



Project | SEARCH®

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/>.



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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 each of the following agencies: 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
- Others as appropriate, or appointed by the Oregon Project SEARCH Steering Committee.

III. How to become an Oregon Project SEARCH provider:

- a. Oregon Project SEARCH provider requirements:
 - i. Must be a VR vendor; and
 - ii. Must be an ODDS provider agency.
- b. New Oregon Project SEARCH providers, and existing Oregon Project SEARCH providers looking to develop new or additional Project Search sites, must submit an application to the Oregon Project SEARCH Coordinators for review.
- c. Submit Oregon Project SEARCH provider application to Oregon Project SEARCH Steering Committee for approval. Email application here: oregon.projectsearch@dhsosha.state.or.us
- d. Providers must complete the National Project Search franchise agreement upon approval of application from Oregon Project SEARCH Steering Committee.

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.
- 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. The type of work experiences that will be developed for the internship rotations to ensure they are not just rote experiences, and are 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 and emergency funding.
 - iii. Other local contributions available (partner funding, grants, etc).
 - iv. Adequate staffing to meet support needs, including:
 1. Experienced employment program manager with oversight over program. If the manager does not have experience, then they must be closely supervised by someone who has the experience.
 2. Adequate staffing for Skills Trainers/Job developers/Job Coaches, other employment professionals and staffing, etc.
 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 State requirements 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. Areas served with an emphasis on areas not already served or underserved.

V. Probationary Year.

New programs and new sites will be re-evaluated by the Oregon Project SEARCH Steering Committee after one year, or as needed, to ensure the program can continue to be sustainable and meet program requirements.

VI. Oregon Project SEARCH Program Requirements.

In addition to other federal and state requirements for VR and ODDS employment services, all Oregon Project SEARCH Providers must complete the following:

- 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 (Direct Placement if hired by host site. If not hired, not placement until hired in the community).	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; and
- b. Be eligible for ODDS services.

IX. Complaints/Grievances

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

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 requirements for Oregon Project SEARCH and also 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, safety, and the delivery of services.
- 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](#).

Contact Oregon Project SEARCH with questions at:
oregon.projectsearch@dhsosha.state.or.us