

# Project SEARCH Engagement Request for VRS Community Partners

August 2024



# Welcome!

- Introductions



Project | SEARCH



# Program Overview



Project | SEARCH®

# Video



# Project SEARCH Founders

**Erin Riehle, a Nursing  
Director**



**Susie Rutkowski, a Special  
Education Director**



# Cincinnati Children's Hospital Project SEARCH

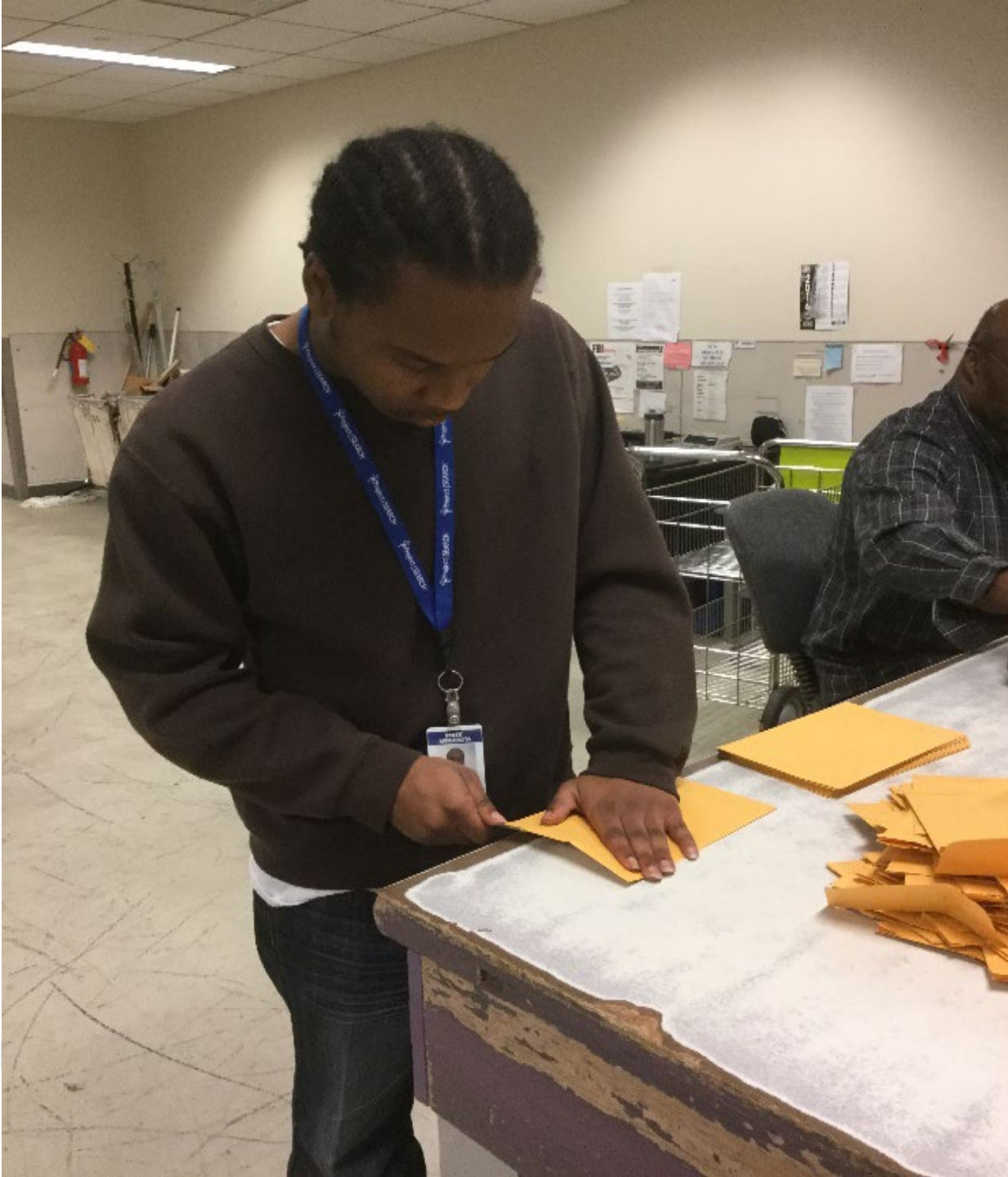


- Program began in 1996
- Developed as a means to:
  - Meet entry level employment needs at Cincinnati Children's
  - Support the diversity initiative, and
  - Partner with schools and community services agencies to improve outcomes



## What is Project SEARCH?

Evidence-based one-year internship program for students with intellectual/developmental cognitive disabilities, ages 18 to 22, in their last year of high school eligibility.



# Goal of the Program

The goal of Project SEARCH is for interns to obtain **competitive, integrated employment** within 9 months after completion of their internship experience.





# International Program

- 48 states
- 10 countries
- 722 programs
- 44,521 students served since 2010



# 13 Minnesota Project SEARCH Sites

- **Avera Hospital** (Marshall)
- **Children's Minnesota** (Minneapolis)
- **Embassy Suites** (Bloomington)
- **Essentia St. Mary's** (Detroit Lakes)
- **Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare** (St. Paul)
- **Hennepin Healthcare** (Minneapolis)
- **M Health Fairview Lakes Medical Center** (Wyoming)
- **M Health Fairview Ridges** (Burnsville)
- **NEW!** **M Health Fairview Southdale** (Edina)
- **NEW!** **M Health Fairview St. John's** (Maplewood)
- **Mayo Clinic** (Rochester)
- **Medtronic** (NW Metro)
- **Sanford Medical Center** (Worthington)

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# Minnesota Data

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Project SEARCH started in Minnesota in 2009 at Medtronic.

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As of 2024, 650 interns have participated in Project SEARCH.

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70% have obtained competitive integrated employment.

# Brief Program Description

One school year

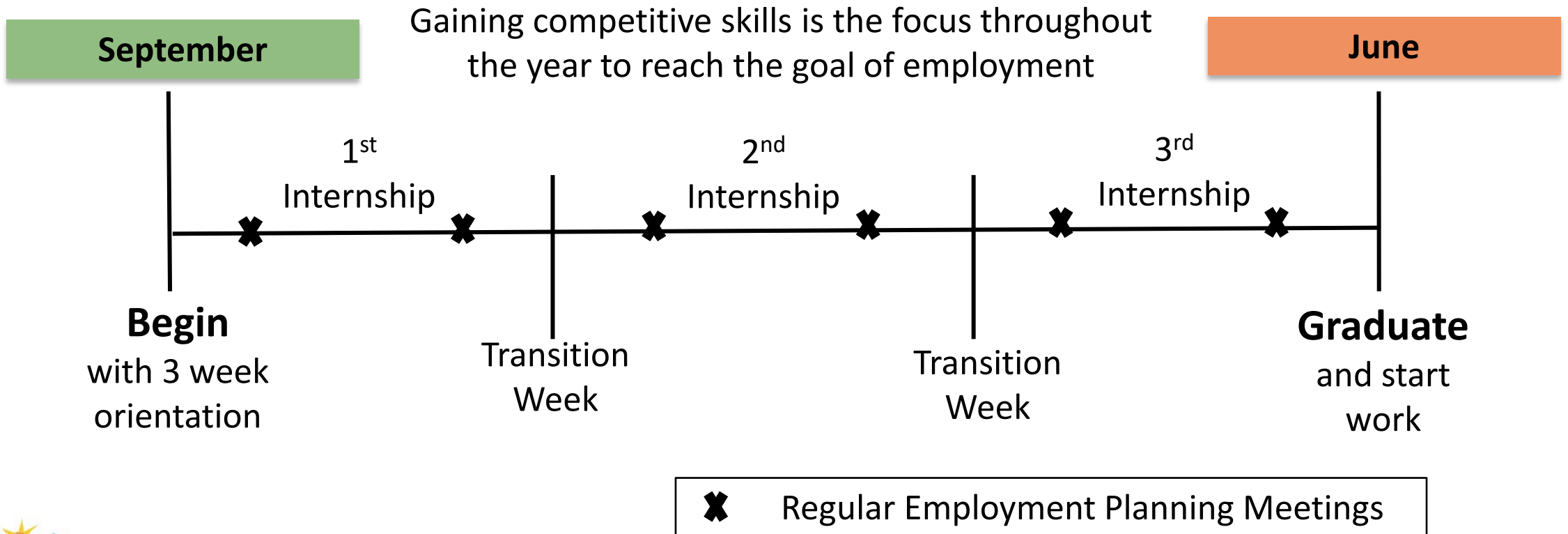
- 8-10 student interns with a variety of intellectual and developmental disabilities
- Are totally immersed in host business culture
- With a certified instructor and skills trainers on-site
- Participate in internships with continual feedback
- To work toward the outcome of employment in the community



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# What does the year look like?

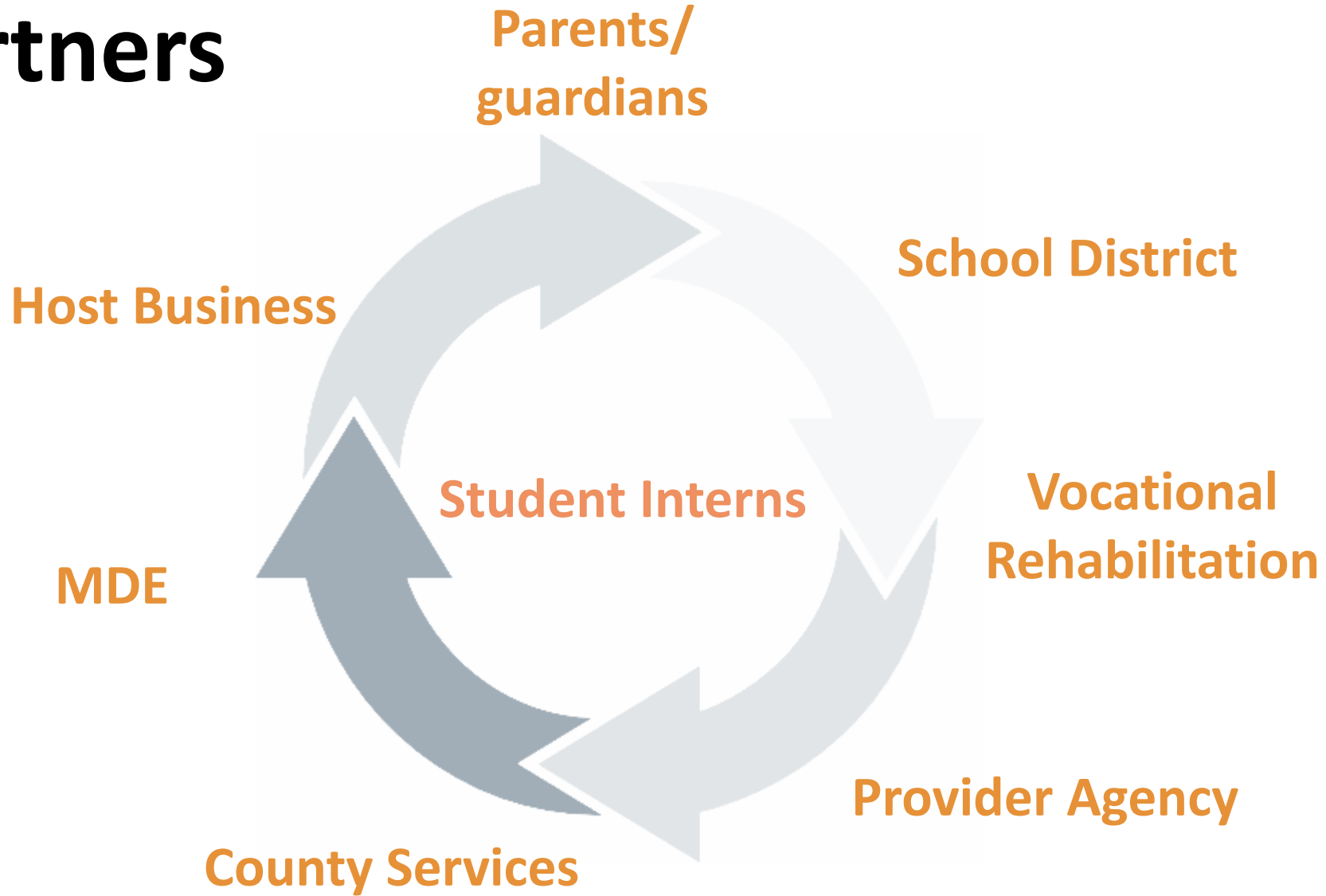
(Follows the School Calendar)



# Partner Roles

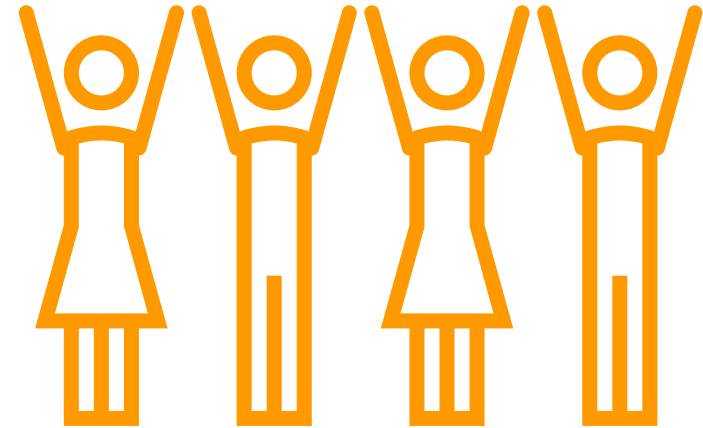


# Partners



# Partners slide 2

- MDE: Lead agency, statewide coordination
- Host school district
- Host business
- County
- VRS/SSB
- Parents/guardians
- **Provider Agency= YOU!**





# Project SEARCH Partners

## Host School District

- Provides special education instructor and skills trainers

## Host Business

- Provides classroom space
- Arranges for internship rotations within the business
- Ensures staff are engaged as mentors to the interns



# Project SEARCH Partners (continued slide 2)

## **County Services**

- Ongoing liaison with employer once the eligible Project SEARCH intern graduates
- Eligibility for case management and waived services is determined through MnChoices assessment.
- Handles any needed accommodations



# Project SEARCH Partners (continued slide 3)

## Vocational Rehabilitation Services (or SSB)

- Provides career counseling during internships and follow-up support after graduation, funds Pre-ETS, job placement and coaching through Provider Agency

## Parents and Guardians

- Parents are part of the team in helping to acquire employment
- Everyone works together in looking for **competitive, integrated employment** for the Project SEARCH graduate



# Project SEARCH Partners (continued slide 4)

## **Provider Agency (DEED-VRS contracted Community Partner)**

- Attends intern meetings and tracks progress throughout Project SEARCH
- Provides Pre-ETS during internships
- Begins job placement toward the end of the year (goal: CIE within 9 months)
- Job coaching as needed
- Long-term follow-along support as needed through waiver funding



# Provider Agency Selection Process



# Engagement Request

- One Provider Agency is selected for each site through the Engagement Request Opportunity
  - Used to be “Letter of Interest” but has been changed to align with state contracting rules
- Must have capacity to serve 5-10 new interns each year



# Current Engagement Request Opportunity

- Three sites seeking “Provider Agency”:
  - M Health Fairview Ridges (Burnsville)
  - M Health Fairview Southdale (Edina)
  - M Health Fairview St. John’s (Maplewood)
- Find Engagement Request and more on [this page of DEED-VRS website](#), within “Opportunities” tab
- **Due Date: Friday, September 13, 2024, 4:30 p.m.**
  - Questions may be asked through Friday, August 30, 4:30 p.m.



# Questions?

## Contact information:

- Alyssa Klein, VRS,  
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