DARS

Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services

Pre-Employment Transition Services

An Overview of DARS Pre-ETS and Vocational Rehabilitation Transition Services

What is DARS?

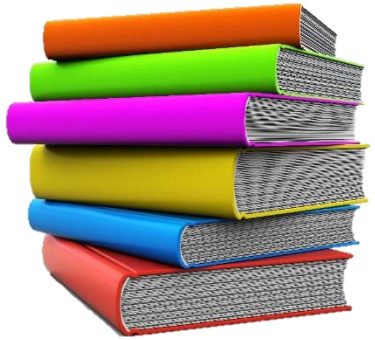
The Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS)

- Virginia's federally mandated Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program
- Assists individuals with disabilities to prepare for, enter, and maintain employment
- Focus is on EMPLOYMENT
- Participation is VOLUNTARY

Schools and DARS

- Schools and DARS share a common goal of successful employment outcomes
- Federal regulations require schools and DARS to work together to deliver Pre-ETS within the educational setting
- Pre-ETS works in conjunction with the school's existing transition services and are based on the student's individual need

What are Pre-ETS?



- Early start at developing employability skills and to assist students with identifying career interests
- Only for Students With Disabilities
- Do not have to be a DARS client
- DARS collaborates with students, families, schools and community service providers

Pre-ETS may be provided to students who…

- Are at least 14 AND
- Are receiving special education services and have an IEP, OR
- Have a Section 504 plan, OR
- Have a disability not served by other means from the school and can provide documentation of disability

How are Students Referred for Pre-ETS?

- Students can be referred for Pre-ETS by the school, parents, or other service provider
- Pre-ETS Information Release and Consent form needs to be completed and signed
- Consent form and documentation of disability will be turned in to the DARS counselor

Pre-ETS Activities

There are Five Required Pre-ETS Activities

- Job exploration counseling
- Work-based learning experiences
- Postsecondary education counseling
- Workplace readiness training
- Instruction in self-advocacy

Job Exploration Counseling

Purpose

Foster motivation, consideration of opportunities, and informed decision making.

Examples

- Explore the world of work
- Explore interests and abilities
- Investigate careers

Work-Based Learning Experiences

Purpose

An educational approach to provide students with knowledge and skills that help them connect school experiences to real-life work activities and future career opportunities

Examples

- Work site tours to learn about necessary job skills
- Job shadowing
- Informational Interviews
- Employer presentations
- Job Fairs
- Arrange guest speakers who have disabilities and are employed

Counseling on Opportunities for Enrolling in Post-Secondary Education

Purpose

Gaining an awareness of the wide range of career pathway options and labor market realities and projections

Examples

- Academic and occupational counseling
- Courses, applications, and admissions processes
- Guidance on the FAFSA process
- Referral to resources
- Campus visits/Tours

Workplace Readiness Training

Purpose

Prepares students for commonly expected skills that employers seek from most employees. Work readiness skills are a set of skills and behaviors that are necessary for any job. Often called soft skills, employability skills, or job readiness skills.

Examples

- Employer expectations
- Time management
- Job seeking/networking
- Employment application writing skills
- Interviewing skills
- Job retention skills
- Workplace communication skills

Instruction in Self-Advocacy

Purpose

Provide students with the ability to effectively communicate, convey, negotiate or assert his/her own interests and/or desires. These skills will be needed in education, workplace, and community settings.

Examples

- Arrange for speakers from Independent Living Services
- Understanding rights and responsibilities
- Requesting services and accommodations
- Communicating thoughts, needs, and concerns

Pre-Employment Transition Services are the first step on a continuum of Vocational Rehabilitation services provided by DARS.

What happens when a person no longer wants/needs or qualifies for Pre-ETS?

1. Apply for DARS Vocational Rehabilitation Services (this can happen any time, based on individual need)
   - Complete and sign VR application
   - Eligibility completed by VR counselor
2. Look for employment on their own
   - Use skills gained through Pre-ETS to look for, secure, and maintain employment
   - Still can apply for VR services at any time

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) and VR Transition Services

- Pre-ETS help students get an early start exploring careers of interest and developing foundational skills.
- VR Transition services are designed to support students pursue their goals as they transition out of school.

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Vocational Rehabilitation

- The VR program helps people with disabilities become prepared for, find, and maintain competitive, integrated employment and live more independently in the community.
- The difference between VR and Pre-ETS is that VR services are individualized, planned services that the VR counselor and consumer agree are needed to assist the individual in working toward and accomplishing his or her employment goal.
- In order to receive VR services, the individual **must** first become a VR consumer.

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Eligibility Criteria

- Have a physical, mental, or emotional disability
  - If a person isn't sure they have a disability, we can help make that determination
- The disability interferes with the individual's ability to find or maintain employment.
- The person is willing and able to work and believes that DARS will be helpful.
- The individual lives, works, or is a student in VA and is eligible to work in the US.

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Examples of VR Services

Counseling and Guidance	Job Placement
Vocational Evaluation	Customized Employment
Situational Assessments	Job Coach Training Services
On-the-Job Training	Supported Employment
Unpaid Work Experiences	Self-Employment Enterprise
Assistive Technology Assessments and Services/Accommodations	Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center (WWRC)
Postsecondary Education/Vocational Training	Support services (Job readiness training, resume development, application assistance, driver's education, time-limited transportation assistance, etc.)

Cost for VR Services

Some VR services are free, while others depend on the individual's ability to pay. DARS considers comparable benefits and other funds should be used if they are available.

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Steps Toward VR/Employment

- Referral for Services
- Initial Visit
- Eligibility Determination
- Develop IPE and Determining Services
- Preparing for Employment
- Job Search and Employment
- Case Closure

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DARS Pre-ETS & VR Transition Services Site

For more information, visit the DARS Pre-ETS and VR Transition Services webpage

https://www.dars.virginia.gov/drs/transitionservices.htm

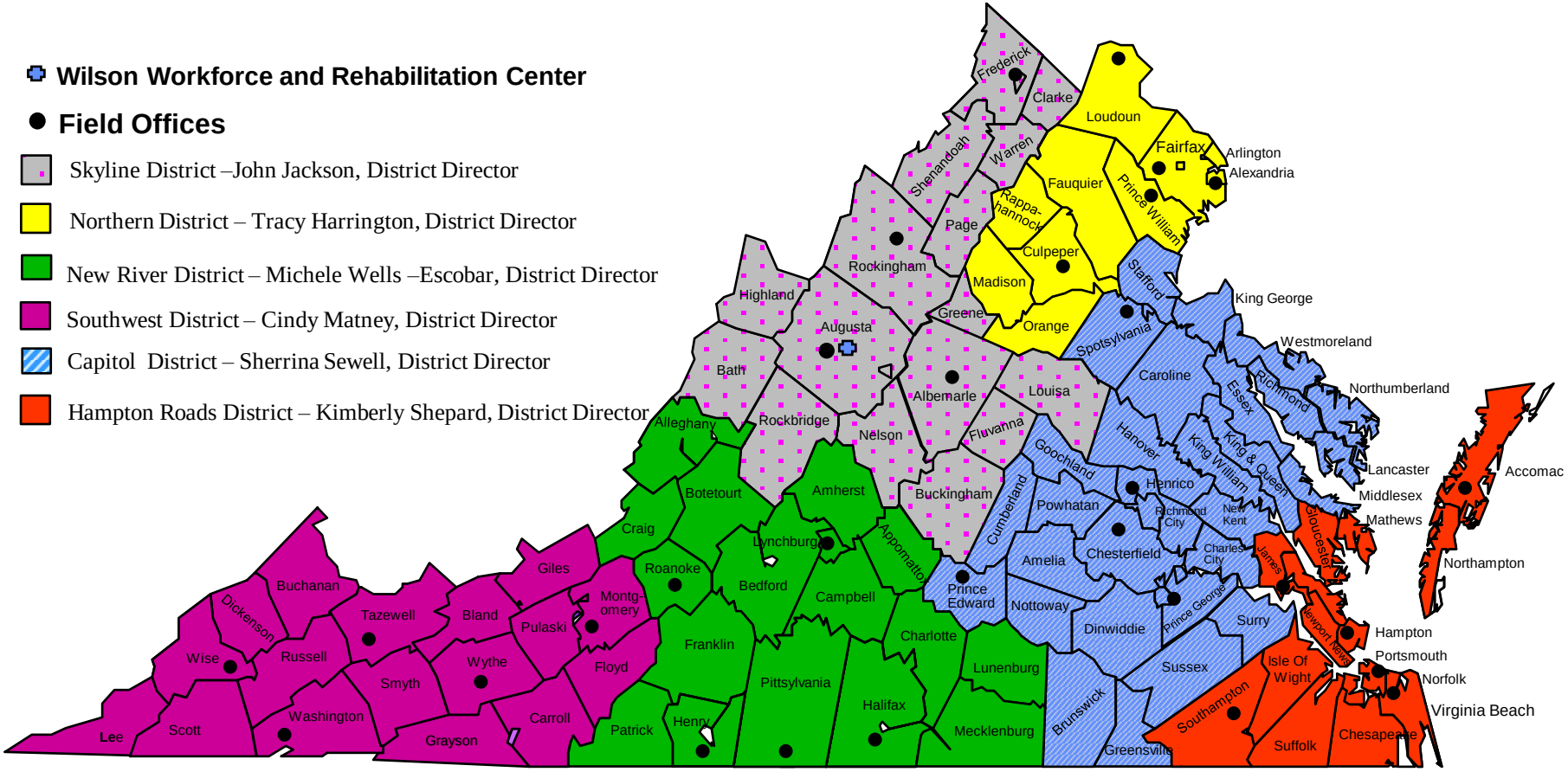
Virginia's Transition Resource Hub

Did you know that Virginia has a one-stop shop for transition resources? Check out the new Transition Resource Hub at https://preets.vcurrtc.org/

Virginia Dept. for Aging and Rehabilitative Services

Division of Rehabilitative Services

- **Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center**
- **Field Offices**
- Skyline District –John Jackson, District Director
- Northern District – Tracy Harrington, District Director
- New River District – Michele Wells –Escobar, District Director
- Southwest District – Cindy Matney, District Director
- Capitol District – Sherrina Sewell, District Director
- Hampton Roads District – Kimberly Shepard, District Director



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Prepare Students for the FUTURE