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| StateSeal.JPG | **RFS-24-77904**  **Pre-Employment Transition Services Required Activities**  **Attachment E** | |
| **Respondent:** | | Sycamore, Services, Inc. |
| **Instructions:**  Request for Service RFS-24-77904 is a solicitation by the State of Indiana in which organizations are invited to compete for contract amongst other respondents in a formal evaluation process. Please be aware that the evaluation of your organization’s proposal will be completed by a team of State of Indiana employees and your organization’s score will be reflective of that evaluation. The evaluation of a proposal can only be based upon the information provided by the Respondent in its proposal submission. Therefore, a competitive proposal will thoroughly answer the questions listed. The Respondent is expected to provide the complete details of its proposed operations, processes, and staffing for the scope of work detailed in the RFS document and supplemental attachments.  Please review the requirements in the RFS carefully. Please describe your relevant experience and explain how you propose to perform the work. For all areas in which subcontractors will be performing a portion of the work, clearly describe their roles and responsibilities, related qualifications, and experience, and how you will maintain oversight of the subcontractors’ activities.  Please use the yellow shaded fields to indicate your answers to the following questions. The yellow fields will automatically expand to accommodate content. Every attempt should be made to preserve the original format of this form. **A completed Technical Proposal is a requirement for proposal submission. Failure to complete and submit this form may impact your proposal’s responsiveness.** Diagrams, certificates, graphics, and other exhibits should be referenced within the relevant answer field and included as legible attachments. | | |

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| **1** | **Proposed Solution and Features**  Provide an overview of how the proposed strategies meet the requirements for Pre-ETS as outlined in the scope of work. Describe in detail the specific strategies for developing and carrying out each of the five Pre-ETS activities described in Section III. Summary Scope of Work, to students with disabilities, as aligned with WIOA required activities, for both individuals and/or in group settings. As applicable, describe how the proposed strategies enhance or expand upon existing strategies that have been successful in the provision of services that align with Pre-ETS to students with disabilities or other student populations. Identify the specific counties and schools respondent intends to serve.  Additionally, please provide a detailed description of your work approach, including the following:   * + How would you organize this project in order to be able to manage the workload?   + Provide a high-level project plan, based on the information provided in this RFI.   + Provide preferred list of counties and school systems you intend to serve. As described in Section III. Summary Scope of Work, respondents may also opt to provide a secondary list of alternate counties and schools you would consider serving.   + Describe how you would evaluate the effectiveness of services provided.   + Provide a brief description or sample of the curriculum you propose to utilize for each of the required activities, as well as incorporation of best practices or resources into service delivery, such as the Lifecourse framework. |
| **EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW**  Sycamore Services, The Arc Southwest Indiana, Southern Indiana Resource Solutions (SIRS), Rauch, Inc., Blue River Services, and New Hope Services, Inc, have partnered to propose a collaborative project that will continue to provide high quality Pre-Employment Transition Services as prescribed in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) for students with disabilities between the ages of 14-22 who are eligible or potentially eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation services.  The collaborative has been providing Pre-Employment Transition Services for seven years in up to 76 high schools across eighteen (18) Southern Indiana counties including **Clark, Crawford, Dubois, Floyd, Gibson, Harrison, Jefferson, Orange, Perry, Pike, Posey, Scott, Spencer, Switzerland, Vanderburgh, Vigo, Warrick, and Washington**. Specific services include job exploration counseling, counseling on opportunities for enrollment in post-secondary education, workplace readiness training, instruction to improve self-advocacy skills, and the development and access to work-based learning experiences.  The principal and overarching goal of this project is to continue to develop and implement a model transition program to improve strategies for students with intellectual and other disabilities to live independently, participate in postsecondary education/training experiences, and obtain and retain competitive integrated employment.  The project also helps build and develop the skills and competencies of the participating schools to create a high quality, sustainable system of school-to-work transition planning that prepares students with disabilities to be successful as they leave high school and enter the adult world.  Career Coaches will utilize the Charting the LifeCourse framework to help identify the goals and visions of the students that we work with and will be utilized within all 5 required areas. All staff will be given instruction on how to utilize this approach to help meet the needs of the individuals served as part of their orientation process.  **List of Preferred and Secondary Schools and Counties**  In **Attachment 1**, we have included a list of our preferred schools and counties that we would like to continue to serve.  We are currently in all 76 schools and have developed a relationship with the students and the school personnel.  In the past seven years, we have provided all five required services to over 3300 students and developed countless opportunities to assist students to be more prepared for life beyond high school.  We are also interested in providing services in additional counties and schools and have attached a list of those schools and counties we are seeking to add to our Collaborative. **Attachment 2**  **Scope of Work—Specific Services**    **Job Exploration Counseling**  Job Exploration Counseling ensures that students recognize the relevance of high school and post-school education to their futures, both in college, technical school and/or the workplace.  Career Coaches work with students to explore career options.  Job exploration counseling is offered in various school-based and community-based settings, including in groups and one on one sessions.    We work closely with the schools to supplement, not supplant current efforts.  Key resources include local employers and businesses for community-based activities.    Specific job exploration counseling activities that we have used include:     * LifeCourse planning * Indiana Career Explorer * O\*Net Online Career Exploration Tools * Awareness of Career and Technical Education (CTE) * Vocational counseling and guidance * Career speakers * INDemand Jobs * Career Awareness Activities * Workplace tours and field trips   Our Career Coaches become well acquainted with their students’ interests, strengths, preferences and needs through Charting the LifeCourse and Indiana Career Explorer activities.  We then assist students in identifying potential careers that may be a good fit based upon these factors, as well as possible career pathways. We ensure that students are aware of the educational/training opportunities available to them by participating in Career and Technical Education programs. Career Coaches connect students with career speakers to help students learn more about local in-demand industries. We have utilized career speakers to give group presentations to students from businesses such as: 14 WFIE News, Nokia Networks and Solutions, Indiana State Police, and AstraZeneca Pharmaceutical just to name a few.  Our Career Coaches also have many students with very specific career interests in mind and we foster those interests by connecting students with professionals in the field.  Examples of such personalized connections include a student interested in becoming a meteorologist visited with the Chief Meteorologist from WEHT/WTVW Eyewitness News to learn about the job's responsibilities. Another student interested in a law career spoke with a local lawyer about his job and ways that teens can start a law career such as teen court and local law offices.  A student interested in a career in politics was able to have a sit-down with the Mayor of Evansville and learned more about the types of issues he handles as Mayor.  Lastly, a student who was interested in becoming a pilot, met with a pilot at Tri-State Aero and was able to do a pre-flight walk through, go up in the plane with the pilot, and actually got to fly the plane.  The student got a real feel for if this is the career path for him.  Our Pre-ETS program offers year-round services.  We make the most of summer break by offering students a wide range of businesses to tour. Career Coachers target local, in-demand business for the students when planning these activities as well as areas of interest that the students have voiced. Students have completed work-site tours to learn about necessary jobs skills in various businesses including: Evansville Regional Airport, Holiday Inn Express, Showplace Cinemas, Mill’s Body Shop, Colonial Classics Garden Center and Toyota Motor Manufacturing Indiana.  **Work-Based Learning Experiences**  Work-based learning experiences are essential to forming, developing, and making informed choices about careers. Successful work- based learning programs and activities require a collaborative effort with significant planning and development in order to achieve successful outcomes for the student and the employer.  Work Based Learning Experiences are provided on an individual basis and group settings where appropriate.   Work-based learning opportunities are developed by Career Coaches and could include:     * Participating in school-based work opportunities * Participating in paid and non-paid internships * Participating in paid or non-paid work experience * Participating in Project Search (Deaconess Gateway Hospital) * Participating in Volunteer Activities * Job Shadowing * Stipend Activities   Experiences range in intensity, structure, scope, and duration and include activities as diverse as employer mentoring, paid and unpaid internships, volunteer opportunities, structured on-the-job training, and the more formal work status such as an apprenticeship.  Direct employer or community involvement in an integrated work environment is utilized as much as possible to ensure in-depth student engagement.  Support for the students during these learning experiences is provided by the Career Coach with an emphasis on developing natural supports on the job site and maximizing independence.  Student progress is closely monitored to ensure quality and meaningful work experiences.  In addition, in 2021 we began offering work-based learning stipends to students on a case-by-case basis. The Career Coach ensures that such work-based learning experiences are completed in an integrated setting, based on the prevailing wage for the position, and time limited in nature. These work-based learning stipends increase the likelihood of student participation in such activities by providing a financial incentive for students to do so. Since its inception, we have currently paid over $32,000 in stipends to students and if awarded new contract, we plan to almost double the amount of stipends to be paid to students. With the increase of stipends being offered to students, the awareness and community participation will expand. Where applicable, employers or community members are also requested to complete a Work-Based Learning Transition Assessment to give input regarding the student's skills and needs exhibited during their work experience.    Our collaborative has developed numerous community partnerships to provide students with a diverse array of on-site work experiences. Such experiences expose students to a variety of job duties and work environments which help the students make informed decisions about their likes and dislikes about these jobs.  Students also develop a variety of work skills that are transferrable to other jobs such as attention to detail, critical thinking and problem solving, teamwork, and communication skills.  In Vanderburgh County, students have been able to volunteer at several diverse organizations.  At the Tri-State Food Bank, students performed a variety of tasks including labeling donated cans of food and packing meals for seniors and children.  At Mesker Park Zoo, students helped with planting flowers and setting up for special events.  At the Salvation Army, students served as Bell Ringers for the Red Kettle Campaign and also helped out with the Christmas Toy Town event.  At the Humane Society, students socialized cats, walked and fed dogs, and helped clean and disinfect the facility. Participating in such activities helps students to see a variety of career paths and they can learn about potential job options that they did not have prior knowledge of.  Such experiences can also be of great help to students in determining a career path as they get closer to exiting high school.      Students were also provided with job shadowing and mentoring opportunities in the community. A student worked with their high school maintenance department over the summer with tasks such as moving furniture, shampooing carpets, washing windows, etc., to get the school building ready for the new school year. A student interested in becoming a basketball manager was able to job shadow with the University of Evansville Basketball Team.  The UE Coach did state that they work with individuals with disabilities as managers for the team and if the student was interested to contact the coach closer to his graduation. Connecting students with such opportunities in their areas of interest can really set students up for success on their resumes and give a great sense of understanding of what various careers really look like with hands-on experience.      One of our core agencies has developed a strong partnership with Holiday World in Spencer County.  The Seasonal HR Administrator at Holiday World has confirmed the positive employer quality experiences with the students from the Pre-ETS program during the Work Experience in the summer.  This opportunity has given students a very realistic idea of what working at Holiday World is like as well as the type of work being done in the various parts of the park.  The students have had the opportunity to complete work experience and volunteering for the past three years.   Another of our collaborative partners has long-standing ties with area businesses in Gibson County.  Their Summer Help and Learn program allows students to gain critical and transferable work skills that help set them apart from others when applying for jobs in the future.  At Azalea Path Botanical Garden and Arboretum, students help set up for weddings and receptions, plant a variety of flowers and take visitors on tours.  At Lyles Station Historic School and Museum, students plant vegetable and flower gardens and operate a vegetable stand.  They also take visitors on tours of the school and grounds.  Our collaborative partner serving Floyd County worked with Baptist Health Floyd Hospital to provide volunteer opportunities for students as patient transport and nurse assistants. This provided our students with the opportunity to observe and help in a real hospital setting. The experiences students gained at Baptist Floyd Hospital was invaluable. They were able to shadow and assist nurses and other healthcare professionals, gaining hands-on experience and learning about different roles and responsibilities within the hospital. This not only helped them gain a better understanding of the healthcare industry but also helped them narrow down their career goals and aspirations.  In addition, we are currently working with MSD Mount Vernon on a pilot program spearheaded by TransCen. TransCen has secured a contract with the Indiana Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Servcies (DDARS) to assist them in improving employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities in Indiana. TransCen is working with area partners on increasing work experiences for students with disabilities.  **Counseling on Opportunities for Enrollment in Post-Secondary Education**  Individuals who successfully complete education beyond high school, such as a post-secondary program, have increased opportunities for employment and have higher earning potential.  Students and their family members are provided information and guidance on a variety of post-secondary education and training opportunities. Individual and group services are provided as needed for students. This includes information on:     * Identification of post-secondary opportunities in the area * Next Level Jobs program * Joining and eligibility requirements for the US military * Attending college fairs, tours, and meeting with post-secondary personnel regarding enrollment * Examination of college and trade/technical school requirements * Completing post-secondary applications, entrance requirement, and testing * Identify and advocate for needed accommodations and services * Identifying financial aid options * Assistance with completing FAFSA     Our collaborative has partnered with educational and training organizations to educate students about post-secondary opportunities in the area we serve.   Each year during Spring Break, students from the Collaborative have the opportunity to participate in the Spring Break College tour.  During the week, students can attend different college campuses (IVY Tech, University of Southern Indiana, Vincennes University, University of Evansville, Oakland City University, and Indiana University Southeast). Students meet with university staff and learn about the admission requirements, cost of attendance, and financial aid.  Students also meet with representatives from the school’s disability services department.  Students tour the campus, see the housing options, and in some cases, even get to sample the food in the dining hall.   We also arrange individual tours of these colleges with students throughout the year. During individual tours, students may also be able to meet with a professor in their major of interest. We have assisted students in connecting with professors to learn more about areas of study including Russian Studies, Culinary Arts, and Electrical Engineering. Parents are also invited to these college tours so that they can get first-hand information about the schools that their student may be interested in attending.  We have established relationships with student disability services programs at each of these schools and assist students in getting connected with the disability services office at their selected college/university. Staff also work with students on understanding the differences in accommodations at the high school and college level.  Michelle Kirk, Manager of Disability Resources at the University of Southern Indiana, has also spoken with students as part of our summer program on available college supports and independent living skills needed by students to be successful at college.  Career Coaches work with students and their families to ensure that they are aware of the Evansville Association for the Blind (EAB) College Summer Program for Students with Disabilities that is offered at the campus of the University of Southern Indiana.  This program is intended for any student with disabilities who has completed their junior year of high school.  Participants in the program can receive up to 7 hours of college credit that is transferable to the college of the student’s choice.  This program also gives actual experience and knowledge of college demands.  Career Coaches work to with the VR personnel and EAB staff to ensure that interested students complete the necessary requirements for enrollment in this program. Students who participate in this program receive a summary of their skills and abilities as well as recommendations for improvement.  This information can be very important to students in determining whether or not college would be a good fit for them.    Our Collaborative has also connected with training programs that provide students with skills needed to be successful in obtaining employment The Indiana Kentucky Ohio Regional Carpenters Counsel (IKORCC) has provided information to students regarding apprenticeship programs such as carpenter, millwright or floor covering.  The IKORCC trainees also provided a hands-on learning experience for students by assisting them in building a wooden toolbox. Staff at The Salon Professional Academy (TSPA) and Roger’s Hair Academy have provided our students with information regarding their cosmetology, esthetics, and manicurist programs.  We have arranged tours for students with Local 181 Heavy Operator’s Union.  Our students also visited a local Recruitment Office for all branches of the military and spoke with a recruitment officer about life in the military and the requirements to enlist.  We work to ensure that students are aware of state funded resources that are available to them as they prepare to exit from high school. Our staff work to educate students and their families about the possible education, training, and employment supports that could possibly be available to the student through their local VR office, should the student qualify for services.  Our staff assist with referral to VR for interested students and assist students in advocating for their wants and needs when applying for VR services as needed.    We also educate students about training programs and supports available to them through their local WorkOne office.  We ensure that students are aware of the educational/training opportunities that are available through the Next Level Jobs Workforce Readiness Grant that enables students to enroll in over 150 eligible programs to receive tuition-free training in high demand jobs.  **Workplace Readiness Training**  Work readiness skills are commonly known as soft skills, employability skills, or social/interpersonal skills.  Workplace readiness ensures students are prepared to secure and maintain employment by providing opportunities to learn about positive work behaviors and skills.  Career Coaches provide workplace readiness training in groups for younger students ages 14-16 and with older students as appropriate. Group settings address skills such as team building, cooperation, and diversity training.  For older students who may be thinking about seeking their first job, Career Coaches can provide individualized training to educate them about dealing with real-world situations such as: professionalism, integrity, and work-ethic.      Specific areas of instruction include:     * Employability skills * Social and communication skills * Benefits to work training * Work incentives counseling * Financial literacy and asset development training * Independent living skills * Using technology and assistive technology * Problem solving and decision-making skills * Time Management Skills * Using transportation   To better help prepare our students for life after high school, our collaborative has partnered with community agencies.  Representatives from Old National Bank have instructed students in dressing for success, preparing for an interview and understanding real world expenses through their Reality-opolis program.  A similar program is offered in Clarksville through the local credit union – One Vision.  These community partners provide a financial literacy program to the students to experience actual budgeting and planning.  Career Coaches also work with their local Purdue Home Extension Offices to give students information regarding nutrition, meal planning and budgeting.  We also realize that students will need to navigate their way in their own communities to get to and from work, shop or just for fun.  The Superintendent of Operations from Metropolitan Evansville Transit System (METS) works with our program to personalize bus training for students.  METS brings an off-duty bus to each Evansville High School and allows students to board and ride the bus with Career Coaches and other students to help ease anxiety of riding the bus.  This personalized attention allows students to see bus drivers as community helpers, teaches bus rules and safety precautions, and helps students feel more relaxed to ask questions.   We also work with local Ride Share agencies in other counties and make sure that the students have the information and can access their own transportation.  In Harrison County, Career Coaches partnered with Purdue Extension Services during their summer program. Students were able to participate in their Nutrition Education Program. The lesson plans were tailored to students’ interest and skill level. Students enjoyed attending and were fully engaged during the 90+ minute sessions.      **Instruction in Self-Advocacy**  “Students who have self-determination skills have a stronger chance of being successful in making the transition to adulthood, including employment and independence”(Wehmeyer & Schwatz, 1997).   Career Coaches provide self-advocacy training in group or individualized settings as appropriate.  Opportunities for peer mentoring are developed as an effective strategy to promote self-advocacy and self-determination skills.  Other specific topics may include:   * Training or presentation on self- determination * Training or presentation on self-awareness * Training or presentation on disability disclosure * Understanding rights and responsibilities * Participate in person-centered planning * Understanding/requesting accommodations * Mentoring/peer mentoring     Through participation in the Pre-ETS program students have had the opportunity to meet persons with disabilities who have gone on to become very successful employees.  Ben Trockman was an athlete and competed in motocross races for years.  During a race in 2006 when he was 17, he flipped over the handlebars of his motorcycle and crashed. The resulting spinal cord injury left him paralyzed below the neck. Ben currently serves as the Diversity and Inclusion Outreach Specialist for Old National Bank and was elected to the Evansville City Council.   Listening to speakers such as these empowers students with disabilities and helps them imagine a world of possibilities.  Career Coaches utilize the Charting the LifeCourse Toolkit to support students in looking at their goals, dreams and what they want to accomplish.  Career Coaches can help students understand their strengths, support needs, and identify steps to live the lives they want to live.  Additionally, as part of our Self Advocacy training, students are provided information on how to review their IEP and help advocate for themselves at their Annual Case Review.  Career Coaches give students the encouragement and confidence to participate and lead the conversation during their meetings by helping them understand the purpose behind the IEP.  As evident through the Pre-test Rubric, a large majority of the students do not understand or know why they have an IEP and what accommodations they receive.  Career Coaches also provide information to students regarding how to disclose their disability and appropriate persons with whom to share this information.  Students are also provided with information on accommodations through post-secondary programs such as Disability Resources and TRIO. University representatives present information to students via high school visits and during the college tours on what additional accommodations can be provided to them after high school.  Discussions have been initiated with three of the local colleges (IVY Tech, University of Evansville, and University of Southern Indiana) to help develop a student-led Self Advocacy group on campus for students that meet the requirements of Pre-Employment Services along with helping them with Time Management and Study Skills.  With this group, students have the support of Career Coaches and other students who have faced similar situations or who may have suggestions on how to deal with issues facing college students.  Students are also offered resources that assist in advocating for themselves. Some of the resources offered include: INAPSE, INARF, ARC/Self Advocates of Indiana, IN\*SOURCE, YOUTH\*SOURCE, Job Accommodation Network (JAN) and Hands in Autism.  We recently assisted students in completing a survey for INAPSE Transition Committee. In addition, one of our students is currently serving on the Commission on Rehabilitation Services. The commission is comprised of a group of citizens appointed by the Governor representing the disability community and is involved in matters affecting VR policies and procedures, goals and priorities, and the state plan.    **Curriculum**  A compiled list of the different curriculum that staff have utilized within the five required service areas is included in **Attachment 3.**  We encourage all staff to research new and innovative ideas to meet the needs of each individual student and utilize Best Practices in the area of transition.  We work with the different schools and attempt to minimize duplication of services.  Some schools utilize Indiana Career Explorer for their diploma track students and others utilize Google Sites Transition Portfolio for their Life Skills students.  **Project Organization**  The project will be supported by six core partner agencies—Sycamore Services, The Arc Southwest Indiana, Southern Indiana Resource Solutions (SIRS), Rauch, Blue River Services, and New Hope Services.  Sycamore Service is the official respondent and will assume responsibility as the primary fiscal agent.  Leadership staff from each of the six core partner agencies serve on the management team to provide expertise, guidance, and management oversight for the project to ensure overall coordination of services.  Career Coaches and a full-time Project Manager are utilized to carry out the day-to-day activities.  Each core partner employs Career Coaches all working together to achieve the desired outcomes of the project.    In 2016, our project started with three core partners which covered 9 counties and 25 schools.  In 2018 our collaboration grew to add an additional 2 partners and a total of 18 counties and 62 schools. In 2023, we now have 6 partners and over 76 schools.   We have served over 3300 students throughout the Southern Indiana Collaborative project.  During this time, we have been able to assist individuals in visiting and enrolling in post-secondary education programs, applying for scholarships, learning to ride public transportation, shadowing employment opportunities, learning about different careers and making decisions about their future.  We have worked with 76 schools to help encourage students to advocate for themselves and have a voice in what they want to do.  Our staff have researched and developed hundreds of lesson plans and team-building activities.  They have worked one on one and in groups.  All this hard work and activities have continued to reinforce the mission behind what we do.  For every high school student who is able to become more independent, attend college, get a job, or advocate for themselves, because of the services we have provided, then we have accomplished our goal.    In addition, resources from other partners will be leveraged to ensure the most cost-effective service delivery model. Examples of resource partners include:       * Vocational Rehabilitation * WorkOne * Next Level Jobs Workforce Ready Grant * Evansville Association for the Blind Summer College Program * IN\*Source- Special Education Parent Support * Youth\*Source * TransCen * Prosser Career Education Center * Southern Indiana Career and Technical Center * Vincennes University * University of Southern Indiana * IVY Tech * University of Evansville * Oakland City College * Indiana University Southeast * Metropolitan Evansville Transit System (METS) * Mets Mobility Transportation Service * Ride Solution * JAG – Jobs for America’s Graduates     **High Level Project Plan**  The overarching goal of this project is to continue to implement a model transition program to improve strategies for students with intellectual and other disabilities to live independently, participate in postsecondary education experiences, and obtain and retain competitive integrated employment.  The project helps build and develop the skills and competencies of the participating schools to create a high quality, sustainable system of school-to-work transition planning that prepares students with disabilities to be successful as they leave high school and enter the adult world.  With the changes in graduation requirements, students will have to demonstrate post-secondary readiness through the completion of graduation pathways.  This includes learning and demonstrating employability skills through a work-based learning experience.  With this change, we are expecting that schools have a greater need for Pre-Employment services beginning with the underclassman (14-16 years of age).   Specific tenants and key aspects of this collaborative project will include:   * The targeted population: Students with disabilities between the age of 14 and 22 * Highly collaborative approach utilizing a multitude of core and resource partners to leverage resources, maximize coverage and minimize duplication of services * Six core partners will provide management oversight for the project * Embedded Career Coaches at local high schools utilizing a single point of contact model at each school * Career Coaches will provide prescribed Pre-Employment services to enhance not supplant existing school-based transition services * Build on the existing partnerships with local high schools to better support students with IEPs and identify career paths. * Partner with school staff to grow relationships with local communities and businesses * Develop a model that: meets VR’s objectives to help students with IEPs not only graduate, but exit high school prepared to enter the workforce and that dovetails with existing career planning efforts * Schools will provide the partner agencies/staff with structure, guidance and support so the staff member can be effective and engaging early in the process * Engage students to ensure they are aware of all career pathways available (including programs offered at the partner schools and associated technical schools):   1. Assessment of needs for students  2. Plan development with students  3. Group activities tailored to needs when interest and need align   * Provide individualized attention, support and coaching to students with disabilities at all grade levels who require extra mentoring and development * Utilize group and classroom training for younger students ages 14-16     In the past seven years of this project, we ensured that all public schools were contacted, and an MOU was agreed upon and approved with the schools who expressed need/interest. A copy of a sample MOU with schools is included in Attachment 5.  We now have opened up opportunities with online, private, homeschools and parochial schools. Relationships have been developed with 76 schools and students are receiving Pre-Employment services.  Each school has worked with the agencies to determine their priority of students to be served, including those identified with the most need and ability to benefit from the program.  We continue to reach out to school personnel to help identify “Gap” students who are less likely to be identified by the schools for adult services. They struggle to achieve requirements for a general diploma, they are often quiet, nonassertive, with little or no self-advocacy skills and they typically don’t stay in school past the age of 18 or 19. For those students that have needed additional support beyond our services, Career Coaches assist them in applying for Vocational Rehabilitation services.    **Evaluation**  Specific goals and outcomes of this collaborative project will include:   * Develop and implement effective strategies for students with disabilities that increase independent living and inclusion in their communities and in competitive integrated workplaces * Improve collaboration and service coordination among vocational rehabilitation counselors, school transition staff, employment providers and other stakeholders supporting students with disabilities * Increase the number of students that have access to best-practice transition services * Increase in student and family awareness of effective transition planning resulting in increased knowledge, empowerment and advocacy skills * Increase in demonstrated skills among students participating in project * Exploration of a wide range of career options for students, including certification programs, apprenticeships, trade/technical programs, and other career pathways * Create and disseminate information on innovative, effective, and efficient approaches to implement quality pre-employment transition services * Increase the number of students referred to Vocational Rehabilitation for employment services, educational supports or career pathways.   To accomplish the stated outcomes, the project will be supported by six (6) core partner agencies.  These organizations have a combined 370 plus years of experience providing quality services to people with disabilities in Southern Indiana including transition services consistent with the requirements of the Request for Service.  Collaborating partnerships continue to be developed and utilized with other employment providers in the region as needed to increase capacity, ensure coverage, and minimize duplication of services.  In addition, resources from other partners will be leveraged to ensure the most cost-effective service delivery model.  Pre-Employment Transition Services are delivered in individual one-on-one sessions and group settings based on the individual needs of the student and the subject matter.  Services such as work-based learning experiences will be provided in the community in partnership with local businesses. | |
| **2** | **Staffing**  Describe how you would staff this project to ensure capacity to carry out the scope of work. Identify key staff and their roles and responsibilities, including roles and responsibilities of any sub-contractors. Provide resumes for key staff. Ensure that the staffing plan is consistent with cost proposal. Describe if staff will be dedicated personnel for the project or if they will be a shared resource.  Additionally, list each collaborative partner, including local public agencies, Work One centers, VR employment service providers, local educational agencies (i.e., schools), post-secondary educational institutions, Independent Living centers, community programs, employers, or other entities. Describe collaborative partners’ roles and how each will be engaged in the project to better coordinate service delivery, reduce duplication of effort, leverage promising and innovative practices, and serve the greatest number of students possible. |
| Career Coaches and a Project Manager are utilized to carry out the day-to-day activities outlined in this proposal.  Our Career Coaches have experience in transition planning and implementation, have a good working knowledge of school systems and can work effectively in the political environment of a school.  The project manager has extensive experience in transition planning and can demonstrate effective project management skills.  We currently have the equivalent of 14 full-time Career coaches and, if approved for this new contract, will be hiring an additional 4 Career Coaches to meet the demand of students. In some of the rural areas, staff not only provide services in the school, but also share their time with Employment Services duties.  In addition, director level staff at each of the six core partner agencies will provide expertise, guidance, and management oversight to ensure the overall success of the proposed project.  Bios for leadership staff are included in our response to Question 4 and resumes for key partners are included in **Attachment 4** for the management and leadership team.  **Position Title:** Project Manager  **Required Experience:**  Bachelor’s Degree minimum, Masters preferred.  Experience in transition planning and implementation.  Coordination and/or management experience.  **Responsibilities:**   * Coordinate & conduct a “needs assessment” with all participating schools * Develop a project plan for each participating school, based on the needs assessment results * Schedule, train & oversee activities of Career Coaches * Schedule & plan training sessions in coordination with project partners and staff * Coordinate & assimilate all data regarding students and project activities & outcomes * Facilitate on-going communication and collaboration among all partners of the project * Ensure outreach and advocacy training for students & families * Develop/Approve all report formats, forms, and data collection methods * Assist with monthly billing reports for VRS * Assess current school resource information and make recommendations to address consistency among the participating schools * Provide oversight among all collaborating partners to ensure consistent and quality services are being delivered       **Position Title:** Career Coach  **Required Experience:**  Bachelor’s degree strongly preferred.  Experience in special education, supported employment, and/or transition service delivery may substitute for degree.  **Responsibilities:**   * Assist in gathering “needs assessment” data * Gather information on students with disabilities within each participating school system * Gather information on students who are participating in some level of transition planning * Gather information on students who do not currently participate in transition planning, but would benefit from enhanced vocational support * Assist with data collection and reporting * Assist school personnel in identifying “gap” students with disabilities * Participate in Pre-Employment Transition Services in one-on-one and group settings * Model “best practices” for school personnel as they build competency in the various transition skill areas of career planning, job development, systematic instruction, jobsite analysis, and negotiating skills * Support school staff in working with identified VR personnel * Participate in the planning of transition/career fairs at participating schools * Support school staff and students/families at case conferences of students participating in transition planning, as necessary to enhance school staff’s ability to build capacity * Participate in IEP meetings to assist in effective transition planning and implementation     The Project Manager, Agency Directors and Career Coaches work closely with the local educational agencies in their areas to identify students in need of Pre-ETS services, coordinate provision of services and supports and create opportunities for family engagement.  Collaborative staff work with school personnel, Vocational Rehabilitation and WorkOne to identify community resources, develop connections to business and set up community-based services.  Career Coaches will use their established connections in the community to provide opportunities for job exploration and work-based learning experiences in student’s identified areas of interest. Community and Social Service organizations will also be used to educate students in independent living and employability skills. Post-Secondary Institutions in the area are utilized as additional resources in career exploration, understanding financial aid and self-advocacy.   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Partner List** | | | | **Agency** | **Type of Partnership** | **Roles & Responsibilities** | | Sycamore Services,  Danville, IN | Core Partner & Proposal Respondent | * Employ Career Coaches * Employ the Project Manager to oversee the all the Career coaches and provide Quality Assurance * Provide Pre-ETS services * Serve on Management Team & provide general oversight of project * Monthly billing to VR * Assist with data collection | | The Arc Southwest Indiana  Princeton, IN | Core Partner | * Employ Career Coaches * Provide Pre-ETS services * Serve on Management Team and provide general oversight of project * Assist with data collection | | Southern Indiana Resource Solutions (SIRS)  Jasper, IN | Core Partner | * Employ Career Coaches * Provide Pre-ETS services * Serve on Management Team and provide general oversight of project * Assist with data collection | | Rauch, Inc  New Albany, IN | Core Partner | * Employ Career Coaches * Provide Pre-ETS services * Serve on Management Team and provide general oversight of project * Assist with data collection | | Blue River Services  Corydon, IN | Core Partner | * Employ Career Coaches * Provide Pre-ETS services * Serve on Management Team and provide general oversight of project * Assist with data collection | | New Hope Services, Inc  Jeffersonville, IN | Core Partner | * Employ Career Coaches * Provide Pre-ETS services * Serve on Management Team and provide general oversight of project * Assist with data collection |     Resource partners include:   **State Agencies**   * + Vocational Rehabilitation   + WorkOne South   + WorkOne South Central   + WorkOne Southeast   + WorkOne Southwest   **Local Schools**   * + Borden-Henryville School Corporation   + Cannelton City Schools   + Clarksville Community School Corporation   + Crawford County Community School Corporation   + East Gibson School Corporation   + East Washington School Corporation   + Evansville Catholic Diocese   + Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation   + Greater Clark County Schools   + Greater Jasper Consolidated Schools   + Hoosier College and Career Academy   + Indiana Connections Academy   + Madison Consolidate Schools   + MSD Mount Vernon   + MSD North Posey County Schools   + Lanesville Community School Corporation   + New Albany-Floyd County Consolidated Schools   + North Gibson School Corporation   + North Harrison Community School Corporation   + North Spencer County School Corporation   + Northeast Dubois County School Corporation   + Orleans Community Schools   + Paoli Community School Corporation   + Pike County School Corporation   + Perry Central Community School Corporation   + Salem Community Schools   + Scott County School District 1   + Scott County School District 2   + Silvercreek School Corporation   + South Gibson School Corporation   + South Harrison Community Schools   + South Spencer County School Corporation   + South Vermillion Community School Corporation   + Southeast Dubois County School Corporation   + Southwest Dubois County School Corporation   + Southwester-Jefferson County Consolidated   + Springs Valley Community School Corporation   + Switzerland County School Corporation   + Tell City-Troy Township School Corporation   + Vigo County School Corporation   + Warrick County School Corporation   + West Washington School Corporation   **Career and Technical Education (CTE)**   * + Prosser   + Southern Indiana Career and Technical Institute   **Transition Programs**   * + AIM Academy Vincennes University Jasper Campus   + TRACES Program University of Evansville   + Southwest Transition Cadre   + IN\*SOURCE—Special Education Parent Support,   + Youth\*Source   **Post-Secondary Education**   * + IVY Tech   + Indiana University Southeast   + Oakland City University   + University of Evansville   + University of Southern Indiana   + Vincennes University   **Trade and Technical Program**   * + Indiana/Kentucky/Ohio Regional Council of Carpenters   + Local 181 Heavy Operator’s Union   + Roger’s Hair Academy   + The Salon Professional Academy   **Animals and Natural Resources**   * + Azalea Path Botanical Garden and Arboretum   + Colonial Classics Landscaping and Nursery   + Falls of the Ohio   + Mesker Park Zoo   + Vanderburgh County Humane Society   + Warrick County Humane Society   + Wesselman Woods   **Automotive**   * + Toyota Motor Manufacturing   + Mills Body Shop   **Communication and Information**   * + Evansville Vanderburgh Public Library   + New Albany Public Library   + Nokia Network and Solutions   + WEHT/WTVW Television   + WEVV Television   + 14 WFIE News   + WGBF Radio   + WNIN Radio and Television Station   + WSWI Campus Radio Station   **Finance**   * + Old National Bank   + One Vision Credit Union   **Health and Medical Services**   * + Baptist Health Floyd Hospital   + Deaconess Gateway Hospital   + North Park Nursing Center   + Vanderburgh County Health Department   **Hospitality and Tourism**   * + Be Happy Pie Company   + Donut Bank Bakery   + Holiday Inn Express   + Holiday World   + Lyles Station Historic School and Museum   + Milk and Sugar Scoop Shoppe   + Showplace Cinemas   **Industry and Manufacturing**   * + AstraZeneca Pharmaceuticals   + Berry Global   + Cintas Uniform Solutions   + Nix Metal Fabrications   + Refresco Beverages   **Public Safety**   * + Evansville Fire Department   + Evansville Police Department   + Indiana State Police   + New Albany Fire Department   **Social Service Organizations**   * + Center for Lay Ministries   + Dress for Success   + Evansville Association for the Blind   + Goodwill   + Harrison County Community Services   + The Hope Gallery   + The Mustard Seed   + Purdue Extension Floyd County   + Purdue Extension Harrison County   + Purdue Extension Vanderburgh County   + Salvation Army   + Southern Indiana Coalition for the Homeless   + Tri-State Food Bank   **Transportation**   * + Evansville Regional Airport   + Metropolitan Evansville Transit System (METS)   + Ride Solution   + Tri-State Aero | |
| **3** | **Relevant Experience**  Describe relevant experience and qualifications in implementation for a project of this size and scope, including credentials and demonstrated experience in the development and/or provision of employment supports to students with disabilities or any similar services with the target population. Please also include background and expertise of staff that would play a substantial role in the delivery of services. |
| **QUALIFICATIONS**/**EXPERIENCE**  The project will be supported by six core partner agencies—Sycamore Services, The Arc Southwest Indiana, Southern Indiana Resource Solutions (SIRS), Rauch, Inc., Blue River Services, and New Hope Services, Inc.  These organizations have a combined 370 plus years of experience providing quality services in Central and Southern Indiana including a wide array of transition services for students with disabilities consistent with the requirements of WIOA and the Request for Service.  Three of the agencies have or currently operate successful Project SEARCH programs working with 8 high schools and one host business site in Central Indiana and two in Southern Indiana providing fully immersed work-based learning experiences to more than 30 students with disabilities annually.  **SYCAMORE SERVICES**, **INC** began in a rural setting on the West Side of Indianapolis as families searched for educational programs for their children and adults with disabilities over 62 years ago.  The agency has over 35 years of experience in providing employment opportunities to individuals with disabilities.  In the past 10 years, they have assisted over 1400 individuals in obtaining competitive community employment.  Sycamore Services has developed strong partnerships with Marion, Hendricks, Putnam, Morgan, Vanderburgh, Vigo, and Posey County schools.  Through these relationships, successful transition programs have been developed and have resulted in individuals becoming employed and independent in their own communities.  Since 2016, Sycamore has served as the fiscal agent for the Pre-Employment Transition project that covers 18 counties and schools.  We collaborate with The Arc of Southwest Indiana, SIRS, Rauch, Inc, -Blue River Services, and New Hope Services, Inc.   Sycamore also currently partners with Easter Seals Crossroads as a member of the Central Collaboration providing Pre-Employment Services in four counties including Hendricks, Marion, Morgan and Putnam.  Sycamore partnered with MSD Wayne Township and Avon Community Schools from 2008 - 2020 to provide transition opportunities for students through Project Search at the Indiana Government Center.  As a result of these internships at the Government Center, full time employment has been obtained in the Lt Governor’s Office, the State Auditor’s Office, Secretary of State Office, FSSA, Bureau of Motor Vehicles, DWD, Department of Children Services and Homeland Security, just to name a few.    Sycamore partnered with Easter Seals Crossroads on the CITY Project from 2008 to 2011.  The CITY Project was a Projects with Industry initiative funded by the US Department of Education and was successful in creating quality work experiences and paid employment opportunities for transition age youth with disabilities from the Indianapolis Public Schools.  Sycamore Services also worked on the NEST Project from 2006–2009.  NEST was a Collaborative Transition Program, in partnership with Sycamore Services and Noble, working with schools in Marion County and surrounding counties to provide technical assistance on transition planning. The NEST project was instrumental in assisting over 30 high schools in developing exemplary transition practices and improving employment outcomes for their students.  Sycamore partnered with SIRS and The Arc of Gibson County in 2008-2009 to work with schools in Warrick, Gibson and Pike counties to provide transition services to seven high schools.  Sycamore Services also partnered with Easter Seal Crossroads and Noble on the “Indiana School-to-Work Transition Collaborative”, a five-year research project facilitated by the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community designed to provide technical assistance in “best practices” of exemplary transition planning and services.  Sycamore, in partnership with Easter Seals Crossroads and Noble of Indiana, worked together on the “Indiana School-to-Work Transition Collaborative” five-year research project.  Through this collaboration, Sycamore was responsible for staffing and providing technical assistance in “best practice” transition services to MSD Wayne Township schools.  In 2015, Sycamore was awarded a grant from the State of Indiana for a training program to help participants in our Work Center or Day Program to learn valuable job skills and build a portfolio when searching for jobs.  Sycamore was one of only two that were selected for this grant throughout the state.  The grant took place at IU Health West.  Testament to the quality of Sycamore’s employment services is the fact that the State of Indiana has chosen Sycamore to partner in several projects related to employment of individuals with disabilities.  **THE ARC SOUTHWEST INDIANA** has been making a difference to thousands of children and adults with disabilities since they began in 1963. The agency has a long history of assisting individuals with disabilities in their quest to find community employment.  The community employment division of The Arc Southwest Indiana has been in continuous operation for nearly three decades.  During this time, the services offered have expanded beyond employment services to include cutting edge programs like Project Search.  The leadership of The Arc Southwest Indiana is fully committed to providing excellent services to individuals served.  In turn, there is equal commitment to the long-term success of programs that allow services to be provided.  A large part of the success enjoyed in recent programs has been the ability to work collaboratively with project partners and develop lasting, positive relationships.  **SIRS** was established in 1968, celebrating its 55th anniversary in 2023.  SIRS offers First Steps early intervention services, pediatric therapies, employment, and residential services and supports, community access and participation services, benefits analysis and work incentive planning, transportation services and manufacturing services.  The primary service area is Dubois, Perry, Spencer, Vanderburgh, and Warrick counties.  SIRS participated in the initial grants offered by Vocational Rehabilitation in the late 80s to initiate supported employment services in Indiana.  The company was chosen to be one of the first 6 agencies in the state to pilotthe systems change grants in the early 90s.  In large part due to the participation in the systems change grants as well as the leadership within the company, SIRS made a commitment in the mid-90s to move to community-based services.  This resulted in the closure of our three sheltered workshops and a total emphasis on community-based, competitive employment for the individuals we serve.  The organization continues to be a leader in the field of employment services operating successful employment programs for people with disabilities.  SIRS is a partner with the Warrick County School Corporation to operate a Project SEARCH site at Deaconess Hospital in Newburgh, IN.  SIRS also partners with the Exceptional Children’s Coop of Dubois, Spencer, and Perry Counties to operate AIM Academy at Vincennes University Jasper Campus which is transition immersion program for transition students ages 19-22.  SIRS participates in the School-To-Work Collaborative in Vanderburgh County. This innovative, team approach is another example of how adult disability service providers can work together to facilitate the employment outcomes for transition age youth.  SIRS operates the Work Incentive Planning and Assistance Project (WIPA) for 34 counties in Southern Indiana.  The WIPA program enables beneficiaries with disabilities to make informed choices about work and helps support working beneficiaries to make a successful transition to self-sufficiency.  SIRS employs two full time Community Work Incentive Coordinators (CWIC) to provide community-based work incentives expertise to beneficiaries of SSDI and SSI benefits.  SIRS is a partner with Ride Solution to provide rural on-demand public transportation services in Dubois, Perry, Spencer, and Warrick Counties.  SIRS is also the Medicaid transportation provider for these counties.    SIRS identified transportation as a major barrier to community employment and general community access.  SIRS worked tirelessly from the mid-90s through 2008 to get transportation services started in each of our core counties.  SIRS began Supported Employment services in the late 80s as an add on service.  By the mid- 90s SIRS made a commitment to a total conversion to community based, integrated services.  The closing of the three sheltered workshops is evidence of this commitment. The initial intent of the sheltered workshops was to orient people with disabilities to work, develop work skills, and determine the type of work in which they were interested and would likely succeed.  **BLUE RIVER SERVICES, INC (BRS)** is a non-profit organization founded in 1959 by six families who believe that all people are capable of learning when given the opportunity and appropriate support services.  With this guiding philosophy for more than 60 years, BRS has consistently expanded its services to meet the needs of community members and help people with disabilities and the general public overcome barriers to independence.  BRS strives to reach its motto of “People Serving People” by providing exceptional services for all ages, from infants to senior, in all areas of life and levels of ability.  In fiscal year 2019, the agency served 20,710 individuals through more than 20 programs in 30 Indiana counties.  BRS provides collaborations with multiple organizations in the areas served to provide Transportation, Youth Transitional Housing, Employment Services, Children Services, Drivers Education Training, Adult Housing Options, Industrial Manufacturing, Structured Family Care, Adult Residential Services and WIC Services.  Blue River meets the Better Business Bureau of Standards for Charitable Accountability, is affiliated with Indiana’s State Use Program, Prevent Child Abuse Indiana, First Steps, Healthy Families of America, Safe Place and is also accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF, International).    **RAUCH, INC** is proud of its grassroots heritage in Southern Indiana.  Founded in 1953 by a dedicated group of parents led by Mrs. Leona Receveur, programming began in a church basement with a volunteer teacher.  Rauch was the first school for children with developmental disabilities in the state of Indiana and the first entity in Southern Indiana to be funded by the WHAS Crusade for Children.  Rabbi Joseph Rauch, an original Crusade panelist, was instrumental in helping Rauch obtain funding in 1958 for its Charlestown Road site.  Today, Rauch directly serves over 1,000 children, adults, and families from five sites.  Service counties in Indiana include Clark, Floyd, Harrison, Scott, Washington, Jefferson, Jackson and Jennings counties.  Rauch provides Employment, Supported Living, Industrial, Adult Day Habilitation and Children Services.  Rauch meets the Better Business Bureau Standards for Charitable Accountability, and is proud to be affiliated with the Indiana Association of Rehabilitation Facilities (INARF), First Steps of Indiana, Metro United Way and the WHAS Crusade for Children and to be accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF, International)  **NEW HOPE SERVICES, INC. (NHS)**has been building “a community within the community” for over 65 years, addressing the needs of vulnerable populations, including individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities, children, and low-income families. NHS currently operates across 24 counties in Indiana. Whether it involves supporting families with adults or children or imparting life skills and job training to individuals with disabilities, NHS is dedicated to empowering and aiding members of our community.    NHS is organized into three primary divisions: Ability Services, Family Services, and Affordable Housing.  Programs within the Ability Services division include:  Employment Services, Pre-ETS, Participant Assistance and Care (PAC), Behavior Management, Respite, Attendant Care and Homemaker, Supported Living, Skills Training, Adult Day Program, and Community Habilitation.  Programs within the Family Services division include:  Women, Infant and Children (WIC) program, Healthy Families, and the HopeCare Clinic.  The Affordable Housing division includes the Affordable Developer program.    The six core partner organizations have a proven track record of achievement in improving the independence, exploring post-secondary training opportunities, and enhancing employment outcomes for young adults with disabilities as they transition from high school.  Each support and embrace the underlying principles of “Employment First,” a concept that supports integrated employment as the first and preferred outcome for all individuals and designed to facilitate the full inclusion of people with disabilities in the workplace and community.  They have demonstrated strong participation with state-wide membership and trade organizations such as Indiana APSE and INARF.  Recently, Leadership from Sycamore Services have shared best practices strategies with other agencies at INARF and was just recently selected to present on Collaboration Between Pre-ETS and YVRC’s at the 2024 INAPSE conference.  The extensive individual and collective experience of the core partner agencies creates a uniquely qualified collaboration that will continue to result in success by fulfilling the desired outcomes of the project.  The six organizations are all well connected with the business community, as well as other stakeholders, and cover a wide geographical area in Southern Indiana.  **Staff Qualifications**  The personnel from each core partner in this project present with a wide spectrum of qualified skills and represent over 140 years of experience working with youth and adults with a variety of disabilities, including those with high support needs.  Many of the staff have experience in successfully managing and working on federal and state grants including transition projects.  Specific expertise of key leadership for the project is summarized below.    **Patti Sebanc**is the Director of Employment Services and Youth and Therapeutic Services at Sycamore Services.  Patti has over 31 years of experience working with individuals in various roles, with the majority of years being related to employment.   She has been involved in the development and supervision of transition programs including Project Search, State funded Transition Grants, Indiana School-to-Work Transition Collaborative and most recently Pre-Employment Transition Services.  In her years of experience, she assisted with the development of Sycamore’s Residential program, Employment Services, Day and Community Services, Behavior Management, Recreational Therapy and Children’s Services, both First Steps and clinic based. Patti is committed to Sycamore Services' mission to provide individualized training and supports to persons with disabilities to enhance independence in all areas of life.  Patti will serve on the management and oversight team for the project and will also serve as the primary liaison to State personnel.  **Joy Harding** is employed by Sycamore Services and has served as the Project Manager for the Pre-ETS program serving Southern Indiana since the program began in 2016.  She received her MS degree from the University of Evansville.  She has worked with persons with disabilities in various capacities for over 30 years.  She has experience serving in supervisory roles for individuals receiving residential and employment supports, and also has experience serving as a Case Manager.  In her current role, Joy is a member of Regional Cadres of Transition Educators which is focused on improving transition outcomes for secondary students.  She also is a member of the Transition Advisory Council.  She has forged connections with area businesses and post-secondary institutions to help students have a smooth transition from high school.  Joy will continue to serve on the management and oversight team for the project as well as serve as the alternate liaison to State personnel.  **Brian Drogich** is the Director of Operations for The Arc Southwest Indiana.  Brian has worked in the rehabilitative field for over sixteen years.  Throughout this time, he has had continual involvement in the provision of employment services to persons with disabilities.  Brian has been involved in several projects through The Arc Southwest Indiana that are focused on services for youth.  Brian was the Site Coordinator for Gibson County Project Search from 2009 to 2013.  Brian also has experience in providing transition services through an earlier transition collaborative, as well as being an Administrative Representative for The Arc Southwest in the current Pre-ETS collaborative with primary partners Sycamore Services and SIRS.  Since moving to his current position as Director of Operations for The Arc Southwest Indiana, Brian has remained very involved in the delivery of placement services to Vocational Rehabilitation clients.  While not directly involved in working with clients, Brian oversees the work completed by the Employment Specialist and attends quarterly meetings with the Vocational Rehabilitation Area Supervisor covering Pike County.  Brian will serve on the management and oversight team for the project*.*  **Cheryl Mullis** is the President/CEO of Southern Indiana Resource Solutions (SIRS) and has 20 years of experience working with individuals with disabilities.  Cheryl has served in various roles, including management of the operations of SIRS' employment, transition, community access, transportation, and work incentive planning and assistance programs.  She is constantly exploring ways to support and encourage the employment of people with disabilities.  Cheryl's passion for employment and vast knowledge in the field put her in a unique position to create innovative opportunities for the individuals within the SIRS community. Cheryl will continue to serve on the management and oversight team for the project.  **Holly Adam** is the Director of Employment Services for Rauch, Inc. and Blue River Services.  Holly has worked in the field of ID/DD Services for over 30 years. During her career in the field, Holly has supervised and ran multiple programs, including but not limited to, Integrated Workshops, Supported Living, Representative Payee Services, Day Habilitation, Respite, PAC, Senior-in-Home Care, and Employment Services. Holly is a CARF Surveyor for CARF International and Private Consultant. Holly has worked with the Pre-ETS Collaboration for six years and will serve on the management and oversight team for the project.  **Rebekah Lewellen**, serving as the Director of Social Services for New Hope Services, Inc, plays a pivotal role as a key leader within NHS. With a tenure of over 14 years, Rebekah's journey began as a Family Resource Specialist in the Healthy Families Division. Swiftly advancing into a supervisory role, she provided support to numerous staff involved in assisting mothers and children across 13 Indiana Counties.  In 2018, Rebekah's dedication and capabilities led to her promotion as the Manager of Direct Support. In this role, she led a team serving individuals with disabilities in our Day Program, Community Habilitation, and Behavioral Management. Two years later, Rebekah transitioned to the Employment Services Program at NHS, where she supervised Employment Consultants overseeing Supported Employment initiatives in eight Indiana counties.  After a successful stint as Employment Services Manager, Rebekah, armed with extensive experience in leading diverse programs and teams at NHS, earned a promotion to the position of Director of Social Services. In her current role, she oversees both Family and Ability Services for NHS.   Rebekah will continue to serve on the management and oversight team for the project. | |
| **4** | **Training**  Describe how staff training will be conducted and what process will be followed. Share sample training documentation that will be utilized and describe additional training content that would be developed (e.g., system manual, user manual etc.). |
| Each Collaborative Partner is responsible for hiring Career Coaches for their specific agency.  Ideally, prospective Career Coaches will have experience working with students with disabilities ages 14-22, knowledge of major community employers and knowledge of post-secondary opportunities in their service area.  Career Coaches play a critical role in the success of students’ transition from high school.   Each Collaborative Partner will evaluate the personal attributes of prospective Career Coaches through their resume/application and responses to case study type open-ended questions during the interview process.  Desired personal attributes of Career Coaches include:  Principle Optimism, Cultural Competence, Business Oriented and Network Savvy.  Each Collaborative Partner will ensure that a prospective Career Coach meets the hiring requirements of their agency and has a satisfactory:  state and county Criminal History Report, CNA Home Health Aide Registry Check, Sex Offender Registry Check, Drug Screening, TB Test, Valid Driver’s License and Current Proof of Insurance.   Additionally, contractor and sub-contractors shall enroll in and verify the work eligibility status of his/her newly hired employees through the E-Verify program as defined in the Pre-ETS contract.  Newly hired Career Coaches will undergo initial training with their specific agency.  Each Collaborative Partner will ensure their Career Coach completes the required training for their specific agency, including but not limited to:  First Aid, CPR, Behavior Intervention, Confidentiality/FERPA, Communication, Respect and Dignity, Protection of an Individual’s Rights, Protecting an Individual from Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation and DDRS Incident Reporting. Career Coaches will be required to demonstrate their acquired knowledge in the above areas by successfully passing a quiz in accordance with their specific agency’s guidelines.  Once a Career Coach completes their initial training with their respective agency, they will complete an orientation for the Pre-ETS program.  This orientation will be presented in three phases.  Phase One will be completed by the Project Manager and will include training regarding:   * The Basics of Pre-ETS- The Rehabilitation Act/WIOA/IDEA * Who is eligible for Pre-ETS   + Documents needed to validate eligibility * Most common student disabilities * The role of the Career Coach * Identifying Students in Need of Pre-ETS Services/Working with Schools   + Communicating with schools and parents * The Required Five Pre-ETS Services   + Examples of these services   + Allowable activities * Using the Pre-ETS Portal   + Entering student information in the portal   + How to complete the Intake/Exit Rubric and Recommended Services   + Information to be included in service session notes   + Information needed for stipend activities.   + Changing student status * Curriculum resources * Ideas for activities to be completed during school breaks * Community Partnerships * Charting the LifeCourse     Training will be documented on a Training Form and will include the following:   * An agenda including the subject matter or type of training provided * The name, title and applicable qualifications of the trainer * The duration of each training session (start time/end time) * The date(s) of the training * The signature of the trainer verifying satisfactory completion of the training by the employee * The signature of the employee or agent documenting the employee/agent’s attendance at each training session.     Career Coaches must meet a 90% competency on the Pre-ETS Services Quiz.  Re-training will occur with the Project Manager and/or designee until appropriate competency levels are reached or until such time it is determined that competency will not be met.  Phase Two of training will involve new Career Coaches completing the 9 online training courses developed by Level Up Indiana that include:  Introduction to Transition; Effective Community-Based Instruction; and Working to improve Access to Pre-ETS Underserved Populations,  Phase Three will be coordinated between the Project Manager and the Specific Collaborative Partner and will include school-based experiences for the new Career Coach so that they can gain needed skills and knowledge to effectively provide Pre-ETS services to students.  Training will include:   * Who is the point of contact at the assigned school and their preferred method of communication * Referral Process for Students * Student IEP and Transition Needs * Scheduling Career Coach School Visits * Procedure For Working with Students at School * Procedure For Field Trips * Parental Consent and Engagement * Student Information Exchange * Emergency Procedures       Career Coaches will be required to document the requested information about each school via an Individualized School Training Form to verify that such training has been provided.   An example of this training form is included in Attachment 13.   All the above aspects of orientation must be completed prior to working independently.  At a minimum, the Project Manager will meet with Career Coaches on a quarterly basis.  These quarterly staff meetings will provide training and mentoring opportunities for Career Coaches to help them become more comfortable in their role.  Guest speakers will be solicited to offer additional professional development opportunities to Career Coaches.  Types of trainings that could be offered include:   * Understanding Student Work Restrictions * Person Centered-Planning * Benefits Counseling * Determining Student’s Goals for Pre-ETS Services * Working with students and families * Understanding differences between VR and Pre-ETS allowable activities * How to complete the FAFSA * WorkOne Youth Services * Evansville Association for the Blind summer program at USI * How to refer a student to Vocational Rehabilitation * Creating effective resumes     All in-house trainings will be documented on a Training Form.  Career Coaches will be required to pass a quiz on the training material presented with 90% accuracy.  Project Manager will attend all State Provider Meetings and share updates and changes that are discussed.  The Project Manager will also pass along information pertaining to external training opportunities to Career Coaches as these become available.  These training opportunities may include conferences, webinars, and workshops.  Possible external training subjects could include:   * Understanding specific disabilities * Financial aid for post-secondary education * Changes in graduation requirements * Communication Strategies * Self-Advocacy     Career Coaches who participate in external training opportunities will be requested to submit a certificate of attendance for such training when available to verify such training occurred.  Each Collaborative Partner will ensure their Career Coaches receive training on an annual basis.  Annual training will include at a minimum:   * Confidentiality/FERPA * Communication * Respect and Dignity, * Protection of an Individual’s Rights, * Protecting an Individual from Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation * DDRS Incident Reporting * Other policies and procedures as required by local, State, and Federal laws and guidelines     Career Coaches will be required to demonstrate their acquired knowledge in the above areas by successfully passing a quiz in accordance with their specific agency’s guidelines. | |
| **5** | **Documentation/Billing**  Describe procedures related to how data and required documentation listed in attachment E would be collected and entered into BRS’ Pre-ETS web portal (see **Attachment F, Overview of Web Portal**). Outline the process that will be used to meet the states expectations for timely and accurate billing, and ensuring that expenses claimed align with service delivery data entered into the Pre-ETS web portal. |
| Career Coaches will utilize the Pre-ETS Vendor Portal system to collect federally, and state required data in a format that will facilitate combined VR and Pre-ETS participant reporting at the level of detail required by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA).   Students and/or parents interested in the student receiving Pre-ETS services must sign a consent form allowing the student to participate in all aspects of the Pre-ETS program, including field trips and transportation, under the supervision of collaborative staff.  Students age 18 and older, who do not have a legal guardian, may sign the Pre-ETS consent form for themselves without a parent signature.  Participation in the Pre-ETS program is voluntary and consent may be revoked at any time by notifying the Pre-ETS Project Manager or assigned Career Coach either verbally or in writing of the student’s/parent’s desire to revoke consent.  The signed consent form will be considered valid, unless revoked, until such time as the student exits the Pre-ETS program due to graduation, aging out, etc. The consent form does NOT need to be signed annually.  The signed consent form gives permission to share information between the student’s school and collaborative staff which includes copies of school records and confidential information that is necessary to determine the student’s eligibility for participation.  The consent form will also enable to the Career Coach to obtain information from Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation regarding the student’s case status with Vocational Rehabilitation during the time the student is enrolled in Pre-ETS and for one-year post-exit from Pre-ETS.  Career Coaches will create an electronic file in the Pre-ETS Vendor Portal for each Pre-ETS student on their caseload.  The Career Coach will enter the student’s contact and demographic information into the New Intake section in the portal as required.  The Career Coach will also upload a PDF file format copy of all required documents into the portal for each student on their caseload participating in Pre-ETS program.  Upon receipt of a signed consent form, the designated school representative will forward a copy of the student’s IEP or 504 plan to the assigned Career Coach.  If an IEP or 504 Plan is not available, the school representative and the assigned Career Coach will discuss what other information may be used to determine the student’s eligibility for the Pre-ETS program.   The Career Coach will review the disability documentation prior to meeting with the student to better understand the student’s Pre-ETS Needs, accommodation needs, learning style, specific interests, etc.   The Career Coach may also discuss the student’s skills, challenges and interests with the student’s TOR and/or parent/legal guardian to help gain a clearer understanding of student’s Pre-ETS needs.  Once a signed consent form and disability documentation have been received, the Career Coach will then schedule the student for an initial meeting at which time they will verify the student’s Intake information and complete an Intake Rubric in the Pre-ETS Vendor Portal.  The purpose of the Intake Rubric is to capture the student’s skills and accomplishments at the time of their enrollment into the Pre-ETS program.  Students’ skills will be evaluated in each of the five Pre-ETS service categories.  Students will be encouraged to participate in the Intake Rubric to the best of their ability utilizing their preferred method of communication.  The Career Coach will use the Guided Questions to help gather information about the student and answer the specific questions in each category. The Career Coach may rephrase the question or define any terms with which the student is unfamiliar to help get the most accurate information.  The Career Coach may also use information from school records or interview with the parent/guardian or TOR when attempting to answer questions on the Intake Rubric and to identify student needs.  The Career Coach will ask the student a series of questions in each of the five service categories to determine their skills in each area on a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high). The Career Coach will use the information from the Intake Rubric to summarize the findings and make recommendations for the student in each of the 5 service areas. The Career Coach will discuss the Intake Rubric findings with the student.  Once the Intake Rubric has been marked as complete, the recommendations documented by the Career Coach will be automatically transferred to the Recommended Services page in the portal. Each of the 5 service areas will have an assigned a weighted score, indicating the prioritization of services for the student. The Career Coach will review the assigned scores for each of the 5 service areas. The Career Coach will then use the Recommended Service Comments section to make any additional observations regarding provision or prioritization of services. The Career Coach will then submit the Intake Rubric/Recommended Services for approval by the Youth Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (YVRC).  If the Recommended Services for the student are not approved by the YVRC, the Career Coach will make any requested changes and resubmit these services for approval.  Using the Recommended Services as a guide, the Career Coach will meet with the student to address their needs in the identified service area.    Where student’s needs/interests overlap, services may be provided in group sessions.  Career Coaches may meet with students individually when exploring career interests or needs that are unique to that student.  The frequency of Pre-ETS services will be based upon the needs of the students.  The Career Coach will provide the needed service(s) using resources/activities that are appropriate, evidenced-based, and understandable to the individual student.  Upon completion of the service activity, The Career Coach will document the New Service Session in the Pre-ETS Vendor Portal.  The service session note must include all required information.  In addition, the “Activity Note” should be: objective not subjective; thorough, yet concise; written within 10 days after the session to ensure accuracy; and readily understandable by and appropriate for any reader (YVRC, Teacher of Record, Student, Parent, etc.)  Specifically, the Career Coach will:   * Identify the activity that was done with/for the student * Identify which of the five service categories the activity falls within * Explain how the activity directly benefits the student(s) based on their needs and/or transition goals * Summarize what the student did using factual/observable information about the service session * Describe what the student learned about their interests, skills, preferences and/or needs * indicate what their plan of action will be between this session and the next, where appropriate   Career Coaches will be specific but brief in their documentation.  The Career Coach will indicate if the service provided was a direct or indirect service.  The bulk of services provided to students will be direct in nature.  Indirect services will be limited to 25% of billable activities.  When documenting stipend activities, the Career Coach will include all required information in the New Stipend Session in the Pre-ETS Vendor Portal. Career Coaches will ensure that the student’s Session Start Date and Session End Date are accurately recorded for the month, along with their total hours worked. The Career Coach will ensure that wages paid for Stipends are based on the prevailing wage for that position and will upload a Wage Justification Form to the student’s portal file. In the Work-Based Learning Evaluation section, the Career Coach will briefly explain what job tasks the student completed during their Work-Based Learning Experience and summarize the student’s strengths/weaknesses and likes/dislikes about the job. The Career Coach will also ensure that a Pre-ETS Work-Based Learning Transition Assessment is completed for the student at the conclusion of their Work-Based Learning Experience that includes an evaluation of the student’s job performance by both the student and their Work-Based Learning Advisor. This assessment will be uploaded into the student’s electronic file in the portal.    The Project Manager will review a sampling of provider portal entries for each Career Coach to ensure that Pre-ETS services are being billed accurately and timely.  The Project Manager will monitor to ensure that expenses claimed align with service delivery data entered in the Pre-ETS Vendor Portal. Each school is now assigned a Youth Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (YVRC).  They are responsible for reviewing a sampling of monthly services to ensure appropriate services are being provided and accurately documented.  If an issue is discovered during the portal audit by the YVRC, they will notify the Project Manager who will follow up with the Career Coach involved to take corrective action.  Each Career Coach will be required to ensure that all services and stipends for the preceding month have been entered into the Pre-ETS Vendor Portal by the close of business on the first working day of each new month.  Once all the service sessions have been entered, the Project Manager will use the “Reports” section in the portal to generate a “Service Session Details for Monthly Billing Report” for each Specific Agency and for the Collaborative as a whole.  The Project Manager will then use the “Fiscal” section in the portal to “Generate Invoice” for each Specific Agency and the Collaborative as a whole.  The Project Manager will review the information from the monthly billing report and portal invoice to ensure accuracy.  The Contract Lead will also review the monthly financial figures to further ensure accuracy.   An invoice will be sent to VR no later than the 10th working day of the month for expenses incurred the previous month. | |