Why Participate in Project SEARCH?

Employers actually value the dedication and the quality of work that students with disabilities often bring to their workplaces. As a result, student interns are accepted, nurtured and challenged to learn and to do more in their jobs. Most students find their Project SEARCH experience both fulfilling and rewarding, as they gain self-confidence, ability and self-esteem throughout the program. Parents often see a transformation in their teens or young adults.

“His superior attitude and willingness to learn have made him a valued team member and a joy to work with.”
Host supervisor

“I learned how to get along with different people better.”
Intern at the end of the year

“I was skeptical at first that there would be things he could do at a hospital, but he has some hard tasks he does all by himself and is good at.”
Parent of a new intern

Where Can I Find More Information?

To apply to Project SEARCH, talk to your student’s teacher.

For more information about the Project SEARCH model and Project SEARCH Indiana, contact Margaret Gilbride at the Center on Community Living and Careers, 812-822-6508, or mgilbrid@indiana.edu.

Center on Community Living & Careers
Indiana Institute on Disability and Careers
Indiana University

812-855-6508
TTY: 812-855-9336
www.iidc.indiana.edu/cclc
**What is Project SEARCH?**

Modeled on a nationally recognized program developed at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital, Project SEARCH provides transition-age students with quality, unpaid internship experiences in preparation for competitive employment – jobs in the “real world.” Through Project SEARCH Indiana, students in transition – those with disabilities who are in their last year of high school – can experience innovative employment and career development opportunities.

Working with teams of employment service providers, school systems, and local businesses, Project SEARCH student interns develop a variety of skills, including:

- Specific job skills
- The ability to respond to employer expectations
- Workplace social skills
- Interviewing skills

**Who Should Apply?**

Candidates for Project SEARCH should:

- be at least 18 years old
- be in their last year of school
- be willing to work at least 20 hours a week
- have applied and be found eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation Services in Indiana
- be able to use non-school transportation options
- be able to meet the specific hiring requirements of their employer (e.g., drug screens, immunizations, etc.)
- have already met all high school certificate/ diploma requirements

Candidates are selected based on the above criteria. There are a limited number of Project SEARCH opportunities available. Ideally, candidates should apply in their next-to-last year of high school.

**What Internships are Available and How Long Do They Last?**

Internship experiences vary. They may include jobs in customer service, hospitality, clerical work, materials management, mail room/delivery, custodial services, data entry and much more.

Students are enrolled in Project SEARCH for their entire senior year. During that time, each student has the opportunity to intern in three different job rotations, for 8–11 weeks each.

**What Will My Student Do in a Typical Day?**

Students spend their entire day at their Project SEARCH job site. This means they will no longer attend classes in their high school. Depending upon their work schedules, however, they can still participate in after-school or extracurricular activities.

A typical day includes:

- Classroom instruction in employability and independent living skills, 1 hour
- Job rotations, 2 hours
- Lunch, 30 minutes
- Job rotations, 2 hours
- Classroom instruction, 45 minutes – 1 hour

**How Does Project SEARCH Benefit Students?**

Students leave their Project SEARCH internships with a detailed portfolio of their work experiences. The portfolio includes photos, recognitions, and letters of recommendation that students can use to show potential employers.

Some students at Project SEARCH Indiana sites as well as other Project SEARCH sites around the country have also been hired into part- or even full-time positions immediately after their internships. All students leave Project SEARCH with either a job at their Project SEARCH host business, a job with a related business, or with a team to assist them in obtaining employment.

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Jessica
Project SEARCH grad, now a Senior Document Imaging Associate. Jessica earns $13 per hour, working 36 hours per week with full benefits.

Matt
Project SEARCH grad, now an on-call Mail Room Associate. Matt earns $9.50 per hour, working at least 36 hours per week.