



# A Vision of Employment For All: Preparing youth to work

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# When do we start talking to kids about work and careers?

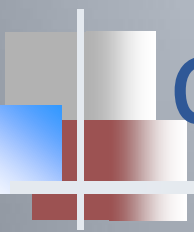




# What if we began with the vision that everyone will work?

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You need to opt out of work  
rather than opting in or  
demonstrating that you are 'ready'  
or able to work

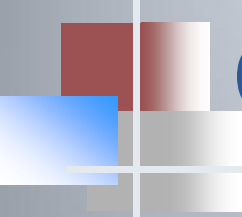


How do we send the message  
to families and youth with  
disabilities

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That going to work is  
an expectation? And a  
right?

# Is employment for everyone?

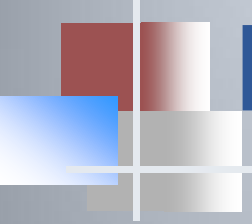


# WIOA Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (July 2014)

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- “WIOA will help workers, including workers with disabilities, access employment, education, job-driven training, and support services that give them the chance to advance careers and secure the good jobs of the future” President Obama
- Emphasis on *high expectations* and *competitive integrated employment* for individuals with disabilities, particularly for youth/students with **significant** disabilities

# “Competitive Integrated Employment”



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- Full or part time work;
- Minimum wage or higher;
- Wages and benefits similar to those performing the same work without disabilities;
- And fully integrated with co-workers without disabilities.



# WIOA Highlights

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- Strong focus on youth with disabilities
- Transition from K-12/IDEA to VR, post-secondary *education/competitive integrated* employment
- Restricts the pipeline from school into subminimum wage programs
- Directive to VR programs to consider all PwDs employable



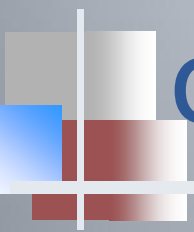
# WIOA: Youth Transition and Subminimum Wage



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Focuses the efforts of VR programs on preparing youth with disabilities for competitive integrated employment

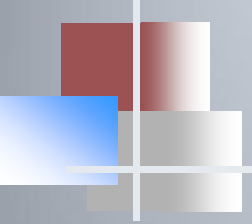
- Youth cannot immediately enter subminimum wage programs
- Youth with disabilities must first apply for VR services
- Receive training in job setting soft skills
- Have experiences in competitive integrated employment
- Receive an explanation of their rights to work at or above minimum wage
  
- If they enter a subminimum wage program, they must have a plan for moving to competitive integrated employment



Just because you can't  
compete doesn't mean you  
can't work

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It just means you need a different  
strategy to be successful getting a  
job



An individualized work experience which considered student interests, conditions for success, contributions & tasks that could be offered to an employer

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# Typical Way to Get a Job





# Two Distinct Approaches

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## *Labor Market Job Development:*

**Responding** to the needs of employers with applicants who are “qualified” to meet those general needs.

## *Customized Job Development:*

Discovering the “strengths, needs and interests” of job seekers and **proactively** negotiating a job description that meets both the applicant’s and employer’s specific needs.

# Customized Job Development is a different conversation with an employer

## Job Developer initiates on behalf of the Job Seeker

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- Employers are contacted because their needs might match what the job seeker brings
- Job developer assists employer to identify unmet needs
- Job seeker's skills, tasks & contributions are emphasized
- A proposal is presented and a position is negotiated

## Employer Reacts

- *Reviews their unmet needs or allows developer to ID unmet needs*
- *If a match is identified, a proposal is made*
- *If the proposal is a win-win for employee and business, a new job description is created*



# Customized Employment is now a part of the Rehab Act

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- “Competitive integrated employment for an individual with a significant disability, that is based on an individualized determination of strengths, needs, interests of the individual with a significant disability”  
“designed to meet the specific abilities of the individual with a significant disability and business needs of an employer” and “carried out through flexible strategies”.
- CE is now an available service through public VR nationally.



# Let's Use Work Experience

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To get to know what each student  
can do and to help them envision  
themselves working in the  
community!





# Types of Work Experiences and Paid Employment in Schools

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1. Volunteering
2. Job Shadowing
3. Service Learning/Internships
4. General Work Experience
5. Matched Work Experience
6. Customized Work Experience



## Work Experience led to a job

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- The school learned about Carley's conditions, skills and potential tasks through various work experiences and gathering information from people who knew her well.



# Conditions for Success

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- Characteristics of:
  - Work environment
  - Supervisor or coworkers
  - Tasks
  - Structure of flow of the tasks
  - Flexibility of schedule
  - Ongoing supports



# Contributions

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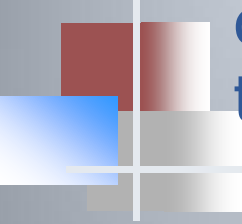
- Personal attributes
- Experiences or training
- Credentials
- Work characteristics
- Skills (an ability acquired by training)



# Tasks the person can do for pay

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- Tasks of daily living,
- Tasks performed during work experiences, and
- Tasks that can be taught based upon the skills we know a student has.



The IEP team needed to learn how and what Ann could contribute and about her ideal conditions before the team, including Ann, could envision her in employment.

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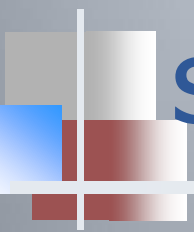
- Unpaid work experience at the hospital in several areas;
- Unpaid experiences at school;
- Interviews with people who knew her well.



# Work experience led to a job

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- Work experiences identified tasks Ann could do, where she felt safe, her contributions and support needs. She began her job before exiting school.



What about an evolution of  
work experiences to prepare  
students for the best matched

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Placement upon graduation, with  
adequate supports in place



# Are we learning and teaching all we can during work experiences?

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Interests  
Motivators  
Support needs  
Support strategies that work  
Skills and abilities  
Ideal conditions for success  
Conditions that don't work for the student



# What do we need to learn during work experiences?

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- How students learn best
- Environments that work/don't work
- Support strategies that help them be successful
- Things to avoid in a workplace
- Tasks the student can do
- Skills, abilities and contributions



# Using work experience to clarify conditions for success

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- Jim does best in an environment where the rules are clear and enforced
- Mostly male
- Working around the same few people daily
- Succinct instruction up front
- A variety of familiar tasks
- Physical tasks



# Using work experience to clarify (or minimize) ongoing support needs

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- What environments will 'naturally' have supports a student needs?
- Can the student move from one task to the next? Ask for help? Socialize? Get to work and break on time....**WITHOUT THE JOB COACH WITH THEM?**



# Changes to VR services

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- Extends supported employment availability from 18 to 24 months;
- Youth in need of ongoing supports will not be waitlisted until funding for long term support \$\$ are found.



# Pre-employment services (15% of VR funds to PETS)

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## **Pre-employment transition services...**

Covers students who are eligible for and receiving IDEA services and individuals who are students with disabilities under section 504 (academic year they turn 16-high school exit).

- Required services include: 1. Job Exploration Counseling; 2. Work Based Learning; 3. counseling in opportunities for enrollment in postsecondary education; 4. workplace readiness; and 5. Instruction in self-advocacy.

## Montana Vocational Rehabilitation and Blind Services

### Pre-Employment Transition Services

In July of 2014 the reauthorization of Workforce Investment Act took place. The new act is now called the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and includes many changes focused on students with disabilities. Under the new Act the Vocational Rehabilitation and Blind Services (VRBS) program has added a new service category, Pre-Employment Transition Services. Below is an explanation of the components with the Pre-employment Transition Services and how our program may assist your efforts with students' transitions needs.

1. **Job Exploration Counseling:** VRBS will work with the school and student to assist in exploring the world of work and career choices. This could include interest and abilities surveys, reviewing career websites, job shadowing, mentoring at local businesses, high school-based courses on career choices and informational interviews.
2. **Work-based learning experiences:** VRBS can facilitate paid or non-paid work experiences in the community, help seek volunteer positions, short or long term internships, on the job training, apprenticeships and mentoring activities. VRBS may be able to pay for the wages and employment costs, transportation and staff costs to allow students to attend these options.
3. **Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in postsecondary education:** For those students seeking further education VRBS can assist with exploring these options. This could include exploration of career paths, referrals to campus resources (Career Services, disability and academic support services), preparation for entrance testing, campus visits, review of entrance requirements, links to Federal Financial Aid, the Student Assistance Foundation, Employment Opportunity Centers and TRIO programs and college preparation camps (summers).
4. **Work place readiness:** These services focus on preparing the student for the workplace. Services may include soft-skill training, peer mentoring, independent living skills, accessing transportation services, customer service skills, classes at Adult Education, HRDC or Job Services.
5. **Instruction in self-advocacy:** Helping a student understand more about themselves and how to interact with the world. Services could include courses taught by Independent Living Centers, peer mentoring, Disability Mentoring Day, attendance at the Montana Youth Leadership Forum and Montana Youth Transitions conference, instruction in peer mentoring, learning about assistive technology and understanding accommodations in the work place.



# Resource for developing and organizing experiences:

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A Guide to Developing a Work Experience Program (Using Volunteerism for Middle School Students)

Available at:

<http://ruralinstitute.umt.edu/transition/articles.aspx>



# Resource for Department of Labor Guidelines around unpaid work experiences

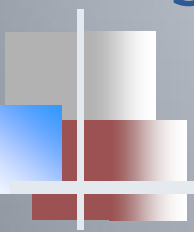


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<http://transitioncoalition.org/transition>

<http://www.transitioncoalition.org/transition/section.php?pageId=192>

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