



What is DRS?

The Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) is an adult vocational rehabilitation agency that falls under the umbrella of Illinois Department of Human Services. The purpose of DRS is to help individuals with disabilities obtain and maintain competitive employment. DRS counselors provide evaluation, vocational guidance and counseling, job development/placement and follow-up services to eligible individuals. DRS collaborates with many community partners to offer a wide range of coordinated services.

DRS offers services to individuals with disabilities during their high school or transition years through the Secondary Transitional Experience Program (STEP). Students are referred to the STEP program by a member of their high school or transition team. Access and management of STEP cases is overseen by Terri Michaels, NSSED/DRS Transition Specialist, for NSSED students and NSSED member district students.

Who is an Appropriate Referral for STEP Services?

Students receiving special education services and,

- Demonstrating challenges that significantly impact their ability to obtain and maintain employment
- Requiring assistance transitioning to employment or additional skill development to succeed in the work force
- Having, but not limited to, the following diagnoses:
 - Learning, Intellectual, Emotional, Behavioral or Physical Disability
 - Autism Spectrum Disorders
 - ADHD
 - Vision Impaired, Hearing Impaired
 - Brain Injury
 - Cerebral Palsy, Epilepsy, Muscular Dystrophy

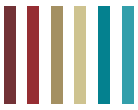
All students must have a valid Social Security Number

When Should a Student be Referred for STEP Services?

Typically, a referral is made during a student's junior year in high school

What is Involved in the Process?

- The student/parent sign a DRS Consent for Services and Release of Information
- The case manager or transition specialist gathers required documents (current IEP, psychological evaluation, social history), completes a Functional Limitation checklist and DRS Referral form in order to open a case for the student.
- An intake meeting is scheduled with the DRS Transition Specialist and student to discuss vocational interests and goals, current and previous job training or work experience and strengths/challenges
- After a student is determined eligible for services, an assessment is completed and an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) is developed
- DRS Transition Specialist meets with student on a quarterly basis and may participate in IEP and/or transition planning meetings throughout the year



When do Services Begin?

STEP services, supported and managed through the DRS grant, are provided when the student is in high school or receiving district-sponsored transition services. Typically, the initial referral for STEP services is made during the student's junior year in high school.

During the last six months of high school or transition, the NSSED/DRS Transition Specialist works with the student, family and school team to refine the vocational goals in the post-secondary plan and identify appropriate services and supports that may be provided by DRS. Following graduation, the NSSED/DRS Transition Specialist works with the student and family to determine if and when it is appropriate to refer the student for DRS adult services.

What Services are Available?

The STEP program can provide opportunities for career exploration, guidance and career counseling, and coordination of post-secondary education and training.

Examples of STEP services include:

- Job and career counseling
- Job shadow experiences
- Job-seeking skill development (practice interview skills, resume development)
- School and community-based job training opportunities
- Job coaching
- Guidance and support in obtaining and maintaining competitive employment

Examples of DRS adult services include:

- Continuation of the services listed above
- Tools and equipment/assistive technology
- Financial assistance for community college, 4-year college/university, training/technical programs

How is the Referral Made?

Contact your child's High School or Transition Program Case Manager or Transition Coordinator

Contact Information

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