

Itineris BCPS Pre-ETS Proposal

Types of services proposed: Job Exploration and Workplace Readiness

Introduction:

Itineris is an employment first adult provider that supports adults with autism in the Baltimore area. We provide person centered programs focused on helping individuals develop the skills to obtain a meaningful job in a field they enjoy. In 2013, we received a grant from the Knott foundation to create a workplace readiness curriculum specifically for individuals on the autism spectrum. This curriculum was designed to help individuals with ASD cultivate the pre-requisite skills necessary to joining the workforce. Each lesson can be taught with multiple teaching strategies – meaning that the curriculum is accessible to all individuals, regardless of their academic level. Individuals on the autism spectrum exhibit a range of learning styles, communication styles and academic abilities. The need to teach skills effectively for individual regardless of their placement on the spectrum is evident. Most curricula are very general in nature and work at the pace of the teacher. Our curriculum utilizes individualized teaching methods to address the cognitive level, communication style, learning style and pace of each student.

In order to tailor the curriculum for use with the individuals in high school, we adapted the Career Planning specifically give younger students without job experience relevant context. We will discuss all of the prerequisites, including what it means to have a job, what types of jobs are available, different employment options, as well as completing a long term career vision board for each individual.

Additionally, because Autism occurs on a spectrum, our curriculum was designed with the idea that it would need to be taught in a different way to each individual that participates. Different teaching strategies are outlined in each lesson, so that the teacher has prompts on how to teach the targeted skill or idea based on the current skill level of each participant.

We are interested in creating a Pre-ETS program to improve employment outcomes for Baltimore City and County students. As the only autism-specific adult provider in the greater Baltimore area, we are acutely aware of the level of work readiness training young adults on the spectrum have been exposed to. Most students exiting school were not ready to enter the workforce upon exiting high school. These individuals and families are both unprepared and untrained in career planning or work readiness skills. Due to the lack of readiness, Itineris spends a year or more introducing these concepts in order prepare our consumers for competitive integrated employment.

Each student transitioning out of BCPS should have identified their preferred area of employment interest and set measurable goals toward achieving that. Along with this, they should exit school with a job-ready resume, job experiences and a general understanding of

workplace expectations, including work place social strategies for communication with supervisors and co-workers as well as an understanding of the soft skills needed to be successful in the workplace.

The Itineris Pre-ETS program will improve outcomes for students on the autism spectrum. We are seeking a collaborative partnership between DORS and the Baltimore County and City school systems in order to improve student outcomes. By utilizing the outcome driven experience of Itineris, identifying students within the Baltimore County and City school systems: and with referrals sent through DORS, students with autism and their families will greatly benefit from exposure to this program. Itineris has reached out to Mike Breeden, Monica Njoku and Christopher House of DORS for referrals. Both Mr. Breeden and Ms. Njoku indicated they had several schools that they would like to recommend.

Program Description:

Initially, Itineris would start with one school, with a class of up to 10 students. It is recommended that we start with 11th graders (for those graduating at 18 and move with them until graduation or certificate students at age 20 who will graduate at 21).

As this would be our pilot group, we would like to have several months to monitor program integrity, assess the learning pace and learning styles and evaluate progress made by each student in the program. Itineris will then commit to increasing capacity so that additional schools and students can be incorporated into the program.

The program will run one hour per week during the school day at the school. The program is flexible, and is able to adhere to various school schedules. We would also be open to having this be an after-hours program in the school.

Based on a record review and initial classroom observation, our teacher will begin by assessing necessary soft skills, conducting a strengths and needs assessment and a likes and preference assessment, all of which are necessary for looking for successful employment.

Itineris utilizes a variety of assessments that were created by the Director of Clinical Services. We use a pre-vocational assessment, a strengths and needs assessment, and a likes and preferences assessment. If the student is verbal, we have also used the My Next Move questionnaire from the O*Net website. In order to benefit from the program, students should enroll in the full year of programming. The program will be run once a year.

Students will begin with Career Planning, where we will be working closely with the student to develop a profile of their individual area of interest, introduce occupational options, explore self-employment ideas and assist in helping the student identify and

develop potential career paths. We will also explore what options are needed in order to follow that path. Additionally, we will provide Work Readiness Training, which will help develop all of the soft skills necessary for employment from social skills support and training to workplace behavior and expectations. At the end of the program, each student will have completed assessments, a cover letter, resume, or visual portfolio in that represents their areas of interest.

Workshop Structure:

Each section would coincide with the school's schedule with the first week being an introduction for both teacher and students and the last week being a wrap up. It is recommended that these sessions take place during the school day at the actual school the student is attending. There is a unit test that will be taken before lessons are taught as well as a post-test that will be used to determine mastery. Ideally, the workshop will be an hour each week and the group will have access to a computer lab as needed.

Section One Assessments/Introduction to Job Exploration

- Introductions, program overview (4 weeks)
- Itineris Pre-Vocational Curriculum
- Vocational Tasks Assessment
 - Strengths and Needs Assessments
 - Likes and Preferences Assessments
- ONET
- Review of Assessments

Career Planning (4 weeks)

The following would be done in ratios of 2 students to 1 teacher:

Exploration of Career Options-

- What am I good at and what do I like?
- What are the requirements for a job in the field I like?
- What type of experience should I be looking for and how do I get it?
- Mapping Social Capital and Community

Careers in demand (ONET)

Starting my own business

- What is involved?
- Family input

Create a career vision board

- What do I want to do and how do I get there?
- Set measurable, time monitored goals

Date submitted: 7/31/2017

Unit 1: (6 weeks)

- Lesson 1: Self-Advocacy/Understanding My Needs in the Workplace
- Lesson 2: Paid vs. Volunteer Work
- Lesson 3: Building a Baseline Resume
- Lesson 4: Understanding Cover Letters

Unit 1 continued: (6 weeks)

- Lesson 5: Interview Preparation
- Lesson 5: Appearing for an Interview
- Lesson 6: Mock interviews (peer to peer and peer to teacher)
- Lesson 7: Workplace Expectations/Rights Under ADA

Work Readiness:

Unit 2: (10 weeks)

- Lesson 1: Communication (Supervisor vs. Co-worker)
- Lesson 2: Workplace Expectations – Hygiene and Dress Code
- Lesson 3: Workplace Behaviors – Conversations with Co-workers
- Lesson 4: Clocking In & Out
- Lesson 5: Planning a daily work schedule/Estimating time of tasks
- Lesson 6: Accepting and Sharing Feedback
- Lesson 7: Budgeting Money
- Lesson Plans in total Wrap up and review

Teacher Profile:

All Itineris teachers will be background checked through CJIS as well as drug screened. Additionally, all teachers are required to take the mandatory Developmental Disabilities Administration trainings including crisis intervention and prevention strategies, Autism 101, Introduction to ABA - Teaching strategies for adults with autism.

Cost Justifications:

Please see attached budget breakdown.

Affirmation of Program reporting requirements:

We will provide all outlined requests to include:

Documentation – WBLE agreement and On-site Workplace Readiness Training Report will be provided as needed.

Date submitted: 7/31/2017

Recommendations – Each student will have a report card style list of recommendations from the teacher stating ideal conditions of employment. This would include likes, preferences, suggested environmental adaptations, sensory suggestions, strengths, and tolerance/endurance levels.

Signatures – Acknowledgement from all parties that the service has been provided.

The documentation furnished to DORS will include a completed student resume and if applicable, a copy of the portfolio, and the DORS training report.

In summary, Itineris believes that this service is essential to ensuring that students with ASD are prepared to enter the workforce when they graduate. In the future, we would also like to offer benefits counseling to students and families who are transitioning, as this is a key step in the process towards pursuing competitive integrated employment. We look forward to any comments and suggestions.