

Guide • Virtual Service Delivery to Students with Disabilities



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During the COVID-19 Pandemic, Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) has been working to establish strategies and techniques to navigate the delivery of virtual Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). The following guidance is not meant to be definitive; rather, it provides guidelines and recommendations gleaned from a variety of well-known and respected national and local sources.

The following are suggested when supporting students with transition and/or Pre-ETS:

Maintaining Contact

1. Maintaining contact with students and youth remains the expectation and a best practice. The following are possible options:
 - a) Contact students using State issued or approved phone, email, text, Microsoft Teams, or regular mail.
 - b) Contact parents/authorized representatives to check in on students and offer consultation on appropriate activities.
 - c) Contact your schools to let them know you are:
 - i. Maintaining contact with students
 - ii. Available for consultation
 - iii. Able to participate in virtual Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)
 - iv. Available to discuss how to provide and supplement their transition activities
 - d) Contact teachers to see how they are engaging with students and ask how vocational rehabilitation (VR) can support transition activities.
 - e) Coordinate with school contacts to plan for summer work experiences.
 - f) Document all contacts and services provided in Aware.

Access

2. Access to virtual service delivery will vary greatly by student. Circumstances may not allow for services to be provided virtually; however, the following reasonable efforts should be considered:
 - a) Survey or contact students to learn about the communication/technology resources they have at home.
 - b) Use smartphone if available.
 - c) Use home phone if available.

- d) Use smart TV features if available.
- e) Use of an HDMI cable so TV can be used for large screen viewing.
- f) Consider having materials downloaded on a thumb drive if internet is not available.
- g) If necessary, provide hard copy materials to the student if internet or a computer is not available.

Ethical Considerations

3. Ethical considerations related to the use of distance counseling and technology are important when initiating services for students and their parents/guardians. The following should be discussed prior to service delivery:
- a) Limits of technology including risks and benefits.
 - b) Virtual boundaries, such as sharing information, inappropriate chats, photos, etc.
 - c) Digital footprints (what happens on the net stays on the net).
 - d) Confidentiality related to written, video, and audio communication.

Informed Choice

4. Informed choice allows students and parents/guardians to weigh information presented to them when making decisions. It is expected that counselors will engage in and document informed choice discussions with students and parents/guardians. Essential questions to ask when facilitating an informed choice discussion should include:
- a) Is the student considered at higher risk as outlined by the Centers for Disease Control? <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/index.html>
 - b) Does the student live with family members at higher risk as outlined by the CDC?
 - c) Is physical distancing possible in the job and workplace being considered?
 - d) Is the employer implementing steps to reduce the exposure to COVID 19?
 - e) Will the student have access to supports necessary to be successful on the job?
 - f) Will working provide physical and mental health benefits for the student?

*For more information, please review the MRS Informed Choice Policy and/or consult with your manager:

<http://mrselearn.org/Home/RehabServManual/tabid/74/function443/ViewSingle/ManualltemId/282/Default.aspx?SearchText=informed+choice>

Virtual Services Content

5. Virtual services content can include modifying existing services or developing new services in response to current conditions. Services should include the following:
 - a) Meets the needs of the student.
 - b) Meets the definition of one of the five required Pre-ETS services (click the hyperlinks below).
 - i. [Job exploration counseling](#)
 - ii. [Work-based learning experiences, which may include in-school or after school opportunities, experiences outside of the traditional school setting, and/or internships](#)
 - iii. [Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs](#)
 - iv. [Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living](#)
 - v. [Instruction in self-advocacy](#)
 - c) Includes similar content as provided with face-to-face delivery.
 - d) Provides services through the most secure methods possible.
 - e) Provides counselors the option to observe service delivery.
 - f) Allows counselor/vendors the ability to document student participation and progress.
 - g) Includes accessibility features such as closed captioning, screen reader, etc.

Vendors

6. When working with vendors who are delivering services virtually, the following should be considered:
 - a) Existing services
 - i. Does it lend itself well to virtual service delivery?
 - ii. Does it include the same content?
 - iii. Were items purchased such as software, online platform, thumb drives, printed hard copies, postage, HDMI cables, etc.

- iv. Is there additional training vendors must provide to students prior to service delivery?
 - v. Will services be provided individually or in group settings? If group, determine a manageable/safe size?
 - vi. Are services relying on pre-recorded content, or will they be delivered live?
- b) New services (in addition to some of the above considerations)
- i. Does it meet the definition of an allowable Pre-ETS service?
 - ii. Is there a documented need?

Virtual Service Delivery Platforms

7. There are many virtual service delivery platforms, each having certain advantages and disadvantages. **MRS is required to use Microsoft Teams when scheduling meetings or scheduling to directly provide services to customers.** However, MRS may join other platforms and participate and/or directly provide services when invited. When this occurs, it is important to consider the following:
- a) Security vulnerability - is the platform encrypted?
 - b) Confidentiality - can confidentiality be maintained during the meeting?
 - c) Accessibility - is the platform accessible to students with different abilities?
 - d) Reliability - confidence in the technology, and that it will function as intended?
 - e) User friendly - is it easy to understand and navigate?
 - f) Affordability - is it free or does it have a cost?

Platforms Frequently Used By Providers				
Platform	Description	Cost	Can it be HIPAA Compliant?	Accessibility Features
Zoom	Video & web conferencing platform	Free for basic	Yes	https://zoom.us/accessibility
Microsoft Teams	Unified communication and collaboration platform	Free for basic	Yes	https://support.office.com/en-us/article/accessibility-overview-of-microsoft-

				teams-2d4009e7-1300-4766-87e8-7a217496c3d5
BlueJeans	Video conferencing service	Low cost	Yes	https://support.bluejeans.com/s/article/Accessibility-Features
Doxy.me	Telemedicine solution	Free for basic	Yes	https://help.doxy.me/en/articles/3626014-accessibility
Google Classroom	Developed for schools it creates a virtual classroom	Free	Yes	https://edu.google.com/why-google/accessibility/?modal_active=none
Google Hangouts	Allows photos, videos and group calls	Free	Only certain features	https://support.google.com/hangoutschat/answer/7652236?co=GENIE.Platform%3DDesktop&hl=en
Google Duo	Video chat mobile app	Free	Possibly, it features end-to-end encryption	https://www.neowin.net/news/google-is-reportedly-working-on-live-captions-for-duo-video-calls/
FaceTime	Video chat mobile app	Free	Possibly, it features end-to-end encryption	https://support.apple.com/en-us/HT210070

***Reminder: At this time, MRS staff may only use Microsoft Teams when scheduling online meetings/programming.**

Additionally, please remember documentation/case notes should support the virtual service delivery platform selected, as well as informed consent, ethical considerations, accommodations, rational for the service, etc. Remote or virtual service delivery still requires MRS counselors to maintain appropriate documentation whether the service is provided in-person or virtually.

Counselor Activities

8. There are many activities counselors can complete virtually during this time:

Job preparation activities

- a) Conduct mock interviews with students.
- b) Complete online applications, including companies who have increased hiring needs.

- c) Create resumes and cover letters.
- d) Coordinate online interviews.
- e) Assist students in developing statement/explanation/accountability letters.
- f) Research industries, educational, and technical training programs.
- g) Develop and maintain employer contacts.
- h) Consult with your District Business Representative as well as Business Relations Consultant.
- i) Access the Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP): www.tapability.org
 - i. For more information reference:
<http://mrselearn.org/Home/MRSPrograms/TAP/tabid/1700/Default.aspx>
- j) Support students with accessing technology they may not have experience using. The Job Accommodation Network may offer additional options to access technology <https://askjan.org/>
- k) Explore O*Net to assist students exploring career options:
<https://www.onetonline.org/>
- l) Explore MI Works: <https://www.michiganworks.org/job-seekers>

Job Retention

- a) Use this time to address benefits planning/counseling needs.
- b) Disability disclosure concerns.
- c) For those recently laid off, maintain communication with supervisor/employer to develop a return to work plan.
- d) For those still working, additional support may be needed if work tasks or routines have changed.

Links to resources and activities:

- a) WINTAC resources for the delivery of Pre-ETS
<http://www.wintac.org/content/resources-distance-service-delivery#pre-ets>
 Online Pre-ETS Platform (Counselor, Provider, etc. can administer), WINTAC,
 Explore Work online Pre-ETS platform: http://wintac-s3.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/topic-areas/ta_PreETS/Explore-Work-Introductory-Guide.pdf
- b) Pre-Employment Transition Services: A Guide for Collaboration Among State Rehabilitation Agencies and Education Partners
<http://wintac-s3.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/topic-areas/ta01-pre-ets/VRED-GUIDE-WINTAC-FINAL.pdf>
- c) Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) Resources – OSERS posted Questions and Answers on Providing Services to Children with Disabilities During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 Outbreak
<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/qa-covid-19-03-12-2020.pdf>
- d) Office of Special Education Resources, VR program performance Measures RSA Covid-19 FAQ: <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/rsa/supporting/rsa-faq-wioa-vr-covid-19-03-26-2020.pdf>
- e) WIOA/IDEA crosswalk: http://wintac-s3.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/topic-areas/ta_PreETS/WIOA-IDEA_Indicator_Visual_Accessible.pdf
- f) WIOA/IDEA/Perkins Crosswalk: <http://wintac-s3.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/topic-areas/ta01-pre-ets/WIOA-IDEA-Perkins-Indicators-WINTAC19-1122.pdf>
- g) National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT) transition planning resources and webinars <https://transitionta.org>
 - o [NTACT: Distance Learning for Special Education – Transition \(webinars and resources to work with students and families\)](#)
- h) Google Distance Learning for Special Education
 - o <https://sites.google.com/view/distance-learning-specialied/home/online-resources/transition>
- i) VocFit: Job matching website and assessment tool to assist in determining the best fit between an individual's abilities and preferences and the job's environmental and occupational demands. The site features a job matching tool, virtual skills assessment, discovery job bank/job development, virtual job exploration, and self-assessment. Vocfit.com