# **Project SEARCH Provider Agency Engagement Request**

**NOTICE:** Only current master contract holders with Department of Employment and Economic Development – Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DEED-VRS) can respond to this Engagement Request. This Engagement Request does not obligate DEED-VRS to award a contract or complete the project or engagement, and DEED-VRS reserves its right to cancel the proposed contract if it is considered in its best interest.

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| Issuing Agency | Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) |
| Agency Division | Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) |
| Agency Contact | Alyssa Klein |
| Agency Contact Email Address | [alyssa.klein@state.mn.us](mailto:alyssa.klein@state.mn.us) |
| Agency Contact Phone # | 763-279-4374 |
| Project/Engagement Title | Project SEARCH Provider Agency Engagement Request |
| Anticipated Start and End Date | 10/01/2024 – 06/30/2027 |
| Description of the services needed | Each Minnesota Project SEARCH site selects one “Provider Agency” (a DEED-VRS master contract holder) to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services, Job Placement, and Job Coaching (as needed) for all student interns enrolled at that site. See attached Exhibit A for more detail about the role of a Provider Agency. |
| Requirements for the services needed | Service categories that need to be provided under the parameters as outlined in this Engagement Request include the following:   * Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) * Job Placement Services * Job Coaching |
| Work Location | DEED-VRS is seeking a “Provider Agency” for the following Project SEARCH sites through this Engagement Request:   * M Health Fairview – Ridges in Burnsville * M Health Fairview – Southdale in Edina * M Health Fairview – St. John’s in Maplewood   Agencies have the option to apply to become the “Provider Agency” for one, two, or all three sites. |

**The contact person for questions is:**

Alyssa Klein, DEED-VRS Youth Services Coordinator, [alyssa.klein@state.mn.us](mailto:alyssa.klein@state.mn.us)

Questions should be emailed to the contact by 4:30 p.m. Central Daylight Time (CDT) on Friday, August 30, 2024. Please use the email subject line “Engagement Request Question(s)”.

Other personnel are not authorized to answer questions regarding this Engagement Request.

## **INSTRUCTIONS TO RESPONDENT**

All interested master contract holders should respond to Alyssa Klein, [alyssa.klein@state.mn.us](mailto:alyssa.klein@state.mn.us) no later than 4:30 p.m. Central Daylight Time (CDT) on Friday, September 13, 2024. Complete the information requested below. Section 1-5 will be submitted as your Technical Proposal and Section 6 will be submitted as your Cost Proposal. The Technical Proposal and Cost Proposal must be submitted separately.

## **TECHNICAL PROPOSAL**

**Master Contract Holder Contact Information**

Company’s Full Legal Name:

Business Address:

Contact Person’s Name:

Telephone Number:

Email Address:

Indicate which site(s) your agency is applying for (you may select one, two, or all three):

\_\_ M Health Fairview – Ridges in Burnsville

\_\_ M Health Fairview – Southdale in Edina

\_\_ M Health Fairview – St. John’s in Maplewood

1. Preferred Credentials

Indicate which of the following credentials are applicable to your agency:

\_\_ Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) accreditation

\_\_ MN Department of Human Services 245D employment services provider licensure

\_\_ Neither

1. Background and Qualifications

Describe the agency background detailing qualifications, credentials and experience of the personnel proposed to work with student interns and those who supervise the personnel. Detail the agency’s interest in being selected as a Project SEARCH Provider Agency and how the agency can meet the *Requirements for the Services Needed*.

1. Approach to Project

Describe the overall approach to the work in the three (3) service categories. How will the agency accomplish the service category tasks and goals of the project? Who will do the work?

1. Relevant Experience

Describe three (3) relevant past experiences where Pre-Employment Transition Services, job development and/or job coaching to youth were provided. Include the name of the business, details about the type of job, and the services that were provided.

1. Letters of Endorsement

Provide two letters of endorsement from persons/organizations that partner with your agency.

## **COST PROPOSAL**

1. Cost Detail

Complete the following rate charts for services as outlined in your agency’s current executed master contract(s) and as amended, if applicable. Must be submitted separately from the Technical Proposal.

**Job Related Services – General Services**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Service Title** | **Rate and Unit** | **Unit** |
| Placement and Follow-Up Services under a Performance Based Agreement (“PBA”)  See PBA for Placement and Follow-Up Services as referenced at: <https://mn.gov/deed/job-seekers/disabilities/partners/guide/contracted-services/services/pba/> | | |
| Job Coaching (Time-Limited) |  |  |

**Pre-Employment Transition Services**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Service Title** | **Individual Rate** | **Group Rate (3+ Students in Group)** | **Unit** |
| Pre-ETS Job Exploration Counseling Services |  |  |  |
| Pre-ETS Post-Secondary Education Counseling Services |  |  |  |
| Pre-ETS Instruction in Self-Advocacy Services |  |  |  |
| Pre-ETS Workplace Readiness Training |  |  |  |
| Pre-ETS Introductory Work Activities |  |  |  |
| Pre-ETS Internship - Services |  |  |  |
| Pre-ETS Internship - Wages |  |  |  |
| Pre-ETS Work Experience - Services |  |  |  |
| Pre-ETS Work Experience- Wages |  |  |  |
| Pre-ETS Intake (only VR eligible students) |  |  |  |
| Pre-ETS Work-Based Learning Coaching (only VR eligible students) |  |  |  |

**Engagement Request Evaluation**

DEED-VRS will conduct an evaluation of responses to this Engagement Request. The evaluations will be conducted in three phases:

Phase 1 - Review responses for responsiveness and pass/fail requirements

Phase 2 - Evaluate responses

Phase 3 - Select finalist(s)

**Phase 1 – Responsiveness and Pass/Fail Requirements**

The purpose of this phase is to determine if each response complies with mandatory requirements. DEED-VRS will first review each Engagement Request for responsiveness to determine if the agency satisfies all mandatory requirements. DEED-VRS will evaluate these requirements on a pass/fail basis.

Mandatory Requirements. The following will be considered on a pass/fail basis:

* Responses must be received by the due date and time specified in this Engagement Request.
* Responder must have a valid Master Contract and be in good standing.
* Responder has all three (3) services in the *Requirements for the Services Needed* section on their Master Contract.

Phase 2 - Evaluate Response(s)

Only those responses found to have met Phase 1 criteria will be considered in Phase 2.

The factors and weighting on which responses will be evaluated are:

1. Preferred Credentials 20 points
2. Background and Qualifications 20 points
3. Approach to Project 20 points
4. Relevant Experience 20 points
5. Letters of Endorsement 10 points
6. Cost Detail 10 points

**100 points**

Phase 3 - Select Finalist(s)

Only those responses that have been evaluated under Phase 2 shall be eligible for Phase 3.

DEED-VRS will make its selection based on best value, as determined by this evaluation process. DEED-VRS reserves the right to pursue negotiations on any exception taken to the Work Authorization(s). In the event that negotiated terms cannot be reached, DEED-VRS reserves the right to terminate negotiations and begin negotiating with the next highest scoring Vendor(s) and take other actions as the State deems appropriate. DEED-VRS reserves the right to reissue the Engagement Request as the State deems appropriate.

## **EXHIBIT A**

## **Role of the Project SEARCH Provider Agency**

A Project SEARCH Provider Agency is an organization that has a master contract with Department of Employment and Economic Development – Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DEED-VRS) and has been selected through a competitive Engagement Request process. Each Minnesota Project SEARCH site selects one Provider Agency to deliver Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), Job Placement, and Job Coaching services for student interns with disabilities participating in the Project SEARCH program.

Each Project SEARCH site serves approximately 5-10 student interns a year. Funding is provided in the form of individual student intern service authorizations from DEED-VRS or DEED-State Services for the Blind (DEED-SSB), as applicable.

Program Description

Project SEARCH is an education and internship program for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are in their last year of high school or 18 to 22 transition programming. This is a one school year program that prepares students for competitive integrated employment.

The Minnesota Project SEARCH sites are modeled after the nationally recognized program initiated by Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center. As part of the Project SEARCH model, student interns spend their day at a host business site.

The student interns work on employability skills in the classroom for the first and last part of the day. Most of the day is spent in a skills-building internship for which they applied, interviewed, and were selected. The interns go through three internship rotations which are unpaid and designed to teach competitive, marketable skills.

The goal of the Project SEARCH program is for each student intern to obtain competitive integrated employment within 9 months after the completion of the Project SEARCH program. Job placement services typically begin by the end of the second internship rotation of the Project SEARCH program year.

During the Project SEARCH program, interns should receive Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) as needed. The five required Pre-ETS are job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, postsecondary education counseling, workplace readiness training, and instruction in self-advocacy. The school is the primary provider of transition services, but the selected Provider Agency will work with the school and VRS staff to fill in any gaps as needed.

Student interns begin a competitive integrated job search toward the end of their second (of three) internship rotations. The Provider Agency will assist the interns in finding employment with the host business and/or other businesses in the community using the skills they learned in Project SEARCH.

Role of Provider Agency

* Support the development, implementation, and fidelity of the Project SEARCH program model.
* Upon invitation, participate in the Host Business/Project SEARCH Leadership Team to evaluate student intern progress, report employment outcomes and work toward continuous improvement.
* In collaboration with the Project SEARCH Business Liaison, Project SEARCH Instructor, and VRS counselor, help facilitate Pre-ETS for student interns.
* Beginning with the signed placement plan meeting, provide placement and retention services through a Performance Based Agreement (PBA) for eligible enrolled student interns that are consistent with the goal on their Employment and Placement Plans. The VRS defined job search key components will be adhered to commencing with the signed placement plan meeting and continuing through closure from placement and retention services.
* In collaboration with Project SEARCH Instructor and VRS Counselor, provide expertise in identifying and acquiring needed assistive technology, workplace adaptations, and accommodations as needed for each student intern.
* As needed, provide consistent job coaching support for student intern graduates at their competitive integrated employment worksite.

Scope of Services

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) Description

[The school](https://mn.gov/deed/assets/pre-ets-services_tcm1045-379874.pdf) provides transition services within the Project SEARCH program. The selected Provider Agency will be asked to [enhance](https://mn.gov/deed/assets/pre-ets-services_tcm1045-379874.pdf) those services by providing Pre-ETS as needed. See the Pre-Employment Transition Services Definitions for P/T Contracts document for more detail.

#### **Job Placement Services Description**

Job placement services include all activities related to a search for competitive integrated employment.

Activities include, but are not limited to any of the following:

* Identifying and developing job opportunities;
* Assisting with creating and updating resumes;
* Completing job applications;
* Preparing for job interviews;
* Completing cover and thank you letters;
* Providing on site job analysis; and
* Assisting employers to identify and eliminate barriers to both competitive integrated employment and to the advancement of individuals with disabilities.

Job Placement services will be paid by the Vocational Rehabilitation agency to the Provider Agency in accordance with their master contract and approved performance-based agreement fee schedule.

#### **Job Coaching Services Description**

Job coaching services include support, training, and consultation to the individual and the business to facilitate successful competitive integrated employment. Job coaching can be performed on or off the job site.

Job coaching can include but is not limited to any of the following:

* Job site skills training and assistance to perform work duties including utilizing appropriate instructional strategies to teach work tasks.
* Assistance with job destination training and transportation coordination.
* Training and assistance with work adjustment and interpersonal skills.
* Training in employment practices, business policies and the work culture (breaks, check-ins, absences from work).
* Navigating changes in the work environment impacting potential for job retention.
* Identifying and integrating natural supports in the workplace, including modeling ways of supporting the new employee.
* Reducing training and support as the individual becomes more independent.
* Exploring and seeking job advancement.

Job coaching services will be paid by DEED-VRS or DEED-SSB (as applicable) to the Provider Agency in accordance with their master contract and approved fee schedule.