

STEP Fact-Sheet

- **Secondary Transitional Experience Program:** STEP is an evaluation, training, and employment program that prepares students with disabilities for transition to employment and community participation during and after high school. STEP is a program led by the Department of Human Services' Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS). DRS works in partnership with people with disabilities, schools, families, adult agencies, and employers to assist individuals with disabilities with reaching their career goals.
- **STEP Goals:**
 - Students learn to become productive, self-sufficient adults through a variety of work and classroom experiences
 - Assist students in developing desirable work habits and realistic career goals
 - Provide opportunities for students to explore careers
 - Offer meaningful work experiences
 - Encourage students to develop the social and personal skills needed to maintain successful employment
- **STEP Services:** Vocational rehabilitation specialists, teachers, DRS Counselors and Transition Specialists work with students to individualize STEP services to meet their needs. Services can include:
 - Guidance and career counseling
 - Information and referral
 - Opportunities for career exploration
 - Participation in work experiences
 - Job training and placement
 - Supported Employment Services
 - Independent living services
 - Coordination of post-secondary education and training
- **Who is Appropriate for Referral to STEP:**
 - A student who wants to be involved in a co-op program including work opportunities and classroom based instruction. If under the age of 18, or 18 with a guardian, parents/guardian must agree to the student's involvement in the STEP program.
 - A student who has a significant, most significant, or very significant disability according to State of Illinois DHS/DRS Order of Selection service guidelines
 - A student who has a *measureable* vocational goal specifically identified on his/her IEP
- **Accessing STEP Services:**
 - High school students with a disability may be eligible to participate in STEP if they receive special education services or other assistance because of a disability
 - All information is confidential and will not be released without consent.
 - A referral can be made by contacting the high school or the local DRS office
 - Referral packets to DRS should include: DHS/DRS release of information, most recent physical, most recent psychological, current IEP, SSN, and if applicable most recent social development evaluation or therapy evaluations

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STUDENTS WHO HAVE WORK EXPERIENCE DURING HIGH SCHOOL ARE MORE LIKELY TO HAVE A JOB AND EARN MORE MONEY AFTER THEY LEAVE SCHOOL

- Program Service Descriptions:

- Work related class: Classroom instruction usually conducted within the school setting that includes, but is not limited to, career exploration, job seeking skills, job placement skills, resume writing and job applications, interviewing skills
- Job Shadowing: A method of learning about a job by spending time with a person who is working in the career. Students learn the realities of a job by walking through the day as a shadow of a competent worker.
- Independent Living Skills Training : Classroom or community-based instruction beyond that received in a Work Related Class that typically provides training in skill areas other than vocational development that students will need to function independently within the community.
- Community-Based Experience: Experience in the private or not-for-profit business sector that is competitive and integrated.
- On The Job Evaluation/Training (OJE/OJT) : A training experience where a person is evaluated in terms of aptitudes and abilities, work speed, work skills, ability to learn, quality of work performed and work behaviors. Used to develop basic job skills that would lead to employment and is utilized until the student is able to perform the job duties.
- On-Campus Experience: Experience in any school setting, closely supervised. Often a student's first training experience, used to identify vocational strengths, and to develop appropriate work behaviors and skills in preparation for community placements.
- Job Coaching: On-the-job support provided by school personnel to ensure that students with disabilities have access to paid, competitive, integrated training experiences in the community.

Questions?

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WHEN STUDENTS PLAN AHEAD FOR ADULT LIFE, THEY ARE MORE SUCCESSFUL IN:

COMPLETING SCHOOL

GETTING A JOB

LIVING INDEPENDENTLY