



Project SEARCH™ is an international program that has grown from a single program site at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center to more than 300 sites across the United States and Canada, England, Scotland, Ireland, and Australia. Project SEARCH™'s primary objective is to secure competitive employment for people with disabilities. The program is approved by the New York State Education Department and focuses on transitional education and takes place entirely at the workplace. The person-centered philosophy of Project SEARCH™ helps students build skills that will lead to a career and allow them to graduate with a work certificate.

Application and enrollment contact:

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For general information contact:

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Project SEARCH™ Coordinator

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Parents or students seeking additional information should contact their local school district.

The Western New York Collaborative of Project SEARCH™ is provided through Aspire of WNY, Erie 1 BOCES and The Summit Center with host site Beechwood Continuing Care.



Office for People With Developmental Disabilities



Project | SEARCH™

A High School Transition Program

Project SEARCH™ is an international trademark and copyrighted program model.

Western New York Project SEARCH™ Collaborative is a business-led partnership which offers a school-to-work program alternative for students with disabilities who are in their last year of high school. The program is provided by Beechwood Continuing Care in conjunction with Erie 1 BOCES, Aspire of WNY and The Summit Center.

At its beautiful, Amherst location, Beechwood Continuing Care provides a classroom for the participating interns along with employees who serve as professional mentors. The team consists of a teacher, teacher aides and job coach to meet the educational and training needs of the interns. Job placement is the goal of Project SEARCH™ and the team assists each intern in defining career goals.

By combining real-life work experience, with training in employment and independent living skills, the goal is for each intern to obtain competitive, integrated employment. Upon successful completion of the program, interns may be offered employment at Beechwood in a job that aligns with the skills they've learned.

A series of job rotations lasting up to ten weeks allows students to seek positions that best suit their interests and skills. They receive support with accommodations, adaptations and on-the-job coaching.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Students ages 18-21 who are eligible for ACCESS-VR and/or OPWDD services
- Desire to be competitively employed
- Completion of all academic requirements for high school graduation
- Basic communication skills
- Appropriate social, grooming, and hygiene skills
- Independent toileting and feeding skills
- Passed drug screening and background checks

Placement in Project SEARCH™ is determined by your local school district's Committee on Special Education. Upon successful completion of the program, a student will earn the Skills & Achievement Commencement Credential.



Project SEARCH™ operates Monday – Friday, from 8:15 a.m. – 2:45 p.m., from September – June.

On a typical day:

- Interns attend employability skills classes at Beechwood. Lessons are based on daily living skills such as finances, nutrition, and resume writing.
- Interns participate in non-paid job rotations (10-12 weeks each) throughout Beechwood including: gift shop, working directly with Beechwood residents, clerical/office work, food preparation, laundry service, inventory support, and maintenance.
- Mobility (transportation) training may be provided as part of the program.

Both Aspire and Summit provide job coaches with a specialization in job development and placement. These job coaches work with the interns until the assigned tasks can be performed independently. The time and instruction is individualized.

What people say about Project SEARCH™ at Beechwood:

"This has been an awesome experience and I feel proud. I look forward to getting a good job in the future."
– Project SEARCH™ intern

"Project SEARCH™ has given my son the opportunity to use the skills he has and learn new ones. His self-esteem has improved and he seems more confident."
– Parent of Project SEARCH™ intern

"The fact that Project SEARCH™ students and Beechwood staff are so comfortable working together validates why we are partners. You hear that business and education don't mix? Guess what! They mix here at Beechwood."
– Kathy Simme, HR Director, Beechwood Continuing Care

