

## OVERVIEW

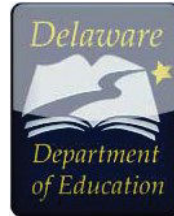
Project SEARCH is a nine-month school-to-work program for students 18 to 22 years old with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The program operates entirely within the host business. Total workplace immersion facilitates a seamless combination of classroom instruction, career exploration, and on-the-job training and support. The goal for each student is competitive employment in the community using the skills he or she has acquired at the host business. The program provides real-life work experience combined with training in employability and independent living skills to help young adults with disabilities make the successful transition from school to a productive adult life.

### Why Does It Work?

- Extensive training period and career exploration
- Innovative adaptations
- Long-term job coaching
- Continuous feedback from instructor, job coaches and employers
- Changes in business culture with far-reaching positive effects on attitudes about hiring people with disabilities and the range of jobs in which they can be successful



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



For more information, email:

### Melissa Dougherty

Project SEARCH Program Coordinator  
[melissa.dougherty@redclay.k12.de.us](mailto:melissa.dougherty@redclay.k12.de.us)

### Erica Sadler

Diversity & Inclusion Special Partnerships  
ChristianaCare  
[erica.sadler@christianacare.org](mailto:erica.sadler@christianacare.org)

For additional information:

[www.christianacare.org/project-search](http://www.christianacare.org/project-search)

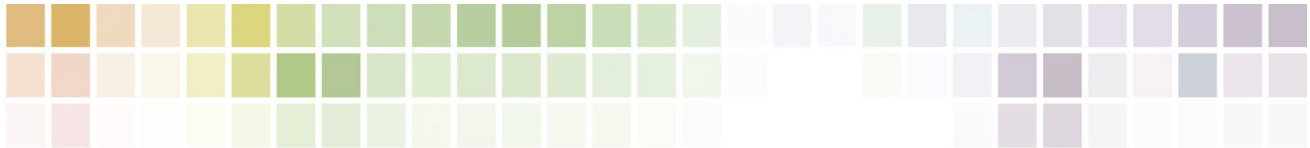
Follow us on Facebook:



## Project SEARCH

High School Transition Program





## Eligibility and Student Selection

Project SEARCH serves students in their last year of high school who have an Individual Education Program. These students have intellectual and developmental disabilities and are highly motivated to achieve competitive employment. Qualifying students are referred to the program through their high schools, family members or a vocational rehabilitation counselor. They apply in the winter and spring in the year prior to entering the program. A team of Project SEARCH staff facilitates the selection process that includes student application reviews, skills assessments, tours and candidate interviews. The program can accommodate up to 12 students.

## Yearly Calendar

Students attend the program for a full school year in the host business. A special education teacher and skills trainers work to meet the educational and training needs of the students over the course of the year. There is a three-week orientation followed by three, 11-week internship rotations which focus on competitive, marketable and transferable skills.



**“I love coming to Project SEARCH and working every day because I am part of a team.”**

## Project SEARCH Intern

### Employment Skills Curriculum

Curriculum topics include: Team Building, Workplace Safety, Technology, Self-Advocacy Skills, Preparing for and Maintaining Employment, Financial Literacy, Health and Wellness, Social Skills, Communication, Presentation Skills, Interviewing and Job Search Skills.

### Daily Schedule

Students are responsible for their own transportation to and from the host business each day. The daily schedule is 7:30 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. (6.75 hours). The first hour of the day is spent in the classroom, provided by the host business, where the employment skills curriculum is taught by a special education instructor. Students then spend the majority of their day on their work rotation sites, including lunch with their assigned department. At the end of the day, students return to the classroom for a recap of their day and reflection.

### Job Placement/Retention

During the last few months, the program’s emphasis is on refining skills, achieving career goals and obtaining job placement. Services are identified in the community that provide assistance with the necessary adaptations required to perform a specific job, job coaching and long-term follow-along, if appropriate. Students leave with a portfolio containing a resume, letters of recommendation, and any awards or special recognitions received while in the program.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **How long is the Project SEARCH program?**

Project SEARCH lasts for the full school year in the host business.

### **How are internship decisions made for interns?**

Work sites are identified with input from the intern, Project SEARCH staff and ChristianaCare to ensure the best internship experience.

### **How do students receive feedback during their internships?**

Once a student is selected, a mentor is assigned at his or her work site. The mentor, along with the instructor and skills trainers, provides consistent feedback and guidance while helping to develop the core skills necessary for successful employment.

### **Can I participate in Project SEARCH if I live outside of the Red Clay Consolidated School District?**

Yes. Project SEARCH is open to all New Castle County school districts.

### **What is the application process?**

~ Complete a Project SEARCH ChristianaCare application <https://christianacare.org/about/whoweare/project-search/>

~ Submit the Project SEARCH application to [projectsearch@redclay.k12.de.us](mailto:projectsearch@redclay.k12.de.us) to be reviewed by the selection committee

~ Applicants participate in selection process (Interview, Tour, Skills Assessment)

~ Applicants will be notified in April

