

Project Skills is a paid work experience program for high school students with disabilities. The program is a cooperative arrangement between the state vocational rehabilitation agencies and your local school district.

Project Skills provides students the opportunity to learn different skills in a variety of career experiences, with the assistance of a job coach, if needed.

Project Skills will help to build the student's work history and help them move into different and better jobs as they mature and are ready to take on new challenges.



Project Skills Video
[http://dhs.sd.gov/
rehabservices/
servicesandprograms.aspx](http://dhs.sd.gov/rehabservices/servicesandprograms.aspx)

For information on Project Skills, please contact your local Vocational Rehabilitation counselor, local high school, or Regional Transition Liaison:

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Project Skills



***A Great Opportunity
for Youth!***

- ◆ ***Gain Work Skills***
- ◆ ***Identify Career Plans***
- ◆ ***Develop Work History***

Why Project Skills ?

Many times, students with disabilities don't get an opportunity to gain paid work experience while in high school. Although willing, most employers cannot afford to provide the training and supports students frequently require on their first job. By covering the cost of wages and additional supports, Project Skills enables employers to provide these students with valuable work experiences in a real work setting.

How Does it Work?

- Student identifies jobs that they are interested in.
- School representative contacts area employers to locate possible jobs that match the student's interest areas.
- Once an appropriate work experience site is located, the vocational rehabilitation (VR) counselor will meet with student and school representative to sign a Work Experience Agreement.
- The work experience can last from a minimum of 30 to a maximum of 250 hours. During this time, students are paid current minimum wage.



Who is Eligible?

Your VR Counselor will decide if you are eligible for Project Skills. In order to participate in the program, as a student you must:

- Apply for and be determined eligible for vocational rehabilitation services through either the Division of Rehabilitation Services or Service to the Blind & Visually Impaired.
- Be 16 years or older.
- Be enrolled in high school and striving to meet academic and attendance requirements.
- Have an employment experience as part of the Individual Education Program (IEP).
- Have a 504 Plan if not on an IEP.

Who Pays for the Program?

SD Vocational Rehabilitation Programs provides funding for wages, FICA, worker's compensation, and other costs. VR may be able to pay for other items needed to be successful in your employment experience while participating in Project Skills.



The local school district provides matching funds (generally in-kind) for Project Skills by providing job

development, job coaching and on-site monitoring. These services can be provided directly by the school district or may be purchased from another agency, such as an education cooperative, Community Support Provider, Career Learning Center, or other agency approved by SD Vocational Rehabilitation Programs.

What is the Employer's Role?

- Provide participants appropriate supervision and training, safe working conditions and adhere to all child labor laws.
- Assist student to maintain accurate time and attendance records.
- Provide feedback on progress of student to school staff.
- Provide adequate general liability insurance. (There is no financial obligation of benefits or wages by the employer.)