

4000 TRANSITION PROGRAMS

4001 General. The Division provides an emphasis on serving students and youth with disabilities in planning and making a seamless transition from high school to postsecondary education and/or competitive integrated employment. The 2014 Amendments of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 represent a renewed commitment for the Division to serve students and youth with disabilities and provide more opportunities for all youth with disabilities to practice and improve workplace skills, explore career interests and acquire work experiences. For the purposes of the Division’s provision of transition services, the following distinctions will apply:

A. “Pre–Employment Transition Services” are provided to students with disabilities ages 14–21 years old who **are** enrolled in high school or secondary education.

B. “Post–Secondary Transition Services” are provided to youth with disabilities ages 14–24 years old who **are not** enrolled in high school.

4002 Pre–Employment Transition Services (PETS)

4002.1 PETS. Pre–Employment Transition Services are intended to facilitate a smooth transition of students with disabilities from high school to post–secondary education and/or employment. These pre–employment transition services assist students in determining an appropriate vocational goal when their expressed goal is not practical with their disability, they are undecided as to a vocational goal, or they need to further explore the employment options of their chosen vocational goal. The scope of these services will include but not be limited to:

1. Job exploration counseling;
2. Work– based learning experiences;
3. Counseling on post–secondary opportunities;
4. Work place readiness training; and,

5. Self-advocacy training.

4002.2 PETS Counselors

A. PETS Counselors are assigned to public and private high schools in every county of West Virginia to work with students, families and educators while in high school and during the transition process. These Counselors inform them of available rehabilitation services and identify students who might benefit from or need rehabilitation services and/or career planning consistent with the individual's unique employment factors: strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, career interests, and informed choice. Students with disabilities will be served initially by PETS Counselors until they graduate/exit secondary education.

B. PETS Counselors are responsible for:

1. Informing students, parents, and school staff about Division policies and procedures as they relate to transition planning, pre-employment transition services, rehabilitation services, and employment outcomes.
2. Utilizing the Transition Program Survey to identify students with disabilities who could benefit from pre-employment transition services and vocational rehabilitation services.
3. Participating in school-based meetings to facilitate the coordination of services concerning the student's progress (with emphasis on Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team meetings) appropriate to transition and to promote inclusion of work-based experiences in the IEP.
4. Determining eligibility for Division services depending on when the student makes application and based on the expected graduation/exit date.
5. Counseling transition students and their parents about vocational and career planning utilizing existing school records and information gathered through the provision of PETS.

6. Providing information regarding occupational demands and current labor market information in relation to the career cluster and vocational exploration;

7. Advising students, parents, and school staff on the availability of community-based services from other State agencies, adult services programs, and independent living centers;

8. Development of the Individualized Plan for Employment-Transition (IPET), Individualized Plan for Employment-High School (IPE-HS), or Plan amendment (if needed), by the student's expected graduation/exit date. Whenever possible, the PETS and Transition Counselors should meet jointly with the student and their representative to develop the IPE-HS.

9. Completing in *Actions/Details* a Transfer Summary of the case activities and planning that has occurred to provide future direction of the case prior to the transfer. This will serve to provide continuity between the PETS and the post-secondary transition services. The Transfer Summary will include:

a. Disability on which he/she was found eligible and any current "red flags" not documented.

b. The client's specific vocational goal for which the IPE-HS was developed.

c. Projected post-secondary services for the continuation of the rehabilitation transition case.

4003 Outreach. The Division initiates outreach to students and youth with disabilities as early as possible during the transition planning process to identify those who are in need of PETS and/or transition services, including students who are enrolled in school and youth who are not enrolled in school. Not all students or youth with disabilities are identified in the typical school setting. Examples include but are not limited to: incarcerated youth, youth in alternative placements, home schooled and/or homebound, involved in high school equivalency/TASC or Mountaineer Challenge Academy participants.

School districts, community groups, and organizations that serve out-of-school youth (i.e., drop-outs) are provided with contact information for the Division's local offices and staff.

4004 The Provision of Pre-Employment Transition Services/Vocational Rehabilitation Services. As the student moves from school to post school life, there is no gap in services between the education and the vocational rehabilitation systems. While local school districts are responsible for providing education and transition services to students with disabilities who are still in the secondary school system, the PETS and Transition Counselors provide vocational rehabilitation services that involve planning and preparing for the student's future employment. The provision of pre-employment transition and/or vocational rehabilitation services while a student is still enrolled in high school is determined based on state and local cooperative agreements and the Division's policies. The PETS Counselor will provide PETS when the eligible and/or potentially eligible student enters tenth grade or as early as appropriate. Vocational rehabilitation services that can be provided are:

- A. Pre-employment transition services (PETS);
- B. Vocational in nature;
- C. Supportive and lead to the achievement of the employment goal identified on the IPE;
- D. Not the responsibility of the school district under IDEA or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act; and,
- E. Not readily available from the school district.

4005 Post-School Choices. The transition process from school to work is outcome based, leading to the achievement of competitive integrated employment through, but not limited to, the following:

- A. Post-secondary education;
- B. Vocational training;

- C. Career technical education;
- D. Competitive integrated employment (including supported employment);
- E. Adult education;
- F. Adult services;
- G. Independent living skills (daily living skills), where appropriate;
- H. Community participation consistent with the informed choice of the individual; or,
- I. Other identified services specific to the individual's needs.

4006 Transition Process. The PETS counselor will be working with the student while they are in high school and prepare the case to be transferred to a Transition Counselor upon the student's graduation/exit from school. The Transition Counselor then works with the student in post-secondary planning and service provision to meet their employment goal.

4006.1 Role of the Transition Counselor. The role of the Transition Counselor includes:

- A. Facilitating the smooth transfer of the individual's case from the PETS counselor to the transition caseload for post-secondary rehabilitation services;
- B. Continuing implementation of the IPE-HS and provision of post-secondary rehabilitation services;
- C. Job seeking and placement activities; and,
- D. Closing the rehabilitation case according to the Division's current policy.

4006.2 Collaboration between PETS and Transition Counselors

A. Early in the graduation/exit year of the student a Pre-Transfer Staffing will occur between the PETS and Transition Counselors to review the pending transfer of cases from the PETS caseload to the respective Transition caseload.

B. If the student has an IEP, one or both of the PETS and Transition Counselors will attend the Exit IEP meeting to facilitate the transition of the student and to inform the school staff of the plans for post-secondary services to be provided by the Division.

C. Both Counselors will collaborate on the transfer of the student's PETS case to the Transition caseload prior to the graduation/exit date. A transfer planning meeting should take place between the Counselors and individual as early as January of the student's last semester of school but no later than the graduation/exit date.

4007 Referrals

A. The Division will seek referrals from the school system as early as 10th grade or at least three years before the student's projected exit from high school. Referrals as early as appropriate to the student's needs allow more opportunities for vocational planning and exploration of career goals through pre-employment transition services. Counselors will seek referrals for all students with disabilities including students in special education, students with 504 Plans and self-referrals utilizing the transition survey. Students may otherwise refer themselves or be referred by school personnel, family members, guardians, or other interested persons.

B. All individuals, including students, have the right to apply for the Division's services. There are situations in which application for pre-employment transition services may be premature, depending on individual circumstances. Application for or receipt of pre-employment transition services from other agencies does not preclude a student's application to the Division. Access to pre-employment transition services from other agencies, whether

actual or anticipated, is never a basis for refusing to accept an application for the Division's services.

C. Any referrals received after mid-term of the students Senior (or exit) year will be provided rehabilitation services through the Transition caseload.

D. Any other youth with disabilities who are not enrolled in or have exited secondary education will be provided rehabilitation services through the General caseload.

4008 Eligibility

4008.1 Eligibility. A student's status in special education (IEP), a student with a disability under a 504 Plan, or a student identified as having an otherwise significant health condition, does not automatically mean that the student is eligible for vocational rehabilitation services. All determinations of eligibility are made according to Division policy.

4008.2 Assessments. To assist with the eligibility decision the PETS Counselor (or Transition Counselor if applicable) will request pertinent and available school-based assessment information, including but not limited to:

- A. Psychological evaluations,
- B. Vocational evaluations,
- C. Medical or specialty screenings, and,
- D. 504 Plans or IEP, if applicable.

4009 Plan Development. A rehabilitation plan is developed to provide pre-employment transition services for transition students determined eligible for the Division's services and who can be served under the Order of Selection. A rehabilitation plan must be developed within 90 days of eligibility determination. There may be times when a vocational goal or pre-employment transition service requested has been determined inappropriate given the student's abilities. The Division does not support an inappropriate goal or

service. Plan development for students with disabilities will follow one of two options, IPET or IPE–HS.

4009.1 Individualized Plan for Employment–Transition (IPET). The IPET has been established to aid transition students in developing or solidifying a vocational goal. The scope of the IPET includes vocational planning activities that are considered PETS. Assessment activities will be initiated consistent with the individual’s informed choice and available resources in order to identify capabilities, interests, rehabilitation needs, goals, objectives, and PETS.

4009.2 When to develop an IPET. Due to the nature of working with transition students, there is often the lack of or uncertainty about a specific vocational goal or the student has identified a general vocational goal. When this occurs the counselor will develop an IPET for pre–employment transition services using the Career Cluster (general vocational goal). The Counselor and student will determine what additional assessments or PETS are necessary to solidify the chosen goal. Once a specific goal has been determined it will be necessary to write an IPE–HS to provide post–secondary services that will lead to the successful competitive integrated employment outcome. The IPE–HS should be completed as early as is appropriate during the transition process, prior to but no later than when the eligible student graduates/exits the school setting.

4009.3 Career Cluster. The Career Cluster is the foundation for the development of the IPET when the student has not identified a specific vocational goal.

A. During the eighth grade, WV students choose a Career Cluster (sometimes referred to as the Career Pathway) that determines the curriculum and courses the student will follow during high school. The Career Cluster is based on the student’s interests and other assessments that identify a potential vocational area that will eventually lead to post–secondary training and/or employment goals.

B. Career Clusters are a grouping of 16 Occupations and Industries based on the knowledge and skills required for success in the workplace. Utilizing career clusters provides students the opportunity to

explore different career options and find a better match to their interests, skills and abilities in preparation for postsecondary goals. Career Cluster choices include:

1. Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources;
2. Architecture and Construction;
3. Arts, Audio–Video Technology and Communications;
4. Business, Management and Administration;
5. Education and Training;
6. Finance;
7. Government and Public Administration;
8. Health Science;
9. Hospitality and Tourism;
10. Human Services;
11. Information Technology;
12. Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security;
13. Manufacturing;
14. Marketing;
15. Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics; and,
16. Transportation, Distribution and Logistics.

C. In instances where the student does not have an identified Career Cluster or Career Pathway, the PETS Counselor will use other assessment material which may include transcripts, current class schedules or information gathered from the student's guidance counselor to assist the student with the identification of an appropriate Career Cluster for vocational planning.

4009.4 Contents IPET. The IPET will be documented by the Counselor using form(s) designated by the Division and will include the following components:

A. *Career Cluster/General Goal.* The IPET shall be consistent with the student's educational pathway and their interests. The Counselor and individual will consider factors including: the assessments used for determining eligibility, priority of services, and rehabilitation needs; the provision of planned PETS; and, the individual's informed choice in the decision making

process to determine the career cluster/general goal and related Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) code.

B. *Timeframe*. Under the section “I expect to determine my specific vocational goal before I graduate high school” an expected graduation date is required; i.e., December 2015.

C. *Intermediate Goals/Objectives*. Intermediate rehabilitation goals and objectives will support the exploration and solidification of a career goal consistent with the individual’s informed choice.

D. *Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS)*. The five PETS to be provided during high school shall be included on the IPET. Vocational Counseling and Guidance, and Assessments will automatically be provided as ongoing services throughout the IPET.

E. *Evaluation Criteria*. Evaluation will be completed on each intermediate objective. The I.O. review will be conducted every 60 days based on the pre-employment transition service provided.

F. *Financial Arrangements*. Students participating in PETS while enrolled in high school are exempt from current economic resource policy. Comparable benefits or third party resources will be applied to the cost of the planned services. The IPET will reflect the individual’s personal responsibilities regarding any financial arrangements and the need to reevaluate economic resources annually, per Division policy.

G. *Individual Comments*. The individual or, as appropriate, the individual’s representative, will be provided an opportunity to describe how the individual was informed about and involved in choosing a career cluster, alternative goals, objectives, and pre-employment transition services.

4009.5 IPET Program Explanation Statement. The program explanation statement comprehensively addresses all relevant factors and considerations that led to the determination of the career cluster vocational goal and the PETS selected. The program explanation must include the following information:

A. Discuss the occupational demands, which include the physical/mental requirements and labor market information, of the Career Cluster goal you and the client expect to explore to determine a specific vocational goal. Show why the SOC code was selected and the relevance to transition planning and employment goals; and,

B. Discuss the utilization of comparable benefits, if applicable.

4009.6 Moving from an IPET to the IPE–HS. All IPET based on a career cluster (general goal) shall be revised when the specific vocational goal has been determined. At any time during the provision of pre–employment transition services while the student remains in high school the IPET can be revised to the IPE–HS. The IPE–HS will be written prior to the expected graduation/exit date.

4009.7 When to develop an IPE–HS. The IPE–HS can be developed if the specific vocational goal has already been identified and documentation supports the goal. The Counselor and student will determine what additional assessments or pre–employment transition services will be provided to facilitate the student’s transition to post–secondary services. In this situation, the IPE–HS will be written to provide PETS **and** post–secondary services that will lead to the successful competitive integrated employment outcome. A Plan amendment would only be required in accordance with existing Division policy and guidelines.

4010 Cooperative Agreements. Cooperative agreements facilitate collaborative working relationships leading to positive employment outcomes for eligible students with disabilities, including those served through an IEP or a 504 Plan, or those with other documented disabilities. Each agreement sets the framework for a comprehensive and coordinated effort to identify and serve students with physical and/or mental disabilities. Cooperative agreements with the State Educational Agency (SEA) include a mutually agreed upon definition of transition youth and an age range. The Program Specialist for Transition and Education Programs acts as the Division’s liaison with the State Board of Education and provides statewide coordination and technical assistance for pre–employment transition services and post–secondary transition services. As the student moves from school to post school life, there is no gap in services

between the education and the vocational rehabilitation systems. Transition services are implemented through cooperative agreements between the Division and various educational bodies, including:

- A. West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE);
- B. All 55 West Virginia County Boards of Education;
- C. West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission;
- D. West Virginia Department of Education, Division of Technical and Adult Education; and,
- E. West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind.

4010.1 Contents of Agreements. The cooperative agreement with the SEA contains provisions for:

- A. Consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including vocational rehabilitation services;
- B. Transition planning by the Rehabilitation Counselors and educational agency personnel for students with disabilities that facilitates the development and completion of their IEP and IPE;
- C. The roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency;
- D. Procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who are in need of transition services; and,
- E. Procedures for Local Education Agencies (LEA) to establish interagency agreements tailored to meet the unique circumstances of the local area.

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F. Continuous and uninterrupted services are provided without duplication or encroachment of the separate programs.

G. If the Division and the school district are unable to agree upon which party is responsible for a specific service, then a cost sharing arrangement may be negotiated.

H. Conflicts are to be resolved using the process outlined in the cooperative agreement with the SEA.

4010.2 County Agreements. In addition to the interagency cooperative agreement with WVDE, the Division maintains individualized agreements between LEA and the Division's Field districts. These agreements define referral procedures and the roles of the school and Division staff in the provision of transition services that are specific and tailored to the unique situation of each school district and the Division's Field districts. The District Manager is the Division's party responsible for local agreements with those school districts within the Field district.