# Project SEARCH Engagement Request

# Q and A

Posted Sept. 3, 2024

A question-and-answer (Q and A) opportunity for the Project SEARCH Engagement Request was open from August 5 through August 30, 2024. Below are the questions that were asked and their answers.

1. **Question:** How many Project SEARCH student interns typically have a waiver and how many typically access “Extended Employment” (EE) services?

**Answer:** There were 71 PS student interns for the 2023-24 school year. Of those:

* 31 (44%) had a waiver
* 7 (10%) are still in the process of applying for a waiver
* 27 (38%) will likely be utilizing EE for ongoing support
* 5 (7%) will not have any ongoing support (although it was noted that one of those could benefit from EE if there was that service available to them)

1. **Question:** I was not able to attend the webinar on August 9, 2024. Was it recorded?

**Answer:** Yes, you can access the [recorded webinar here](https://youtu.be/k1cB4IpLEs4). You can also access the [webinar presentation slides here](https://mn.gov/deed/assets/august-2024-engagement-acc_tcm1045-640653.pdf).

1. **Question:** We are a newer VRS provider and we did not sign up for any pre-ets services. If we were to submit an application for this program will that make a difference?

**Answer:** One requirement for this opportunity is that you have Pre-ETS on your contract. So unfortunately, if you don’t have those on your contract, that would make you ineligible at this time.

1. **Question:** Our agency is applying for one of the Project SEARCH sites currently open. We applied for an opportunity earlier this year and we are wondering if we could re-use one of the letters of endorsement from that opportunity?

**Answer:** Unfortunately, that is not something we can answer. The reviewers will look at each application individually and score each item based on their own opinions. In other words, it would be up to each person to decide whether or not to score less on a letter of endorsement that was used for another opportunity.

1. **Question(s):** A couple of questions we have for this opportunity are:
2. For the 8-10 students would there be just one staff responsible for the group (we have vocational rehab counselors)
3. This would fall under Pre-ets funding correct? So the rate would be the same as Pre-ets?
4. The times for the internship would that follow school times 8a-4p?

**Answer(s):** To clarify, the school district provides the primary services to students during the Project SEARCH school year while the students are in internships (i.e. they have an instructor and job coaches that support the students). The role of the “Provider Agency” is provider periodic Pre-ETS services for students throughout the school year (individually and/or in groups). The provider agency works with the instructor and the VRS counselor to decide how often the Pre-ETS would be provided (some come provider agency staff come out once a week, some less frequently). A main reason for providing Pre-ETS is to allow the provider agency staff to get to know the students and observe their progression throughout the year so that there can be a smooth transition into job placement towards the end of the school year. A PBA is authorized between the 2nd and 3rd (final) internship rotation so that students can begin getting ready to look for a job for when they are done with their internships.

So to answer your questions:

1. Your agency would decide how many staff would serve the students with Pre-ETS and placement. Ideally the same staff would providing Pre-ETS would also provide the placement services. It is nice when it can be one consistent person- that is usually how things operate at most of the current sites.
2. The Pre-ETS services would indeed fall under the same rates that your agency has on your current DEED-VRS P/T master contract.
3. The time that students are on site for Project SEARCH is for the full school day, and they are there on the same school days as the rest of the school district. As for the exact times, that varies per site.