

# Project SEARCH of the Black Hills Intern Handbook



Project | SEARCH  
of the Black Hills

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## Welcome

Welcome to Project SEARCH Rapid City. The Project SEARCH staff will work hard to ensure that this will be a successful year for everyone. We will demonstrate professional conduct, impartial direction, objective advice, and individualized recommendations, which are ultimately designed to teach and establish the standards over the course of this program. These expectations will prepare interns for the competencies expected in the workforce. Project SEARCH interns are expected to conduct themselves as an employee would, and follow similar standards.

This handbook will acquaint you with the details of our program. It is a guide and is subject to change as needs arise. With a clear understanding of our expectations and an enthusiastic and committed attitude, we are confident you will have a great year.

## Curriculum and Instructional Outcomes

Project SEARCH Rapid City follows the national Project SEARCH® curriculum. Interns receive direct instruction on topics that may include, but are not limited to: Team Building, Workplace Safety, Social Skills, Presentation Skills, Technology, Interview Skills, Money Management, Health and Wellness, Resume Writing, Job Search Skills, and Keeping a Job.

## Calendar and Early Dismissals

Project SEARCH follows the Rapid City School District calendar; therefore, days off, early dismissals, snow days, etc. will all be in accordance with the district calendar. Interns and their families/guardians are directed to check your School District website and local radio and television stations for weather-related announcements. Please see attached school calendar.

## Internship Rotations

Over the course of the year, interns may complete up to three (3) 10-12 week internship rotations. These rotations are unpaid. However, the South Dakota Department of Rehabilitation Services provides each intern a monthly stipend. Project SEARCH Rapid City interns will receive a stipend. Interns will have the opportunity to express preferences for each rotation, and Project SEARCH staff will work hard to honor said requests. The goal of Project SEARCH is for interns to gain as many job skills as possible in order to obtain competitive employment.

## Job Coaching

The skills trainer(s) is (are) here to provide indirect support while the intern completes internship rotations. They will help the intern learn tasks and understand what is expected on the job. Skills trainers do not work side-by-side with interns all day long. The goal of this program is independence. Interns are expected to take directions from their supervisor and ask questions when help is needed.

## Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)

VR pays part of the costs for interns to receive job-coaching services and provides a monthly stipend. In order to receive those services, interns are expected to attend required monthly meetings and complete necessary paperwork.

## Progress

Performance will be evaluated in the following areas: attendance, class participation, attitude, work evaluations and as required by the IEP. The skills trainer, teacher, or supervisor will complete work evaluations. We will make every effort to ensure that intern progress is

communicated through newsletters, emails, phone calls and progress meetings. The purpose of this communication is to ensure that all parties involved are supporting the intern's transition and job goals. Any communication or meetings will involve all or some of the following: teacher/coordinator, skills trainer, intern, family members/guardians, and VR representative(s).

## Meals

Interns have several options for lunch. They can bring lunch from home (the Project SEARCH office and most rotation sites will have refrigerator and microwave available) or purchase it from the cafeteria. Lunch breaks will generally be 30 minutes in length; however, this may vary depending on rotation site policy and/or workload. Meal times will vary depending on how busy their job location is. Interns are encouraged to eat lunch with their coworkers/mentors. Regardless of where interns buy and eat lunch, they must be back at work on time. Interns may also want to bring healthy snacks to work with them.

## Dress Code

Interns must follow the dress code of the job site (such as black pants and slip-resistant shoes). Closed toe shoes and nice pants are required. Shorts, sweatpants, jeans, T-shirts, tank tops, camisoles, sandals and sweatshirts are not allowed unless your direct supervisor has issued or approved the attire. Hair must be clean, cut, combed, groomed and maintained. Antiperspirant, deodorant, and products that eliminate body odor **MUST** be used. Bathing and teeth-brushing should occur daily. Dressing in layered clothing is recommended so that interns are prepared for the various indoor and outdoor temperature changes they may experience over the course of a day.

## Medication

Any Project SEARCH intern who takes medication during the workday must be responsible for taking it him or herself. Medications will not be stored in the Project SEARCH office. If a special medication need arises, please notify the Project SEARCH Coordinator.

## Tobacco and Alcohol Use

The use of tobacco, or being under the influence of controlled substances/and or alcohol during school-sponsored activities/programs is prohibited.

## Email, Cell Phones, Electronics and Personal Items

Personal cell phone use (phone calls and texts) is not allowed during classroom or work time. All cell phone ringers must either be on *silent* or *vibrate*. Project SEARCH staff strongly discourage interns from bringing electronics and personal items to work. Should an intern choose to bring such items to work, it is at the intern's risk. Project SEARCH and job site staff are not responsible for personal items that become lost, misplaced, damaged, and/or stolen. Unless otherwise specified, personal email, cell phones, and electronic devices may not be used, except during breaks.

## Computer/Technology Guidelines

All Project SEARCH interns will be issued appropriate technology at the start of the year. **The intern in whose name a system account and/or computer hardware is issued will be responsible at all times for its appropriate use.** Non-compliance with the policies of your school district and Project SEARCH Computer Use Policy will result in disciplinary action. Electronic mail, network usage, and all stored files shall not be considered confidential and may

be monitored at any time by staff to ensure appropriate use. The District(s) and Project SEARCH cooperate fully with local, state or federal officials in any investigation concerning or relating to violations of computer crime laws. Contents of e-mail and network communications are governed by the South Dakota Open Records Act; proper authorities will be given full access to all requested information.

All Interns agree to abide by the following:

- 1) Interns will have access to all available forms of electronic media and communication that support the educational goals and objectives of your school district and the Project SEARCH Program.
- 2) Interns are responsible for their ethical and educational use of the technology resources of your school district, Project SEARCH and the Department of Rehabilitation Services.
- 3) Access to Project SEARCH and technology resources is a privilege and not a right.
- 4) Transmission of any material that is in violation of any federal or state law is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to the following: confidential information, copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material, and computer viruses.
- 5) Any attempt to alter data, the configuration of a computer, or the files of another user, without the consent of the individual, technology administrator, Program Coordinator, or Skills Trainer will be considered an act of vandalism and subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the discipline procedures.
- 6) Do not access, use, or change computer files that do not belong to you.
- 7) Do not reveal your full name, phone number, home address, social security number, credit card numbers, password or passwords of other people.
- 8) Remember that storage is not guaranteed to be private or confidential; your school district, Project SEARCH, and/or VR staff may access anything on your computer at any time, including email.
- 9) If you inadvertently access a web site that contains obscene, pornographic or otherwise offensive material, notify the program coordinator or skills trainer immediately so that such sites can be blocked from further access. This is not merely a request; it is a responsibility.
- 10) Interns should maintain high integrity with regard to email content. Always use appropriate language. Do not transmit language/material that is profane, obscene, abusive, or offensive to others.
- 11) Do not send mass e-mails, chain letters or spam. Do not private chat during class.

The aforementioned is a guide, and is subject to change as needs arise, or based on decisions made by the Project SEARCH Team.

## Respectful Environment

Project SEARCH believes everyone has the right to work in a respectful environment, free of discrimination and harassment. Each intern and each employee has the right to be treated with respect and dignity. Any conduct, comment or gesture, either overt or subtle that is likely to offend someone will be addressed swiftly and seriously. Interns will also be required to follow the specific harassment policies of the participating jobsite hosts.

Should an intern feel s/he is the victim of discrimination and/or harassment, complaints can be filed with the Project SEARCH Program Coordinator Heather Hoeye (see contact information below) or the Monument Health Human Resources Department, 605-755-5510

## Attendance Policy

Interns are expected to attend Project SEARCH every day. When an intern is unable to attend Project SEARCH, he or she *must contact the instructor and their job site manager or supervisor directly*. This can be done by calling the instructor and manager (*texting is not an acceptable method unless permission for this type of correspondence has been given*). If the instructor is not available, the intern will need to leave a message with name and reason for the absence.

Three (3) excused absences are permitted per rotation (12 weeks). Any absences over this may result in a team meeting, disciplinary action and result a stipend reduction for the day. Continued absences may result in removal from the program.

If the intern is aware of an upcoming absence, a "Request for Time Off" form must be completed at least three (3) days prior to the absence and given to the instructor for approval. This can be used for scheduled doctor appointments, agency meetings and interviews.

Tardiness over 5 minutes may result in stipend deductions in the amount of \$2.00 per 5 minutes late. Repeated tardiness could lead to dismissal from the program. After the third tardy, a meeting will be held with the instructor, parent and case manager to discuss the tardiness and come up with a plan of action. A sample stipend deduction worksheet can be found at the end of this handbook.

### Important Note:

The following steps may be used for absences exceeding the three (3) excused absences and/or one (1) no-call no-show absence.

- 1<sup>st</sup> Offense** A meeting will be held with the intern, the mentor and the Project SEARCH instructor. A stipend reduction of \$10 may be given.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Offense** A team meeting will be scheduled to discuss the absences and create a plan to ensure attendance meets program guidelines. The team will consist of the intern, parent/guardian, instructor, case manager, VR Counselor, and associate school representative. A stipend deduction will be given of at least \$10.00.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Offense** A team meeting will be scheduled to discuss possible dismissal from the program. If dismissal is not agreed upon by the team, an action plan will be put in place to deter further absences. The outcome will be a team decision. A stipend deduction of at least \$10.00 will be given.

- 4<sup>th</sup> Offense** A team meeting will be scheduled and the final decision regarding dismissal from the program will be determined by the Project SEARCH team, along with a stipend deduction of at least \$10.00.

## Discipline Policy

In the case where interns do not demonstrate, through behavior or words, a commitment to the goals and expectations laid out by the Project SEARCH Program, the Project SEARCH Team will assess the need for adaptations, suspension, voluntary withdrawal, or a discharge from the program. As in any workplace, there are situations that may arise that require immediate disciplinary action. Project SEARCH staff will be proactive on program policy. An integral part of the Project SEARCH program is to support interns in understanding the Code of Conduct required by all Monument Health employees. While Project SEARCH staff will take all efforts to inform and model appropriate work behavior, situations may arise when disciplinary action is necessary.

Project SEARCH staff retains the right to take disciplinary actions towards any intern for the following reasons that may include, but are not limited to:

1. Rules violations.
2. Inappropriate behavior, including sexual harassment.
3. Theft or misuse of Project SEARCH or Monument Health property, or the property of others.
4. Failure to report charges of a summary, misdemeanor, or felony offense.
5. Offensive and/or abusive language or conduct toward the public, related officials, employees or any other persons.
6. Insubordination.
7. Failure to adequately perform the duties and responsibilities of their position.
8. Negligence in the care and handling of Project SEARCH or Monument Health owned, leased, or issued property.
9. Conviction of criminal offenses.
10. Willful violations of Project SEARCH rules, regulations, policies, and/or procedures.
11. Working under the influence of, possessing alcoholic beverages, or illegal drugs on the job.
12. Providing false information in the commission of work duties or investigations, falsifying records and other documents/records.

The above listing is not to be construed as an all-inclusive list for disciplinary action.

## Types of Disciplinary Actions

Project SEARCH staff, in consultation with the intern's IEP Team members, may take the following remedial action:

1. Verbal Reprimand: Project SEARCH staff may choose to verbally reprimand an intern for wrongdoing. Detailed notations of the misbehavior and corrective actions will be discussed with the intern.
  - a. Verbal reprimands are to be noted and placed in a departmental file with a copy given to the intern.
2. Written Reprimand: Written reprimands are to detail the violation and a corrective plan, with reasonable timetables for correcting the deficient areas of concern.

- a. Reprimands should be presented to the intern and copies submitted to the intern's IEP file.
  - b. All written reprimands will be reviewed with the intern at a face-to-face meeting. In addition, written reprimands will be reviewed at the following monthly meeting.
3. Suspension: If violations are severe enough, an intern may be suspended.
  - a. Documentation detailing the violations and any other pertinent information will be provided to the intern, their parent/guardian, VR, participating school district and other pertinent agencies at a face-to-face meeting.
  - b. All recommended actions will be discussed and thoroughly reviewed with the intern along with a corrective plan of action.
  - c. Monument Health Liaison will be notified and involved with this meeting.
4. Discharge: Project SEARCH staff, after consultation with the IEP team (including the Monument Health liaison) may recommend the discharge of an employee following a conscientious attempt to correct violations.

Note: Project SEARCH staff may begin at any step of the process based on the severity of the act(s).

### Contact Information

Parents and guardians should address any questions and concerns regarding an intern's work experience to the Project SEARCH Program Manager. Please do not contact job site supervisors directly.

**Pamila K. Junek**, Project SEARCH Program Manager / Employment Specialist CESP  
605-381-8024 (Cell)  
pjunek@bhssc.org



## Grievance Procedures

Interns are entitled to filing a grievance if they disagree with a disciplinary action taken by Project SEARCH staff or IEP team.

1. Aggrieved interns may verbally present a grievance to Project SEARCH staff within ten (10) working days of the occurrence. All grievances will be reviewed with the IEP team.
2. After discussing the issue with the IEP team, a written response will be provided within five (5) working days of receipt of the grievance.
3. If the intern or the IEP team cannot meet the time frames, either party may request an extension. The request for an extension must be in writing.

The intern and/or the intern's family can ask for assistance from either their VR Counselor or their home district Case Manager to assist in filing a grievance.

If the intern or their representative is not satisfied with the resolution, they will follow the grievance policy of the intern's resident school district.

If at any time, an intern is determined ineligible for VR services or VR funded services are discontinued, the intern will be informed in writing of the denial decision and due process/appeal procedures by their local VR Counselor.

## Monument Health Project SEARCH Intern Contract

For my participation in the Project SEARCH program, I will receive a monthly stipend from VR. It is not to be considered a wage. I am not an employee of Monument Health. I must follow the terms of this contract or deductions may be taken from my stipend, and/or I could be removed from the program.

- I will call my teacher when I am absent or tardy. Being late or absent could reduce my stipend.
- I will complete my internship rotations unless I accept competitive employment that meets program guidelines.
- I will attend daily from 8:00-2:30, Monday-Friday. Vacation days will be determined by the Rapid City Public School District.
- I will apply for support programs that may assist me in reaching the goals of the Project SEARCH program.
- I will dress appropriately and follow the dress code.
- I will bathe/shower, brush my teeth, wear antiperspirant, fix my hair in the morning, and wear clean clothes daily. If my hygiene is unacceptable, I will be sent home to clean up quickly, return to Project SEARCH, and lose part of my stipend.
- I am responsible for my meals. My stipend can be used for this cost. I may bring my own lunch or purchase it at the cafeteria.
- I will follow the rules of the host business and program.
- I will attend and participate in scheduled meetings with my team.
- I will actively seek competitive employment.
- My continuing participation in the Project SEARCH program may be reviewed at any time.

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Intern Name (please print)

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Intern Signature

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Date

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Parent/Guardian Name (please print)

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Parent/Guardian Signature

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Date

# Stipend Deduction Worksheet

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount of deduction: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Deduction:

- Unexcused Absence - \$10.00 for every day unexcused
- Uniform Code - \$5.00 after three (3) strikes
- Disrespect for Authority - \$5.00 per documented incident
- Disrespect for Team Members - \$5.00 per documented incident
- Late - \$2.00=5 minutes, \$4=10 minutes, \$6=15 minutes, etc.
- Hygiene and Grooming - \$5.00 after three (3) strikes
- Badge - \$5.00 after three (3) strikes
- Other (identify) \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Notes (attach document if needed)

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Program Coordinator Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Intern Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Signature Page

I have received and understand the Project SEARCH Intern Handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Intern Name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Intern Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date