

# Program Overview

The goal for each student is long-term competitive, integrated employment within the community.

The Project SEARCH High School Transition Program is a 9 month school-to-work program that takes place entirely at the workplace. Student interns participate in employment-related instruction and are assigned to three internships within the Mayo Clinic Health System.

The program provides real-life work experience with training in employability and independent living skills to help young adults with disabilities make successful transitions from school to a productive adult life.

All interns must be involved with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). Agencies meet with Project SEARCH staff, family, and interns throughout the program year to provide vocational counseling and guidance, along with various support services as required.

Project SEARCH was developed at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, which is still the administrative headquarters for the organization. Under the leadership of J. Erin Riehle and Susie Rutkowski, there are over 500 international Project SEARCH sites.

Visit the Project SEARCH national website at [www.projectsearch.us](http://www.projectsearch.us)

Find our program on Facebook at "Project SEARCH-Eau Claire"



Project SEARCH Eau Claire is made possible by the following partners:



## Project SEARCH Eau Claire High School Transition Program

## Program Eligibility

### *Minimum Qualifications*

- Age 18 or older.
- Completion of high school credits necessary for graduation, in last year of high school services and accepting diploma at end of the school year.
- Must be eligible for DVR (Department of Vocational Rehabilitation) Services.
- Able to pass background check and Mayo Clinic Health System requirements.
- Immunizations current.
- Desire and plan to work competitively in the community at the conclusion of the program.

### *Preferred Qualifications*

- Independent personal hygiene and grooming skills.
- Independent daily living skills.
- Appropriate behavior and social skills in the workplace.
- Ability to take direction from supervisors and change behavior.
- Ability to communicate effectively with or without accommodations.
- Has access to reliable transportation each day and willingness to arrange own transportation to and from Mayo Clinic Health System.
- Previous experience in a work environment (school, volunteer or paid work).
- Meets eligibility requirements for long-term support; screening is provided by the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC).

## Application Process

- Students are referred to the program through their school district and apply in the late fall (December) of the year prior to entering the program.
- The student and family complete and submit the application by a predetermined deadline.
- Students participate in an interview and assessment day in early spring.
- Student selection is carried out by members of the Project SEARCH steering committee by using a formalized scoring rubric developed by Project SEARCH.
- Acceptance letters are sent to students

An open house is held annually for potential students, family members, the community and interested businesses. It provides an opportunity to learn about potential worksites, meet the Project SEARCH staff and interns, discuss program goals and to ask questions. Interested students are encouraged to request an application packet from their district Special Education Director and discuss Project SEARCH at their IEP meetings. Families may also contact Mandy Van Vleet (Director of Special Education) at 715-852-3074 or [mvanvleet@ecasd.us](mailto:mvanvleet@ecasd.us)

Inquiries can also be directed to the Project SEARCH team via email at [projectsearchec@gmail.com](mailto:projectsearchec@gmail.com)

## Project SEARCH Curriculum

Throughout the school year, interns participate in a functional academic curriculum that stresses employability and independent living skills. Project SEARCH activities are designed around 8 major focus areas:

1. Team Building
2. Workplace Safety
3. Technology
4. Self-Advocacy
5. Preparing for Employment
6. Financial Literacy
7. Health and Wellness
8. Maintaining Employment

The curriculum is flexible and allows the teacher to design lessons around the core topics and adjust the curriculum based on specific intern and employer needs. Interns build communication and problem solving skills, as well as job-specific skills, through work rotations. These are unpaid internships. Worksites are assigned based on the intern's previous work experience, interest, preferences, and assessments. Skills trainers and department staff collaborate to provide support for the students. Skills trainers fade out as the intern gains independence.