

Iowa Department for the Blind and the Iowa Department of Education Interagency Agreement

I. Parties to the Agreement

This Interagency Agreement is between the Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB-VR), the Iowa Department of Education (Department).

II. Background

Both the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (the Rehabilitation Act), as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), require State Educational Agencies (SEA) and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agencies to plan and coordinate transition services, as well as pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities through a formal interagency agreement (Section 612(a)(12) of IDEA and Section 101(a)(11)(D) of the Rehabilitation Act).

The IDB-VR program and the Department share responsibility in preparing students who are blind or have low vision for successful employment upon graduating or exiting high school. The IDB-VR and Department hereby define their relationship including their respective roles and responsibilities to students with disabilities. This agreement encompasses the respective and joint responsibilities of IDB-VR and the Department as it relates to the provision of pre-employment transition services; Section 511; and any other transition services. No client specific confidential information will be shared between the parties without a signed authorization from the client/student or, if applicable, his/her parent or legal guardian authorizing the disclosure.

III. Purpose

The purpose of this agreement is:

- To facilitate and coordinate the receipt of pre-employment transition services, transition services, and other VR services to students who are blind or have low vision in order to facilitate their smooth transition from school to post-school employment-related activities and competitive, integrated employment.
- To serve as a mechanism for IDB-VR, with the Department to clearly specify the plans, policies and procedures for coordinating services to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities, including:
 - Section 113(a)(b) of the Rehabilitation Act, as well as final section 361.48(a)(2), requires the IDB-VR, in collaboration with the Department and local education agencies (LEAs), to ensure the five pre-employment transition services required activities are made available statewide to all students with disabilities in need of any or all such services.
 - The IDB-VR will collaborate with the Department and LEAs to provide any or all of the following five pre-employment transition services required activities to eligible or potentially eligible students with disabilities (ages 14–21) as Pre-employment defined under section 361.5(c)(51), based on individual need,

once a student requests or is recommended for one or more pre-employment transition services.

IV. Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) Required Activities

- Job exploration counseling.
 - Work-based learning experiences.
 - Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education.
 - Workplace readiness training.
 - Instruction in self-advocacy and peer mentoring.
- a. Any Pre-ETS the IDB-VR staff provides will be to students, who are identified by the school of record as a person with a disability related to blindness or low vision. These services can be delivered in a variety of ways to best meet the needs of the individual, and may include but are not limited to:
- i. IDB-VR counselors providing said services either in-person or in groups at no cost to the Department or local school districts;
 - ii. IDB-VR hiring qualified vendors with approved Provider Agreements to deliver pre-employment transition services one-on-one or in groups at no cost to the Department or local school districts;
 - iii. IDB-VR may use online modules or web-based services as they become available;
 - iv. IDB-VR counselors may utilize video or audio-conferencing delivery systems for meetings with students, teachers, parents, or school district personnel for discussion about possible pre-employment transition services for the student as they become available at no cost to the Department or local school districts;
 - v. Individual high school teachers or other high school employees, such as guidance counselors, may develop and deliver curriculum specific to the five required activities listed above at no cost to the IDB-VR.

b. Additional Considerations include:

- i. The Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB) will employ vocational rehabilitation counselors to collaborate with individual high schools to coordinate and/or provide pre-employment transition services, delivered either by IDB-VR, the LEA, IESBVI or an IDB-VR service provider.
- ii. The Department and IDB-VR will encourage LEAs to engage students who are blind or have low vision and their families in transition planning, including the provision of pre-employment transition services, in coordination with the IDB-VR VR counselors.
- iii. The Department and IDB-VR will encourage LEA staff and educational service providers to provide referrals to IDB-VR after obtaining the necessary parent/guardian consent and documentation needed to request pre-employment transition services for identified students. Referrals may be provided by:
 1. Online Referral Process (through IDB)
 2. Statewide System Referral Process (IESBVI)
 3. Providing contact information for the individual to IDB staff (email, phone call or in-person conversation)
- iv. The Department and IDB-VR will encourage LEA staff and educational service providers to provide IDB-VR the Pre-ETS Information and Consent form for each student prior to IDB-VR providing any pre-employment transition service, either through a provider or through IDB-VR staff.
- v. The Department will encourage LEAs to provide physical space on the school campus to conduct the pre-employment transition services.
- vi. See section VI regarding Outreach and Identification Procedures.
- vii. See section VII regarding section 511 as it applies to Pre-ETS.

V. Consultation and Technical Assistance

IDB-VR, along with the Department and local school districts assist in planning for the transition of students who are blind or have low vision from school to post-school employment-related activities, pre-employment transition services, and competitive, integrated employment. IDB-VR will provide consultation and technical assistance to the Department and LEAs to assist in transition planning for students who are blind or have low vision from school to postsecondary employment or education-related activities, pre-employment transition services, and competitive, integrated employment.

The consultation and technical assistance provided by the IDB-VR may be provided through alternative means, such as conference calls, video conferences as well as shared in-person training opportunities. Examples include sharing conference opportunities, being strong partners in delivery of technical assistance through recognized partnerships such as the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: The Collaborative. IDB-VR staff will

attend and participate in regularly scheduled transition planning meetings when invited and as resources are available.

VI. Transition Planning

- a. IDB-VR will attend meetings for the development of an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) when invited, with appropriate consent and as resources allow. IDB-VR is requesting that an accessible copy of the IEP and additional educational related assessments be provided to the IDB-VR counselor so that IDB-VR may better assist and participate in the development of the IEP. IDB-VR will not charge the school districts for staff to attend these meetings.
- b. The Department will encourage LEAs and educational service providers to encourage family members, parents, or legal guardians to complete a referral to IDB-VR at IEP meetings as appropriate. The IDB-VR requests the Department to encourage LEAs to refer these students to IDB-VR to assist in connecting these students to high-quality career services, education and training, and supportive services including vocational rehabilitation services that they need to enter employment with the best chance of success.
- c. IDB-VR, in collaboration with local school districts, will share referral information as part of routine meetings to ensure that students who are blind or have low vision are receiving pre-employment transition services and other transition services.
- d. IDB-VR, in collaboration with LEAs, will provide or arrange for the provision of pre-employment transition services to all students who are blind or have low vision and have completed the Pre-ETS agreement.
- e. IDB-VR shall determine the eligibility for IDB-VR services of all students who are blind or have low vision who have applied for IDB-VR services within 60 days from the date of application.
- f. IDB-VR will develop an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), which is consistent with the client's (student's) IEP, within 90 days of IDB-VR eligibility, unless an extension is approved.
- g. IDB-VR, the Department, and LEAs will encourage cross-training opportunities be shared and developed at the local level for transition planning.
- h. IDB-VR will coordinate services with non-educational agencies to support out-of-school students who are blind or have low vision.

VII. Roles and Responsibilities/Service Provision

IDB-VR and the Department agree on the following roles and responsibilities of each agency, including provisions for determining state lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition and pre-employment transition services:

- a. Any Pre-ETS the IDB-VR staff provides will be to students who are identified as a student person with a disability related to blindness or low vision. These services can be delivered in a variety of ways to best meet the needs of the individual, and may include but are not limited to:

- i. Distribution of general information related to services, consultation and TA, attend transition fairs and other forums to provide information about Pre-ETS and VR services to parents and school personnel, attend IEP meetings, provide Pre-ETS, eligibility determination, IPE development and VR services, with parent permission as required.
- i. IDB-VR will provide technical assistance, training, and reference materials regarding WIOA to school districts or area education agencies (AEAs) and other stakeholders including parents, families, guardians, and students relating to the provision of pre-employment transition services
- ii. IDB-VR will accept referrals of students who are blind or have low vision during the transition planning process for the provision of pre-employment transition services.
- iii. IDB-VR will consult with school district staff on transition planning to prepare a student who is blind or has low vision to move from school to work or postsecondary education in accordance with the student's unique needs, strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, capabilities, interests and abilities, and informed choice as determined through the IEP process and provision of pre-employment transition services.
- iv. IDB-VR will provide students who are eligible for vocational rehabilitation with the services necessary and appropriate in order to obtain a successful employment outcome. These services may include assessment, disability related skills training, educational and vocational training, rehabilitation technology, job seeking skills training, and job placement services.
- v. IDB-VR may provide consultative support and technical assistance to individual high school teachers or other high school employees, such as school counselors, in the development and delivery of curriculum related to the five required Pre-ETS activities listed above at no cost to the IDB-VR.
- vi. IDB-VR will provide or arrange for the provision of Pre-ETS to potentially eligible students, and for additional VR services required by the eligible student to meet their IPE goal, when the services are specific to his/her employment outcome and are not services customarily provided to the student by the LEA under IDEA.
- vii. IDB-VR will provide information and outreach to parents and/or guardian(s), students/clients regarding VR eligibility, vocational assessment for employment and postsecondary planning, and Client Assistance Program (CAP).
- viii. IDB-VR will obtain written consent for the release of confidential information, pursuant to VR policy and procedures, federal and state laws, and regulations regarding confidentiality.

- ix. IDB-VR will provide contact information to the schools of VR staff including counselors, employment specialists, rehabilitation technology specialists, and rehabilitation teachers.
 - x. IDB-VR will identify a single point of contact who will coordinate transition services for students. This point of contact will typically be the IDB-VR counselor assigned to the school district.
 - xi. IDB-VR will share information to the Department on referrals, Pre-ETS services and employment outcomes of students who are blind or have low vision as requested and as the law and IDB-VR policies allow.
 - xii. IDB-VR will engage with employers to assist in the development of work-based learning opportunities for students who are blind or have low vision.
 - xiii. IDB-VR will participate with the Department on joint training of LEAs and VR staff regarding new federal requirements or state identified initiatives as mutually agreed upon and resources allow.
 - xiv. IDB-VR will participate with the Department to provide joint training regarding the role of VR and new regulations/procedures for students with disabilities exiting school to be referred to VR prior to entering subminimum wage work with a 14c certificate holder.
 - xv. IDB-VR will provide auxiliary aids or services for a student with a disability if the device or service is required for the student to access or participate in any of the pre-employment transition services.
- b. The Department will serve as the lead agency responsible for assuring that eligible and potentially eligible students with disabilities, including students who are blind or have low vision, receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). The Department will provide technical assistance, training, and reference materials regarding WIOA to school districts or area education agencies (AEAs) and other stakeholders identified by the Department, including parents, families, guardians, and students relating to the provision of pre-employment transition services and other transition services, as determined by the Department with input from the IDB-VR.
- i. The Department will share this memorandum of understanding with the Department, AEAs, and LEA practitioners in secondary special education.
 - ii. The Department will provide professional development and ongoing supports to AEA and LEA teams regarding the smooth transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school employment-related activities, including the receipt of appropriate pre-employment transition services, transition services, technical education and competitive, integrated employment.
 - iii. The Department will serve as the lead agency responsible for assuring that eligible students with disabilities, including students who are blind or have low vision, receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). The Department, in collaboration with IDB-VR, will provide technical assistance,

training, and reference materials regarding WIOA to school districts or area education agencies (AEAs) and other stakeholders identified by the Department, including parents, families, guardians, and students relating to the provision of pre-employment transition services and other transition services.

- a. The Department Secondary Special Education Program Consultant will be the single point of contact at the state level for collaboration in Secondary Transition activities for AEAs and LEAs
 - b. Through coordination with Access for Special Kids (ASK) Resource Center, the Parent Training Information Center, and AEA contacts, ongoing outreach, training, and communication will be shared with parents about transition services and opportunities.
- iv. The Department collects data related to Secondary Transition on Indicators 1 (graduation rates), 2 (dropout rates), 13 (IEP components), and 14 (outcomes in education/training and employment). These data, along with tools and resources for continuous improvement, are shared with districts through the IDEA Differentiated Accountability process.
 - v. The Department will collaborate with IDB to provide joint training as needed to ensure AEAs and LEAs understand their responsibilities in serving students who are blind or have low vision.
 - vi. The Department will collaborate with IDB to provide joint training to provide all existing educational assessment and performance information relevant for the determination of eligibility for IDB-VR services.
 - vii. For purposes related to section 511, neither the Department nor LEAs will enter into an arrangement with an entity holding a special wage certificate under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act for the purpose of operating a program under which a student with a disability, including a student who is blind or has low vision, is engaged in work at a subminimum wage.

VIII. Outreach and Identification Procedures

- a. IDB-VR will work with the LEAs to identify students with disabilities and potentially eligible students that may benefit from the delivery of pre-employment transition services.
- b. The Department will provide information and resources to support the LEAs in providing students, and their family with general information about resources designed to assist students as they transition from high school to postsecondary education and employment such as: information regarding the student's rights to accommodations under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), disability support services available through colleges and universities, and resources related to benefits counseling.

- c. In order to best facilitate a successful transition to postsecondary education or employment, the Department will provide information and resources to LEAs to support their referral of students who are blind or have low vision when they are 14 years old or when the IEP focus begins to incorporate transition planning.
- d. Annually, IDB-VR will send written notice to Iowa's school districts regarding the availability of pre-employment transition services for eligible and potentially eligible students who are blind or have low vision and the process to request these services.
- e. IDB-VR will provide the Information and Consent form and Pre-ETS agreement to school districts.
- f. IDB-VR has assigned vocational rehabilitation counselors to work with LEA staff to coordinate, identify students, and implement pre-employment transition services.
- g. Pre-employment transition services may be provided by either the LEA (under IDEA) or IDB-VR (under the Rehabilitation Act). IDB-VR staff will work with the IEP team to ensure IDEA services are being supplemented, not supplanted.
- h. Not all eligible or potentially eligible students who are blind or have low vision will require all five required activities; however, all should receive all needed and appropriate services, as determined through informed choice and consultation with each student based on their strengths and needs and consistent with their IEP, when applicable.

IX. Section 511 – Limitations on Use of Subminimum Wage

Under the section 511 of Rehabilitation Act, 14(c) businesses referred to as 'employers' are prohibited from employing any individual with a disability who is 24 years of age or younger at subminimum wage, unless the individual has received documentation from vocational rehabilitation upon completion of the activities. Coordination between LEAs, AEAs, the Department and IDB-VR is needed to meet documentation requirements under section 511 of the Rehabilitation Act for students and youth with disabilities seeking subminimum wage employment. These entities must document the completion of the following activities:

1. Pre-ETS that are available to a student with a disability or transition services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
2. Application for vocational rehabilitation services was completed and the individual was determined:
 - a. Ineligible for vocational rehabilitation services, or
 - b. Eligible for vocational rehabilitation services, and
 - i. The youth with a disability had an approved Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).
 - ii. The youth with a disability was unable to achieve the employment outcome specified in the IPE.
 - iii. The youth with a disability's case record is closed.
3. Career counseling and information and referral services to federal and state programs to help the individual discover, experience and attain competitive

integrated employment has been provided. The counseling and information cannot be for employment at sub-minimum wage and should be provided within 30 calendar days.

The Department will encourage each LEA to obtain consent and provide IDB-VR documentation that the student has completed transition services or received Pre-ETS when seeking subminimum wage employment. Documentation can include the student's IEP, transition assessment results, work based learning data, summary of performance and any other specific data/documentation around transition experiences, assessment and instruction. Documentation should be provided by the LEA to the IDB-VR staff no later than 30 calendar days after the determination of sub minimum wage has been made.

These sub-minimum wage requirements and documentation requirements should be shared by IDB-VR and the Department with LEA, AEA, parents/guardians and students. IDB-VR will maintain the documentation and provide a copy to the student within 45 days after the completion of services. Any of the services identified above that the LEA provided must be documented by the LEA and provided to IDB-VR and the student.

The Department and LEAs will not enter into a contract or other arrangement with an entity for the purpose of operating a program under which a youth with a disability is engaged in work compensated at a subminimum wage.

X. Mechanism for Interagency Coordination

IDB-VR and the Department developed joint procedures to implement this Interagency Agreement.

a. Financial Responsibilities

IDB-VR will be responsible for vocational rehabilitation services authorized by the Rehabilitation Act and identified on an IPE. The Department will be responsible for ensuring that a free and appropriate education (FAPE) is made available to eligible students, including special education services included in the IEP, as authorized by IDEA.

When similar or identical service needs are identified as education-related in the IEP established by the school district and employment-related in the IPE established by VR, it is agreed that disputes will be resolved between VR and the Department. The process for dispute resolution is as follows:

If the service is special education or a related service and included in the student's IEP, the school district may provide the service either directly or through other sources, or request VR provide the service. If VR determines the service does not violate the comparable benefits and financial needs test (unless such a determination would interrupt or delay the progress of the individual), and is identified as a service on the individual's IPE, VR may assume the costs for the service. If VR determines that the purpose of the service is more for educational attainment than

achievement of competitive integrated employment, then the LEA would pay for the service, as they would for services obligated under IDEA.

IDB-VR's funding for assessment for eligibility and vocational needs, counseling and referral services, job placement services, rehabilitation technology are exempt from comparable services and benefits requirements.

IDB-VR need not conduct a comparable benefits search when providing Pre-ETS and auxiliary aids and services to eligible students with disabilities or potentially eligible students with disabilities that have not applied or been determined eligible for VR services. IDB must conduct a search for comparable services and benefits when providing VR services to eligible individuals; however, the following services and activities are always exempt from such search: assessment for determining eligibility and vocational needs, counseling and guidance, referral services, job related services, rehabilitation technology, and post employment services.

When assistive technology, goods or services are needed for educational purposes, it will be the financial responsibility of the LEA. However, upon exit from high school, IDB-VR will evaluate the need for assistive technology (AT) for vocational and employment purposes. IDB-VR may either purchase existing AT from the LEA at the appropriate assessed value or purchase new assistive technology items for the individual as needed for employment and identified on the individual's IPE.

Nothing in this part will be construed to reduce the responsibility of a local educational agency or any other agency to provide or pay for any transition services that are also considered special education or related services and that are necessary for ensuring a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to children with disabilities within the state involved.

IDB-VR will provide auxiliary aids or services for a student with a disability if the device or service is required for the student to access one of the required pre-employment transition services and no other public entity is required to provide such aid or service.

b. Interagency Disputes

Disagreements about which entity is responsible for payment for services may occur. Students and families are to be advised of their Procedural Safeguard Rights and options to file for State Mediation, Due Process, and/or State Complaint. If disagreements about financial responsibilities occur, both IDB-VR and the Department agree to:

- Abide by an informal dispute resolution process for reimbursement for costs incurred by IDB-VR for inter-agency coordination, or for reimbursement for costs incurred by the Department or to otherwise implement this agreement.
- IDB-VR and the Department will educate school districts on their financial responsibilities and IDB-VR responsibilities and encourage full participation in the process.
- If IDB-VR or the LEA fails to provide or pay for services for which they have financial or legal responsibility, the dispute will be referred to the IDB-VR

program administrator and the superintendent. The program administrator and the superintendent, or their designees, will meet to resolve the interagency dispute. If the dispute cannot be resolved at this level, then the issue should be taken to the IDB Director and the Department of Education Secondary Special Education Program Consultant.

- If the decision is that one entity failed to provide or pay for services, then the other entity may claim reimbursement for services and shall be reimbursed by the other entity in a timely manner.

c. Conflict Resolution Process for Individual Students and Their Parents or Legal Guardians:

Nothing in this agreement precludes the parents' or adult student's rights to appeal decisions made by IDB-VR or the school districts as available under the Rehabilitation Act or IDEA.

XI. Amendments

This agreement may be amended at any time upon mutual consent of the parties. Any amendment must be in writing and signed and dated by the parties.

XII. Term

This agreement shall be effective from May 27, 2023, through May 27, 2026. The parties, upon mutual consent and in writing, may renew this agreement for any number of two-year extensions.

XIII. Approvals and Signatures


Department of Education



McKenzie Snow, Director

Sep 26, 2025
Date

Iowa Department for the Blind



Stacy Cervenka, Director

10/15/2025
Date