



Project Search Background

Project SEARCH is a highly successful employment service model. The model is based on a business-led partnership with community agencies including DD provider agencies, DD case management entities, and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). The goal is that interns leave the program with competitive integrated employment in the community. Participants generally work 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. Interns generally spend the first hour of their day on an employment skills curriculum in a classroom setting. They then generally spend five hours gaining real-world work experience in their internships with a skills trainer that remains on site.

See more information regarding Oregon Project SEARCH here:

<https://www.oregon.gov/dhs/EMPLOYMENT/EMPLOYMENT-FIRST/Pages/policy.aspx>;

and more national level information here: <https://projectsearch.us/>.



TABLE of CONTENTS:

- I. Oregon Project SEARCH Steering Committee
- II. Project SEARCH State Coordinators
- III. How to become an Oregon Project SEARCH provider
- IV. Criteria for Application Review
- V. Probationary Review
- VI. Project Search Program Requirements.
- VII. VR and ODDS Funding for Project SEARCH
- VIII. Individuals eligible for Project SEARCH
- IX. Complaints & Grievances
- X. Project SEARCH Corrective Action
- XI. Terminating services for interns and notice requirements

I. Oregon Project SEARCH Steering Committee

The Oregon Project SEARCH Steering Committee is made up of:

- Representatives appointed by executive leadership; and
- At least one person representing Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), ODDS (Oregon's Office of Developmental Disabilities Services), and ODE (Oregon Department of Education).

II. Project SEARCH State Coordinators

The Oregon Project SEARCH State Coordinators include one person from:

- VR;
- ODDS (at minimum), and/or
- Others as appropriate, or appointed by the Oregon Project SEARCH Steering Committee.

III. How to become an Oregon Project SEARCH provider. Requirements include:

- a. Must be a VR vendor.
- b. Must be an ODDS provider agency.
- c. Submit Oregon Project SEARCH provider application to Oregon Project SEARCH Steering Committee for approval. An application must be submitted to expand to additional / new Project Search sites.
See application here:
Email application here: oregon.projectsearch@dhsosha.state.or.us
- d. Upon approval of application from Oregon Project SEARCH Steering Committee: Complete the National Project Search franchise agreement.

IV. Criteria for application review. Oregon's Project SEARCH Steering Committee reviews applications as they are submitted. Review criteria includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- a. Ability to deliver proposal outlined in Project SEARCH application and the MOU.
- b. Provider's fair and equitable process for recruiting and accepting participants.
- c. Provider's process for recruiting host employers, and existing relationships with potential host employers.
- d. Provider's ability to support internships with multiple rotations, and opportunities to gain skills that can be transferred to real-world work settings.
- e. What type of work experiences will be developed for the internship rotations to ensure they are not just rote experiences, and experiences

that can be transferred to other competitive integrated employment settings?

- f. Provider's ability to ensure work experiences are in integrated employment settings.
- g. Demonstration that the provider has financial capacity to sustain and allocate to Project SEARCH, including:
 - i. Funding specifically allocated to Project SEARCH.
 - ii. Agency reserve/emergency funding.
 - iii. Other local contributions available (partner funding, grants, etc).
 - iv. Adequate staffing to meet support needs, including:
 - 1. Experienced Employment Program Manager who will have oversight over program
 - 2. Adequate staffing for Skills Trainers/Job developers/Job Coaching, etc staffing.
 - 3. Staff to meet personal assistance support needs.
 - v. Ability to offer job development services following Project SEARCH internship rotations.
- h. Letters of support (not required but suggested)
- i. Timeline for implementation
- j. Ability to meet terms of State MOU and fidelity checklist
- k. National Project SEARCH program requirements as determined by their signed agreement
- l. Ability to support individuals with more significant disabilities and personal care support needs.
- m. Ability to meet service needs in rural areas.

V. Probationary Year.

New programs and new sites will be re-evaluated by State of Oregon Project Search Steering Committee after one year or as needed to ensure the program can continue to be sustainable under the terms of the MOU.

VI. Project Search Program Requirements. In addition to other federal and state requirements for VR and ODDS employment services, all Oregon Project SEARCH Providers must:

- a. **Annual self-evaluation.** Complete an annual self-evaluation using the Project SEARCH National fidelity checklist. Submit this to Oregon Statewide Coordinators. The provider must also submit an Improvement Plan if necessary and upon request from the Statewide Coordinators.
- b. **Data Reporting.** Oregon Project SEARCH providers must submit data for the national Project SEARCH Data Reporting Requirements.

Oregon Project SEARCH providers must also submit this data to the Oregon Project Search Steering Committee annually and upon request.

- c. Meet all other ODDS and VR service requirements including but not limited to:
 - i. Incident reporting
 - ii. Advance notice of service termination
 - iii. All other requirements for VR and ODDS services.

VII. VR and ODDS Funding for Adult Model Project SEARCH

Activity	Funder
Project SEARCH Franchise Fee	To be determined by each project search site
5 hours/day support during the work experience	For adults: ODDS-funded Employment Path Community
1 hour/day Career Exploration	VR-funded Career Exploration
Assistive Technology	VR
Job Development outside of Project SEARCH work experiences	VR
Initial 3 Months Job Coaching (if hired)	VR
Long-Term Job Coaching (initial, ongoing, maintenance)	ODDS

See for more information regarding service rates and requirements:

- VR transmittal regarding VR-funded Career Exploration for Project Search: <https://www.oregon.gov/dhs/EMPLOYMENT/VR/PolicyRuleDocs/VR-AR-19-07.pdf>
- VR policies and rules page: <https://www.oregon.gov/dhs/employment/VR/Pages/Policies-Rules.aspx>
- ODDS Expenditure Guidelines: <https://www.oregon.gov/DHS/SENIORS-DISABILITIES/DD/PROVIDERS-PARTNERS/Documents/ODDS-Expenditure-Guidelines.pdf>
- ODDS Administrative Rules:
 - OAR 411-323: <https://www.oregon.gov/DHS/SENIORS-DISABILITIES/DD/ODDSRules/411-323.pdf>
 - OAR 411-345: <https://www.oregon.gov/DHS/SENIORS-DISABILITIES/DD/ODDSRules/411-345.pdf>
- ODDS I/DD Employment Policy Website: <https://www.oregon.gov/dhs/EMPLOYMENT/EMPLOYMENT-FIRST/Pages/policy.aspx>

VIII. Individuals eligible for Project SEARCH

To participate in Oregon Project SEARCH, individuals must:

- a. Be eligible for VR services.
- b. Be eligible for ODDS services and/or:
 - i. The person must be pursuing eligibility for ODDS services; and

- ii. There must be a reasonable expectation that the person will be eligible for ODDS and Medicaid-funded Home and Community-Based Services.

IX. Complaints/Grievances

Individuals and providers have the right to pursue complaints and grievance processes as outlined under requirements for VR and ODDS services generally.

Complaints may also be submitted to the Project SEARCH Coordinators.

Options for problem solving with VR can be found here:

<https://www.oregon.gov/dhs/employment/VR/Pages/Dispute-Resolution.aspx>

Information regarding the ODDS complaints process can be found here:

<https://www.oregon.gov/dhs/SENIORS-DISABILITIES/DD/Pages/File-a-Complaint.aspx>; OR EMAIL: ODDS.Complaints@dhsosha.state.or.us

X. Project SEARCH Annual Self-Evaluation

Oregon Project SEARCH providers must complete an annual self-evaluation using the Project SEARCH National fidelity checklist. This must be submitted annually to the Oregon Statewide Project SEARCH Coordinators.

The provider must submit an Improvement Plan if necessary and upon request from the Oregon Statewide Project SEARCH Coordinators. The Improvement Plan requirement will be based on review of the provider self-evaluation, as well as a review to determine whether the provider continues to meet all the terms of the Project SEARCH MOU, the provider application review criteria, and all other requirements for ODDS and VR services.

If the provider is not able to sufficiently address the areas of concern identified in a request for an Improvement Plan, then the Oregon Project SEARCH Steering Committee may take Corrective Action. This may include, but is not limited to, suspension or termination of the Project SEARCH MOU. The Oregon Project SEARCH Steering Committee will give a provider agency advance written notice.

XI. Corrective Action for Providers

- a. **Immediate termination.** An Oregon Project SEARCH MOU may be immediately suspended or terminated by the Project SEARCH Steering Committee if it is determined there are significant concerns related to health and safety.

b. Other. Oregon Project SEARCH providers are also subject to action that may be taken by VR and/or ODDS. This includes but is not limited to the following:

- i. Contract termination
- ii. Licensing review
- iii. Conditions on service endorsement
- iv. Not paying for services if not delivered as agreed in service agreements.
- v. Other provider corrective action available.

XII. Notice Requirements for Terminating Interns from Project SEARCH

ODDS and VR service notice requirements must be followed before an individual may be terminated from Oregon Project SEARCH. ODDS notice requirements can be found under [OAR 411-345-0145](#) and VR notice requirements can be found under [OAR 582-060](#).

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