



## Project SEARCH Program FAQs



**Children's**  
Hospital of Wisconsin

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### What is Project SEARCH?

The Project SEARCH Program is a unique, business-led, one-year, transition program that takes place entirely in a host business. Total workplace emersion facilitates a seamless combination of classroom instruction, career exploration and relevant job-skills training through strategically designed internships.

#### How long has Project SEARCH existed?

Project SEARCH was developed in 1996 by Nurse J. Erin Riehle, then the Director of the Emergency Department at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center. Project SEARCH Children's Hospital of Wisconsin enrolled their first class of interns in September 2011. Project SEARCH ProHealth Care Waukesha Memorial Hospital enrolled their first class in September 2013.

#### How are decisions made for admission?

An application must be completed entirely and submitted by each year's deadline. Applications are reviewed for eligibility and then an assessment is conducted by Project SEARCH staff. The final step is participation in the "selection day". Information from the application, assessment and selection day are taken into consideration when the selection team chooses interns for the program. Applicants are informed of admittance by early June. *Applications must have an open case with DVR and a long-term funding source.*

#### What is the skill level needed?

The intern must have basic number and word recognition skills. He/she should have the ability to learn systematic work routines and be able to communicate his/her needs. Interns must have completed all high school credits necessary for graduation.

#### Is there a wait list to get into the program?

Project SEARCH can accept a maximum of 12 interns for each location. Those who are not selected for the program are placed on a wait list in the event that an opening becomes available. Previous applicants can reapply the following year.

### **Is transportation provided?**

Each intern is responsible for his/her transportation to and from the program. Mobility training can be provided.

### **What is the intern's daily schedule?**

The interns begin each day in the training room at 8:00 a.m. working on employability skills using the approved Project SEARCH curriculum and building specific job related skills needed for each rotation. The interns work in their department from 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. and return to the training room for journaling and daily wrap up until 2:30 p.m.

### **What is the program year?**

Project SEARCH runs from early September to early June with a winter and spring break.

### **How are interns assigned to rotations?**

Project SEARCH staff assess the skill sets, prior to experience and career goals of each intern to match department needs. After a brief introduction to each rotation, the intern expresses his/her interests and those are taken into consideration when assigning their rotations.

### **Are these paid internships?**

No, in the healthcare field, unpaid internships are common in trade for real work experience.

### **How are internships/rotations developed?**

After a department expresses an interest in hosting an intern, Project SEARCH staff conducts a thorough job and task options analysis to understand the expectations, skill sets and needs of each department. Available rotations options may change throughout the year depending on the department workflow needs.

### **Do we rotate the interns through the same departments?**

The goal is for each intern to complete three different rotations during the year. An intern may be placed in a rotation twice if the team decides that is best to meet his/her career goals. We utilize a wide variety of departments. Most departments host an intern once or twice per year.

### **Are interns ever left alone?**

Interns are expected to become independent. Project SEARCH does not provide 100% job coaching. A mentor who works closely with the intern is selected by the department manager and Project SEARCH staff.

### **Is there an evaluation process to gauge their progress while in each rotation?**

Project SEARCH and department staff communicate daily regarding the intern's work production and progress. Daily check-ins as well as brief weekly meetings to discuss development are held with each intern. Interns also have a monthly meeting with DVR, Project SEARCH staff and parents.

### **What is the job placement process?**

During orientation, the Project SEARCH intern agrees to actively pursue employment. Project SEARCH and Easter Seals staff work intensely to help each intern seek and apply for appropriate jobs, develop a resume, prepare for interviews and request letters of recommendation from department management. Our goal is 100% competitive employment.

### **What is competitive employment?**

Competitive employment is defined as 20 hours/week in a integrated setting making prevailing wage for that position.

***If you're interested in the program or for more information, contact Beth Andrea Lohmann at [bethl@eastersealswise.com](mailto:bethl@eastersealswise.com) or (262) 953-2208.***



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