

Section 11: Pre-employment Transition Services (PRE-ETS)

Program Purpose

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) amended the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requiring state Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) programs to set aside at least 15% of their federal funds to create the Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) program. Kansas Pre-ETS and VR are part of the Rehabilitation Services (RS) program. Pre-ETS has the goal of empowering transition-age youth (starting around age 14-16) to achieve their employment potential.

- Pre-ETS services are designed to help students with disabilities explore career interests, build work skills, and prepare for future employment or further education.
- Students with disabilities may request Pre-ETS services directly from their local VR office or be referred by their local school.
 - You can find local VR offices here:
 - **Website** <https://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/Pages/MapVR.aspx>
 - **Phone number** 866-213-9079
 - **Address** for the KRS Central Office:

Rehabilitation Services – Pre-ETS
 Department for Children and Families Administration Building
 555 S. Kansas, 3rd Floor
 Topeka, KS 66603
 Toll-free Customer Service: 1-866-213-9079

Eligibility

Students with disabilities need to be transition-age to be eligible for Pre-ETS services. Transition age is defined as no younger than 14 years and not older than 21 years old. The following criteria must be met to be eligible.

- The student must attend a secondary, post-secondary, or other recognized education program. This includes traditional secondary schools, alternative education programs, home schooling, post-secondary programs, and other recognized education programs including those offered through the juvenile justice system.

- The student must be eligible for and receive services on an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or have a disability with a Section 504 Plan.
 - An **Individual Education Plan (IEP)** is an annual plan that outlines a student's special education needs and the specific supports and services they require to address their learning needs.
 - A **Section 504 Plan** is a document that outlines the accommodations and supports a student with a disability needs to have equal access to education. The student is eligible for a 504 Plan if they have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity (i.e., walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, working, caring for oneself, and performing manual tasks).
- The student must be a Kansas resident or have employment authorization documentation if they are not a U.S. resident.

If the student appears to meet the eligibility criteria, the next step is to meet with the local Pre-ETS Transition Specialist.

- Students may be referred to their Pre-ETS Transition Specialist by their local school staff or may complete an application and submit it to the local Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) office. The student and a parent or legal guardian must sign the application.
 - Here is a fillable Pre-ETS Request for Services and Information Release: https://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/RS/Documents/RS%20Forms/Request_Verification_fillable.pdf.
- The local Pre-ETS Transition Specialist will schedule an appointment to meet with the student, parent/guardian, and local educators if referred by the school. For verification, eligibility documents can include copies of:
 - The Individual Education Plan (IEP)
 - 504 Plan
 - SSI/SSDI or
 - Medical records documenting disability
- Once the student is determined eligible, the local Pre-ETS Transition Specialist will work with the student and parent/guardian (if appropriate) to develop a Pre-ETS Plan. The Pre-ETS Plan will identify the services to be provided, the student's and other participant responsibilities, and expectations. The goal of the plan is to empower the student to develop self-reliance and prepare for employment.

Services

Pre-ETS services are designed to help a student achieve their highest employment potential. Five key services are provided through Pre-ETS depending on the student's needs.

- **Job Exploration Counseling.** Helps students learn about careers that match their interests, strengths, and goals.
 - The local Pre-ETS Transition Specialist could:
 - Help complete a vocational interest inventory,
 - Share information about the local and regional labor market
 - Discuss local jobs and careers, and
 - Connect the student with community resources
- **Self-Advocacy.** Empowers students to express their needs and goals in a variety of settings including school and work.
 - Students will:
 - Learn about their rights under education laws
 - Learn how to advocate
 - Build their self-advocacy skills to help them request resources, accommodations, or services and supports they need to succeed at work and in life.
- **Workplace Readiness Training.** Teaches students about the skills needed for employment.
 - For example, students can learn core skills needed to succeed in any job (e.g., teammate interactions, reporting to a supervisor, customer service, etc.).
 - For example, students can access local career centers, build social and job skills, participate in independent living, and get connected to community resources.
- **Counseling on Comprehensive Transition or Post-Secondary Education.** Helps students create a clear path to employment.
 - Activities may include providing information about education opportunities including disability support services, discussing reasonable accommodations needed in training and academic settings, exposing students to post-secondary training programs, and linking students with other community resources.
- **Work-based Learning Experiences.** Helps students build skills to succeed in the workplace based on work experiences.

- For example, students could have opportunities to job shadow or participate in mock interviews, connect with career track or other work-based learning programs, gain experience with local businesses for work-based learning experiences, and participate in volunteer and internship opportunities.

Assistive Technology Services Covered

If the student with a disability requires an AT service or device to access or participate in Pre-ETS, he/she can receive assistive technology (AT) services and devices. If the AT device or service is provided by another place like their school, the VR counselor may approve and pay for it through Rehabilitation Services (RS).

- For example, screen reading software programs could be purchased to allow an individual who is blind to access information on a computer during a work-based learning experience. For people who are blind or visually impaired, the screen reader itself counts as an “auxiliary aid,” not the computer.
- Auxiliary aids and services in Pre-ETS need approval from the Pre-ETS Program Administrator first.
- An assistive technology evaluation may be conducted to determine if the student would benefit from an assistive technology device or service to participate in a work setting. VR could pay for the evaluation.

Assistive Technology Devices Covered

Assistive technology devices may be provided if the eligible student with a disability requires an AT device to access or participate in Pre-ETS services. First, the local Pre-ETS Transition Specialist will confirm that the device is not already provided by the student’s school.

- If a student with a disability requires personal devices, services, or individually prescribed assistive technology, Pre-ETS will work with a local VR counselor to determine if the student meets the eligibility criteria of VR. If yes, then an Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) is developed to include those additional services through VR funding, not Pre-ETS funding.
- Pre-ETS cannot provide individually prescribed assistive technology and personal devices or services (e.g., prescription eyeglasses, hearing aids, readers for personal study or personal services).

Challenges Obtaining Assistive Technology

Assistive Technology (AT) devices can be provided for the student by the local school, Pre-ETS or VR. Therefore, the student and parents/guardians may be confused about how to

access the technology needed. The process of having eligibility established for Pre-ETS, developing a Pre-ETS Plan, then needing to determine eligibility for VR if AT is needed can be particularly confusing for individuals who are not familiar with the programs. The Pre-ETS Transition Specialist will work to simplify the process, but concerns and confusion may arise. The most common challenges are explained below:

- **Delays:** A delay can occur if there is a disagreement about whether the school or Pre-ETS should provide the device. The school may choose to use other resources to provide short-term access to a device.
- **Large Caseloads:** VR counselors may have many cases, so students should stay in touch and be proactive with their IPE tasks to keep things on track. The local Pre-ETS Transition Specialist can help.
- **Time and Funding:** Assistive technology services and devices authorized on an individual's IPE through VR will be paid for by KRS. However, the length of time to review recommended devices can vary. A longer review process occurs if:
 - A device costs over \$1,999.00,
 - The device cannot be purchased through a state approved vendor, or
 - The device is needed for a type of employment that the VR counselor isn't familiar with.

Appeals

If a student, parent, or guardian is not satisfied with their services, they can talk about their concerns with their Pre-ETS Transition Specialist.

- If there are still concerns or if they would like an additional perspective, they can talk about their concerns with the Pre-ETS Transition Specialist's supervisor. Most problems can be resolved.
 - Contact information for program administrators' is located here:
<https://www.ksde.gov/Portals/0/CSAS/CSAS%20Home/Hidden%20File%20Links/DCF%20Pre-Employment%20Transition%20Services%20Managers%20by%20Region%200011321.pdf>
- If the dispute is still unresolved, the student, parent, or guardian may request an administrative review. The review can be conducted by a Pre-ETS Transition supervisor, not involved in their case, or an exception request can be made from the Commissioner of Kansas Rehabilitation Services.
- Lastly, the student and/or parent/guardian can submit a fair hearing request conducted by a Fair Hearing Officer.
 - Contact the KRS Commissioner's office to request any of these reviews:

Rehabilitation Services

Department for Children and Families Administration Building

555 S. Kansas, 3rd Floor

Topeka, KS 66603

Phone: 785-368-7143

Fax: 785-368-7467

TTY: 785-368-7478

Tollfree Customer Service Line: 1-866-213-9079

- If there still are concerns, the student, parent, or guardian may contact
 - The Client Assistance Program (CAP) staff: www.drckansas.org
 - Client Assistance Program Disability Rights Center (DRC):
www.drckansas.org ;877-776-1541