

**ND Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)**  
**Summer Work Experience (SWE) Program**  
Effective January 1, 2016 - August 31, 2016

**Introduction:**

The DVR Summer Work Experience (SWE) Program is an opportunity for students to develop soft skills in a real work environment. The most important aspect of work experience is not necessarily the nature of the work, but rather the opportunity to learn work norms and develop good work habits. The job may or may not be in the same interest area as the student's long term goal. The work experience program seeks to build skills to get the student closer to their long term goal.

**Eligibility Criteria:**

- Be eligible for DVR services prior to participation in services. A student with a disability may be determined eligible for DVR services without having a 504 or Individualized Education Plan (IEP).
- **Not be** involved in DVR Pre-ETS summer work experience **contract** activities, unless approved by the DVR Regional Administrator.

**Participation:**

Students should have the opportunity to participate in at least two summer work experiences before exiting school. For students exiting school as a "typical" senior, they should have an opportunity to do a work experience during the summer before their sophomore and junior years. Senior + students (students staying in school until they are 21) should have an opportunity to do a work experience the summer after their senior year, and the summer of their senior + 1 year. Again, at least two work experiences before exiting.

**Pre-Vocational Training/SWE Parameters:**

Once DVR eligible, students will choose a "Community Rehabilitation Provider" (CRP). The CRP may provide up to 15 hours of pre-vocational training during the school year, before SWE begins, if the student so desires. DVR counselors and/or CRP will assist students to search for the job, train on the job, and maintain the job throughout the summer. Work must be community based, competitive, integrated, and pay at least minimum wage or above. The best scenario for SWE is 20 hours per week for 13 weeks, however 15-19 hours per week is acceptable if approved by the DVR Regional Administrator. Anything less needs state office approval.

**Potential Timeline:**

January: Student chooses a CRP and may participate in 15 hours of pre-vocational training activities including, but not limited to, disability disclosure, reasonable accommodations, appropriate dress, etc.

February: The DVR counselor and CRP will collaborate with parents, teachers, student, etc. to share information such as interest testing, job shadow reports, IEP goals, etc. in order to plan if, or what, work experience may be beneficial for the student.

March/April: CRP and student start job search.

May: Student begins work experience.

## **Roles of the Team:**

### School Personnel - During the school year encourage students to:

- Submit an application to DVR.
- Coordinate with DVR to review and share vocational profiles and interest/aptitude assessments.
- Participate in volunteer experiences, job shadows, career fairs, etc.
- Engage in School to Work opportunities and/or Work Readiness programs.

### Vocational Rehabilitation

- DVR and student interview and select a CRP.
- Provide vocational guidance and counseling.
- Partner with MI, DD, TIPS case managers, therapists, etc. to ensure a successful work experience.
- If for some reason the first job placement is not successful and all things are equal, legal, and based on good rehabilitation counseling, the counselor **may** allow a student a second chance at summer work experience.
- The student needs to be in a DVR transition Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) to participate in SWE.

### Parent(s)

- Encourage the student to be part of the work experience program.
- Be a good role model and support work experience.
- Find a balance between supporting the student, while also allowing them to experience natural consequences.
- Provide opportunities to learn independence skills.
- Provide responsibilities and opportunities to make their own choices.
- Identify supports that work and will benefit the student.
- Be an active part of the team.

### Student/Worker

- Meet all scheduled appointments with the CRP, teacher, and DVR counselor. If the student consistently misses appointments, the DVR counselor may determine them ineligible for SWE.
- Be on time, responsible, honest, and open to constructive criticism.
- Dress appropriately.
- Be willing to learn from supervisors, school officials, DVR counselor, and CRP.
- Have a professional relationship with co-workers and supervisors.
- Advocate for yourself. Tell others what you need to be successful.
- Be persistent, willing to work, and complete tasks that are assigned to you.

### Community Rehabilitation Provider (CRP)

- Contact employers to obtain and maintain work experience.
- CRP will facilitate the pre-vocational training as requested by DVR. There are transition modules on the DVR website <https://www.nd.gov/dhs/dvr/individual/student.html> that may be used for pre-vocational training, or other training tools such as Discovery may be used as well.

- Along with the regular training provided by the employer, the CRP will support and train the student on-site in the employment setting. This support starts when the student becomes employed and is gradually faded out as the student becomes more independent. The depth of service provided depends upon the level of need.
- **Does not** place the student at their own place of employment and receive payment for developing the work experience.
- Obtain verbal approval of secured work experience site from the DVR counselor prior to the student's start date and follow up with submitting the "Employment Verification" form.
- Maintain regular contact with the student, DVR counselor, and employer.
- Assist the student in resolving issues related to retention of employment.
- Work with the employer to make sure the placement is going smoothly.
- Contact the DVR counselor at any time during business hours for technical assistance. The DVR counselor will respond within 24 hours or sooner. If the provider does not receive a response within that time, the DVR Regional Administrator may be contacted. (Typically summer brings vacations so counselors may not be readily available.)
- Contact the DVR counselor immediately if a student is at risk of job loss, job loss has occurred, or the student chooses not to allow the CRP to be on the job site.

#### **Payment:**

The DVR counselor will send the authorization and the Referral for Employment Services (SFN 1092) to the CRP as soon as the CRP begins the 15 hours of vocational training and/or job development. This could occur as early as January. Subsequent monthly authorizations will begin as early as May for job placement (see payment rates).

Once the student is placed:

- CRP sends the DVR counselor a completed Employment Verification Report (SFN 1841).
- CRP completes the Monthly Progress Summary (SFN 1101) on a monthly basis and submits to the DVR counselor.
- If the job becomes permanent, the CRP will submit an invoice and a completed Employment Verification Report (SFN 1841) to the DVR counselor. The form must also be signed by the employer. The DVR counselor will then authorize the permanent placement fee.

#### **AWARE (for DVR staff only):**

- Check the Summer Work Experience box on the special programs screen.
- Use service category "job placement" on the IPE and all authorizations.

#### **Travel:**

There are some circumstances where the client lives in and desires to work in a rural community. In instances where the provider must travel more than 20 miles one way outside of the metropolitan service area or city limits, whichever area is larger, DVR will authorize additional payment to the CRP. Payment will be based on the approved state rate for mileage with the number of miles calculated according to GasBuddy.com. The number of required trips will be negotiated between the provider and DVR counselor.