

FACT SHEET FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Illinois Dept. of Human Services
Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS)

Who is Eligible for DRS Services?

Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) works with people with a wide range of disabilities. Some examples include learning disability, mental retardation, diabetes, muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy, brain injury, epilepsy, hearing loss, vision loss, kidney disease, paraplegia, quadriplegia, and substance abuse, among many others. *Most students who receive special education services qualify for DRS services.*

A student with a disability may be eligible for DRS services if the disability causes problems in preparing for, finding or keeping a job. A referral should be made to DRS, especially in the following situations:

- there is a need for assistance transitioning to employment
- or
- a student needs additional skill development after high school to succeed in the work force.

How Does DRS Work?

Each person who comes to DRS as a customer works with a rehabilitation counselor. Together they follow these four steps:

1. *Decide on an employment goal.* The customer selects a job goal that matches his or her aptitudes and interests. The counselor may help to obtain the necessary information so the customer can make the best choices. Sometimes this will require gathering information from other people such as teachers or doctors. Sometimes getting assessments is helpful, such as vocational testing and job try-outs.
2. *Develop a plan.* The customer works with a counselor to develop a plan for employment. The plan identifies the services that will be needed. It will state who will provide the services and how to determine if they are beneficial. Some services will be provided by the counselor. Others may be purchased or provided by other agencies.
3. *Follow the plan.* The customer receives the services outlined in his or her plan. Some examples are below:
 - * Job seeking skills training
 - * Job placement assistance
 - * Job training
 - * Accommodations & assistive technology
 - * Job coaches
 - * Support services
 - * Tools & equipment
 - * Prostheses

If a customer is a high school student, some of these services will be provided as part of his or her high school program. The DRS counselor will monitor progress through the vocational coordinator, attend staffings and make arrangements for the services that will be needed to make the transition out of high school as smooth as possible.

4. *Reach the goal.* The counselor works with the customer to reach the final goal: finding the right job. Once the customer is on the job, the counselor follows up at least 90 days to make sure both the employer and new employee are satisfied. Sometimes additional services are needed. When this happens, DRS can begin working with the customer again to make sure he or she is able to stay on the job.

Who Pays for Services?

DRS provides the following services free of charge:

- Disability Assessments
- Vocational Counseling
- Job Placement Services
- Job follow-up services, including job coaching.

Some of these services are purchased from public and private agencies in the community. For other services, if financially able, customers are asked to help pay for part of the services.

How is a Referral to DRS Made?

If a student is in a school work program in the special education department, the vocational teacher or coordinator usually makes the initial referral. Otherwise, a student with a disability who is interested in services and is within two years of high school exit may call the number below. Referrals may be made by family members, school staff, mental health professionals, social workers, churches and other community agencies. To make a referral you can contact the DHS/DRS office listed below.

Joyce Aarestad, Transition Specialist – DRS Liaison
Tazewell-Mason Counties Special Education Association
300 Cedar Street Phone – 309-347-3532, Ext. 312
Pekin, IL 61554 Fax – 309-346-0440
E-Mail: jaarestad@tmcsea.org