

**Questions and Answers
for
Revised Project SEARCH RFA
12-10-15**

Q1. Why is DHS-EF reposting the RFA?

A. DHS-EF is reposting the revised RFA because it seeks to award a total of five (5) applicants with Training and Technical Assistance to develop a total of five (5) Project SEARCH sites throughout Oregon. In the first posting, only two applicants were awarded. DHS-EF is soliciting applications for three (3) more sites.

Q2. Where will the application be posted?

A. The Application will be posted on the DHS- Employment First Website at <http://iworkwesucceed.org/> on Monday, December 14, 2015. It will be posted until January 15, 2016.

Q3. Is there information about Project SEARCH?

A. Yes. DHS-EF in partnership with representatives from Project SEARCH, hosted an informational call on October 16, 2015 for the original RFA. The recorded call is posted on the DHS- Employment First Website at <http://iworkwesucceed.org/>.

Additionally, the power point presented on October 16th by Project SEARCH representatives giving an overview of Project SEARCH is posted on the DHS- Employment First Website at <http://iworkwesucceed.org/>. It does not include the audio from the call.

Interested parties are also encouraged to go directly to the Project SEARCH website at <http://www.projectsearch.us/> for information about Project SEARCH.

The Application will also be sent out to the CDDP's, Support Brokerages, local VR branches, known DHS qualified employment provider agencies, local education agencies and Educational Service Districts.

Q.4. What does SEARCH stand for since it is capitalized?

A. It is not an acronym and does not stand for anything. It is simply part of the Project SEARCH Trademarked label and logo.

Q5. Please clarify who the primary lead applicant is?

A. The primary lead applicant is the entity that will be the primary entity responsible for working with the Project SEARCH training and technical assistance team and the host employer.

Generally, the lead applicant will be the local education agency if the proposal is to have a traditional Project SEARCH model focused on transition age students (18-21 years).

If the application proposes to have a modified Project SEARCH model focused on supporting working age adults (no longer in school), then the lead agency is generally going to be a DHS qualified employment provider/vendor agency supporting individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Q.6. May a Regional Education Service District serve as the lead applicant?

A. Yes. A Regional Education Service District may serve as the lead applicant.

Q. 7. If a DHS qualified community based employment provider/vendor is submitting to do the "working age adult" version of the model, do they still need to have a representative of the LEA as a partner?

A. If a DHS qualified community based employment provider/vendor is the lead applicant with intent to develop a “working age adult” Project SEARCH model, then LEA would not necessarily be required as a partner. However, having an LEA as a supporting stakeholder/partner is not discouraged. The lead applicant may choose to allow applying participants for the Project SEARCH internship cohort to be transition age students in their last year of school. In this scenario, if the school agrees and the services are written into the students IEP, the employment provider/vendor may bill the school district for the “employment path” services rather than ODDS to support the student’s participation.

Q8. What Regions will DHS- be awarding sites to?

- A. While the original RFA sought to award Training and Technical Assistance to develop a Project SEARCH site in each of the five regions as defined by Office of Developmental Disability Services (ODDS), the revised RFA allows DHS-EF to consider awarding multiple applicants in any of the five regions described in the RFA.

Q9. Do the Regions correlate with the ODDS Regional Employment Specialist assignments?

- A. Mostly, but not exactly. There are some slight variations.

The ODDS Regional Employment Specialists assignments are

- NW Metro Region
- Eastern Oregon Region (Covers most of Eastern)
- Central Oregon and part of Eastern Region
- Mid-Valley Region (includes Lane County)
- Southern Region

Q.10. Is it accurate that only one education agency or vendor will be chosen from each region?

- A. No. This was the expectation in the original RFA, but the revised RFA allows for more than one education agency or vendor to be awarded in the same region. While DHS-EF does encourage and hope for broad geographic representation of applicants, DHS-EF will consider awarding multiple applicants in a region. However, Applicants awarded in the same region must be operating in different industries. For example, hospital, college/university, large law firm or large manufacturing plant. Two applicants developing sites in the same industry and in the same region will not be awarded.

Q.11. What is the age range for transition age students?

- A. The Project SEARCH transition age model is focused on students 18-21 years of range who are in their last year of school prior to Exit.

Q.12. In order to be chosen, does the agency/vendor have to already have a host business lined up?

- A. No. The applicant is required to identify in the application 1-4 potential businesses in its community that may serve as the host business where the internships will happen. If the applicant already has commitment from a local business to serve as the host business,

then a letter of commitment from the host business is encouraged. This host business should be a larger employer with at least 200 employees and have a diverse range of positions. Hospitals, colleges, universities, large industries, large hotels, manufacturing companies, large law firms, and large retail stores are just some of the examples of types of host businesses. The host business will become a primary partner throughout the training and technical assistance and development of the Project SEARCH site.

Q.13. Is there a power point or a selling point for the program to present to potential host businesses?

- A. The applicant may not yet have commitment from a potential “host business” and may be unsure how to approach a business about becoming a host business. That is why the application only requires the applicant to list 1-4 potential businesses that may be able to serve as the host business. The potential host business(es) should be larger employers with at least 200 employees and have a diverse range of positions. Hospitals, colleges/universities, large industries, large hotels, manufacturing companies, large law firms, and large retail stores are just some of the examples of types of host businesses.

The successful applicant will work with the Project SEARCH training and TA team to secure ONE single host business where the internships will occur. This will include helping the local Project SEARCH team meet with the potential host business(es) listed in their applications to explain what Project SEARCH is, the expectations, etc. The host business will become a primary partner throughout the training and technical assistance and development of the Project SEARCH site.

Q.14. Are the terms "host business" and "Project SEARCH site" interchangeable?

- A. Not exactly. For the purposes of the RFA, the "host business" is the business that actually hosts and provides the internships. The "Project SEARCH site" is referring to the local Project SEARCH team and collaboration effort between the lead applicant (local education agency or vendor), host business, VR, DD, and other community stakeholders.

Q.15. Will the successful applicant be responsible for developing host businesses throughout that region?

A. No. The successful applicant will work with the Project SEARCH training and TA team to secure one single host business where the internships will occur. The Project SEARCH model is a 9 month internship for students or adults wishing to pursue competitive integrated employment and who may require additional work experience to identify work skills, strengths and interest. Following the internship experience, the interns will search for a community integrated job of at least 16 hours or more. This may be within the host business or it may be with another employer.

Q.16. Does Project SEARCH technical assistance include helping to develop the project search site?

A. The successful applicant will work with the Project SEARCH training and TA team to secure ONE single host business where the internships will occur. The applicant is required to identify in the application 1-4 potential businesses in its community that may serve as the host business where the internships will happen. If the applicant already has commitment from a local business to serve as the host business, then a letter of commitment from the host business is encouraged. This host business should be a larger employer with at least 200 employees and have a diverse range of positions. Hospitals, colleges/universities, large industries, large hotels, manufacturing companies, large law firms, and large retail stores are just some of the examples of types of host businesses. The host business will become a primary partner throughout the training and technical assistance and development of the Project SEARCH site.

Q17. Are there specific industries being targeted for sites?

A. No. The type of industry or business the community wishes to target is at the discretion of the community. DHS wants communities to be innovative. The application does not require the host employer site to be definitively identified or committed at time of application. It will only require the applicant to list potential host employer sites. Project SEARCH as part of its Training and Technical Assistance provide the support to develop host employer site where the Project SEARCH site will be located.

Q18. Can the state, city or county government be a possible site to expand public sector jobs?

- A. Yes, absolutely. Government employers are certainly eligible to serve as the host employer if they meet the size and other requirements for Project SEARCH.

Q.19. If a DHS qualified community based employment provider/vendor applies and is chosen, what exactly would that mean?

- A. If the lead applicant is a DHS qualified community based employment provider/vendor, then the vendor will be responsible for providing a "teacher", and any necessary assistants or job coaches who will be located at the host business (e.g., hospital), and responsible for working with the interns on teaching pre-vocational skill building. The lead applicant is also responsible for serving as the primary responsible agency and point of contact with the Cincinnati Children's Medical Hospital Project SEARCH training and TA consultants.

Q20. What is the commitment requirements for the teacher between January and August, when much of the Project SEARCH training and TA is happening?

- A. Project SEARCH knows that often the teacher may not even be identified or hired until July. Therefore it expects that the local education agency's Special Education Supervisor or someone from the Transition program will be actively involved in the training and technical assistance between January and August. When the teacher is identified for the Project SEARCH site, then the local education agency representative who has been involved in the training and TA will assist the new teacher in getting "up to speed".

Q21. What billing code or category of service does an employment provider bill VR for the job coaching site support under the new DHS VR contract?

- A. During the internship, if additional on-site support is required, then the vendor will work with the VR Counselor to determine what services the individual qualifies for and the VR Counselor will request these services from the vendor. The vendor will invoice based on the specific service requested from the VR Counselor.

Q22. How much are the annual licensing fees? And will DHS be paying for this?

- A. DHS will pay \$15,000 for the initial cost to launch a new Project SEARCH site. The \$15,000 covers the training and technical assistance provided by the Project SEARCH team and the first year licensing fee which is \$300. DHS will also pay for the second year licensing fee. DHS may be willing to cover the licensing fees for the 2017-19 biennium as well, but that has not yet been decided.

Q23. Could a DHS qualified community based employment provider/vendor use its facility as the 'classroom' and then take clients out to the employment site/host business?

- A. No. the host business must be able to provide a space for an on-site classroom. The "teacher" will be located at the host business and the interns will attend classes there each day prior to engaging in their daily internship activities.

Q24. In the following video,

<http://cchmcstream.cchmc.org/MediasiteEX/Play/e33acd53c2cb41e8b7f0e1cd3f8d8dfc1d> it's expressed that the interns would spend 6.5 hours each day on site, including 1.5 hours in the classroom (one hour from 8 am until 9 am and another half hour from 2 to 2:30 pm). In the video, they say the interns would rotate through three 10-week internships over the course of the school year. Does Oregon have the same expectations?

- A. Yes. Project SEARCH is an internationally recognized best practice model, licensed and trademarked with a very specific program. The training and technical assistance awarded to the successful applicant(s) focuses on the critical components of the licensed and trademarked Project SEARCH model and how to implement the program model. Deviation from the program model design would not fulfill the intent of RFA, and may violate the Project SEARCH licensing agreement terms.

Q25. How many interns do you envision being at a site?

- A. Generally speaking, the average number of interns ranges from 7-12 interns per site. Usually, the number depends on the cost of the "teacher". It is recommended that the applicant consider how many interns it needs to cover the cost of the teacher. For example, a DHS qualified community based employment provider/vendor may want to

consider the billing rate for the ODDS funded “employment path” services combine with any additional funded services through VR that interns may be eligible for to determine what is financially required to support the cost of the teacher and any related support staff. It is also important to consider the number of interns in relation to the size of your host business site and whether the host business can support the number of interns you determine are needed to support the cost of the teacher.

Q.26. How many job coaches are required?

A. There is no specific requirement. This may be based off the needs of the selected intern participants/students and the skill set of your “teacher”.

Q.27. How would the new VR model fit into this or has a different funding stream been developed for this process with VR?

A. Interns will get to experience three separate internship experiences during their time in the program. During the second internship cycle, the students will begin working with VR and a vendor to discuss job placement options. The vendor selected to provide job placement will invoice VR for the job placement work per the terms of their Job Placement contract, just as they do now. During the internship, if additional on-site support is required, then the vendor will work with the VR Counselor to determine what services the individual qualifies for and the VR Counselor will request these services from the vendor.

Q.28. How does ODDS fit into the process?

A. If a DHS qualified Community based employment provider/vendor is the lead applicant to develop a “working age adult” model, then the vendor must be a DD qualified provider so it can bill ODDS for “employment path” community services. This monthly funding helps to support the cost of the on site “teacher” that is required for the model. ODDS is also responsible for picking up the long term employment supports as needed for eligible individuals once the participant has achieved stabilization (as defined by VR) in competitive integrated employment.