of the disability
 - specific needs expressed by the school district/family
 - counselor's schedule

VR Participation in the IEP Meeting (cont.)

- **For students who are VR eligible:**
 - Participation in the IEP meeting is a priority, and proper consent from the student/parent should be obtained and communicated between the school and VR.
 - The VR counselor will make arrangements to:
 - attend the IEP meeting in person, or
 - participate via conference call, or
 - provide information in writing on VR services
- **To enhance active VR participation in the IEP:**
 - Discuss/communicate/coordinate:
 - the school's IEP scheduling process
 - the VR counselor's schedule/availability
 - teachers notify the VR counselor well in advance of the IEP meeting date

Big Picture VR

- **Eliminate duplication of transition services provided by the school** (i.e. transition assessments, non-paid work experiences, etc.)
- **Enhance and expand substantial transition services focusing on successful post-school employment and education/training options** (i.e. career exploration, career planning, employment/wage data, training programs, etc.)

Missouri VR Student Transition Referrals-Who

- **Any** student with a disability may be referred to VR for transition services:
 - Students with a 504 plan
 - Students with a physical or mental impairment
 - Students receiving services through an IEP
- A student with a disability who is referred specifically to VR for participation in the **Cooperative (COOP) Work Experience Program**:
 - must be receiving special education services through an IEP

Missouri VR Student Transition Referrals-How

- **Referral information requested by VR**
 - VR Questionnaire/Application
 - VR Health Assessment Questionnaire
 - Latest IEP/504 Plan, Re-Evaluation/Diagnostic Summary
 - Records to include other mental/physical health-related diagnosis
 - Current class schedule, and/or transcript
- **If students are referred and ...**
 - **Forms/referral information are not complete?**
 - VR counselor will meet with the student/family and complete the paperwork in order to open the case.
 - **School records are not available or do not include adequate diagnostic information?**
 - VR counselor will make every effort to obtain existing medical records and then schedule diagnostic testing if necessary to determine eligibility.
 - **The student is under age 18, and parent/guardian signature on VR application has not been obtained?**
 - VR counselor can meet with the student to discuss services, but cannot open a case, until guardian signature is obtained on the VR application.

Missouri VR Student Transition Referrals-When

- **The best time for VR to receive a transition referral and/or open a case will vary, depending on the needs of the client. Some examples include:**
 - student is “at-risk” of dropping out of school
 - student needs disability-related accommodations/supports for employment
 - student is requesting, shows interest in, and is appropriate for, paid work experience such as COOP
 - student is in their last year of high school
 - anytime the student’s individual needs support referral



VR Eligibility

- **Eligibility for VR services is determined individually, based on the following requirements:**
 - A physical or mental impairment, as determined by qualified personnel licensed or certified in accordance with state law or regulation,
 - that constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment, and
 - requires vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, secure, retain or regain employment consistent with the applicant's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.
- **A referral does not automatically result in VR eligibility.**
- **A diagnosis, IEP, and/or test scores alone, do not automatically result in VR eligibility.**

Missouri Statewide Order of Selection

- In the event vocational rehabilitation services cannot be provided to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State of Missouri, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) will implement a statewide order of selection. Missouri VR has been in an order of selection since 10-1-03.
- In accordance with the following priority categories, individuals with the most significant disabilities will be selected first for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services. Services shall be provided based upon the eligible individual's placement in one (1) of the following priority categories:
 - **Priority Category I:** An individual with the most significant disability.
 - **Priority Category II:** An individual with a significant disability.
 - **Priority Category III:** An individual with a disability.

Missouri VR Transition-Related Services for Eligible Youth

- **After the student is determined eligible, VR may provide the following services, which include, but are not limited to:**
 - Consultation, technical assistance, participation in IEP meetings
 - Web-Based Career Planning/Portfolio [MissouriConnections.org]
 - Individual career guidance/counseling/vocational planning
 - Assistance in finding employment/job development [may include Employment Services (ES) thru a community rehabilitation provider]
 - COOP and/or On-the-Job-Training (OJT)
 - Supported employment job coaching
 - Assistive technology devices/services for vocational or employment related purposes*
 - Post secondary education or training*

* Denotes a service based on financial need



Cooperative (COOP) Work Experience Program

- COOP is one of several transition services provided by VR, operating in partnership with special education in local school districts.
- COOP is one of four school-directed and supervised paid or unpaid off campus learning experiences approved by DESE, in which the student may receive high school credit.
- The school district in which the student attends must have an approved COOP agreement with VR to participate.
- The school district must have a designated Work Experience Coordinator (WEC), certified in special education assigned to supervise students. The school will assign credit based on the number of hours a student works.



Vocational/Career Planning

- **Vocational/career planning is often focused on career and employment-related activities with the student, which may include:**
 - Career exploration [Missouri Connections]
 - Assistance with resume writing/job leads/contacting employers
 - Coordinating OJT/Internship opportunities with employers
 - Disability awareness/advocacy
 - Assistance with college or training programs
 - Researching accommodations necessary to access services
 - Setting up appointments to visit schools/specialized programs
 - Discussing financial/transportation/housing issues



Guidance and Counseling

- **Guidance and counseling is focused on the student's personal, family, friends, and/or disability-related issues which may affect their student's long or short term vocational choices.**
- **Regular, on-going meetings with the student/family may include guidance/counseling to assist the student with:**
 - Personal planning and decision-making
 - Drug/alcohol related issues, and/or any legal history
 - Disability awareness/self-advocacy
 - Appropriate work-related behavior, and "soft-skills" in an employment setting



Linking Students to Other Adult Service Agencies/Programs/Services

- **Discuss and connect students/families, with any other adult service agencies/programs/services that may be important in the student's continued vocational planning after graduation from high school.**
- **These programs may include, but are not limited to, the following:**
 - Centers for Independent Living (CIL)
 - Career Centers (Workforce Development)
 - Disability Support Services/Access Office (colleges/universities)



VR Services After Graduation

- **After the student graduates or exits from high school, VR may continue to provide the following services, which include, but are not limited to:**
 - Individual career guidance/counseling/vocational planning
 - Assistance in finding employment/job development
 - On-the-Job-Training (OJT)
 - Employment Services or Supported Employment job coaching
 - Post secondary education or training*
 - Assistive devices/technology/services*
 - Job-related tools, licenses, and equipment*
 - Job and/or training related accommodations/modifications*

* Denotes a service based on financial need

Successful Transition Outcome Case Closure (26)

- **VR may close an individual's case as successfully employed (Status 26):**
 - once the student has graduated or exited the secondary school setting, and
 - obtained/maintained employment for over 90 days; providing the following:
 - the student's job goal is consistent with the individual's capacity, interests, ability, resources and strengths
 - the student is no longer interested or expresses a need for further VR services
 - substantial VR services were provided to assist the student in reaching their employment outcome

Dream Big: See The Possibilities



Dream Big: See The Possibilities



Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation Transition Team Members 2008-11

- **Lydia Mitchell** – St. Louis West/Transition VR
- **Kim Gee** – St. Charles VR
- **Barb Hirst** – St. Louis South VR
- **Elizabeth Smith** – Cape Girardeau VR
- **Jackie Crawford**– Springfield North VR
- **Tausha Taylor** – St. Joe VR
- **Carrie Pugh** – Kansas City Transition VR
- **Chris Clause** – Sedalia VR
- **Don Jackson** – Chillicothe VR
- **Marilyn Smith** – St. Louis Special School/Transition Liaison
- **Sally Smith** – North Kansas City School District/Transition Liaison
- **Karen Allan** – parent rep
- **Dorothy Parks** – VR
- **Barb Hoelzer** – VR
- **Brenda Simmons** – VR