

## STAR School District Q & A

### (Answers to Questions posed by School District Staff)

#### **Q. Are students in postsecondary education required to have an IEP?**

A. Because students don't have an IEP in postsecondary education, students can be referred for STAR services if they had either an IEP or 504 Plan in high school. Currently, students in postsecondary education, must be referred from the school district they attended.

#### **Q. Are school districts the only entity responsible for making STAR Referrals?**

A. Yes

#### **Q. Is each VR office going to get the new brochures?**

A. Each ESE director was sent the new Transition Brochures which outlines Pre-Employment Services and Students' Transition program choices. Local VR offices will receive brochures as well to supplement the brochures sent to the schools. This brochure is also posted on our website at [http://www.rehabworks.org/stw\\_star.shtml](http://www.rehabworks.org/stw_star.shtml). Here viewers can access this brochure in English, Spanish, and Creole.

#### **Q. What if students do not have a Social Security number?**

A. Currently, students must have a social security number to participate in STAR or the Traditional VR program. The SS# is how we track services provided and paid for in our system. This requirement is based on instruction provided to Vocational Rehabilitation by Rehabilitation Services Administration.

#### **Q. Can we have multiple school district representatives?**

A. School District Points of Contact can identify as many school level SDRs as they feel necessary. There could be one identified or many based on student need and availability of staff.

#### **Q. In a very large district expecting school-based staff to input students, even if they are trained, will be a major challenge as they have no time to do the work they are tasked with in their present assigned duties and responsibilities.**

A. Your concern is completely understandable. We have streamlined the referral so that it only requires essential information. The school-level staff member making the STAR Referral does not have to be an ESE teacher or Staffing/Transition Specialist. It can be anyone within the district (i.e.: Paraprofessional, Guidance Counselor, etc.). TPCA Employment Specialists may not be a SDR due to the contractual requirement to spend 100% of his/her time with TPCA students.

VR staff have been trained on STAR and can assist in delivering STAR Program information. VR Youth Techs can hold information sessions or orientations to provide program information to students and families. Where school district staff play a major role is with your relationships with students and families to help encourage students and families to take advantage of these free services.

Also, since there is no eligibility process, VR Youth Techs working with the students will not know them well enough to make service recommendations based on ability or need, but you do. Once you make the referral, we can then begin building relationships with students in order to provide them with the services needed to engage students and make transition from high school successful.

**Q. Should VR get a copy of the IEP and or 504?**

A. No, SDRs attest that the student being referred is a student with a disability. We will not need a copy. VR may require the adult student and/or parent/guardian to sign a Release of Information and/or Waiver of Confidentiality, but that is not the responsibility of the school district staff.

**Q. What responsibility does the VR Youth Tech have in getting STAR Referrals?**

A. STAR Referrals come from the high school through the STAR Portal. If the VR Youth Tech meets with students and/or families during an information session or orientation, they will be asked to make the request with the SDR at the school.

**Q. Can a student that is at risk but does not have an IEP or 504 be referred to STAR?**

A. No, however, if there is a disability suspected, they can apply to VR where they can receive Pre-Employment Transition Services if found eligible and an IPE is written.

**Q. Is STAR available to private schools? If so, how do private schools make a STAR Referral?**

A. Any student with IEP or 504 Plan or is attending a private with a McKay scholarship, can be referred STAR. The District POC can assign someone at the private school to make the STAR Referrals. The request can be made to Sheila Ward by calling 850-245-3347 or emailing her at [Sheila.Ward@vr.fl DOE.org](mailto:Sheila.Ward@vr.fl DOE.org). If students do not have or have never had an IEP or 504 Plan or are not attending with a McKay scholarship, then they must apply for VR services using the "Traditional" approach.

**Q. What is going to happen if all the schools just submit Traditional VR Referrals and no STAR referrals?**

A. Students who are able to access and participate in Pre-ETS with little support should be referred to STAR. This will free VR staff to serve students who need additional services and intensive supports

School Districts are described in legislation as a partner in delivering Pre-ETS activities. There is an expectation in the law that these services be coordinated.

STAR Participants can start receiving Pre-ETS immediately, based on provider availability whereas students applying to VR will take longer due to eligibility determination. It comes down to educating school staff, students, and families to ensure the best program choice is selected.

**Q. Once students are referred & referral process is complete - when & where are services being provided or has this been established in all counties. I'm thinking of those 20 hours that are outside of school hours. How soon might this happen after referral process is complete?**

A. It was suggested that Providers partner with school districts to offer Work Readiness and Self-Advocacy Trainings on school grounds where transportation is less likely to be an issue for students/families. As a reminder, these services must not interfere with students' academic requirements. Providers have 15 business days to accept a referral for service. The provider would then coordinate with the student and family for delivery of service(s).

**Q. How long does a STAR Referral take to get processed?**

A. VR sups have three (3) business days to assign the referral to a VR Youth Tech. The VR Youth Tech then has three (3) working days to make contact with student. Providers have gone through training and are waiting for referrals to come through. It should be a fairly expedited process.

**Q. Was there a form for schools to use to capture the required information? And to sign for permission?**

A. The only required "form" is the STAR Referral form that can be found on the STAR Portal. This online referral form includes all the information required to make the referral.

There is a form that each school district uses to give the district permission to make referrals to outside agencies. This is called, Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Parent Notice and Consent to Invite an Outside Agency Representative. The language in paragraph 2 pertains to this permission to refer. This document, obtained from BEESS, can be found in the training resources located on the STAR Program page.

**Q. Can we take a referral from a student with a tax ID # not a SS #?**

A. The STAR system can only accept Social Security Number.

**Q. Original thought in the spring was that every student with an IEP and 504, ages 15-21 would be referred, but now it looks like we are only referring students who are interested in postsecondary school or training.**

A. No, any student who needs Pre-ETS and meets the requirements, including being 15-21 years old, is in secondary or postsecondary education or training, has IEP or 504 Plan, and has not applied to VR or is a VR Customer can be referred to STAR. If a student is going to postsecondary school or training, Pre-ETS can continue. This addition opens up the door to serve students longer than originally thought. (i.e. beyond high school)

**Q. Are the providers for services going to be listed on the STAR Website to choose from?**

A. School District Representatives will not have to help students choose the service providers. The VR Youth Tech will do this with the student and/or parent/guardian. Providers were told was to send program materials to local VR staff that can be disseminated. Providers were told NOT to contact POCs directly. Please contact Sheila Ward @ 850-245-3347 or [Sheila.ward@vr.fldoe.org](mailto:Sheila.ward@vr.fldoe.org) if providers do.

**Q. Are districts allowed to recruit business partners who are willing to provide work experiences or would we need to connect them to the provider and how is the provider determined?**

A. Districts have many contacts and possibly know resources that VR staff may not be aware of. If District staff is aware of a potential vendor or service provider, they are encouraged either refer them to the local VR office or RehabWorks.org website. We have contract liaisons in each area who can provide potential providers with vendor registration information. School Districts are also encouraged to consider becoming a vendor/provider of VR Pre-Employment Transition Services since they already have an established relationship with students, the parents/guardians, and community.

**Q. How does VR staff know which vendors are service providers in the area?**

A. Each VR Office has a listing of providers and which services each has been approved for. The VR Youth Techs use this list to provide options for students and/or parents/guardians. School District Representatives do not need to enter providers for the STAR Referrals they make.

**Q. What is the distinction between the VR Youth Tech and Vendor?**

A. A Youth Tech receives the STAR Referrals from the School District Representative and makes referrals and authorizes for selected services. They meet with the student and/or parents/guardians to provide additional information on services and available vendors/provider. The Vendor provides the services chosen by the students and/or parent/guardian.

**Q. When you speak of Vendor, are these the folks being paid the per student amount to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services? Is this the same as what was discussed in our collaborative meeting last year?**

A. Yes, Vendors of Pre-Employment Transition Services are paid for the services provided to each student. Different services each have set fees for reimbursement once services have been delivered. For example, a Vendor/Provider delivering Pre-Placement Training (Work Readiness Training) would receive \$302. For each student who received the service. In regards to Pre-Placement Training, each vendor would receive \$302. per student once all deliverables were completed. Community Based Work Experience fees include:

- Plan and Agreement \$980.
- Final Report \$653.

Career Assessment fees include:

- Psychological Testing (Aptitude and Interest Assessments only) \$81.62 each
- Comprehensive Vocational Evaluation \$849.
- On-the-Job Evaluation \$1485.
- Discovery I (Profile) \$1,750.
- Discovery II (Observation) \$39/hour up to 15 hours

**Q. Where is STAR on the REBA website?**

A. STAR is a separate program that must be accessed by School District staff through the STAR web form portal. PoC and SDR will get the log in screen. Depending on permissions you will be sent to the appropriate screen (add a user or make a referral). REBA is used by Vendors/Providers to receive their service referrals and authorizations.

**Q. How will the Pre-ETS providers be collaborating with the school personnel? How will information be shared regarding the students that are still in the school district?**

A. VR Youth Techs will share students' service reports and information with the School District upon request.

**Q. If we are pretty sure there is no vendor in our county - what is being done to secure vendors & is there a way to refer people who may be interested in becoming a vendor/provider?**

A. VR is recruiting additional providers through efforts at both the state and local level. If a service is unavailable in your county please contact Sheila Ward and share with the local office, so that this issue can be prioritized. If you know of someone interested, please direct them to local VR office or our RehabWorks.org website. We also encourage School Districts to apply to be vendors/providers of Pre-ETS.

**Q. Will VR provide resources for transportation for programming outside of school day.**

A. Additional support services, such as transportation, interpreters, uniforms, assistive technology and devices, may be available for students who apply to VR. Current legislation only allows VR to provide services that are Pre-ETS through STAR.

**Q. Do you have to be a psychologist to do the career assessments and discovery assessments?**

A. Anyone interested in becoming a vendor go to the vendor page on RehabWorks.org to learn about vendor qualifications. Note: Discovery providers do not need to be psychologists, but must have completed VR approved Discovery training. Vocational evaluations are not typically done by Psychologists. Aptitude and interest assessments can be done through vocational evaluations and can be done by a psychologist.

**Q. Does a school district (K-12) who has a 3rd Party Cooperative Agreement eligible to be a vendor for VR?**

A. Any School District may become a VR Vendor/Provider for Pre-ETS. The TPCA is an example where the School District is providing a Pre-ETS service. Separate applications are required to become a VR Vendor/Provider for other Pre-ETS. School Districts would need to contact Vendor Registration to let them know the service(s) they would like to add and complete any requirements for those services. School Districts can be a vendor for Pre-ETS without being a TPCA site.

**Q. There was never further follow up with our district to determine if we would be the vendor for our area. I don't know think that anyone else was approached. If someone is interested should they contact VR Youth Tech for application, training, & general info?**

A. If a School District has applied to be a vendor for VR and has not heard back, please contact Sheila Ward at 850-245-3348 or [Sheila.Ward@vr.fldoe.org](mailto:Sheila.Ward@vr.fldoe.org) to follow up on the application. If interested in applying, please contact your local office or visit our RehabWorks.org webpage.

**Q. How will students who are enrolled in Institutes of Higher Education be referred to STAR? Would they still need to go through the School District's Point of Contact?**

A. We are looking at expanding into higher education in the near future. Students must currently be referred by a SDR assigned by the POC to participate in STAR.

**Q. About how long will the process take for setting up work experiences?**

A. Service delivery will dependent on the number of STAR Referrals and the availability of VR Vendor/Providers in a given area. We are expecting short turnaround times for STAR Services.

**Q. Students who don't qualify for VR services can receive services through STAR?**

A. Yes, as long as they meet the requirements:

- Ages 15 – 21
- In High School or Pursuing a Postsecondary Education or Training program (Trade School, College, University)

- Identified by the School District as a student with a disability (i.e. has an IEP or 504 Plan)
- Not a current VR Applicant or Customer

**Q. They can't be a current applicant of VR?**

A. If they have begun the application process they can't receive services through STAR. If they are a STAR Participant and then apply to VR, services will continue until eligibility process has taken place.

**Q. Will there be a need to hire more VR/school district employees to work with the STAR participants?**

A. We do not anticipate School Districts will need to hire any new staff to make STAR Referrals. Many of the STAR Referrals will be made through required IEP activities. The School District Representative can be anyone in the district except for TPCA Employment Specialists. This is why the designation of SDRs was left up to the District POC to know who would be best suited for this task. If for some reason VR Youth Techs are inundated with STAR Referrals, additional VR staff may be reallocated to this assignment.

**Q. Are STAR Referrals only entered via web form on the portal by the designated school representative?**

A. Yes, the STAR portal is the only access point. Only SDRs can put in referrals. Anyone interested in STAR would be referred to the SDR. VR Youth Techs do not have the ability to enter referrals.

**Q. Where will the trainings take place for Work Readiness Training and Career Exploration Counseling?**

A. Recommendation is for Vendors/providers to contact School District to partner and deliver training on campus after school. This would help with transportation issues. It was explained to Vendors that it may be required to show insurance, complete a facilities usage application, etc. It was also suggested that vendors use public places (Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCA, libraries, church halls, etc.) to provide services where students already meet. Vendors will contact school districts. A provider asked about taking advantage of early release and teacher training days as possible meeting times. The determination regarding provider access to students during the school day or on school grounds is solely at the discretion of the School District.

**Q. Is it mandatory to refer all students with disabilities in our district to the STAR Program?**

A. The intent of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act is to provide youth with disabilities an opportunity to gain skills through Pre-Employment Transition Services that will help them transition successfully into life after high school. In addition, VR has been determined as the agent to deliver services. In order for these students to be reached, we must work with our primary partners

collaboratively. If students and/or parents/guardians choose not to pursue services, that is their choice to make.

**Q. Who will work with the STAR students after school hours?**

A. VR Vendors/Providers will be providing Pre-ETS to students. Vendors have to go through a thorough approval process (background check) to ensure the safety of our students/customers. If School Districts become vendors, they would also be able to provide the services they are approved to deliver after school hours.

**Q. Are students in STAR supervised during the community based work experiences?**

A. Community Based Work Experiences are set up by the Vendor. Students receive the same level of supervision as anyone receiving that service. Vendors meet with employers to make sure they are in good environments. They are also required to complete monthly reports to evaluate students' progress. Intense services such as job coaching and job retention services are additional support services that are available to students who apply to VR. As a reminder, students who are referred to STAR should be self-directed and require little support.

**Q. Have most of the currently-participating school districts hired someone to specifically handle just this task/process? It seems like it would easily be a full-time job responsibility...**

A. The Point of Contact for each School District assigns the SDR. The SDR does not have to be an ESE teacher or Staffing/Transition Specialist. School Districts are encouraged to incorporate the referral process into existing required activities including the annual IEP review and updates to 504 Plans to limit demands on School District staff.

**Q. Would a STAR student need Discovery?**

A. Not necessarily, but it is an option available for Career Assessments.

**What is Discovery 1 and Discovery 2?**

A. Discovery is a non-traditional assessment, looking at the whole student. In Discovery 1, a profile is developed that identifies students' strengths, abilities, interests, and everything they can do. It is completed through visits in a variety of places (school, home, and Community) and interviews with individuals who closely interact with the student. Visits and interviews allow the provider to identify what students like to do and can do. Discovery is an extension of Discovery 1, authorizing additional hours if more observation time is required to complete profile. Contact Jan Pearce at 850-245-3302 or [jan.pearce@vr.fldoe.org](mailto:jan.pearce@vr.fldoe.org) for more information on Discovery.

**Q. Is there any kind of financial incentives for the students to participate in the STAR Program?**

A. Community Based Work Experiences (OJTs), whether in STAR or going through Traditional VR, can be paid or unpaid. We strongly encourage VR Providers to offer paid experiences. VR provides wage reimbursement which includes FICA and Workers' Compensation, etc. when a paid work experience is available. The success of Community Based Work Experiences often has to do with students acquiring appropriate social/soft/employability skills that can be learned in Pre-Placement Training and work experiences. It is very possible that students will quickly identify the need for these skills and seek these out to increase their future success.

**Q. Does this STAR program include DJJ students who will eventually re-enroll their original district**

A. Yes, if students are in a DJJ facility and meet the requirements, they may access STAR services by having a STAR Referral completed by the SDR for that District. Many districts have their own DJJ Transition Liaison who can also be designated as a SDR by the POC to complete STAR Referral for this population. Although some Pre-ETS such as Community Based Work Experiences may not be feasible due to the nature of the facility, others such as Career Exploration Counseling and Pre-Placement Training and Self-Advocacy Training may work well based on the level of support these students receive. When a transfer occurs from the DJJ facility back to the home school, a transfer would take place in the STAR Program and this student would then be added to the home school's roster.

**Updated:**

**Q. Can students in Postsecondary education receive Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)?**

A. Until further notice, students with disabilities, in Postsecondary education or training, can receive Pre-ETS as long as they have applied and are found eligible for VR services.