Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR)

Transition and Youth Services

An Overview of ACCES-VR Services
Introductions
ACCES-VR

• An office within the New York State Education Department

• 15 district offices and 10 satellite offices

http://www.acces.nysed.gov/vr/district-offices
ACCES-VR: Purpose and Process

• ACCES-VR’s mission is to assist individuals with disabilities to go to WORK.

• ACCES-VR is an ELIGIBILITY based program, not an entitlement program. Individuals must qualify to receive services.
Students and Youth With a Disability

• **Student with a Disability:**
  • Ages 14–22
  • Has a documented disability
  • *Is enrolled in an educational or training program*

• **Youth with a Disability:**
  • Ages 14–25
  • Has a documented disability
Transition Services for Students with Disabilities

ACCES-VR provides a variety of services to assist students with disabilities to identify, prepare for, and pursue their career goals. These services include:

- Pre-ETS for students with disabilities who are potentially eligible for ACCES-VR services
- Pre-ETS for students with disabilities who are determined eligible for ACCES-VR services
- VR services needed for an individual to obtain, maintain, or advance in a job for students who are determined eligible
Pre-ETS

• Pre-ETS for students with disabilities provide information on career options, education and skills training for students ages 14–22 who are potentially eligible or eligible for ACCES-VR services.

• Pre-ETS align with evidence-based predictors of postsecondary success.

• The goal of Pre-ETS is to help students with disabilities achieve an early, solid foundation that will lead them to successful competitive integrated employment and independence.
The Five Pre-ETS

1. Job Exploration Counseling
2. Work-Based Learning Experiences (WBLEs)
3. Counseling on Opportunities for Enrollment in Postsecondary Education
4. Workplace Readiness Training
5. Instruction in Self-Advocacy Counseling
Discussion or counseling on the results of some of these activities can help to identify viable career options or solidify careers that a student will want to explore further.
Work-Based Learning Experience (WBLE)

- Job shadowing
- Career mentorship
- Paid and non-paid internships
- Informational interviews
- Practicum
- Service learning
- Student-led enterprises

- Career-related competitions
- Simulated workplace experience
- Paid work experience
- Non-paid work experience
- Volunteering
- Workplace tours/field trips
Counseling on Postsecondary Options

The formal name of this service is:

• Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary education programs

• Student exploration and planning on a variety of postsecondary education and training opportunities
Workplace readiness skills are sometimes called:

- Soft skills
- Employability skills
- Job readiness skills
Instruction in Self-Advocacy

• Self-awareness
• Understanding of disability
• Disability disclosure
• Decision making
• Goal setting
• Evaluating options
• Identifying independence
• Reasonable accommodations
• Request and utilize accommodations
• Knowing your rights and responsibilities

• Self-determination
• Know how to request and accept help
• Intrinsic motivation
• Taking a leadership role
• Support plans
• Assertiveness
• Listening to other’s opinions
• Problem solving
• Monitoring progress
• Positive self-talk
Students Potentially Eligible and Eligible for ACCES-VR

Potentially Eligible Students:
May receive Pre-ETS

Eligible Students:
May receive Pre-ETS AND/OR
may receive VR services
needed to obtain a job
Vocational Rehabilitation Services

- High school-to-work transition services
- Job counseling
- Job assessment and development
- Job placement
- Vocational or technical training
- BOCES or other classroom training
- Books and tools
- Supported employment
- Occupational license
- Vehicle modifications
- Self-employment
- Rehabilitation technology
- Job coaching
- College training
- Driver training
- And many more!

Being eligible for ACCES-VR services does not mean individuals are eligible to receive ALL ACCES-VR services.
Services for ACCES-VR Eligible Individuals

**Pre-ETS**
- Only for students with a disability ages 14–22
- Services:
  - Job exploration counseling
  - Work-Based Learning Experiences
  - Counseling on postsecondary education options
  - Workplace readiness training
  - Instruction in self-advocacy

**Vocational Rehabilitation Services**
- Required to obtain, maintain, or advance in employment
- Secondary school examples: Vocational guidance and counseling, community work experiences, assessment for career planning
- Postsecondary examples: Job development, supported employment, training (vocational, college)
Referral Process

**Referral to ACCES-VR vendor: Potentially eligible student**
(Pre-ETS ONLY)

- Students with a disability (14–22) enrolled in an educational program
- Would benefit from intro to pre-employment supports and group activities
- May not be appropriate for ACCES-VR services or not yet ready for VR services

**Referral to ACCES-VR: Eligible student**

- Students with a disability that may need more than Pre-ETS (e.g., VR services)
- Students with a disability who are interested in identifying a career goal and accessing services required to achieve that goal and obtain a job
- Students with a disability ready for more in-depth VR services
Before a student with a disability is referred to a program or begins employment where the pay is less than minimum wage, please keep the following in mind:

• Federal legislation and regulations require that youth with disabilities are provided information and choice about work in competitive integrated employment settings that pay at least minimum wage.

• Historically, people with disabilities have not been provided enough information or opportunities to make an informed choice between a job that pays at least minimum wage and one that pays less than minimum wage.

• Choice is not possible without knowing options exist.
Federal Regulatory Requirements

Prior to employment at sub-minimum wage, youth (age 24 and under) must have:

1. Received Pre-ETS and/or transition services
2. Applied for ACCES-VR services
   a) And were found ineligible OR
   b) Were found eligible AND had an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) AND worked toward an IPE work goal for a reasonable amount of time without success AND the case was closed
3. Received Career Counseling and Information and Referral services (CC&I&R)
Responsibility for Subminimum Wage Regulations

• Programs that pay subminimum wage are responsible for:
  • Ensuring that individuals applying are aware of all the required regulatory requirements prior to employment. They must verify these requirements and keep documentation.
  • Following any state oversight entity requirements (e.g., Office of People with Developmental Disabilities [OPWDD], Office of Mental Health [OMH]).

• ACCES-VR is responsible for using a consistent eligibility determination process for all applications this:
  • Ensures equity in the determination of eligibility for VR services.
  • Provides information to all individuals about VR services available to support competitive integrated employment.
  • Use a trial work experience is needed to determine the individual’s eligibility.
ACCES-VR Application and Eligibility Determination: Required Documents

Student, family, or school district

- ACCES-VR Application (VR-04)
- Consent to Release/Obtain Information Form (VR-21)
- Documentation of Disability
- [http://www.acces.nysed.gov/vr/apply-vocational-rehabilitation-services](http://www.acces.nysed.gov/vr/apply-vocational-rehabilitation-services)
When to Apply for ACCES-VR Services?

Applications can be made at any time from age 14 or older, however, students with disabilities leaving secondary school are encouraged to apply no later than the Fall prior to graduation.
Resources

ACCES-VR: http://www.acces.nysed.gov/vr

ACCES VR District Offices: http://www.acces.nysed.gov/vr/district-offices

Apply for VR Services: http://www.acces.nysed.gov/vr/apply-vocational-rehabilitation-services

NTACT:C: https://www.transitionta.org/