



PROJECT SEARCH POSSIBILITIES



Current intern, Dakota M.

What is Project SEARCH?

Project SEARCH is a program that originated in Cincinnati Children's Hospital in 1996. Individuals with disabilities were given the opportunity as interns to work in several different departments of the hospital. Through this experience the interns learned and mastered various skills that would transfer to obtaining and maintaining competitive employment.

Since its inception, Project SEARCH has grown from a single program site in Cincinnati to over 300 sites across the United States and Canada, England, Scotland, Ireland and Australia. On April 6, 2015, the first Project SEARCH class began here in Harrisburg, PA with Dauphin County Government serving as the host site. In collaboration with Dauphin County, Case Management Unit, PA Department of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and Goodwill Keystone Area, 10 students enrolled to participate in 34-weeks of classroom and on-the-job training. After two weeks of classroom training focused on job-readiness and soft skills, interns rotate through three different departments in 10-week cycles with a week of classroom instruction between each rotation.

Project SEARCH Daily Schedule

The Project SEARCH program runs from April to December. A typical day at Project SEARCH would look like:

8:00 – 8:30 am: Arrival at the Project SEARCH classroom.

8:30 – 9:30 am: Employability Skills curriculum with the Project SEARCH Program Instructor.

10:00 am – 2:00 pm: Interns at their internships (with a 30-minute break for lunch)

2:00 pm – 2:30 pm: Interns will walk or be picked up by skills trainers and taken back to the Project SEARCH classroom.

2:30 pm – 3:00 pm: Review of the day: challenges, issues, additional employability skills curriculum.

3:00 pm: Adjournment and departure to return home.

Current Participating Dauphin County Departments

- Children & Youth
- Commissioners
- District Justice McKnight
- District Justice Zozos
- Facility Maintenance
- Juvenile Probation
- Mental Health/ Intellectual Disabilities
- Human Services Custodial

are capable of mastering tasks given by department mentors. They have consistently met expected performance standards. Project SEARCH Interns enjoy the fact that they are part of a team environment. They **DO NOT** want to be considered different or special. They want to work, earn money, and learn valuable skills for competitive employment. Persons with disabilities have a right to participate in the full range of human experiences including success and failure. Most workers with disabilities require no special accommodations. For those that do, the cost is minimal or much lower than the common belief. The accommodations needed by PS Interns have included: written instructions, checklists, flip charts and access to their mentor to ask questions. Cost = \$0. **Dauphin County Departments who are interested in hosting an intern should contact the Project SEARCH Program Instructor, Tracye Johnson, at tjohnson@yourgoodwill.org or at (717) 780-7327.**



Current Intern Randall D. receives a Certificate of Excellence from his internship at Children & Youth

Become a mentor

Project SEARCH gives individuals an opportunity to gain valuable and marketable work experience. Becoming a mentor with Project SEARCH not only helps the interns, but also helps county departments. Since 2015, Project SEARCH Interns have demonstrated exceptional attendance. In the past, we have had 6 interns in 3 previous cohorts with perfect attendance and others only miss due to previous family commitments. Previous departments in the county have reported that Interns

Past Dauphin County Departments

- Bureau of Registration and Elections
- Clerk of Courts
- Drug and Alcohol Services
- Emergency Management Agency
- Human Resources
- Human Services
- Information Technology
- Law Library/Court Administration/Judge's Chamber
- Parks and Recreation (Special Circumstances)
- Purchasing (Warehouse)
- Recycling Center
- Register of Wills and Orphans Court

"My current internship is at Mental Health. I do filing, inserting papers into envelopes and inputting information into the computer. My goal is to find a part-time job and advance to full-time. At Project SEARCH I learn information like how to find a job, advocacy, and how to ride the bus...stuff like that. It's a great program to be in." -Jamea H. current intern



FAQ on The Internship Skill-Building Process for Mentors

What kinds of jobs/tasks and departments can the interns perform?

Our experience tells us that student interns can perform well in many support roles in a variety of departments and settings. Interns often excel at complex yet systematic tasks that are time intensive, equipment intensive, or paper/computer intensive. With training and minimal accommodations, the interns can learn and perform complex tasks that lead to jobs in the community.

Who will train the interns?

Each Project SEARCH program has an instructor and skills trainer on site. These professionals work together to train the interns with input from staff in the department where the internship takes place. Before the program begins, the skills trainer and instructor will develop a job description for each intern by identifying core tasks at each internship site. The Project SEARCH skills trainers and instructor are on site at the business each day to work with the interns and give guidance and support where needed. If there are any problems with the interns during the rotations, the manager or mentor can contact the instructor or skills trainer for immediate assistance.

What is the process for matching one of the interns to my department?

The Project SEARCH instructor, skills trainers will discuss strengths and interests of the students, and compare them to the skills to be learned in each possible internship rotation. Each intern will develop a career goal and training plan with the instructor and skills trainers. Based on the goal, the team will identify possible internships that develop marketable jobs skills. With this information, the instructor and skills trainers will make preliminary matches during the first few weeks of the program (the orientation period). Managers will interview the interns to give them an opportunity to screen potential interns. A department cannot be guaranteed a student for each rotation period, as this will depend on the number of interns, their interests, and the number of internships developed within the host business.

How does the manager get information about working with the student intern? Can the manager ask about the student's disability?

Before the student begins their internship, the Project SEARCH instructor and skills trainers will share helpful information about interacting with and supervising the intern. Department meetings can be utilized to provide information on successful strategies for training young adults with disabilities. Managers cannot ask about a specific intern's disability; however successful training strategies and tools can be shared.

What are the interns daily, weekly, and annual schedules?

Project SEARCH usually follows the April-December calendar. The year will begin with a two-week orientation period in which the interns learn their way around the facility and are introduced to a variety of internships. During the remainder of the year, each student participates in three unpaid internships, each for approximately ten weeks, learning marketable skills with the goal of employment at the end of the year.

