

**STOUT VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION INSTITUTE-SERVICES**

**Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Institute**

**University of Wisconsin-Stout**

**Menomonie, Wisconsin 54751**

**REQUEST FOR FUNDS**

**ESTABLISHING A MODEL TRANSITION PARTNERSHIP CHARTER  
SCHOOL**

**Significance:**

The transition from secondary school and living with family to work and independent living is a difficult one for most students. The transition is significantly more difficult for young adults with disabilities. An opportunity to practice the skills taught in high school in an environment with significant support and minimal risks is crucial for the individual to develop into a lifelong worker and functional member of the community. A university based vocational rehabilitation program provides an ideal setting for this learning.

The **Transition Partnership Charter School (TPCS)** will provide classroom and supported experiential learning for students with disabilities from throughout western Wisconsin. An example of the potential of learning in an experiential environment is the experiences of a young woman involved in the current pilot program. Prior to enrollment she nearly lost a subsidized position with as full time job coach due to her compulsive talking habits. Co-workers were noted to avoid contact with her due to her interrupting and incessant chatter. In the fall of 2004 she entered the pilot project and lived in the dorm at Stout. Over the next four months she was involved in numerous campus based work experience positions and on- job assessments. At this point she took a part-time position in the community. After approximately 20 hours on the job the employer stated a job coach was no longer necessary to assist the student in successfully performing the job. She has also developed new friends and acquaintances as her social skills have improved.

Transition from school to work is a priority of the youth programs of the Department of Labor. When this process involves students with disabilities, services are a priority of the Department of Education as documented in the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act** and the **Rehabilitation Act**. The **No Child Left Behind** legislation also indicates the need to serve students in this process. Federal legislation and funding also supports the Charter School as an option to traditional school systems to meet specific student needs.

As a charter school, students in any of the 426 public school districts in Wisconsin can apply to attend TPCS. This mechanism is available nationally through the federal

charter schools grant program providing funding to states. This allows the basic structure of the TPCS to be replicated on a national basis.

**Program Description:**

Funding of this proposal will support model demonstration, direct service to students with disabilities, research and national dissemination efforts of the transition partnership. Over an 18 month period the following activities will be completed:

- \*Develop a transition program in partnership with the Menomonie (Wisconsin) Public Schools within a **charter** school structure placing emphasis on personal development, independent living and vocational development.
  
- \*Recruit 30 young adults with secondary school status to enroll in the TPCS between the ages of 18 and 22. A group of 30 students will also be identified as a control group.
  
- \*Provide transition programming over the course of the 2005-06 school year.
  
- \*Conduct research on the outcomes of the 2005-06 school year measuring the student's achievement of personal development, independent living and vocational goals.
  
- \*Identify potential funding sources to support ongoing expenses of operating the TPCS.
  
- \*Develop a manuscript describing the model, research findings and suggested best practice in establishing a transition charter school.
  
- \*Distribute manuscript, develop webpage and provide presentations at national and regional conferences.

**Organization and Capacity:**

The Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Institute (SVRI) is a part of the College of Human Development at the University of Wisconsin-Stout in Menomonie, Wisconsin. The research, training and services of SVRI are known nationally and internationally as relevant and innovative. Training has been provided to professionals from all fifty states and over in over ten foreign countries. The service programs at SVRI were initiated as a vocational evaluation demonstration project in 1967 to provide a format for research and teaching as well as providing service to area citizens with disabilities. Since that time an employment program with federal Projects With Industry funding and an assistive technology program have been added.

These specialized services have been provided to thousands of persons with disabilities, as well as hundreds of students with disabilities who were in the transition process. The Transition Partnership Charter School (TPCS) utilizes the experiences of the past 37 years to provide a comprehensive, coordinated and integrated program of transition.

With the partnership with the local public school system (Menomonie) formal education and traditional curriculum can be integrated with the vocational rehabilitation services of SVRI. Through this model lessons learned in the classroom can be practiced in campus and community based employment sites, in the labs and residence hall of SVRI and the community at large.

The key partnership that will be demonstrated in this project will be the vocational rehabilitation programs of SVRI and the instruction and case coordination capacity of the Menomonie Public School's Transition staff. This partnership, while currently unique, would be replicable throughout the country. Through the dissemination efforts this model and findings would be presented in numerous formats and venues to foster the development other transition programs involving the partnership secondary or charter schools with vocational rehabilitation programs universities. Over 2,000 professionals will be provided this information.

**Timetable:** The TPCS will follow the following timeline in meeting the objectives of the project from May 2005 to February 2007:

**Unfunded preparation, 2005**

May to August 2005                      Recruit 30 students to enroll in the TPCS.

**Funded Program, 2005-07**

September (05) to May (06)    Provide instruction and vocational programming

March (06) to August (06)    Conduct research and develop manuscript

August (06) to February (07)    Disseminate findings

**Contact: Al Noll/Dave Swan, Directors**

**Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Institute - Services Center**

**University of Wisconsin-Stout**

**Menomonie, Wisconsin 54751**

**715-232-2379**

**Past Funding:**

The Transition Partnership Charter School has operated during the 2004-05 school year with three students in a pilot project. Funding has been received from the Stout Foundation, Menomonie Public Schools, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and parental support. This combination of support would be impossible to assemble for a larger group of students. Thus, support is sought through the earmark process to allow for a demonstration on a larger scale and the development of alternate funding support.

SVRI has been the recipient of many federal grants. This has included a Research and Training Center (33 years), Projects With Industry (19 years) and Long Term Training (6 different projects) grants from the Department of Education. Numerous other grants and contracts have been awarded on a state or local level. This history of government

funding has allowed SVRI to develop appropriate methods of accounting and reporting fund utilization and program outcomes.

**Program Expenses:**

*Personnel (Coordinator, teacher, job coaches, placement and other service staff)	
\$161,625	
*Fringe Benefits	\$68,342
*Staff Travel	\$4,680
*Rehabilitation Services (assessment, benefits counseling, assistive technology)	\$36,000
*Student room and board	\$64,000
*Student transportation	\$12,000

**Capitol Expenses:**

*Dorm remodeling and disability related accommodations	\$500,000
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**TOTAL Costs** **\$846,647**

**Contacts with Congress:**

This proposal has been discussed with Congressman Kind, Congressman Obey and Senator Kohl.