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Government of the District of Columbia  
Department on Disability Services

STANDARD OPERATING PROTOCOL	
Subject: Administration of Pre-Employment Transition Services and Internal Controls	SOP Number: 2023-RSA-SOP002
Responsible Program or Office: Rehabilitation Services Administration	Effective Date: July 3, 2023
	Number of Pages: 12
Cross References, Related Policies and Procedures, and Related Documents: Pre-Employment Transition Policy, Informed Choice Policy (2017), Case Closure Policy (2017), Individualized Plan for Employment Policy (2019), Pre-Employment Transition Consent and Service Delivery SOP	

I. **Purpose:** The purpose of this SOP is to provide guidance on the administration of Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) by the Department on Disability Services (DDS), DC Rehabilitation Services Administration (DCRSA)

II. **Responsible Staff:** Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) specialist, VR Supervisor, Program Manager, Rehabilitation Assistant (RA), Project Manager, DDS Operations.

III. **Pre-ETS Requirements**

A. Pre-ETS are provided to persons who meet the definition of student with a disability.

A student with a disability is a person who: (1) is in an educational program; (2) is 14 to 22 years of age; and (3) is eligible for and is receiving special education or related services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), or is a person with a disability for purposes of section 504 of IDEA.

B. DCRSA shall reserve 15% of its federal funds for purposes of coordinating and providing the required Pre-ETS activities. The primary purpose of Pre-ETS is to help students begin to identify career interests and to learn skills in preparation for transition to competitive integrated employment and/or post-secondary education. DCRSA shall make every effort to ensure the District-wide availability of the following services:



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1. Job exploration counseling,
  2. Work-based learning experiences,
  3. Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education,
  4. Workplace readiness training, and
  5. Instruction in self-advocacy.
- C. Process for Determining Availability of Reserved Funds for Authorized Services
1. DCRSA will determine the total number of “students with disabilities” in the State which includes those students eligible for the VR program as well as those students with disabilities “potentially eligible” for the VR program. The number of students with disabilities is provided to DCRSA by the State Education Agency.
  2. DCRSA will ensure all students with disabilities and their families are made aware of the availability of pre-employment transition services to determine the number of students with disabilities in the State that need required and pre-employment transition coordination activities. DCRSA will document the basis for any reduction in the number of students with disabilities the agency must make required pre-employment transition services available to based on need. Any reductions based on a determination that the provision of required pre-employment transition services activities is not needed must be clearly supported by reliable data.
  3. DCRSA will calculate the cost for the provision of the “required” and “pre-employment transition coordination” activities. DCRSA will use the average per student cost to the VR program for the provision of the “required” and “pre-employment transition coordination” activities. The cost calculation should include, but is not limited to –
    - a. All non-administrative costs for required pre-employment transition services activities provided or arranged by VR staff;
    - b. Costs for the provision of “required” and “pre-employment transition coordination” activities;
    - c. Costs for the provision of “required” activities through Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs). It is important to differentiate the cost for pre-employment transition services from other VR services, including transition services, as MOUs may provide both;
    - d. Costs for the provision of “required” activities through VR contracts with providers/vendors; and



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- e. Costs for additional individualized VR services that may be charged to the reserve, consistent with the Notice of Interpretation, when needed by VR-eligible students with disabilities, under an approved individualized plan for employment (IPE), to participate in pre-employment transition services required activities.
4. DCRSA will calculate the amount of funds that must be set aside and reserved for the provision of the “required” activities under pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities in need of such services, as well as the costs for providing pre-employment transition coordination activities.
    - a. Multiply the number of students with disabilities that need the required activities by the average cost per student with disabilities for the provision of the required activities under pre-employment transition services.
    - b. Estimate the amount of funds necessary to provide pre-employment transition coordination activities.
  5. DCRSA will determine whether the agency’s VR funds that are required to be reserved for the provision of pre-employment transition services are sufficient to make the required and pre-employment transition coordination activities available to all students with disabilities needing such services.
    - a. Subtract the amount calculated to set aside sufficient reserve funds for the provision of required and pre-employment transition coordination activities from the amount of funds the agency is required to reserve for the provision of pre-employment transition services (see Section I. A. above for additional details).
    - b. If the result is positive, the agency may be able to use the remaining balance of funds for the provision of pre-employment transition services authorized activities. Authorized activities must be provided in support of required and pre-employment transition coordination activities.
    - c. If the result is a negative amount, the agency may not use reserved funds to pay for pre-employment transition services authorized activities. The agency may use other, non-reserved, Federal, or non-Federal funds to provide the authorized activities.
  6. Updating/Revising the Reserve Funds Calculations
    - a. The process described above should be updated at least annually and revisited on a regular basis as additional or more recent or accurate data becomes available. If DCRSA charges pre-employment transition services authorized



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activities to the funds required to be reserved and expended for pre-employment transition services, DCRSA is responsible for ensuring that the available data supports its decision-making process and determination.

D. Set-aside must be determined and reserved or expended before any authorized activities can be provided. Reserved funds may be used for the nine authorized activities described in 34 C.F.R. § 361.48(a)(4) and listed below, in accordance with Section III (D). DCRSA staff are to record and report to management on a biweekly basis via the assigned Pre-ETS combo code of all the time spent conducting the following activities:

1. Implementing effective strategies to increase the likelihood of independent living and inclusion in communities and competitive integrated workplaces;
2. Developing and improving strategies for individuals with intellectual disabilities and individuals with significant disabilities to live independently; participate in postsecondary education experiences; and obtain, advance in and retain competitive integrated employment;
3. Providing instruction to vocational rehabilitation counselors, school transition personnel, and other persons supporting students with disabilities;
4. Disseminating information about innovative, effective, and efficient approaches to implement pre-employment transition services;
5. Coordinating activities with transition services provided by local educational agencies under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1400 *et seq.*);
6. Applying evidence-based findings to improve policy, procedure, practice, and the preparation of personnel, in order to implement pre-employment transition services;
7. Developing model transition demonstration projects;
8. Establishing or supporting multistate or regional partnerships involving States, local educational agencies, designated State units, developmental disability agencies, private businesses, or other participants; and
9. Disseminating information and strategies to improve the transition to postsecondary activities of individuals who are members of traditionally unserved and underserved populations.



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- D. Reserved funds may be used for the four pre-employment transition coordinated activities described in 34 C.F.R. § 361.48(a)(4) and listed below, in accordance with Section III (D). DCRSA staff are to record and report to management on a biweekly basis via the assigned Pre-ETS combo code of all the time spent conducting the following activities:
- Attending Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings for students with disabilities, when invited. For example, time spent by the VR specialist discussing one or more of the required activities in the presence of a student with a disability during their IEP meeting may be charged to the funds reserved for the provision of Pre-ETS.
  - Developing work opportunities for students with disabilities with local workforce development boards, one-stop centers and employers, including internships, summer employment and other employment opportunities. For example, DCRSA staff time spent developing Summer Youth Employment (SYEP) opportunities, internships for public charter school students, and work experience programming with the Department of Employment Services, and other partners, including DCRSA providers, District of Columbia agencies and other entities, may be charged to the funds reserved for the provision of Pre-ETS.
  - Working with schools to coordinate and ensure the provision of Pre-ETS. For example, DCRSA staff time spent on the coordination and provision of pre-employment transition services with local educational agencies may be charged to the funds reserved for the provision of Pre-ETS.
  - When invited, attending person centered planning meetings for students receiving services under Title XIX of the Social Security Act (Medicaid). For example, DCRSA staff time spent attending person-centered planning meetings that focus on pre-employment transition services may be charged to the funds reserved for the provision of Pre-ETS.
- E. Prior to using reserved funds to provide or coordinate any or all of the nine additional authorized activities described in the Pre-ETS policy, DCRSA shall demonstrate that:
1. The required services have been made available throughout the District of Columbia to all students with disabilities in need of such services;



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2. Outreach activities function to identify those students with disabilities in need of such services; and
  3. Prior to the start of a new fiscal year, the RSA Deputy Director, Transition Program Manager, and Transition Project Manager review the Pre-ETS expenditures outlined on the spend plan and actual expenditures to determine where Pre-ETS funding will be allocated for the new fiscal year. DCRSA has developed a fiscal forecast to determine the need for, and costs to provide, required activities to students with disabilities who are potentially eligible or eligible for VR services, as well as the projected costs to provide pre-employment transition coordination activities; and identify the funds available and remaining to engage in authorized activities.
- F. In order to demonstrate that the above requirements have been met, DCRSA shall document the completion of the following steps:
1. Coordinate with the District's Office of the State Superintendent for Education (OSSE) to determine the number of students with disabilities, and those students who are potentially eligible or eligible for VR services.
  2. Use the comprehensive statewide needs assessment's description of the Pre-ETS needs identified in the District and provide the information to OSSE to ensure the Agency has accurate and current information, in order to identify and define Pre-ETS needs.
  3. Identify the number of students with disabilities to whom DCRSA is currently providing Pre-ETS.
  4. Record all of the ways that DCRSA is providing Pre-ETS and outreach activities to students with disabilities in the District that need them.
  5. Determine the average cost per student for DCRSA to provide Pre-ETS in a given fiscal year.



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6. Project the number, or increased number, of students with disabilities that DCRSA will be able to provide Pre-ETS to this year based on all of the ways that it provided or arranged for the provision of Pre-ETS.
  7. Project the average cost per student for DCRSA to provide Pre-ETS in a given fiscal year.
  8. Determine the cost of pre-employment transition coordination activities for in a given fiscal year.
  9. Forecast the amount that DCRSA projects to spend on Pre-ETS based on the per-client cost projected and the number of clients projected to serve. Add that number to the Agency's pre-employment transition coordination costs. Subtract that total from the total 15% reserve amount and the remainder is what DCRSA can spend on authorized activities.
- G. Pre-ETS can be provided to students with disabilities by VR staff, DCRSA providers, Local Education Agencies (LEAs), and comparable services/benefits providers. Only federal funds spent on the provision of Pre-ETS with direct oversight by DCRSA can be reported towards meeting the reserve.
- H. Pre-ETS may be provided in a group or generalized classroom setting and/or an individualized setting once consent from the parent or adult student has been obtained.
- I. The provision and/or coordination of Pre-ETS should consider the preferences, interests, and developmental and/or intellectual maturity of the student or group of students. In coordinating Pre-ETS, DCRSA should explore:
1. Benefits of classroom instruction to address vocational information and acquisition of work readiness/soft skills;
  2. Community experiences to expand vocational interests, knowledge, vocational skills, abilities, and the application of work readiness/soft skills; and,
  3. The exploration of employment and other adult living objectives during and after high school and in collaboration with school services.



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- J. If DCRSA ultimately deems a student's participation in a particular activity inappropriate to the needs of that student, DCRSA shall work with LEA staff and the student (and parent/guardian, if applicable) to explore and identify an alternate, appropriate Pre-ETS for the student to engage in.

### IV. Cooperative Agreements

DCRSA shall utilize human care agreements (HCAs) with service providers, which are fee for service agreements. DCRSA shall leverage memoranda of agreement (MOAs) and memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with LEAs to ensure the provision of Pre-ETS. None of these are currently third-party cooperative agreements. Prior to the start of the fiscal year, DCRSA allocates funding for each of its Pre-ETS providers based on service delivery and spending in the previous fiscal year. Based on the previous year's expenditures, DCRSA can forecast the amount to be spent on Pre-ETS and how much, if any, will be available for additional authorized services. Previously established amounts, accounting for adjustments for increases or decreases for each agreement, will be used as a forecasting method. DCRSA will also with this information project the estimated number of students per agreement, to determine the per student amount. DCRSA will analyze other variable factors that will be used to calculate the approximate set aside at the start of the fiscal year.

#### A. Human Care Agreements (HCAs)

DCRSA has HCAs with service providers for the purpose of serving students in the District. Each HCA has the following structure:

1. Contract Type (Prices);
2. Scope;
3. Applicable Laws;
4. Definitions;
5. Background;
6. Requirements for deliverables;
7. Requirements for Staff Qualification;
8. Monitor;
9. Invoice (deliverables);





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10. LAWS/Insurance; and
11. Agency responsibilities.

Within this structure, the HCAs address the roles and responsibilities for each party in regard to monitoring and provision of services, data collection, and financial accountability. Data collection procedures, outlined in Section IX of this SOP - Documentation and Tracking of Pre-ETS, ensure that Pre-ETS services are documented and invoiced in a manner that clearly identifies them as separate and distinct from other VR services, including transition services, which may also be provided under the HCAs.

### B. Memoranda of Agreement (MOA)

DCRSA has MOAs with Public Charter Schools serving students in the District in order to ensure the provision of Pre-ETS. Each MOA addresses the roles and responsibilities for each party and has the following structure:

1. Introduction
2. Goals and objectives;
3. Scope of services;
4. Coordination of Services;
5. Resolution of disputes;
6. Duration;
7. Termination;
8. Authority for the MOA; and
9. Procedural safeguards.

Within this structure, the responsibilities for the monitoring and provision of services, and data collection have each been addressed. Data collection and tracking procedures included in each MOA are also outlined in Section IX of this SOP - Documentation and Tracking of Pre-ETS.

### C. Memoranda of Understanding (MOU)

DCRSA has an MOU with DCPS. The MOU provides assurances that DCRSA shall maintain ultimate administrative control over the expenditure of all Pre-ETS funds. Where DCRSA provides Pre-ETS reserved funds under an MOU or interagency transfer agreement in order for the LEA to employ staff who coordinate and/or provide pre-employment transition services exclusively, the MOU or interagency transfer agreement shall indicate that DCRSA maintains control over soliciting for positions, the selection and hiring process, establishing job duties, and certifying time and attendance. The MOU



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or interagency transfer agreement shall also describe data collection and tracking procedures to ensure that reserved funds are only used for the provision and/or coordination of Pre-ETS services.

**V. Control Activities**

A. Control activities are performed at the program level to charge and track Pre-ETS expenditures. These activities include:

1. Monthly review of date of birth and verification that students are 14 to 22 years of age. DCRSA RAs will utilize case management system (CMS) to verify the age of all transition youth as of the first business day of each month. All youths either entering or exiting the eligible Pre-ETS age range will be monitored by the VR specialist and supervisor for accurate reserve fund allocation when services are provided. Pre-ETS consent must be provided by the parent/guardian or adult student prior to Pre-ETS being rendered.
2. Quarterly verification of student enrollment status. VR supervisors, or their designees, will review the educational/training status of all transition VR clients and potentially eligible transition youths to verify their enrollment in school as of the first business day of each quarter. All VR clients and potentially eligible transition youths either entering or exiting a secondary, post-secondary, or training institution will be monitored for accurate reserve fund allocation when services are provided.
3. Identification of specific services that qualify as Pre-ETS. The DCRSA Project Manager will work with DCRSA staff or DCRSA providers to develop a yearly plan for the delivery of Pre-ETS and manage its implementation. The DCRSA Transition Program Manager will approve all plans. . Authorization by the VR agency must be given to the Pre-ETS provider prior to rendering Pre-ETS.
4. Pre-ETS provided by DCRSA providers are administered through a purchase order. These purchase orders are designated exclusively for the provision of Pre-ETS and are labeled/titled accordingly in order to ensure appropriate tracking of Pre-ETS.
5. The use of an agency combo code to track DCRSA personnel expenditures charged to Pre-ETS. The code for FY21 is 000138481. The combo code is subject to change



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annually and the Budget Analyst shall notify staff via email if the combo code changes.

Program-level review, which will be conducted by the DCRSA Transition Program Manager and the Project Manager, of charges to, and payments made for, pre-employment transition services which count toward DCRSA's 15 percent expenditure requirement. The DCRSA Transition Program Manager will on a monthly basis review all Pre-ETS charges and expenditures in conjunction with the DDS Operations Manager or designee to ensure proper coding.

- B. The designated DDS Provider Relations Specialist (contract administrator) is responsible for developing and implementing HCAs and contracts, and monitoring compliance with established requirements. Additional responsibilities are provided in the DCRSA Provider Relations Specialist (contract administrator) job description.
- C. The DCRSA Transition Program Manager is responsible for coordinating with the DDS Operations Provider Relations Specialist (contract administrator) assigned to the RSA Transition contracts and HCAs in the development and implementation of contracting vehicles, including human care agreements for the designated services. The DDS Quality Assurance program staff shall monitor the quality of the services and conduct an annual Provider Performance Review (PPR) for every service provider. During the PPR, relevant aspects of a provider's delivery of services shall be reviewed with input from the Quality Assurance program staff, the Transition Program staff, and the DDS Operations staff, including the staff assigned to administer the HCAs. The Transition Program Manager in conjunction with the Deputy Director of RSA will determine the specific services to be provided to students and establish the student tracking system by which service provision can be verified in accordance with the human care agreement. The DDS Operations Provider Relations Specialist (contract administrator) will review and approve invoices submitted by the service providers based on the transition staff review and approval of the service delivery and in accordance with the provider HCA. The invoice submitted by Pre-ETS providers includes the line items for each student and service delivered with time spent captured in an hourly rate defined by the Human Care Agreement. Additional responsibilities are provided in the DCRSA Transition Program Manager job description.
- D. The Supervisor of the DDS Business Services Unit is responsible for ensuring that requisitions and resulting purchase orders are coded correctly for Pre-ETS based upon the designations within the RSA spend plan. The Transition Program Manager will identify



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the need for services to the DDS Provider Relations Specialist (contract administrator) who will coordinate with the Financial Operations Supervisor to determine availability of funding in the RSA spend plan and request that the Business Services Supervisor to prepare the requisition for services based on the proper coding and funding information. The Business Services Supervisor will then prepare the requisition and submit it to DC Agency Fiscal Officer (OCFO) and Agency Contracting Officer assigned by the DC Office of Contracts and Procurement (OCP) for review and approval. Once approved, the Business Services Supervisor reviews the final purchase order for accuracy and notifies the Provider Relations Specialist (contract administrator) and the Financial Services Supervisor of the availability of the purchase order. This process is conducted on an as needed basis through the DC government purchasing system (PASS/Ariba).