

# **Project SEARCH Information Session**

Lehigh Valley Hospital–Schuylkill  
2024-2025



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# Our Partners



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# What is Project SEARCH?

Project SEARCH is a unique, business-led, one-year employment preparation program that provides real life work experience combined with training in employability and independent living skills.



# It is for students who are:

- in their last year of school eligibility;
- interested in working in a business setting;
- working to achieve competitive employment;
- able to work for 4+ hours daily; and
- willing to utilize public transportation.



# Program Eligibility - Agency Involvement

- All interns are involved with OVR and may also be involved with SAM, Inc. in partnership with Schuylkill County MH/DS.
- Agencies meet with Project SEARCH staff, family, and interns throughout the year to provide vocational rehabilitation counseling and guidance along with various support services as required.



# Program Eligibility – School Status

- At least 18 years of age
- Has not graduated from high school
- Has an IEP
- Has an identified intellectual or developmental disability
- Has finished their high school program or credits needed to graduate
- Has agreed that Project SEARCH will be their last year of school
- Has the goal of working at the end of the program



# Program Eligibility – Personal Skills

- Accepts feedback and can change behavior with teaching
- Will be able to follow the rules of the host business
- Will complete travel training to ensure they are able to get to/from and around host business by themselves, and will use public transportation when available
- Is committed to working in the community (at least 16 hours per week) at the end of the program



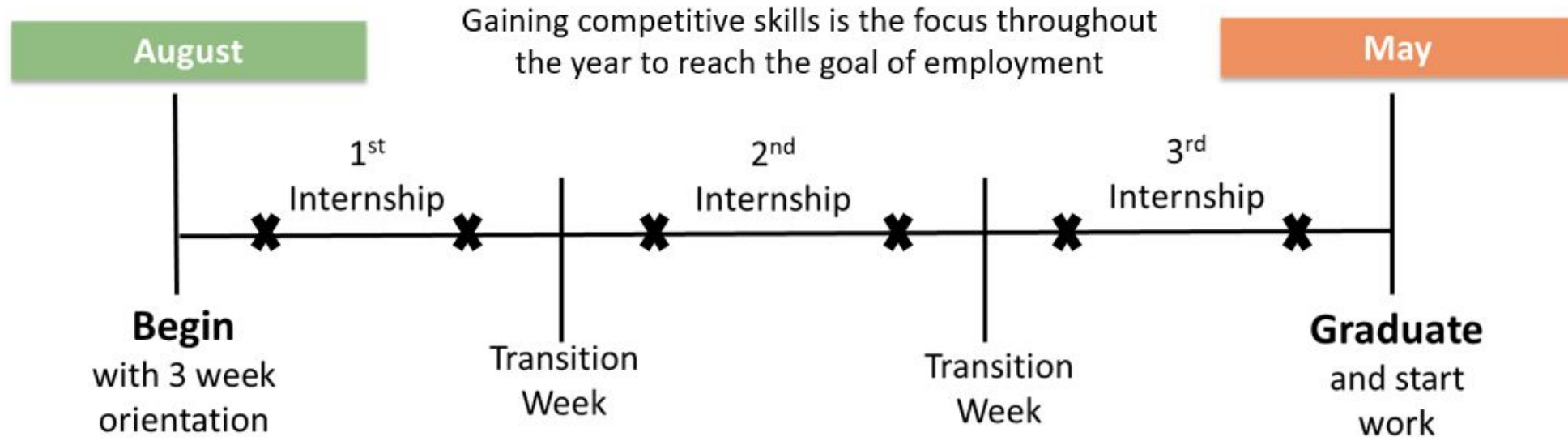
# Work Rotations - 3 per year

- Interns build communication and problem-solving skills, as well as job specific skills, through work rotations.
- These are unpaid internships, but interns may earn stipends provided by OVR for meeting attendance requirements.
- Work rotations are approximately 10 weeks long, usually totaling three rotations per intern by the end of the program.
- Worksites are assigned based on the intern's previous work experience, interests, preferences, and assessments.
- Job Coaches, Mentors, and other department staff collaborate to provide support for the intern. The goal is to have supports fade out as the intern gains independence.





# Annual Calendar



# Typical Day

- 7:50 am Arrival at host business site
- 8:00 am Project SEARCH Employability Skills Curriculum
- 9:00 am Internships – learning specific competitive, marketable skills at actual host business work sites.
- 11:30 am Lunch
- 12:00 noon Internships (continued)
- 2:00 pm Return to classroom, review of day, journaling
- 2:30 pm Adjournment for day



# Expected Outcome

70–100% of interns achieve:

- Competitive, Integrated Employment
- Year-round, non-seasonal
- 16 hours/week or more
- Prevailing wage



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# Parent Responsibilities

- Attend meetings – introductory, Employment Planning (5-6 throughout year), Open House
- Public transportation alone or getting driver's license
- Assist with application and forms
- Assist with meeting host business requirements – vaccinations, clearances, etc.
- Agree that the intern will get an integrated, competitive job
- Promote the independence that will be taught and expected



# Employment Planning Meetings

## Purpose:

- Keep team members updated on the intern's progress
- Identify ways to support the intern to help reach the goal of competitive employment

## Who attends:

- Intern
- Project SEARCH Instructor
- Skills Trainer
- Family member
- VR Counselor
- Job Developer (should attend the meetings by January at the latest)
- Internship managers and business liaisons
- Case managers, OT, PT, or speech therapists



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# Check out these videos...

- ❑ Male: <https://youtu.be/vD2UKIuo8Rc>, [3.14min] outdoor work
- ❑ Female: <https://youtu.be/BjuGuazq0UI>, [3.40min] hospital
- ❑ Male: [https://youtu.be/ZjxzWw\\_6djM](https://youtu.be/ZjxzWw_6djM), [2.17min] production
- ❑ Overview: [https://youtu.be/UzlcLB\\_rN00](https://youtu.be/UzlcLB_rN00) [4.25min]
- ❑ Parent focus:
  - ❑ <https://youtu.be/oQyK7RiNxE0> - [3.30min] “make sure he is okay for tomorrow”, “take a risk and let go”
  - ❑ <https://youtu.be/XR8UYRdkgy4> - [1.0min] “he has a job”



# Our Steering Committee

- Schuylkill IU 29
  - Dr. Rene Evans and Doreen Milot
- Goodwill
  - Jennifer Perez
- Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)
  - Trish Lapotsky and Heather Rodriguez
- SAM, Inc. in partnership with Schuylkill County MH/DS
  - Erin Hoover
- LVH–Schuylkill
  - Pati Socko



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# 2024-2025 Application Process

1. Students are referred to the program through their school district or OVR counselor.
2. Applications will be available on November 1, 2023.
3. The students and families complete and submit the application by March 1, 2024.
4. The Steering Committee reviews the application and contacts selected students.
5. Selected students attend a Skills Assessment/Interview Day at LVH—Schuylkill on March 19, 2024.





# Questions

- Ask them now
- Talk to your teacher or OVR counselor
- Contact Doreen Milot at Schuylkill IU 29
  - [d1m@iu29.org](mailto:d1m@iu29.org)
  - 570-544-9131 x 1258



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**Thank you for attending!**



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