

# Project SEARCH Working Agreement



## The Parties to this Agreement are:

- A. Host Business
- B. School District
- C. Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS)
- D. County Name County Social Services
- E. Minnesota Department of Education/Special Education Division
- F. Provider Agency

It is understood among the parties that this Agreement is not a contract and is not binding.

## I. Purpose:

The Parties to this Agreement will collaborate and cooperate to create a High School Project SEARCH Transition program at Host Business for student interns with intellectual and developmental disabilities that will foster and assist these individuals to prepare for, secure, retain, and advance in competitive integrated employment consistent with their strengths and interests and informed choice as they complete their internships within Host Business. The goal of Project SEARCH is for each student intern to participate in a minimum of three, ten-week internship opportunities and obtain competitive integrated employment within four to eleven months after completion of the program. The definition for competitive integrated employment per the Project SEARCH model means, working a minimum of 16 hours per week, at minimum wage or higher in an integrated environment. This agreement specifies the roles and responsibilities of the parties as they work in partnership to increase training and competitive integrated employment opportunities for student interns, 75% of which must have an intellectual and developmental disability.

The program will be titled Host Business/Project SEARCH. It is replicated after the Project SEARCH program developed at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center in Cincinnati, Ohio. Project SEARCH is a trademark program.

## II. Roles and Responsibilities:

The Parties agree to the following roles and responsibilities.

## **A. Host Business will:**

- Support the development, implementation, and fidelity of the Project SEARCH program model.
- Participate in the Host Business/Project SEARCH Leadership Team to evaluate student intern progress, report employment outcomes and work toward continuous improvement.
- Provide a Business Liaison that assists with internship and job site development, introduces Project SEARCH Instructor and Skills Trainer(s) to Host Business staff, and markets the program internally at Host Business. Also attends periodic meetings to discuss/evaluate program progress and work with the Project SEARCH Instructor and Skills Trainer(s) to reinforce Host Business workplace rules and ensure the Host Business responsibilities are fulfilled.
- Provide classroom space (with whiteboard, tables and chairs, locked cabinet for student interns files, and small refrigerator), for up to 12 student interns and separate workspace when possible, for Project SEARCH Instructor and Skills Trainer(s).
- Provide access to workspace, telephone, photocopy equipment, basic office supplies, computer and internet access for Project SEARCH Instructor and Skills Trainer(s).
- Provide Project SEARCH student interns access to computers with internet connectivity.
- Provide badges, parking access and facilitate appropriate employee orientation to Project SEARCH student interns, Instructor and Skills Trainer(s).
- Share the responsibility to problem-solve individual student intern and/or employee issues. Ensure that constructive feedback to Project SEARCH student interns happens as needed in order to help them reach their competitive integrated employment goals.
- In collaboration with the Project SEARCH Instructor, VRS Counselor and Provider Agency the Project SEARCH Business Liaison will help facilitate the internal and external job development process for Project SEARCH student interns.
- Attend student interns' mid-rotation meetings when possible or schedule a minimum of bi-weekly meetings with Project SEARCH Instructor to discuss and evaluate student interns' progress.
- Participate in and provide access to conference space for Project SEARCH information sessions and tours for Project SEARCH student interns and families in the fall and every spring thereafter for future participants. Host other events as needed.
- Provide assistance in developing marketing materials and expertise in planning public relations strategies.
- Participate in yearly student intern interviews and selection process as a member of the Host Business/Project SEARCH Leadership Team.

## **B. School District will:**

- Support the development, implementation, and fidelity of the Project SEARCH program model.
- Participate in the Host Business/Project SEARCH Leadership Team to evaluate student intern progress, report employment outcomes and work toward continuous improvement.

- Be the hiring agent for providing a licensed special education/work-based learning instructor and job coach(es) with secondary transition experience to implement and support the Project SEARCH program.
- Provide special education funding and services as needed per student intern that participates in Project SEARCH.
- Assist with public relations activities to promote Project SEARCH within School District.
- Inform parent or guardian of the expectation to provide insurance coverage for student intern through their family health insurance.

### **Project SEARCH Instructor will:**

- Support the development, implementation and fidelity of the Project SEARCH program model.
- Participate in the Host Business/Project SEARCH Leadership Team to evaluate student intern progress, report employment outcomes and work toward continuous improvement.
- Adopt and/or adapt the Project SEARCH curriculum and instructional materials that encompass employability skills, functional academics, job development, job preparation and transition to competitive integrated employment.
- Assist Host Business in the development of student intern internship rotations, coordinate, and monitor student intern activities.
- Facilitate, in collaboration with members of the Host Business/Project SEARCH Leadership Team, student intern recruitment activities.
- Participate in and help coordinate yearly student intern interviews and selection process as a member of the Host Business/ Project SEARCH Leadership Team.
- Facilitate coordination with VRS counselor for each student intern to allow for career counseling, Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) and job placement and retention services.
- Complete assessments, prepare evaluation summary reports and intern's Individual Education Program (IEP). In addition, ensure that each Project SEARCH intern has a work-based learning training agreement and training plan.
- Coordinate and attend student intern IEP and mid-rotation meetings to discuss and evaluate progress every four to six weeks, or as School District deems appropriate.
- In collaboration with VRS counselor and Provider Agency provide expertise in identifying and acquiring needed assistive technology, workplace adaptations and accommodations as needed for each student intern.
- In collaboration with the Host Business/Project SEARCH Business Liaison, VRS counselor, Provider Agency, help facilitate the internal and external job development process for Project SEARCH student interns.
- Collect and submit data on student intern employment outcomes and report to the National Project SEARCH office in October and May of each school year.
- Direct the work of skills trainer(s) and provide on-going staff development as needed.
- Collaborate with Host Business/Project SEARCH Leadership Team and Cincinnati Children's Project SEARCH for technical assistance, data collection and other issues related to program model fidelity.

- Assist with public relations activities to promote Host Business/Project SEARCH.

## **C. Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) will:**

### **VRS Transition and Pre-Employment Transition Services Coordinator will:**

- Support the development, implementation, and fidelity of the Project SEARCH program model.
- In collaboration with VRS leadership, MDE and the Host Business/Project SEARCH Leadership Team, facilitate the selection and evaluation process of the Provider Agency.

### **VRS Rehabilitation Area Manager (RAM) will:**

- Support the development, implementation, and fidelity of the Project SEARCH program model.
- Participate in the Host Business/Project SEARCH Leadership Team to evaluate student intern progress, report employment outcomes and work toward continuous improvement.
- Assign one VRS counselor to serve student interns at the Host Business/Project SEARCH site.

### **VRS Counselor will:**

- Support the development, implementation, and fidelity of the Project SEARCH program model.
- 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 Project SEARCH Instructor, provide training to Host Business employees, as necessary, regarding supporting individuals with disabilities in the workplace.
- Participate in yearly student intern interviews and selection process as a member of the Host Business/Project SEARCH Leadership Team.
- Meet with each selected student intern (and their family) to explain VRS and assist with the VRS application process.
- Provide career counseling and guidance along with other individualized services to student interns enrolled in VRS as outlined in their Employment Plan.
- In collaboration with the Project SEARCH Instructor and Provider Agency, provide expertise in identifying and acquiring needed assistive technology, workplace adaptations and accommodations as needed for each student intern.
- In collaboration with the Project SEARCH Business Liaison, Project SEARCH Instructor and Provider Agency, help facilitate the Pre-ETS, job placement and job coaching services for student interns.
- Attend VRS enrolled student intern IEP and mid-rotation meetings every four to six weeks when requested to discuss and evaluate student intern progress.
- Coordinate and fund Pre-ETS, job placement and job coaching services for each student intern enrolled in VRS. The VRS defined job search key components for placement and

retention services will be adhered to commencing with the signed placement plan meeting and continuing through closure from placement and retention services.

- Coordinate with **Name** County Social Services and/or Extended Employment (EE) provider(s) to ensure extended ongoing supports are in place as needed for student interns enrolled in VRS.
- Provide longitudinal employment outcome data for Project SEARCH student interns.

#### **D. **County Name** County Social Services will:**

- Support the development, implementation, and fidelity of the Project SEARCH program model.
- Participate in the **Host Business**/Project SEARCH Leadership Team to evaluate student intern progress, report employment outcomes and work toward continuous improvement.
- Participate in yearly student intern interviews and selection process as a member of the **Host Business**/Project SEARCH Leadership Team.
- Attend IEP and mid-rotation meetings when possible or schedule check-in meetings with Project SEARCH Instructor to discuss and evaluate student intern progress throughout the year.
- As funds are available, support **County Name** County eligible students with Employment Support Services (long-term supports) upon their completion of internships and being hired by **Host Business** or another business.
- Provide outreach to other counties that are serving or could possibly serve student interns that will need Employment Support Services (long-term supports).

#### **E. Minnesota Department of Education/Special Education Division will:**

- MDE will hold the training contract with Cincinnati Children's Hospital.
- Support the development, implementation, and fidelity of the Project SEARCH program model.
- Participate in the **Host Business**/Project SEARCH Leadership Team to evaluate student intern progress, report employment outcomes and work toward continuous improvement.
- Serve as a liaison with Cincinnati Children's Project SEARCH and the Minnesota State Level Project SEARCH Leadership Team for technical assistance, data collection and other issues related to program model fidelity.
- Share competitive integrated employment data on student intern employment outcomes and share with the Minnesota State Level Project SEARCH Leadership Team.
- Participate in yearly student intern interviews and selection process as a member of the **Host Business**/Project SEARCH Leadership Team.
- Provide as needed, continuous improvement and professional development opportunities provided by Cincinnati Children's Project SEARCH staff.
- Provide education and training to the Project SEARCH Instructor on the requirements for secondary transition within each student intern IEP as needed.

## **F. Provider Agency will:**

- 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 the Pre-ETS, job placement and job coaching services for student interns.
- 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.
- 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.
- Assist with travel training for employment when needed.
- Assist with public relation activities to promote the **Host Business**/ Project SEARCH program.
- Provide consistent job coaching support for student intern graduates at their competitive integrated employment worksite when they are receiving placement and retention services through a PBA.

## **III. **Host Business**/Project SEARCH Leadership Team:**

- Includes representatives from **Host Business**, **School District**, Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS), **County Name** County Social Services, Minnesota Department of Education/Special Education Division and, upon invitation, the **Provider Agency**.
- Conducts monthly meetings.
- Receives direction from Cincinnati Children's Project SEARCH and the Minnesota State Level Project SEARCH Leadership Team in supporting the development, implementation and fidelity of the Project SEARCH program model.
- Ensures that at least 75% of student interns selected to participate in the Project Search program have Developmental Cognitive Disabilities (DCD).
- Selects one **Provider Agency** to serve student interns in the **Host Business**/Project SEARCH program.
- Invites the **Provider Agency** to **Host Business**/Project SEARCH Leadership Team meetings as needed.
- Evaluates the effectiveness of the **Provider Agency** annually based on the following criteria:
  - Quantitative data review of employment outcomes and retention. to include the percentage of Project SEARCH student interns successfully placed by the **Provider Agency**.

- Adherence to VRS defined placement and retention services including monthly progress reports after a Performance Based Agreement (PBA) has been initiated.
- Student intern, family, and Leadership Team satisfaction with Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) and placement and retention services.
- Consults with the DEED-VRS Youth Services Coordinator and the MDE Transition Specialist with any Provider Agency feedback that comes forth by any stakeholder (student intern, family/guardian, local PS Leadership Team member, etc.).

#### **IV. Measurable Objectives of Project SEARCH:**

- 100% of Project SEARCH student interns will be provided three, ten-week internship opportunities for the applicable school year.
- 100% of the Project SEARCH student interns will learn and acquire marketable skills that lead to student interns achieving successful competitive integrated employment at **Host Business**, or in the community.
- 100% of the Project SEARCH student interns will be provided the opportunity for job placement and retention services, or other appropriate services through VRS and/or the county.
- A minimum of 75% of Project SEARCH student interns obtain competitive integrated employment outcomes.

#### **V. Period of Agreement:**

This **Host Business**/Project SEARCH Agreement will be in effect for one year, from (date) to (date).

A Party has the right to withdraw from the **Host Business**/Project SEARCH Agreement, but if a Party wishes to do so, it shall notify the other Parties in writing a minimum of 45 days in advance.

#### **VI. Relationship of Parties:**

No agent or employee of either Party shall be deemed an agent or employee of any other Party. Each Party will be solely and entirely responsible for the acts of its agents, subcontractors, or employees.

This Agreement is executed for the benefit of the Parties and the public generally. It is not intended nor may it be construed to create any third-party beneficiaries.

#### **VII. Dispute Resolution:**

The Parties will attempt in good faith to resolve any dispute or concern arising out of or in relation to this Agreement through negotiations between representatives of each of the Parties with authority to settle the relevant dispute.

Performance of this Agreement shall continue during any dispute resolution.

All Parties shall attempt to amicably resolve any dispute within fourteen (14) days from the date Parties receive written notice of the concern.

### VIII. Party Representative Signatures

A. Host Business Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

B. School District Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

C. Vocational Rehabilitation Services Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

D. County Name County Social Services Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

E. MN Department of Education Special Education Division Representative

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Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

F. Provider Agency Representative

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Title

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Signature

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Date