

**Iowa Department  
for the Blind**

# **4 PLUS Programs – Post Senior Living for Ultimate Success**

*Joint presentation by Iowa Department for the Blind and Iowa  
Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired  
January 28, 2020*

“4 + services are activities focused on improving academic, vocational and independent living skills so students can transition from high school to a post-secondary setting”

- Part of the student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- Fill any instructional gaps to complete IEP goals
- Fulfill unmet transition needs

- Local districts are responsible for transition services including 4 + programs
- 4 + services should be considered when completion of graduation requirements will not ensure successful transition from high school to post-school



# 4 + activities might include:

- Post-secondary or vocational education
- Job skills
- Integrated employment including supported employment
- Continuing and adult education
- Adult services
- Independent living
- Community participation

# 4 + Programs may be located at a site other than the high school:

- Community college,
- School district Transition Alliance Program,
- In the community through other providers,
- Iowa School for the Deaf and Iowa Educational Services for Blind and Visually Impaired

# 4 + Programs have:

- Unique program options
- Individual criteria for completion

## Staffed by:

- Certified special education teachers
- Rehabilitation counselors
- Community college faculty

# IESBVI Post-Senior Living for Ultimate Success (4Plus)



- Working to Improve Needed Skills (WINS) program at Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School until 2010
- 4Plus Program for blind and visually impaired students on Iowa School for the Deaf campus during the 2016-17 School year

# Eligibility Requirements

- Meet graduation requirements
- Identified transition needs
- 21 years of age or younger

## The Program Options:

- Curriculum and specially designed instruction
- Community college
- Work Experience Volunteering
- Volunteering



# Program Resources

- Teachers of the Visually Impaired
- Work Experience Coordinator
- Volunteer Coordinator
- Job Coach
- Residential Counselors
- Transportation
- Health Services
- Dorm staff



# Program Data

- 5 students enrolled in community college in last three years
- 2 students attending community college after leaving program

## Current year work experience

- 5 students job shadowed
- 5 students employed
- 9 student interviews



# Collaboration to Develop 4 + Programs

- 2015 - IESBVI and IDB collect data on service needs
- Approximately 40 students had unmet transition needs requiring IEP services beyond the 12th grade
- 2017 - Enrollment in IESBVI 4+ program was 4 students with projected enrollment 10 for 2018
- Optimal program capacity 10 to 15 students
- 2018 - Conversation between IDB, IESBVI and Management Team for Statewide Services about additional 4+ programming

# Collaboration in Service Delivery

- Currently, an IDB Vocational Rehabilitation Teacher (VRT) and Rehabilitation Technology Specialist (RTS) travel bi-weekly from Des Moines to Council Bluffs to provide training to 4 + students
- IDB Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VRCs) travel to Council Bluffs to meet with their 4 + clients
- A number of 4 + students regularly attend IDB Transition Retreats throughout the school year and/or attend the IDB LEAP summer training program.

# More Collaboration in Service Delivery

- IDB vocational rehabilitation counselors attend regional Vision Discipline meetings to discuss common students/clients, improve communication, and streamline service delivery.
- IESBVI and IDB leadership meet every 2-3 months to work through systemic challenges. Cane Travel/Orientation & Mobility, Literacy, and Assistive Technology workgroups were formed to address these specific areas.
- Co-sponsored annual Braille Challenge regional competition for many years.
- IDB Library took over Books for Kids program when IESBVI moved to Council Bluffs.
- IESBVI Literacy Consultant appearing on upcoming IDB “Braille Bits” podcast.

# The Mission of Vocational Rehabilitation

“This program provides grants to assist States in operating statewide vocational rehabilitation (VR) programs, each of which is an integral part of a statewide workforce development system. The VR program is designed to provide VR services for individuals with disabilities, consistent with their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice, so that they may prepare for and engage in competitive integrated employment.”

— Rehabilitation Services Administration <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/rsabvrs/index.html>



The Workforce Opportunity & Innovation Act (WIOA) requires that all Vocational Rehabilitation agencies spend at least 15% of their federal allotment on a specific set of Pre-Employment Transition Services. This mandate has necessitated an intense focus on serving youth.

# The 5 Required Pre-Employment Transition Services

For eligible students with a disability ages 14–21

- Job exploration counseling;
- Work-based learning experiences, which may include in-school or after school opportunities, or experience outside the traditional school setting (including internships), that is provided in an integrated environment in the community to the maximum extent possible);
- Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education;
- Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living;
- Instruction in self-advocacy (including instruction in person-centered planning), which may include peer mentoring (including peer mentoring from individuals with disabilities working in competitive integrated employment).



# Transition Services: Making the Move from School to Work as Seamless as Possible

"The greatest sign of success for a teacher... is to be able to say, 'The children are now working as if I did not exist.'"

-- Maria Montessori



# 4 + Objective

To help students complete Individualized Education Program goals and gain the self-care, self-advocacy, communication, orientation and mobility, and workplace-readiness skills in order to participate in comprehensive adjustment to blindness training programs, obtain post-secondary education, and enter competitive integrated employment.



# Current IDB Transition Programs

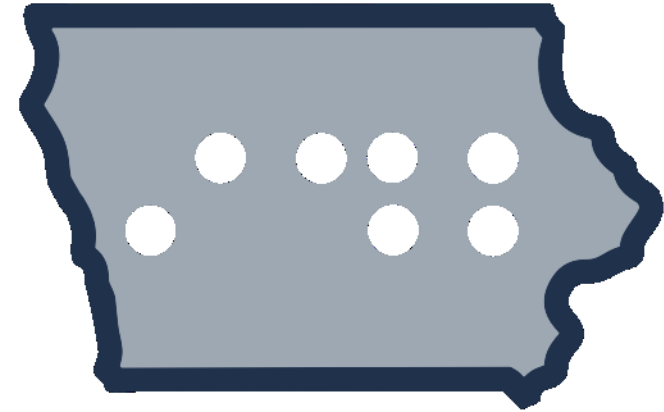
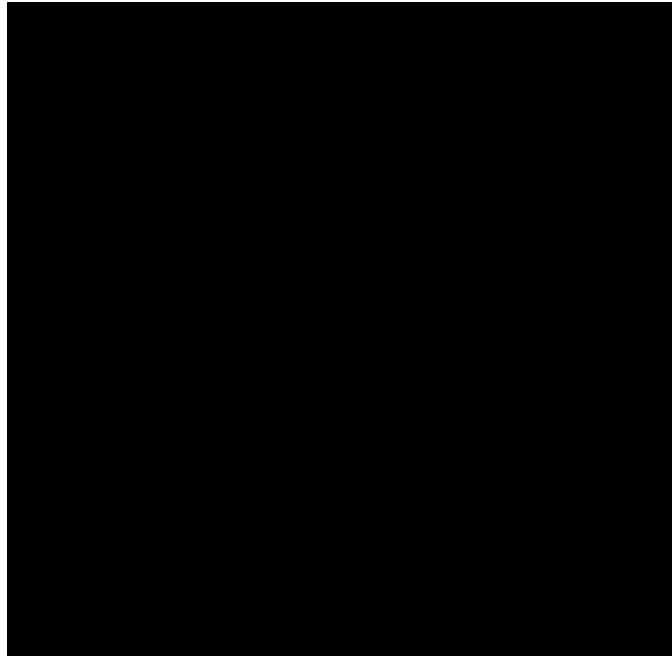
- LEAP 8 week summer program
- Youth Weekend Retreats held throughout the school year
- Vocational Rehabilitation Teachers (VRTs) and Rehabilitation Technology Specialist (RTSs) provide workplace readiness training in their homes, workplaces, schools, and communities
- Dale Carnegie leadership and self-advocacy training
- Sky's the Limit soft skill and workplace behavior training
- Individual counseling provided by vocational rehabilitation counselors
- Additional contracts for work based learning and counseling on post-secondary enrollment with local CRPs

# What we have to offer

- Conveniently located in the center of the state
- Opportunity for students to learn to travel independently in urban, suburban, and college environments with easy access to public transportation
- Program Administrator with a Master's degree in Education. Licensed Teacher of the Visually Impaired with a master's degree in Teaching Blind Students, and other highly-qualified and knowledgeable instructors
- Role models and Peer Support

# Other Features

- Convenient access to Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor to help arrange additional services and supports and provide guidance and counseling
- Access to Business Engagement Specialist to facilitate job shadows, work based learning, part-time employment or volunteering
- Curriculum that utilizes structured discovery methodology to promote problem solving, growth, and empowerment



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**Questions?**