Transition Services Partnership Planner

A guide for educators in arranging Nebraska VR services for students with disabilities

Nebraska VR – *Where your future begins*

NEBRASKA VR

08/2021

Nebraska VR works in partnership with Nebraska schools to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services in accordance with the following:

- Nebraska Legislative Bill 527
- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

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Partnerships

PURPOSE OF THE TRANSITION SERVICES PARTNERSHIP PLANNER

The Transition Services Partnership Planner is an instrument to help educators and Nebraska VR Transition Coordinators meet the transition requirements identified in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) while providing meaningful and effective transition services to students with disabilities. The Planner will serve as a tool to develop a written working agreement and help to:

- Promote a coordinated effort between the school district, Educational Service Unit (ESU), and the local Nebraska VR Office;
- Implement strategies that will facilitate effective transition services and eliminate duplication of services; and
- Ensure the development of an effective partnership to provide vital and results-oriented services to transition aged students with disabilities.

NEBRASKA VR'S ROLE

Nebraska VR Pre-Employment Transition Services Coordinators work in collaboration with school and ESU representatives to complete the Transition Partnership Planning Agreement. This will help to identify the nature and scope of services provided by each entity so students with disabilities receive the services to which they are entitled. Nebraska VR's role is primarily one of exploring appropriate post-school goals and needed supports that lead to employment. Services supplement those provided by the school and ESU and do not supplant those services.

Although only one Nebraska VR staff member may be working directly with the student, other team members may be involved—providing input, as needed, at key decision points. This might occur where more specialized knowledge of a rehabilitation service such as assistive technology is needed or more information is needed in the case of a specific disability.

ELIGIBILITY

Pre-Employment Transition Services are available to students with a disability who are eligible or potentially eligible for VR services ages 14-21. This includes students who are:

- Eligible for and receiving special education services through an IEP
- Receiving services under a Section 504 Accommodation Plan
- Not currently receiving services but eligible for the purposes of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES

Nebraska VR Pre-Employment Transition Services supplement the school's primary role and responsibility to provide transition services to students with disabilities. Collaborative services are delivered to help students plan for appropriate vocational and training goals, acquire work-place readiness skills, gain vocational maturity, and prepare for successful community life. Any service that Nebraska VR provides must relate to students becoming successfully employed in the community.

Students begin working with Nebraska VR once there is a signed Pre-Employment Transition Services Consent and Information Release form in place. Individual and group activities will be determined based on student needs. Throughout the school year, students will meet with their Nebraska VR Pre-Employment Transition Services Coordinator either remotely or in person to learn in groups and/or individually about the world of work through the following:

1) Job exploration counseling;
2) Instruction in self-advocacy which may include peer mentoring;
3) Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in post-secondary educational and training programs at institutions of higher education;
4) Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living; and
5) Work-based learning experiences which include experiences outside the traditional school setting (including internships) and are provided in an integrated environment to the maximum extent possible.

ACTIVITIES

Pre-Employment Transition Services Coordinators will:

- Participate in IEP meetings either remotely or in person
- Consult with teachers
- Attend parent/teacher conferences
- Share information about Nebraska VR

Students may begin by developing awareness of life after school through:

- Career days
- Business tours
- Job fairs
- Presentations and group discussions about the world of work
- Identification and problem-solving regarding barriers to employment

Students also identify interests and strengths while building skills through:

- Interest inventories
- Job exploration counseling
- Informational interviews
- Job shadowing
- Job readiness skills training
- Independent living skills training
- Instruction in self-advocacy
- Work-based learning opportunities in the community
- Benefits orientation and financial planning for employment success
- College tours and orientation to college planning
- Opportunities to participate in Project SEARCH
- Referral to community resources and adult services agencies
- Discussion about potential application for individualized VR Services and development of Individualized Plan for Employment

More individualized services require an application for VR services. Learn more about applying for Adult VR Services on page 5.

A Few Examples of Impairments:

Physical/Medical: cerebral palsy, hearing impairment, juvenile rheumatoid arthritis, diabetes, spina bifida, cystic fibrosis, orthopedic impairment, heart condition, dyslexia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), Traumatic brain injury (TBI), autism
Mental Health: depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), oppositional defiant disorder, drug/alcohol abuse, adjustment disorder
Learning: specific learning disability, intellectual disability, autism, speech/language impairment

Nebraska VR Involvement in the Individualized Education Program (IEP):

Nebraska VR Pre-Employment Transition Services Coordinators welcome invitations to attend IEP meetings. Attendance can be in person, by conference call or video conferencing and prior notice is necessary for scheduling. Due to availability it may be necessary to prioritize which IEP meetings are most important to attend. Educators are required to get prior consent from parents or authorized representatives when outside agencies are invited to IEP meetings.

REFERRAL PROCESS

Who should refer students? Special Education educators, guidance counselors, school nurses, school psychologists, speech language pathologists, administrators, regular educators, and parents or authorized representatives may refer students to Nebraska VR. Students may also self-refer.

Who should be referred? Students verified for special education, students with a 504 Accommodation Plan, students with a disability for the purposes of section 504 (even if they do not have a 504 accommodation plan in place).

When should a referral be made? Students may be referred at age 14 to begin the process of engaging in Pre-Employment Transition Services.

What is the referral process? Complete a Nebraska VR Referral form and submit to the Nebraska VR Pre-Employment Transition Services Coordinator. The Nebraska VR Pre-Employment Transition Services Coordinator will contact the student and parent or authorized representative within 10 days of the referral. An appointment will be scheduled at the earliest possible time to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services Orientation and to complete a Pre-Employment Transition Services Consent and Information Release form or an application for VR services. A parent or authorized representative consent is required for students under the age of 19 and all students with an IEP.

A parent or authorized representative signature on the Pre-Employment Transition Consent and Release form is sufficient to verify the student's disability for the purposes of Pre-Employment Transition Services. Further information can be gathered to assist with planning including the MDT report, IEP, medical information, etc

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Safety and Disclosure

When a school is aware of behavioral issues that could potentially warrant concern for a student's safety or the safety of others, the school is urged to disclose this information in a timely manner. When a safety or behavioral intervention plan is in place, in addition to medical and psychological information, the plan should be shared to ensure appropriate Pre-Employment Transition Services delivery.

If the Nebraska VR Pre-Employment Transition Services Coordinator is providing services in a group setting while the student is present, the classroom teacher or other school personnel should remain in the classroom to address any behavioral issues that may arise.

If the student with a disability requires an aide or personal attendant during the school day to ensure access to free and appropriate public education (FAPE) and transition services through the IEP, the school is asked to provide the same support services while the student is participating in Pre-Employment Transition Services through Nebraska VR.

SCHOOL CONTACT

When will the VR Pre-Employment Transition Services Coordinator come to your school? The Nebraska VR Pre-Employment Transition Services Coordinator will be available to students and staff at your school either remotely or in person as time permits. It is recommended to determine a schedule at the beginning of the school year. If a set schedule is not indicated, all meetings should be arranged in advance with all pertinent school personnel informed. A procedure should be in place to communicate unforeseen changes to the schedule.

STUDENT RELEASE TIME CONSIDERATIONS

- How will time be scheduled for the Nebraska VR Pre-Employment Transition Services Coordinator to meet with students?
- When and where will the Nebraska VR Pre-Employment Transition Services Coordinator meet with students?
- How will class release time be handled?
- When and where will the Nebraska VR Pre-Employment Transition Services Coordinator have access to meet students in groups?

INFORMATION EXCHANGE

How will student records be made available? The Nebraska VR Pre-Employment Transition Services Coordinator may need copies of available student records for eligibility and/or planning purposes. Access to the electronic student record system used by the school helps ensure a seamless flow of information required for eligibility in the special education program. Access to copies of the MDT and IEP with diagnosis, psychological report, and any available vocational records for career planning is very helpful to the provision of Pre-Employment Transition Services. Nebraska VR and the school will need appropriate release forms signed by the parents or authorized representatives. Student records released to Nebraska VR through an information release will remain confidential as specified on the release forms (Pre-Employment Transition Services Consent and Information Release form). The Nebraska VR Pre-Employment Transition Services Coordinator may seek records from outside sources as necessary with the appropriate permission.

FEEDBACK TO EDUCATORS

The Nebraska VR Pre-Employment Transition Services Coordinator will provide periodic status updates to the school regarding each student's participation in pre-employment activities. The best method of providing feedback varies from school to school. This can be addressed through the transition partnership planning process.

OUTREACH

Nebraska VR Pre-Employment Transition Services Coordinators welcome the opportunity to remotely or in person:

- meet with parents or authorized representatives as well as with students to provide information about Pre-Employment Transition Services and employment opportunities.
- attend parent/teacher conferences and meetings with parent groups at school or elsewhere in the community as time permits.

Nebraska VR's transition newsletter is also available to educators, students, and their families. Nebraska VR's transition newsletter, *Transition Works* is also intended to create positive expectations for students and their parents regarding successful employment after leaving school. The publication is available to educators and others through e-mail and the Nebraska VR website. The Nebraska VR Pre-Employment Transition Services Coordinator will provide information to local educators to make this publication available to students, parents, and others, as requested.

FOR MORE INTENSIVE INDIVIDUALIZED SERVICES

Those students who require more intensive services in order to learn, understand, and apply the information presented through Pre-Employment Transition Services activities will be encouraged to submit an application for Nebraska VR services. These individualized and intensive services may not be provided until the student has applied for VR services, been determined eligible, and an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) is in place. It is anticipated that most students will be served under a Pre-Employment Transition Services category until they desire or require more intensive services as they approach graduation.

Eligibility for VR services is determined if all of the following conditions are met:

- He/she has a physical or mental impairment
- The impairment constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment
- He/she can benefit in terms of an employment outcome from the provision of VR services
- He/she requires VR services to prepare for, enter, engage in, or retain gainful employment

A Nebraska VR Employment Specialist will make the determination of eligibility based on a variety of sources including an interview with the individual, a review of school records, and if necessary, outside medical reports. Individuals with a vision impairment as a primary disability may be eligible for services through the Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (NCBVI).

Developing the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE): The IPE, not to be confused with the IEP, is the planning tool Nebraska VR Employment Specialists use to help clients plan for employment success. It is a structured approach that helps clients answer the following key questions:

- What is my job goal?
- What help do I need to get to my goal?
- When will I reach my goal?
- Who will help me?
- When will my plan start?
- Who will pay for what?

Employment Specialists help clients select an appropriate job goal and develop their plan for employment success. Together they work to explore work interests, what is important to them in a job, what barriers may experience in finding and keeping a job, and what jobs are a good match for them.

Career and Technical Education (CTE)

Nebraska VR, CTE and Special Education assist students toward successful transitions to career/workplace readiness and post-secondary education or training. Students benefit when these programs and services collaborate.

Programs of Study

CTE benefits students by learning in context of careers while developing skills relevant to workplaces. CTE is available to all students including students with disabilities/special populations, in every public school and community college in Nebraska.

CTE programs of study are in these career fields:

- Agriculture Food and Natural Resources
- Business, Marketing and Management
- Communication & Information Sciences
- Human Sciences & Education
- Health Sciences
- Skilled & Technical Sciences

CTE is high quality instruction created in partnership with business and industry, workforce and economic development. In addition, Career & Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs) extend classroom instruction for each of the career fields. These co-curricular organizations engage students in applying and demonstrating workplace leadership skills.

COORDINATION OF EFFORT

At the beginning of each school year, Nebraska VR Transition Coordinators will meet with a local school district representative, and where appropriate, the local ESU representative, to complete the Transition Partnership Planning Agreement. The document outlines important issues and provides an opportunity to discuss operational matters, address questions, and review what went well and what didn't in the previous school year. The intent is to identify coordinated direction for the next year's planning and promote continuous improvement in the Transition Partnership.

Through the process of developing this agreement, the following will also be discussed:

- Who should be referred?
- How will students be referred?
- How will student information be shared?
- How will student behavioral concerns be shared?
- Where will services be provided?
- What type of feedback will be helpful for all parties?
- What services will be provided?
- Who will provide the services?
- What goals or priorities need to be pursued?
- How do we partner with other agencies?
- How will we evaluate our progress in this partnership?

SATISFACTION SURVEY

At the end of each school year, a satisfaction survey will be distributed to all school contacts who serve students with disabilities. Nebraska VR staff members will send the survey link to each of their school contacts. Because school feedback is critical to continuous improvement, the expectation is to receive at least one survey response from each school. A response from each contact is preferred.

Transition Partnership Planning Agreement

The purpose of this Transition Partnership Planning Agreement is to promote a coordinated effort between the local school, ESU, and the local Nebraska VR Service Office in providing an effective transition from school to work for students with disabilities. Prior to agreeing to the operating procedures below, educators are encouraged to review the Transition Services Partnership Planner, a guide for educators in coordinating Nebraska VR services for students with disabilities.

SCHOOL CONTACT

What is the building check in and safety procedure?

What private workspace and internet access will be available to the VR Pre-Employment Transition Services Coordinator?

REFERRAL PROCESS

How will students be referred to Nebraska VR?

How will parents or authorized representatives and students be made aware of Nebraska VR services?

What is the student release process for participating in Nebraska VR meetings and activities?

How will information and feedback be exchanged between Nebraska VR and educators?

What is the process for sharing individual safety and behavioral intervention plans and behavioral concerns?

PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES FOR STUDENTS

How will the school and Nebraska VR Pre-Employment Transition Services Coordinator collaborate around job exploration counseling, instruction in self-advocacy, counseling on post-secondary training opportunities, work-place readiness training, work based learning experiences? Check all that apply.

Nebraska VR	**School**
☐ Attending regularly scheduled meetings ☐ Providing information for in-service days ☐ Check-ins during school visits ☐ Benefits information ☐ Providing ATP Information Only Reports ☐ Sharing regular updates about student activities ☐ Sharing work-based learning reports ☐ Providing consultation	☐ Attending regularly scheduled meetings ☐ Check-ins during school visits ☐ Sharing regular updates about student activities ☐ Sharing work-based learning reports

What opportunities will be made available for students to interact with Nebraska VR staff members in a group setting in the school?

What opportunities will be made available for students to learn from employers?

What opportunities will be made available for students and their families to learn about resources in the community? (For example, Developmental Disabilities, Social Security, and Medicaid)

OUTCOMES EXPECTED

Describe the expected outcomes to be achieved as a result of this partnership.

COMMUNICATION

Describe how this agreement will be shared with school staff members.

ANNUAL EVALUATION

The effectiveness of the agreement must be reviewed each year for continuous improvement.

School District	ESU Representative	Nebraska VR Representative
Local School Representative	ESU #	Nebraska VR Office Director
School Name		

Resources

NEBRASKA VR (VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION)

Nebraska VR has a long history of providing transition services to students with disabilities as they transition to life after high school. VR partners with the local schools and parents to help students prepare for the future.

Learn more about Nebraska VR Pre-Employment Transition Services at: vr.nebraska.gov/students/ or call toll free 877-637-3422.

NEBRASKA YOUTH LEADERSHIP COUNCIL (NYLC)

NYLC is a group of young leaders from across the entire state of Nebraska who want to make a difference in the lives of other students with disabilities. NYLC believes young people should have a voice and hope to better the existing services provided to young people through their outreach efforts.

For more information visit the NYLC website: nylc.nebraska.gov/NYLC/Welcome.html.

CLIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (CAP)

CAP is a free service to help applicants and clients find solutions if they have any questions or concerns regarding services from Nebraska VR, Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired or Centers for Independent Living.

Information about CAP services can be found at their website: cap.nebraska.gov or call the toll free 800-742-7594.

ATP EDUCATIONAL ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Assistive Technology Partnership's (ATP) educational offices provide statewide Assistive Technology services to children (birth to twenty-one) with special needs, their families, caregivers, teachers, and service providers, etc.

Visit their website: atp.nebraska.gov/services/services-school or call toll free 888-806-6287.

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES - DIVISION OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES (DHHS-DD)

DHHS-DD helps individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities live independently and access their community.

Learn more at: http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Developmental-Disabilities.aspx

NEBRASKA COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED (NCBVI)

NCBVI is the state vocational rehabilitation agency that provides employment and independent living services for individuals who are blind and visually impaired.

For more information, go to: https://ncbvi.nebraska.gov/

NEBRASKA TRANSITION GUIDE

The purpose of the Nebraska Transition Guide is to enhance supports for transitioning between grade levels, programs, schools, districts, and college and careers for all students by increasing collaboration between students, parents, school staff, and community agencies.

Download the guide at: https://transition.ne.gov/nebraska-transition-guides

ALONG THE WAY GUIDES

The "Along the Way" series of guides from the Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities was created to provide information for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their families, and others.

The guides are available at: http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/DD-Planning-Council-Resources.aspx

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