

Features of the Secondary Transition Experience Program (STEP)

1. **School Credit:** STEP is approved by the Illinois State Board of Education, as a means for students to gain school credit for on-the-job work experiences. As such, STEP is recognized statewide, as a potential transition service for students with disabilities, assisting in employment goals for transition.
2. **Linkage with DHS/Div. of Rehabilitation Services:** All students who participate in STEP are, by design, linked with DHS/DRS as active vocational rehabilitation customers. All participating students are connected with a DRS Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, who can provide transition advice re employment, college, further vocational training, and other adult services.
3. **Consultation/Training:** The STEP Coordinator is available to all participating schools, for consultation on a number of issues, including, but not limited to:
 - Job placement ideas/support
 - Job training/transition resources and advice
 - IEP meeting consult/input re transition-related issues
 - Job coach/teacher training
 - Parent training/support re transition
 - Transition/Career class consult/guest speaking
4. **Flexibility/Individualized Programming:** STEP allows, and in fact encourages, a high degree of programming flexibility, in keeping with the individualized nature of Special Education services. For example, students can be engaged in either paid employment, or volunteer work for STEP credit. Those in volunteer work may receive a training stipend, if they meet the criteria (see “Request for Job Training Stipend” form.) Further, although students are generally expected to work 10 hours or more per week for program participation, an exception to work 5-10 hours per week can be made for those students who are not yet able to work 10 hours or more.
5. **Funding:** Participating schools are allotted an annual budget of \$200 times the number of participating students. Thus, a school with 10 DRS-registered students reporting work hours, will be allotted \$2000.00 for the schoolyear. These monies can be utilized to request student stipends during the schoolyear. Also, at the start of the 4th Quarter, schools that are on target to spend less than their allotted amount can submit a request to utilize a specified amount of remaining STEP funds for student job training supplies and services other than stipends. Hence, a school program that is very successful in helping students obtain employer-paid positions, may request funding of other specific items for the STEP program, e.g., vocational training materials, adaptive vocational equipment, etc. (see “STEP Budget Policy – Student Stipends/Supplies”).