



# Partnering with VRS in Providing Transition Services

Provided by Heather Kosec and Alyssa Klein

# What is Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS)?

- State employment services agency that serves people with disabilities
- Division of the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)
  - [State Services for the Blind \(SSB\)](#) is a sister agency that serves those who are blind, low vision or DeafBlind
- Partner in the [CareerForce](#) system
  - 50 CareerForce locations in the state
- **VRS serves youth and adults: Any Age 14+!**



## “Student with a Disability” for VRS

- Has an IEP (in special education); **or**
- 504 plan; **or**
- Other medical/mental health documentation



# Bringing Services and Supports Together for Students with Disabilities



# Services VRS Provides

- Career Counseling
- Job Training
- Job Placement
- Services to Keep a Job
- Pre-Employment Transition Services
- And more!



# Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

- Job Exploration Counseling
- Work-Based Learning Experiences
- Postsecondary Education Counseling
- Workplace Readiness Training
- Instruction in Self-Advocacy



# Definitions of Pre-ETS

Definitions of Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)				
Job Exploration Counseling	Work-Based Learning Experience	Postsecondary Education Counseling	Workplace Readiness Training	Instruction in Self-Advocacy
<p><b>Work with students to explore:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocational interests</li> <li>• The labor market</li> <li>• In-demand industries and occupations</li> <li>• Non-traditional employment options</li> <li>• Career pathways of interest</li> </ul>	<p><b>Arranging for and providing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Career Mentorship</li> <li>• Career Related Competitions</li> <li>• Informational Interviews</li> <li>• Internships (paid or unpaid)</li> <li>• Job Shadowing</li> <li>• Practicum</li> <li>• Service Learning</li> <li>• Simulated Workplace Experiences</li> <li>• Student-led Enterprises</li> <li>• Work Experiences (paid or unpaid)</li> <li>• Volunteering</li> <li>• Workplace Tours/Field Trips</li> <li>• Youth Apprenticeships (YA)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Assisting students with enrolling or remaining enrolled in postsecondary education or training by helping them to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand how to successfully transition to a postsecondary education or training program</li> <li>• Identify postsecondary education and training options</li> <li>• Understand how their career goals line up with education and training options</li> <li>• Complete steps for enrolling in a postsecondary education or training program</li> <li>• Learn about and apply for postsecondary financial aid options</li> <li>• Learn about various supports and assistive technology used by students with disabilities at college, such as where and how to get alternative formats of textbooks</li> <li>• Learn about information on course offerings, career options, the types of academic and occupational training needed to succeed in the workplace, and how post-secondary opportunities associated with career fields or pathways would pertain to a student who is currently enrolled to ensure they are on the right pathway</li> <li>• Make decisions about changing majors and/ or education or training programs</li> </ul>	<p><b>Arranging for and providing opportunities for students to learn:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication and interpersonal skills</li> <li>• Employer expectations for punctuality and performance, as well as other "soft" skills necessary for employment;</li> <li>• Financial literacy and benefits planning</li> <li>• How to navigate transportation options</li> <li>• Job-seeking skills</li> </ul>	<p><b>Arranging and providing opportunities for:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning about disability and its impact</li> <li>• Learning about/ how to request accommodations, services, supports, and assistive technology</li> <li>• Learning about personal rights and responsibilities</li> <li>• Mentoring (peer mentoring, disability mentoring, group mentoring or e-mentoring)</li> <li>• Participating in youth leadership activities offered in educational or community settings</li> </ul>

[View Definitions of Pre-Employment Transition Services - Full version](#)

## Pre-ETS Availability

- Are provided in **collaboration** between schools and VRS
- Must be **made “available” statewide** to all students with disabilities
- **Any student** with a disability who is age 14-21 can receive Pre-ETS





# Two VRS Staff Assigned to Every School



- VR Counselor and Pre-ETS Representative
- No wrong door: Send referrals to either staff person
- [Find the staff assigned to your school](#)

# 2 Levels of VRS Support

**VRS Student Career Services:**  
..... Two Levels of Support

Introductory Career Services	Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services
<b>Which VRS Staff Coordinates These Services?</b> Your school's <b>Pre-ETS Representative</b> is:	<b>Which VRS Staff Coordinates These Services?</b> Your school's <b>VR Counselor</b> is:
<b>Which Students Should be Referred?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>★ Students with IEPs, 504 plans, or other medical/mental health documentation</li><li>★ Students age 14 up until age 22 can apply to either program at any time</li></ul>	
<b>Typical starting point for students in 9th, 10th, or 11th grade</b> Serves as a "first step" for students who may only need Introductory Career Services	<b>Typical starting point for students in 11th and 12th grade or 18-21 transition programming</b> May serve as a "next step" for students requiring supports beyond Introductory Career Services
<b>What are the Services?</b> May include any of the 5 Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) as needed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Job Exploration</li><li>Work-Readiness Training</li><li>Work Experiences</li><li>Self-Advocacy Training</li><li>Training and College Exploration</li></ul>	<b>What are the Services?</b> May include any of the 5 Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) plus extra services and supports as needed (i.e. coaching to support a work experience). Plus supports after high school graduation to help with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Postsecondary education or training</li><li>Finding a job</li><li>Keeping a job</li></ul>
<b>How Long Can a Student Receive Services?</b> Services available <b>ONLY</b> while enrolled in school.	<b>How Long Can a Student Receive Services?</b> As long as needed. Also, people at any age can apply or re-apply for services.

**Provided in Partnership with Schools!**

Contact the VRS Pre-ETS Representative or VR Counselor who are happy to consult about how to partner and which path is best for each student. DEED 70360-02 (11/2023)

**mi EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**  
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES  
[mn.gov/deed/vrs-student](http://mn.gov/deed/vrs-student)

Upon request, this document can be made available in alternative formats for people with disabilities. DEED is an equal opportunity employer and service provider.

## VRS Student Career Services: Two Levels of Support

### Introductory Career Services

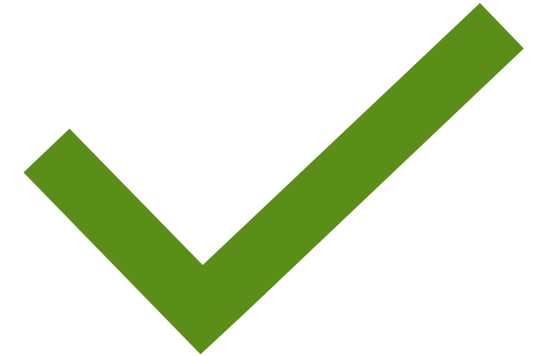
- VRS staff: Pre-ETS Representative
- Typical starting point for 9-11<sup>th</sup> graders
- **\*\*We need: "Verification" of disability\*\***

### VR Career Services

- VRS staff: VR Counselor
- Typical starting point for 12<sup>th</sup> graders and age 18-22 transition students
- **\*\*We need: "Documentation" of disability\*\***

# Steps for Accessing VRS Services

1. Contact one of the [VRS staff assigned to the student's school](#)
2. They will set up a meeting to explain services and provide an application packet
  - Ideally the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) are there
3. VRS verifies student eligibility for services
4. Planning for services begins...



# Planning Services Together

Ideally a team meeting is held with student, parent(s)/guardian(s), school staff (i.e. IEP case manager)

Discuss:

- Pre-ETS needs and what VRS will provide
- How services will be coordinated with school services
- How and when services will be provided
- How communication will take place
- Follow-up meetings



# VRS Contracts with Community Agencies

- Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs)
- Centers for Independent Living (CILs)
- CareerForce partners



# Flyer and Video for Students and Families



What are they? Who are they for? How can I get them?

## What are they?



The Minnesota Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) program partners with high schools and other community partners to arrange for or provide any of the following five services at no charge to students:

1. **Job Exploration:** Exploring interests and careers to start preparing for your future now
2. **Work Experience:** Gain skills and experience through seeing and trying out jobs you are interested in
3. **Training and College Exploration:** Exploring options for training or job skills (such as community, technical and 4-year college options, certificate and apprenticeship programs, etc.)
4. **Work Readiness Training:** Learning basic skills to find and keep a job (such as how to fill out a job application, figure out transportation, and how you use money)
5. **Self-Advocacy Training:** Learn about your strengths, challenges, preferences, and supports so that you can speak up for yourself and ask for what you need to be successful

VRS also provides additional supports to those who qualify.

## Who are they for?

VRS Student Career Services are available to students who are between the ages of 14 through 21 and who have one of the following:

- ☑ An Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- ☑ A 504 plan
- ☑ A record or note from a mental health or medical provider
- ☑ A Social Security Administration (SSA) beneficiary award letter

## How can I get them?

VRS has Student Career Services available across the state.

Find the VRS staff that serve your school at: [mn.gov/deed/vrs-student](http://mn.gov/deed/vrs-student)



FOR MORE INFORMATION,  
VISIT OUR WEBSITE!

The pre-employment transition services provided under the VRS program are funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education with a state match. For federal fiscal year 2021, the total amount of federal grant funds used for these services is \$6,484,287 (16 percent of total federal appropriation). The state appropriation indirectly supports the pre-employment transition spending and amounts to \$1,737,387.



- [Pre-Employment Transition Services - Video \(2:36\)](#)
- [Connecting Students to Work - Flyer](#)

# Adults: Accessing VRS

- Complete an interest form
- A VRS staff person will respond shortly

**WORKFORCE ONE**

Interest Form for Rehabilitation Services

We are excited you are interested in learning more about us. Please fill out the form below so that we can connect you with the office closest to you! A staff person will respond to you within 2 business days. Do know that if you are interested in our services, the next step is an application and an initial meeting.

**Name**

**\*First Name**

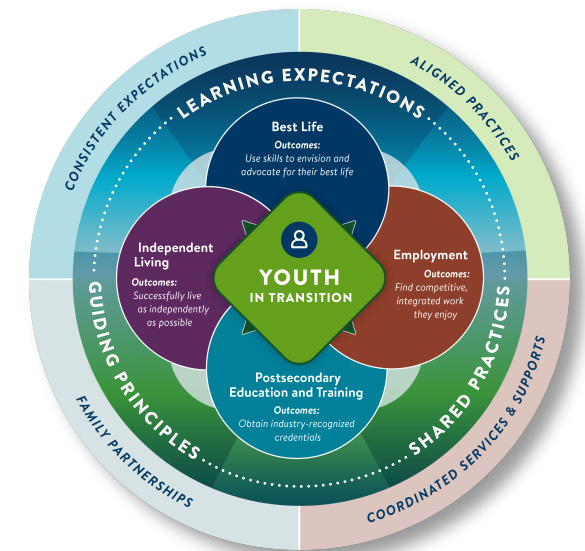
**\*Last Name**

**Preferred Name**

**Pronoun**

# Be sure to attend our upcoming sessions...

- **Minnesota's NEW Transition Framework: Keynote, 8:30 on Wednesday April 17**
- **Resources in Minnesota's Transition Framework: 11:50 on Wednesday April 17**





# Discussion

- What questions do you have?
- What successes in partnering with VRS can you share?
- What ideas do you have for increasing the partnership between schools and VRS/
- How can our youth team help you



**Thank you!**

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