

Braiding Resources

Plan coordination and collaboration across systems is considered a 'best practice' in Transition and Employment Supports. Individuals and systems benefit in tangible ways when collaboration occurs: youth with disabilities achieve personally meaningful outcomes, and schools and service systems maximize resources most efficiently.

In Wisconsin, we have a great opportunity to collaborate and braid resources. The Interagency Agreement between the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and the Department of Health Services (DHS) lays the foundation on which these three important partners in Transition work together. This agreement is intended to "clearly define necessary relationships, policies, and procedures between the DVR, the DPI and the DHS in order to create common understandings and establish collaborative efforts regarding services that will ultimately improve employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities."

How Schools Support Integrated Employment

Starting at age 14, school staff plays a primary role in helping students develop personally meaningful postsecondary employment goals. The IEP Team determines the necessary supports and transition services to engage students in career awareness, opportunities to explore career options, and develop connections with employers and other outside agencies to help students gain experience in a variety of jobs within their local community.

How DVR Supports Integrated Employment

DVR provides services to assist job seekers to address barriers to employment and find employment. Schools support students to connect with DVR at least 2 years prior to graduation. Prior to that time, DVR can provide technical assistance to students, teachers and parents upon request. DVR can provide counseling, technical assistance and funding for job training supports, may pay a students' wages during internships, and much more.

Resources can and *should be* combined for *every* job seeker. How these resources are braided together can and *should be* individualized for *each* job seeker. There is no cookie cutter approach to braiding resources!

How DHS Children's Long Term Care (CLTS) Supports Integrated Employment

CLTS service coordinators assist youth in setting goals and coordinating the programs and services that support these goals. CLTS offers services, such as mentoring, that are designed to help youth build employability skills beyond the school day.



Stories

Jayden



At age 15, Jayden wanted to start working in the summer. He was unsure what kind of work he wanted to do. With help, Jayden made a plan at his IEP meeting to explore job options. Jayden's school staff set up job shadows and

informational interviews with local businesses. After exploring some options, Jayden decided that he wanted to work at a movie theater or in a mailroom over the summer. Jayden's IEP team helped him fill out a DVR referral and connected him with DVR. Jayden, his mom, and school staff met with DVR to develop his Individual Plan for Employment (IPE). The team developed the following plan:

- ✓ **DVR:** DVR pays an adult service provider to do a Discovery assessment. With the results of the Discovery Assessment, DVR pays the adult service provider to develop an internship/work experience with a local business.
- ✓ **School:** After Discovery is completed, school staff works with Jayden to use that information to create a visual resume that highlights his strengths and skills. The IEP team may consider providing school staff to support Jayden during the summer in additional job experiences.
- ✓ **Family:** Jayden's parents, being well-known business owners themselves, share names of people they know who have businesses that offer the type of work that Jayden is interested in. The team will decide who should make the initial contact and who will follow up with the lead to the business.
- ✓ **CLTS Waivers:** Jayden, his family, and his CLTS Waiver Service Coordinator decide to include Mentoring on his Individual Service Plan (ISP) to help him practice using the public bus system so he can get to work independently and safely.

Emma

Emma is a junior in high school. She would like to explore careers and post-secondary education programs for veterinary technician, groomer, or trainer. Emma lives in a rural community. Since many employers are far away and the school only employs one special education teacher and one special education assistant, it is difficult for staff to leave school with Emma for exploration activities.

At her IEP meeting, Emma and her team developed a transition plan to move forward:

- ✓ **DVR:** Provide information about training programs that fit Emma's job goals. Authorize an adult service provider to seek out a job that meets her interests. Use the Youth On-the-Job Training reimbursement as an incentive to pay the employer, if needed. Discuss possible mileage reimbursement for Emma's parents to get her to and from the job.
- ✓ **School:** Support Emma to research labor market info using www.dpi.wi.gov/acp/wicareercruising and other resources. Arrange informational interviews and job shadows with the animal hospital, dog grooming salon, and other businesses – some may occur during the school day and some may be on the weekends or evenings. Staff will help her practice interviewing skills.
- ✓ **Family:** Assist Emma with researching post-secondary training programs designed for students with intellectual disabilities (www.thinkcollege.net) and have programs that meet the identified training requirements of her job goal.
- ✓ **CLTS Waivers:** Emma uses her long-term support services to work with a mentor to practice social skills needed during interviews and as an employee. When she gets a permanent job in her community, she can receive ongoing job support through her long-term support waivers.

