



The Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Overview of WIOA and PETS

***WIOA** = The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, effective October 1, 2014, affects both Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and the Department of Labor (DOL), with no additional federal funding provided.*

***PETS** = Pre-Employment Transition Services for youth that may occur in or outside of the school building, during or after the school day.*

Population focus

- High school students with a disability who are receiving special education services or are eligible under Section 504, who have not yet graduated, and are under the age of 22
- Must be eligible for VR services

5 PETS-approved activities:

1. Job exploration counseling
2. Work-based learning experiences
3. Counseling on opportunities for post-secondary training or education
4. Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living
5. Instruction in self-advocacy

VocRehab Vermont's Approach:

- 14 VR Transition Counselors working with this population to provide PETS services
- 14 Youth Employment Specialists (YES) staff from VABIR who will work in partnership with the Transition Counselors
- 14 VR Young Adult Counselors who will be working with students who have graduated or left school through young adulthood
- Expansion of the JOBS program to focus both on students still in school and those not in school, up through age 26
- Transfer of some supported employment funding from VR to local designated agencies to provide services to students with developmental disabilities
- Increased opportunities for summer activities to include workshops, career exploration groups, unpaid WBL and short-term competitive or subsidized employment
- Increased opportunity for Benefits' Counseling for students who receive SSI or other benefits, and their parents

Hoped for outcomes for students with disabilities:

- Students will be better prepared for employment, career and therefore, adulthood upon leaving high school through having had a variety of pre-employment experiences, setting of career goals and exploring various career pathways
- Increased partnerships and collaborations between special educators, 504 Coordinators, adult partners
- Increased focus on the importance of pre-employment experiences while still in high school
- Development of best practices to be used by all people working with students to lead to more successful career goals
- Increased parent engagement in their child's career opportunities