

Pre-employment Transition Services through Vocational Rehabilitation

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MRC has 3 Divisions:

- Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)
 - Employment Supports for persons with Disabilities, ages 16 and up
- Disability Determination Services (DDS)
 - Determines eligibility for federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits (funded by SSA)
- Community Living (CL)
 - Brain Injury and Specialized Community Services (BISCS)
 - Acquired Brain Injury, Money Follows the Person, and Home & Community Based Waiver Programs
 - Protective Services
 - Independent Living Center Services
 - Turning 22 Program
 - Assistive Technology Program
 - Home Care Assistance / Supported Living Services
 - Consumer Involvement Program

Vision: Engaging every student in career planning activities that lead to a fulfilling adult life through work.

Mission: For every student served, an independent life through meaningful work.



Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA):

- Provide Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to students with disabilities
- There are 5 required services
- Spend at least 15% of federal VR funding to provide or arrange for Pre-ETS services
- Must be provided or arranged in collaboration with LEAs (schools)
- Increased role of the VR counselor in collaborating on Transition Planning with the schools
- Coordination with mandated State partners

- A student with a disability is an individual who:
 - Is in an educational program
 - Secondary or Post-secondary education
 - Meets certain age requirements
 - For MRC, ages 16-22

Can be provided in group setting or on an individual basis:

- Job exploration counseling;
- Work-based learning experiences
- Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs
- Workplace Readiness training to develop social skills and independent living
- Instruction in self-advocacy, including peer mentoring

Job Exploration Counseling: Counseling and guidance provided to students with disabilities designed to assist them in identifying and learning about job opportunities, including career assessment and planning.

Examples:

- Counseling & guidance from VR Counselors
- Testing-Interest, Aptitude
- VR Assessments & Evaluations
- Employer Industry briefings
- Soft skills trainings
- Internships and other work experiences
- Referral to Pre-ETS qualified Community vendor

Workplace Readiness Training: services to assist students in preparing for employment through soft-skills training, job search training or other related areas.

Examples:

- Counseling & guidance from VR Counselors
- Soft skills trainings
- Internships and other work experiences
- MRC's Workplace Readiness Summer Program
- IL Centers TAP Program
- Referral to Pre-ETS qualified Community vendor

Work-Based Learning Experiences: Experiences provided in integrated settings designed to assist in obtaining skills and experiences to assist in future permanent employment.

Examples:

- Internships and other work experiences (CVS, Area office internships)
- Volunteer work
- Service learning projects
- Part-time job
- IL Centers TIP Programs
- Referral to Pre-ETS qualified Community vendor

Counseling on Enrollment in Comprehensive Transition or Post-Secondary Educational Programs:

Assistance provided to students regarding opportunities for enrollment in transition or postsecondary educational programs. May include assistance with identifying and applying for programs and services.

Examples:

- Counseling & guidance from VR Counselors
- College tours & visits
- Referral to Pre-ETS qualified Community vendor (optional service)

Self-Advocacy/Mentoring Instruction: Services to promote self-advocacy and leadership skills, including peer mentoring, to assist students in successful transition from school to post-secondary education, employment, and independent living.

Examples:

- Counseling & guidance from VR Counselors
- Youth Leadership Council
- MRC Annual Consumer Conference
- Referral to Pre-ETS qualified Community vendor (optional service)

VR Transition Services to Schools

- Every public high school has a MRC assigned liaison
- **Full list of Statewide School coverage:** www.mass.gov/mrc/vr
(<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/mrc/mrc-vr-high-school-coverage-report-fy17.pdf>)

Collaboration with other State Agencies

- MOU's with Department of Developmental Services (DDS) & Department of Mental Health (DMH)
- MOU with Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)
- MOU with Workforce

To help facilitate the transition from school to adult services, VR Counselors can:

- Build and maintain collaborative relationships with all appropriate school personnel
- Provide group services within the schools
- Coordinate with other adult service agencies and families
- Participate in Parent Nights, Open House events or other school & community presentations
- Attend IEP/other in-school meetings, as appropriate, to provide vocational transition consultation
- Assess vocational and educational interests and abilities to facilitate IPE development prior to student leaving high school
- Referrals to Pre-ETS services
- Coordinate and refer students and families to School Benefits Counselors for Work Incentives Planning

Referrals can be made for Students:

- Direct from school to the local MRC office (“LEA”)
- Via a Chapter 688 Referral
- Direct from another state agency (DMH/DDS/DYS/DCF)
- Direct from Student/Family

When:

- Ideally: Age 16 or at least Two years prior to Graduation or Turning 22
- Remember: MRC/Vocational Rehabilitation works with individuals with disabilities who have a vocational goal of competitive integrated employment

Student Benefit Counselors

- For students receiving SSI/SSDI benefits (and those who may be losing benefits soon): MRC has 3 Transition- focused Student Benefits Counselors who are available to educate students and families regarding benefits and work incentives planning
- Goal is to ensure family support of student employment goals
- District Student Benefits Counselor – students must be in high school. MRC counselors can arrange a school visit and individual meetings
- After consumer is no longer a student, Benefits Planning services are still available through adult Benefits Planning Counselors

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Pre-Employment Training Services Transitions to Successful Careers

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Triangle



Triangle Inc.'s newest grant initiative serves students aged 16-22 with disabilities enrolled in high school and/or post-secondary educational programs.

TSC will serve students who live in the areas served by the Malden, Somerville, Braintree and Brockton offices of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC).



In one calendar year, TSC will offer services to five cohorts of 15 students – **75 students in total:**

- Malden & Somerville: 3 cohorts
- Braintree & Brockton: 2 cohorts



TSC offers three main program components:

- Career Readiness Bootcamp
- Workplace Learning Experience
- Job Exploration Counseling



Career Readiness Bootcamp



- 4-day program from 8 AM to 4 PM
- Bootcamp curriculum: interest survey, dealing with change, establishing SMART goals, career exploration, developing individual career plan, resume development, interview skills, communication skills, job application overview, professionalism, leadership development & self-advocacy
- Internship Assignments



Workplace Learning Experience

- 6-week, paid or unpaid workplace learning experience
- Close to students' home community
- Limited 1:1 job coaching



we are all people with ability.

triangle

Job Exploration Counseling

- One-on-one appointments with Triangle's employment specialist
- Focus on career planning and vocational exploration



Q & A

