

6-30-17

To: Employment First stakeholders

From: Acacia McGuire Anderson, Statewide Employment First Coordinator

Re: [Employment First](#): Update on Project SEARCH in Oregon

(Please forward to your local partners & stakeholders)

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Oregon currently has five Project SEARCH sites, three of which are funded by the Department of Human Services (DHS). This message is to update you on how these sites are progressing.



Project SEARCH 2016-17 graduates from the PeaceHealth site in Springfield.

Contributed photo.

Project SEARCH is a 9-month internship training program for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). In Oregon, there are three sites funded by DHS: Albertina Kerr leads a program at [Kaiser Permanente Sunnyside Medical Center](#), provider Pearl Buck leads a site at [PeaceHealth Sacred Heart](#)

[Medical Center at RiverBend](#) in Springfield, and Community Access Services is starting a program with the city of Portland in the fall 2017.

In addition, [Albertina Kerr](#) coordinates a site at the [Embassy Suites by Hilton Portland Airport](#) location in partnership with Multnomah County and at Kaiser Permanente Westside Medical Center in partnership with Washington County. [Pearl Buck](#) is launching a second site with PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Medical Center at its university district location in the fall 2017.

Project SEARCH was developed at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center in 1996. It has more than 500 sites in 46 states, the United Kingdom, the

Netherlands, Portugal, and Bahrain, with the primary objective of securing competitive employment for people with disabilities.

Project SEARCH students train in 9-month unpaid internships and rotate three times within that time period, allowing them to try three different types of jobs in a variety of departments. The instructor and skills trainers stay on site with the students.

The goal is that interns leave the internship with competitive integrated employment in the community.

In Oregon, the Project SEARCH sites focus on individuals who recently graduated from a transition program. The Pearl Buck/PeaceHealth site includes individuals who once were in the provider's sheltered workshop and are now transitioning to community employment.

In May, Pearl Buck held a graduation ceremony for its first cohort of Project SEARCH graduates from the PeaceHealth Riverbend location. More than 90 attendees, including PeaceHealth and Pearl Buck staff, families, and representatives from Vocational Rehabilitation and Lane County CDDP, attended.

Out of the 10 Pearl Buck/PeaceHealth graduates, six graduated with individual community jobs at 20 or more hours per week. The other four graduates are in job development and looking for the right job fit.



Austin Harris graduated from Albertina Kerr's Project SEARCH site at Kaiser Permanente Westside Medical Center in 2016. He now works full-time at the Intel campus in Hillsboro.

(Photo: contributed)

Seven interns graduated from Albertina Kerr's Kaiser Westside site on June 9 and another four interns graduate from Kaiser Sunnyside on June 30. Five more interns will graduate from Albertina Kerr's Embassy Suites Project SEARCH site in August.

Erin Cochrun-Weston from Albertina Kerr said in its first two years, the Kaiser Westside location had an 85 percent employment outcome rate. Embassy Suites had a 100

percent employment outcome in its first year. Kaiser Sunnyside is in its first year so data is not available yet on employment outcomes.

“For this upcoming year we have eight interns starting at Westside, eight at Sunnyside and we are interviewing 12 for six slots at Embassy Suites,” she said. “It seems like the word and the great progress and success of the program has spread to families and our partners.”

Project SEARCH has also received positive publicity in Oregon. An article in the [Hillsboro Tribune](#) highlighted the success of the Kaiser Westside medical center site and a story from [KEZI-TV](#) documents the success of the Project SEARCH site at PeaceHealth in Springfield.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

~ Acacia