A program for secondary students in Ingham Intermediate School District Service Area!

Project | SEARCH

PROGRAM TOOLKIT
A guide for State of Michigan Departments to understand the opportunities available with sponsoring a Project SEARCH Intern

This toolkit is presented by the Ingham Intermediate School District Transition Team in partnership with the Michigan Civil Service Commission and community agencies that promote and support department and student success.

Sponsored by: State of Michigan Project SEARCH

www.michigan.gov/projectsearch
# Table Of Contents

- Understanding Project SEARCH .................................................. 3
- Key Information ........................................................................ 4
- Frequently Asked Questions ....................................................... 5
- Interest in Hosting an Intern ....................................................... 7
- Acceptance to the Program ....................................................... 8
- Contact Information ................................................................... 9
- Resources ................................................................................. 10

## Project SEARCH Program Coordinator:

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Understanding Project SEARCH

What is Project SEARCH?
The Project SEARCH High School Transition Program is a unique, business led, one year school-to-work program that takes place entirely at the workplace. Total workplace immersion facilitates a seamless combination of classroom instruction, career exploration and hands-on training through worksite rotations. Project SEARCH is an unpaid internship experience.

Where will the program take place?
The interns are hosted at various State of Michigan departments that have expressed their interest in, have completed an orientation to, and agreed with program sponsorship.

Who is eligible to participate?
Students who are 18 years old or older, have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and a desire to work are able to apply to participate in the program. This program is intended for students who will be completing their final year of education in their local school system. Access to reliable transportation is essential to be successful in Project SEARCH.

What are the goals of the program?
- Provide real-life work experience combined with training in employability and independent living skills to help youth with disabilities make successful transitions from school to productive adult life.
- Enhance State of Michigan department and agency productivity by needs-based, customizable intern responsibilities.
- Deliver quality public service by affording interns the opportunity to experience interning with the State of Michigan, gain marketable skillsets, and obtain and maintain competitive integrated employment.
- Promote employment with the State of Michigan.
- Support intern transition to complex and rewarding jobs.
Key Information

Project SEARCH interns support civil service initiatives and productivity while gaining marketable and transferrable skills to obtain competitive integrated employment that is:

- Year-round work (not seasonal employment)
- 14 hours/week or more
- Minimum wage or higher

Project SEARCH is a business-led program. This means that students learn relevant, marketable skills while immersed with State of Michigan departments and agencies, who are active partners, participating without subsidies.

Collaboration among partner agencies is essential to ensure effectiveness and success by supporting each of the sponsoring departments. This leads to seamless transition services and sustainability through braided funding streams. True collaboration requires a willingness among partner organizations to share resources and adapt policies and procedures. The following are active partners:

- State of Michigan
- Ingham Intermediate School District (Ingham ISD)
- Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS)
- Peckham Industries
- Bureau of Services for Blind Persons
- Community Mental Health (Clinton, Eaton, Ingham)

Intern eligibility includes young adults between the ages of 18 and 26 with a variety of developmental disabilities (acquired before age 22) such as intellectual disability, visual impairment, hearing impairment, orthopedic impairment and autism.

Community partners provide consistent, onsite staff including a special education teacher from Ingham ISD and Skills Trainers.
Frequently Asked Questions

What does it mean to be a Project SEARCH intern?

An intern is a student who has been accepted into the Project SEARCH Program, has a strong desire to work, is entering their final year of school, has manageable behavioral challenges and is eager to gain employment through an unpaid work experience. Students in the program will be referred to as interns by sponsoring parties as well as by coworkers during the program. They will be expected to participate in the host business culture and do their best to uphold the business vision, mission and all policies/procedures.

Why is this considered a student’s last year of school?

The goal of Project SEARCH is to provide interns with marketable and transferable skills that lead to employment. Interested students are expected to seek employment opportunities once they have completed their internship experience.

What school calendar schedule will student interns follow with Project SEARCH?

Interns participating in the program will follow the Ingham ISD school year calendar. This calendar can be found by visiting [www.inghamisd.org](http://www.inghamisd.org).

What are the daily hours for Project SEARCH?

Interns are expected to work at their job placement site from approximately 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. each workday. These times do not include transportation. The interns are with a teacher before and after their job placement for instruction.

How do student interns get to Project SEARCH each day?

Interns are responsible for their own transportation either through personal or public transportation. Project SEARCH does not provide transportation except in extreme circumstances. Travel training opportunities are available the summer before the program begins.

Will participants still be considered a student at their current school/district?

The Project SEARCH program is a capstone experience for students. As such, Ingham ISD becomes responsible for implementing the student’s IEP as the operating district.
Frequently Asked Questions

Are program participants required to work with certain agencies in order to comply with the program’s structure?

Yes. Of the participating partners, interns are required to have open cases with Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) or Bureau of Services for Blind Persons (BSBP) and understand that Ingham ISD will serve them as their operating school district. Based on the intern’s need, other partners may provide additional support.

If I have more questions regarding Project SEARCH, who should I contact?

Please contact Jonathan Bischoff, business relations consultant with MRS. He can be reached at bischoffj1@michigan.gov or 248.234.0557.
Expressing Intern Hosting Interest/Interview Process

If I am interested in learning more about sponsoring interns, what do I do?
Contact:
Jonathan Bischoff
Business Relations Consultant
Michigan Rehabilitation Services
Bischoffj1@michigan.gov
248.234.0557

What steps are involved?

• Departments who express interest in being a Project SEARCH internship site receive an orientation to the program.
• Should the department choose to pursue being a host site:
  o Develop a needs-based task list / job analysis, which can be supported by Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) Business Network Division (BND).
  o Incorporate functional requirements of the prioritized task listing to expedite the intern matching process.
  o Review the completed analysis with management/supervisors for approval.
  o Meet with potential interns and provide an introduction to the department.
  o Begin rotation and onboard intern with the department.

MRS BND will help simplify the identification of tasks and performance indicators. This will help expedite the intern selection process as well as ensure that intern performance matches the indicators approved by the department. Finally, interventions and accommodations with skills trainer and MRS BND or BSBP supports may be introduced to assist the intern achieve performance standards.
Acceptance to the Program

Intern Skills Assessment
A Skills Assessment Day takes place in March to assess the student’s ability to participate in the Project SEARCH program. Applicants rotate through various tasks that assess fine motor skills, problem-solving skills and organizational abilities.

The goal is to learn how applicants would react in certain situations and if they would feel comfortable asking for help or be able to identify who to ask for assistance.

Based on the applicant’s performance during the skills assessment and a short interview, a letter of acceptance or denial is issued to the student.

Background Checks
As a Project SEARCH participant, interns must follow State of Michigan policies regarding new employees. An IChat background check is completed for each student prior to beginning their internship. Additional departmental background check requirements are completed by the department at the time an intern is placed with them.

Intern Expectations
Once the internship starts, students will receive a student handbook that will outline expectations and procedures relative to their conduct as a Project SEARCH participant. The handbook will discuss dress code, attendance expectations, lunch options, etc.

Student interns must follow established State of Michigan’s rules and expectations for their employees.
Project SEARCH Contact Information

For daily issues, including absences, classroom questions, urgent student messages and/or emergencies, please contact:

**Alana Anderson**  
State of Michigan Instructor  
517.819.1703  
asanderson@inghamisd.org

For behavioral or emotional concerns, please feel free to contact:

**Michael Zivsak**  
School Social Worker  
517.281.5935  
mzivsak@inghamisd.org

Project SEARCH has numerous community agencies involved that dedicate time and resources to promote intern success:

**Ingham Intermediate School District**  
Sarah Winslow  
Director, Transition Services  
517.244.1210  
swinslow@inghamisd.org

**Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS)**  
Justine Bond  
Vocational Counselor  
517.335.1224  
BondJ2@michigan.gov

**Peckham Industries**  
Daniel Quine  
Supervisor, Skills Trainers  
517.420.1380  
dquine@peckham.org

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Daniel Quine  
Supervisor, Skills Trainers  
517.420.1380  
dquine@peckham.org

**Bureau of Services for Blind Persons**  
Rosemarie Van Ham  
Vocational Counselor  
517.335.0254  
vannahmr@michigan.gov

**Community Mental Health (CMH)**  
Contact TBD  
517.346.8200
RESOURCES

State of Michigan Project SEARCH Web Site:
- www.michigan.gov/projectsearch
- Bureau of Services for Blind Persons (BSBP)
- Community Mental Health
- Ingham Intermediate School District
- Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
- Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS)
- Peckham Industries

Project SEARCH: www.projectsearch.us

Facebook link: https://www.facebook.com/briancalley/videos/vb.187156704679269/1562331987161727/?type=3&theater

YouTube link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3AVqJlkIZFM

Interns speaking at opening ceremony:
https://vimeo.com/236801559/08be38546e

Michigan State University’s Spartan Project SEARCH:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d4v4yQnQKIE

Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Project SEARCH:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8juNYG6nP1U

Sponsored by:
Project SEARCH brings a successful national program for young adults with developmental disabilities to multiple program sites in Michigan. Participants will experience classroom and on-the-job learning in a variety of settings.

For more information:
www.michigan.gov/projectsearch

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