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| StateSeal.JPG | **RFS-24-77904**  **Pre-Employment Transition Services Required Activities**  **Attachment E** | |
| **Respondent:** | | Prairie Quest 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. |
| 1a. Overview of Proposed Strategies to Meet Pre-ETS Requirements Prairie Quest Inc. (PQC) and its training-focused division, PQC Trains, bring over a decade of experience in developing, implementing and running training programs, including but not limited to Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) and vocational rehabilitation (VR) in Indiana. Our PQC Trains division exists to provide employment services to students and adults with disabilities in order to help them find successful, long-term employment. This means going beyond simple employment training, and PQC Trains empowers our clients of all ages to learn practical job skills in order to find employment positions that are fulfilling and meaningful so that they can be successful at work and beyond.  As a Pre-ETS provider since 2018, we focus on inclusion-backed care and knowledge, and we believe in the human connection. Through quality and honest services, we can change the circumstances for the betterment of us all. We currently serve 26 schools in 13 counties, and with the submission of this proposal we seek to continue providing Pre-ETS as delineated in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) for eligible students with disabilities between the ages of 14 and 22.  As we further detail below, we will deliver the following required core Pre-ETS activities:   * Job exploration counseling. * Work-based learning experiences. * Work-based learning experiences: stipends (on a case-by-case basis). * Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education. * Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living. * Instruction in self-advocacy, which may include peer mentoring.   Hand in hand with our focus on the core Pre-ETS activities, our program also incorporates strategies highlighting best practices that:   1. lead to an Employment First philosophy, emphasizing competitive, integrated employment as the key outcome for individuals with disabilities; and 2. incorporate the LifeCourse framework to help an individual plan for their best future while identifying and utilizing the integrated supports and services available to them in order to achieve greater outcomes while living their good life.   Employment First can entail different meanings depending on the individuals involved at any given time. In the case of our Pre-ETS program, an Employment First focus means ensuring our students have support—e.g., job counseling, work-based learning and advocacy training—to plan their future, and we assist them in obtaining the information and support they need to make their own decisions about working. Our processes also integrate LifeCourse framework concepts by encouraging students to be engaged in envisioning their goals and having high expectations, and we help them to identify the trajectory and integrated supports they might need to achieve their preferred future or “good life.” We work with students to build their skills and knowledge; understand their employment rights; recognize, build access to, and utilize resources and connections; advocate for themselves and accommodations; and overcome other barriers or limitations to employment. Incorporating an Employment First focus and the LifeCourse framework also means that our Pre-ETS Job Coaches have a thorough understanding of the resources, strategies, and technologies available to best support our students as they work toward their goals.  In our overall program delivery, we will provide training on the core Pre-ETS activities and overcoming Employment First barriers using Unique Learning System (ULS) curriculum in combination with PQC-developed supplemental materials and other resources through individual and group training sessions as applicable and tailorable activities. We will also incorporate the use of our Learning Management System (LMS), easy-to-access Padlet dashboards, and hands-on assessment and training resource kits to further enhance student understanding and learning. (An in-depth discussion of our curriculum, PQC-developed supplemental resources, and delivery methods is included in **sections 1a-1** and **1b-5**.)  Our goal with Pre-ETS is to continue to provide high-quality services to our state customers, schools, employers and students. As part of this endeavor, we recognize the need to increase participation in the program and build relationships with key stakeholders, which will entail:   * Ensuring our Job Coaches are present in the schools as often as possible. * Focusing on the core Pre-ETS activities—workplace readiness, job exploration, self-advocacy, work-based learning and post-secondary education opportunities. * Our Job Coaches, with the help of our Community Coordinator, working to find meaningful job shadows, mock interviews, site visits, college and trade school trips, as well as experiences that will lead to impactful employment training. * Having a present and supportive leadership.   + Our leadership will make it a priority to be present at our schools at least quarterly, if not more. This will allow us to stay abreast of updates with school and student needs as well as discuss potential programming opportunities (e.g., resource fairs, group learning experiences).   + Leaders will have regular conversations with our Job Coaches so they feel supported and recognized in the work they are doing and how it will make an impact on the clients, students and community.   + They will perform periodic audits of intake, consent, rubrics and case notes submitted by the Job Coaches. They will also address monthly audit findings that come from the Youth Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (YVRCs). Even when there are good notes, we want to make sure we talk about the findings to reinforce the positives.   + Foster relationships with our community partners that convey employment opportunities, job specific learning, bring fresh ideas for possibilities and extend our learning environment to include our communities. * Maintaining a focus on quality to improve the value of our services to the state, the student, the school, or any community partner that interacts with our services.   + Forms will be kept current.   + Case notes will be timely, complete, concise and detailed as to the time spent, with who, and the activities that occurred.   + We will conduct periodic random audits to ensure we are keeping quality high and results measurable.  1a-1. 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. To meet Pre-ETS requirements, our program offers individual and group services and curriculum focused on the core Pre-ETS activities (i.e., job exploration, work-based learning, counseling on postsecondary opportunities, workplace readiness, self-advocacy, stipends) along with inclusion of principles and goals related to the Employment First legislation. These focuses are not mutually exclusive from one another and can often be cultivated simultaneously via our curriculum and training offerings. As we are committed to providing person-centric training, our initial focus is on working one-on-one with our students. When we conduct group sessions, it is for training that allows the students involved to work and learn as a team on a topic in which they share an interest.  Our curriculum features the award-winning and standards-based **Unique Learning System (ULS)** as well as incorporation of PQC-developed materials and resources to enhance and reiterate lessons. The ULS is specifically designed for students with disabilities to make the general curriculum accessible to the schools we partner with. It is used daily in school districts and classrooms around the country and provides students through transition age with rigorous, standards-based materials specially designed to meet their instructional needs. Topics in this system align with the aforementioned required Pre-ETS activities, further strengthening the program and reiterating the lessons in the required activities. Examples of unit topics related to Pre-ETS services include: My Community, which focuses on accessing community resources, arranging transportation, and rules in the community; Dress for Success, which focuses on appropriate dress and grooming, especially for a job interview; and Home Sweet Home, which explores various options for living as independently as possible. We have, however, escalated our finance training because, as we realized in our experience on our first Pre-ETS contract, the ULS financial curriculum was not challenging enough for our students. For finance curriculum, we instead employ Jump$tart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy curriculum, which incorporates resources in alignment with the National Standards for Personal Financial Education.  To further enhance and expand upon the ULS curriculum, PQC Trains integrates our own developed-in-house supplementary materials and resources. For example, we created a Financial Wellness learning module that we integrate with the Jump$tart materials. Our in-house materials are presented via hands-on training kits, our online LMS, and easy-to-access Padlet dashboards. We train our Pre-ETS Job Coaches on all of our curriculum, and it is embedded into our program’s required activities. Below, we detail our curriculum as well as strategies and tailorable activities we engage to provide the core Pre-ETS service areas to students:   * **Job exploration counseling.** PQC Trains provides job exploration counseling utilizing surveys and assessments (such as the O\*NET Interest Profiler and the Self-Directed Search interest inventory) to assist students in learning about new careers and developing occupational themes. Our ULS curriculum also includes monthly “Job Interest Survey” and “Job Exploration” modules within each unit that feature different fields and job titles that students can learn about and gauge interest in.   Job exploration incorporates discussions aimed at helping students turn their day-to-day experiences into valuable information about what their talents are and what they like and dislike. Our Pre-ETS Job Coaches review career websites such as O\*Net OnLine (www.onetonline.org), the Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov/k12/), Career OneStop (www.careeronestop.org), and the Occupational Outlook Handbook online (www.bls.gov/ooh/) to teach students how to investigate careers of interest on their own. We encourage students to use CareerExplorer.com, take their career test, and explore their compatibility with potentially compatible careers. Our Job Coaches present concepts and experiences with informational interviews and job shadows, including discussion of what they are, why they are important, and how to set them up.  In addition, this section introduces students to exploring higher education, internships, and apprenticeships. It exposes students to resources such as College Board (www.collegeboard.com), Cappex (www.cappex.com), College Navigator (https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/), College Insight (http://college-insight.org/), and My Next Move (www.mynextmove.org); these resources are also covered more in depth in other activities.  Related supplemental materials we have developed within the job exploration topic include hands-on assessment and training activities like our Point of Sale (POS) Solution, and Dexterity resource kits. These kits provide detailed looks into different positions (e.g., cashier, waitress, hostess, stocker, bagger), common tasks/duties, education and experience requirements, and employment field projections. Kits include worksheets that help the student learn related topics such as vocabulary terms, tool identification, totaling order costs, etc. Hands-on activities, such as the POS program, helps students understand cashiering basics, which will help them develop skills related to common duties.  Job exploration services can be tailored to an individual or group setting.   * + **Some examples of job exploration counseling activities we have conducted with our Pre-ETS students include:**     - PQC Trains Pre-ETS Job Coach Robin Williams worked with a student to identify goals and possible career paths. She prompted her student for their thoughts on how to achieve the job they were striving for, then discussed: the training that might be necessary, how to learn more about other jobs within the field, and the student’s preference as to staying local or needing to travel for work. They also discussed planning a trip to the local Carpenters Union in order to help the student learn more about the training needed to be a carpenter, as well as reviewed the Union’s website to prepare for the Union’s application process.     - PQC Trains Pre-ETS Job Coach Mark Middlecoff conducted informational and mock interviews with a student and provided feedback regarding their performance. To further assist the student in improving their interviewing skills, Mark suggested a new approach and recorded the mock interview on video so both Mark and the student could offer critique. After watching the first time, the student noticed they were not sitting still during the interview and that was distracting. They also observed their responses would waver off topic at times, and noted they should ask more questions to make sure they have a full understanding of what is being asked of them by the interviewer.     - PQC Trains Pre-ETS Job Coach Megan Deck met with a group of students and introduced different types of jobs that they might have an interest in. She asked each group member to identify 2 careers they were interested in pursuing as well as 2 hobbies they enjoyed or were interested in trying. The group then discussed each student’s answers and learned more about the careers of interest among them, as well as the education or training needed to obtain each career. Megan also reviewed how their hobbies could relate to future careers.     - PQC Trains Pre-ETS Job Coach Dalian Taylor met with one of his students to evaluate her skills needs and discuss what skills training would be needed. Based on the evaluation, the student needed to further develop their interpersonal, soft, and job exploration skills. Dalian and the student then developed a learning plan consisting of home, school, and career educational materials.     - PQC Trains Pre-ETS Job Coach Jeff Slusser met with a student to discuss their interest in becoming a welder. Jeff presented the student with information about the local employers who the student could visit as a part of a job shadow. Jeff utilized the PQC Trains Padlet program that includes the American Welding Society Assessment quiz as well as information about different welding jobs and training sites specific to welding. The student was very interested and visits to both a college as well as a local welding company were scheduled. * **Work-based learning experiences.** For work-based learning, we look to build on a student’s obtained self-knowledge and interests discovered during the Job Exploration Counseling module. Services can be tailored to an individual or group setting. Using WBL experience, our students get first-hand understanding of real-world applications of academic and occupational training and how they relate to their future success. Our employers are excited to find a way to build, retain and inspire their future employees. All of our WBL experiences (paid/unpaid) extend the traditional classroom to the workplace and reinforce student-to-employer and student-to-community bonds.   In a one-on-one setting, the PQC Trains Pre-ETS Job Coach assists a student in searching for employment settings within the community that coincide with the student’s vocational themes and interests. Informational interviews, volunteer experiences, internships, apprenticeships, and mentoring opportunities may be included to aid students in learning more about fields that interest them, as well as gaining some hands-on experience, with support from our Pre-ETS Job Coaches as needed.  In a group setting, the Job Coach utilizes relationships with community partners to set up work experiences for the class. Worksite tours, informational interviews, volunteer experiences, and job shadows may be included in a variety of different settings.   * + **Examples of work-based learning activities we have conducted with our Pre-ETS students include:**     - A student of Megan’s shared their interest in cosmetology. Megan then worked with the student on a self-employment/entrepreneurial experience with activities including researching self-employment, developing a business plan, reviewing industry requirements, talking about marketing, and discussing the risks and management aspects of a business. The student noted they would like to be in a program where they can take cosmetology while still in school. Based on the student’s IEP, she is able to receive resources that will allow her to get extra help and time in school programs tailored to her career interest.     - The past two summers, Mark has worked with four students on a project dedicated to cleaning and repainting each of Union City’s 180 fire hydrants, completing 90 each summer. Along with gaining valuable experience, the students learned about OSHA and used approved paints and cleaners, and gained an understanding of the hydrant color-coding system that firefighters follow to know hydrant’s water pressure.     - PQC Trains Pre-ETS Job Coach Katherine Lyon worked with a group of students to monitor them while they engaged in work-based learning. She spoke with students about their progress, expectations and activities. She and the students discussed each student’s assignments and how to complete them. Some students were assigned to organization and quality assurance, others to packaging, and all students worked on stocking. When the work-based learning concluded for the day, Katherine and her students discussed what they learned and their insights on things that could be improved upon for the next week.     - PQC Trains Pre-ETS Job Coach Logan Hostetler met with one of her students to go over their thoughts regarding a job shadowing opportunity at a local humane society. As the student had previously expressed an interest in wanting to work with animals, this experience would help the student evaluate whether or not they would enjoy such an environment.     - PQC Trains Pre-ETS Job Coach Kaelin conducted work-based learning exploration with one of her students. She reviewed possible options that fit the student’s career goals, then discussed those options with the student and Teacher of Record (TOR). She also reviewed expectations with the student. Since the student was already in another joblike opportunity through a young adult services program, they discussed getting him into alternate roles to further develop different skills in new settings. * **Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in postsecondary education.** Our Pre-ETS Job Coaches delve deeper into opportunities in higher education and further utilize the resources introduced previously (e.g., College Board, Cappex, College Navigator, College Insight, My Next Move). Lessons focus on determining whether postsecondary education is the right decision; strategies and aids for preparing for admittance exams; how to choose the right school; the difference between community colleges, universities, and trade/technical schools; picking a major that coincides with career interests by utilizing online resources such as “What Can I Do With a Major In…” (https://www.uncw.edu/career/WhatCanIDoWithaMajorIn.html); paying for school (FAFSA, https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college); and documenting and advocating for accommodations. One of the additional supporting resources we incorporate is EnvisionIT Career Pathway handouts, which students can use to identify and record their goals with MyFuture.com as well as compare/contract possible school options with College Navigator.   Students have the opportunity to visit local colleges for a tour; attend a lecture; and meet staff in and learn about available programs and resources such as Purdue Fort Wayne’s Disability Access Center (DAC) and Career Development Center (CDC). The DAC is “committed to promoting and ensuring equal access and opportunity for students with disabilities at Purdue Fort Wayne,” and the CDC assists students and alumni in connecting with leading companies in northeastern Indiana.  Services can be tailored to an individual or group setting.   * + **Examples of postsecondary education counseling activities we have conducted with our Pre-ETS students include:**     - Several Job Coaches set up a visit to the monthly Erskine Green tour. PQC has taken multiple students that were interested in a Career Sampling Visit, and this allowed them to learn about the food services, healthcare and hotel programs available at Erskine Green. After these tours, our Job Coaches work with interested students to identify plans and discuss funding options to allow them to attend after graduation.     - Kaelin reviewed post-secondary options with a student and discussed how those options may apply based on the student’s job choices. They discussed the student applying for FAFSA and the college he would like to attend, as well as reviewed secondary options as well.     - Mark helped one of his students prepare for the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) test by working through practice tests and exploring the student’s options.     - Logan and a student discussed the student’s thoughts about Vocational Rehabilitation services, reviewing options and the process. They discussed benefits to the program.     - Logan also conducted a visit to Erskine Green with another of her students. As part of the activity, they reviewed the types of career paths available, how to enroll, and what the student should consider should they decide they’d like to attend Erskine Green. They continued discussion of the student’s job interests and how they align with Erskine Green’s offerings.     - Megan and a group of her students held a local college visit. They toured the college and Megan reviewed the type of career paths available to the students. They discussed enrollment/admissions processes as well as other topics to consider for attendance, such as paying for college. * **Workplace readiness**. This section prepares students for stepping into professional roles by providing social and independent living skills development training. Of the total 2023 workplace readiness sessions held in 2023, PQC Trains conducted 21% of them. We use ULS curriculum as well as the Jump$tart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy curriculum to best support this learning area. The ULS curriculum includes lessons focused on everyday communication, work attitudes, conflict resolution, empathy, stress management techniques, time management (e.g., creating a schedule and sticking to it), etc. It also includes independent living skills such as dressing for success, proper hygiene, and utilizing local available transportation. Our Job Coaches will familiarize students with the local bus system and may take them out in the community to show them how to use it as well. Additionally, students may work on a “30-Second Sales Pitch” to highlight their abilities, practice mock interviews, or write out a script for a professional phone call.   For banking/money/financial training, the Jump$tart curriculum we utilize presents students with detailed financial and banking training; each lesson includes a specific list of objectives students should learn by the end of the lesson and offers suggestions for discussion topics to help the student discuss and apply their experiences as well as consider their needs to progress.  Services can be tailored to an individual or group setting. In an individual setting, our Pre-ETS Job Coaches assist students in identifying and naming feelings, and provide examples of assertive, professional communication. In a group setting, classroom discussions are facilitated and roleplaying may be incorporated. In either setting, guided meditations may be incorporated as an example of stress management.   * + **Examples of workplace readiness activities we have conducted with our Pre-ETS students include:**     - Mark worked with a student to learn about their available transportation options. He then practiced utilizing public transportation options with the student. The pair then researched job opportunities the student would be interested in that would maintain the cost of his transportation needs.     - Megan conducted a workplace readiness assessment with one of her students. She provided oversight and assistance as the student created an Indiana Career Explorer account and completed an interest assessment. The student also completed the interest profiler, which highlighted his top three career industries (e.g., Agriculture/Natural Resources; Transportation and Logistics; and Arts, Audio Visual and Communications). After reviewing the results, the student expressed an interest in working with animals and Megan discussed with them potential career exploration opportunities related to that interest area.     - Robin worked with one of her students to provide lessons and strategies to support independence at work, such as time management, self-monitoring performance, and accepting constructive feedback. As part of this process, Robin assisted the student in learning how to tell time on an analog clock, as many workplaces still use this style of clock over the digital version that students are more familiar with. The pair discussed how individuals can get in trouble if they return late from a break or lunch, and how tardiness could eventually lead to job loss.     - Robin met with another student to work on their interpersonal skills and assist them in identifying what skills are key for good relationships. They talked about making good choices and connected to the PQC LMS course “4 Steps to Making a Decision,” which demonstrates a process that can be used when making a decision. Robin and her student discussed scenarios and walked through the 4 steps of decision-making in response to each situation and talked about what the student would do differently the next time.     - Katherine led a group of her students in a discussion on maintaining good grooming and personal hygiene in the workplace, focusing on why hygiene is important and that it contributes to a good overall first impression when on the job site. She engaged the students in the conversation, prompting them to respond to questions and provide their thoughts; and she provided worksheets for the students to work through to reinforce what they had learned and discussed.     - Katherine and another of her students worked on developing job-seeking skills. She helped her student work through practice job applications in preparation for obtaining a part-time job. Katherine provided clarifications for questions the student had, and the pair also discussed potential references and the student’s availability.     - Several of our Job Coaches have worked with students to take the Jump$tart Reality Check assessment (available at https://www.jumpstart.org/what-we-do/support-financial-education/reality-check/). This online program allows students to assess job-specific wages and apply real-life costs to evaluate whether their budgets are reasonable. * **Instruction in self-advocacy**. Our instruction in this area prepares students to move into adulthood by teaching them how to take charge of their own lives, seek out information and support when needed, and be an advocate for their own wellness. Even students who know how to advocate for themselves in safe environments like at home, school, or with friends need to be exposed to the challenges facing us today in the workplace. Even the most progressive work environment still struggles with inclusion based on how their employees envision their peers. Covered topics include ULS curriculum in learning self-awareness and self-care, disability disclosure (when and how to do it), making accommodations and assistive technology work for you, knowing one’s rights and responsibilities, taking charge of your own future, and knowing when to seek supports. In our LMS, PQC also has self-advocacy activities that Job Coaches can work through with students, including but not limited to “What Would You Do?” and “Decisions Are Tough,” which help students work through different scenarios involving decisions related to personal, workplace and other concerns.   Students also have the opportunity to participate in activities such as creating a grocery list, shopping for groceries, and preparing simple meals. PQC Trains connects and collaborates with local residential care providers to develop opportunities for students to visit an unoccupied apartment and experience doing laundry and using simple appliances. Students are educated on voting and have the opportunity to become registered voters.  Services can be tailored to an individual or group setting. In the group curriculum, students will have the addition of hosting a small get-together in the classroom for a few fellow students and/or family members. They will experience the process of filling out and mailing invitations, preparing snacks, greeting guests, and cleaning up afterward. Our research, understanding, and experience providing Pre-ETS and VR services supports that model transition programs are successful when they incorporate these practical life skills.   * + **Examples of self-advocacy instruction activities we have conducted with our Pre-ETS students include:**     - One of Logan’s students stated she was struggling financially and would like a small wage increase at her job. Logan had a self-advocacy discussion with the student, noting that since the student had been working with her employer for over a year and had good work history, a raise could be a realistic outcome. Logan also praised her student for advocating for themself and emphasized that was exactly what she would do in the workplace environment.     - Robin conducted positive talk skills training with one of her students and included a discussion of how to apply that in all life situations. She incorporated lessons from PQC’s LMS, including “What Would You Do?” and provided the student with several scenarios where she asked him what we would do in such situations. With another lesson, they discussed rights and responsibilities and how doing the right thing may not always be what someone wants to do, but they should still do the right thing.     - Katherine assisted one of her students in developing self-advocacy skills related to managing anxiety. The student noted an increase in anxious feelings during school and issues with managing it in a nondisruptive way. Katherine and the student talked about causes for the issue, how the student could help herself manage her feelings, and how the student could advocate for herself when her accommodations may not always 100% cover what is needed. The pair also discussed how this situation might play out in an employment setting, which prompted the student to consider what types of jobs and work environments she might feel most comfortable in and might want to explore.     - Dalian worked with one of his students to help them understand self-advocacy and what that entails. Dalian and his student talked about the definition of self-advocacy and how important it is to speak up for oneself. The student reviewed the “I Know My Rights” and “Using My Rights” training materials from PQC. Dalian and the student discussed why self-advocacy is necessary to create a positive work experience, and the student benefitted by realizing that it is important to ask for assistance when needed in the work environment.     - Kaelin worked with one of her students to explain what an accommodation could include for work, college and other adult situations; and she helped identify ways to obtain them.     - Mark discussed self-advocacy after high school with one of his students. He provided lessons on the types of changes that may be present in self-advocacy related to work, college and other adult situations. Their conversation also segued into a discussion of the student’s self-confidence concerns related to participating in a workforce event with the rest of their school. Mark reminded the student that their thoughts, ideas, suggestions and questions are important in building the process.   A new service, **work-based learning: stipends**, is also now offered to students on a case-by-case basis:   * **Work-based learning: Stipends.** Along with the 5 core activities, a new service, work-based learning: stipends, is also an available option for students. This extension of the work-based learning activity allows students to receive payment for duties they perform. Our Job Coaches determine their student eligibility and interest levels in the experience and provide information to the student and their guardians. If the student is interested in moving forward, our Job Coach creates a work-based learning plan; obtains the wage justification; and notifies our PM, who reviews the documents and approves or disapproves the work-based learning, with experiences longer than 30 days also needing further approval from the state. Once everything is in order, the Job Coach works with the student and discusses concerns/accommodations with the employer; at the end of the month, the Job Coach obtains timesheet validation and submits documentation for the stipend so a check can be prepared. The Job Coach will distribute the check to the student, and the student will have gained both valuable experience and pay for their hard-earned work. Based on the 2023 data, PQC Trains has performed 14% of the total work-based learning stipends across Pre-ETS.   + **Examples of work-based learning: stipend activities we have conducted with our Pre-ETS students include:**     - In summer 2022, PQC Trains had 84 students participate in summer internships in their respective counties. These students were provided with a range of opportunities, and in total we had students working in 26 different programs. Some worked in their schools to help clean, prepare, and reset the school to be ready for the new year. Others worked jobs in their communities, including helping at food banks, businesses, and even a couple of programs related to creative media or new advanced manufacturing options. Each student’s hours were tracked, and they received a fair wage for their time. (And seeing the joy in their faces as they received their first checks was priceless.)     - Robin and one of her students met up with the owner of the local pet care/boarding facility and discussed the stipend program. They finalized the stipend plan with a schedule for the student, an agreed-upon start date, an hourly rate to be applied for time worked, and an understanding that Robin would also periodically observe the student.     - Robin and another student met and talked about the student setting up a banking account in order to be able to timely cash the stipend checks they received from their work-based learning: stipend experience. They also discussed the student budgeting their money so they could save up to move out on their own after graduation.     - The past two summers (2022 and 2023), Mark has worked with four students on a project dedicated to cleaning and repainting each of Union City’s 180 fire hydrants, completing 90 each summer. Along with gaining valuable experience, the students learned about OSHA and used approved paints and cleaners, and gained an understanding of the hydrant color-coding system that firefighters follow to know hydrant’s water pressure. As part of this process, Mark observes his students and conducts evaluations for each on attendance, timeliness, appearance/hygiene, their on-the-job relationships and communication, comprehension, concentration, desire to learn, confidence, behavior, and more.   Additionally, for instances where a remote school solution is desired, PQC Trains has also developed an educational module titled “My Toolbox Training.” This kit, geared toward Pre-ETS–age students, focuses on helping the student to master employment skills and obtain a job. Involving 10 hours of training, it covers a variety of topics useful in obtaining and maintaining employment. Subjects include: Taking initiative and self-direction, work ethic, critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and innovation, integrity, listening/speaking, conflict resolution, customer service, respect for diversity, teamwork, productivity, professionalism, workplace safety, information literacy, and information security. As they master the skills, students receive completion badges and certificates as a tangible recognition of their progress and achievement. Further discussion and samples of our curriculum and resources/materials are included in **section 1b-5**.  We also track our service statistics associated with the total number of students served, new students, held sessions, and categories covered each month. A compilation of our 2023 Year-End Service Statistics can be found in **Attachment 13**. 1a-2. 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. Since 2018, PQC Trains has provided Pre-ETS services to 1,567 students. Each year, we have extended services to more students and more schools, as well as created more programming that leads to long-term career goals by our students. It is with great pride we show the annual students added to our Pre-ETS program, as depicted in **Attachment 12**. Even during COVID in 2020, our growth continued despite schools being on lockdown.  Along with growing in students, we also grew the number of Job Coaches supporting our schools. In 2018, we had four (4) Job Coaches supporting two (2) counties and five (5) schools. We now have 20 Job Coaches supporting 11 counties and our schools. We have extended services to schools that previously did not want Pre-ETS and have demonstrated to a number of schools how we partner to help them meet their goals while satisfying the goals set down by the Pre-ETS contract.  But numbers are not the only strategy that we’ve added since 2018. We have maintained our ULS materials while adding category-specific training like a Point-of-Sale training solution with hands-on training that lets our students experience using tools, handling complex directions, and obtaining job-specific learning *(see* ***Attachment 12*** *for photo)*. Hands-on training is key to having students learn workplace skills such as following directions, communication, team work, applying quality steps, and having fun while working. In 2023, during a winter break, our students at Bluffton High got a chance to use a hobby kit we created in order to set up and decorate our holiday tree. They had to do the shopping, set up the work space, set up the work instructions, complete the ornament fabrication, and ultimately decorate the tree. Using out-of-the-box ideas has led them to embed skills that will be beneficial in their adult lives.  Creating a learning environment is essential for students to gain job knowledge and workplace skills, apply self-advocacy strategies, and build confidence in a defined work-based learning setting. There have been 257 students that experienced paid employment within our network of 107 businesses, agencies and schools; and we’ve utilized the WBL programming to encourage attendance in the Pre-ETS program since we require that they participate in the other core categories before going into a work-based learning experience.  Going into 2024, PQC Trains plans to continue to build on our existing strategies. For example, we are:   * Working with Tyson Foods to set up WBL initiatives that will allow students to learn about the hygiene factors that go into working in the food industry. * In the process of rolling out our mobile photography solution that will allow our students to set up a photography studio that includes a backdrop, multiple props used in poses, and a printer to provide headshots at the schools. * Working with Parkview Hospital’s Farm to School team that, in 2023, created pickled beets that we processed and distributed to students while allowing them to learn about fermenting as well as taste a vegetable they’ve never experienced before. Our goal with this effort is to expand the program to schools willing to allow students to participate. * Building on the transition fairs that we started in 2023—in 2024, our goal is to host seven (7).   Our programs are all scalable and meant to scale out to serve more students and additional schools, engage new community partners, and incorporate new service delivery models that utilize the LifeCourse framework and still customizable to meet the student, school and community needs. 1b. Detailed Description of Work Approach1b-1. How would you organize this project in order to be able to manage the workload? Our approach to project management and organization is to “keep it simple.” We create a straightforward organizational structure with clear lines of oversight and direct communication between Job Coaches supporting Pre-ETS activities and our management team.  We select capable, qualified managers and lead personnel, provide them with the proper tools and commensurate authority to successfully manage, and reward them when they do so. Local responsibility for the total performance of the contract will be vested in the Program Manager (PM). The PM has complete control of the project and is tasked to provide the management expertise, personnel resources, and customer interface necessary to meet and exceed all contractual requirements. We look for PMs who are managerially and technically capable, believe in a team approach to performance, and possess excellent people skills. That last feature is one that is often overlooked by many companies but can be the most important quality of all. The PM must be able to express themself well; be a good listener; and be capable of communicating with all levels of clients, technical staff, and management.  Serving as our PM is **Ms. Paige Briggs**, who is based at the PQC corporate headquarters in Fort Wayne, Ind. Ms. Briggs’ background in management and human services makes her a strong choice for our Pre-ETS PM as she has experience overseeing programs with many moving parts and working with a team to accomplish goals on a tight timeline. She is conscientious, detail-oriented and, perhaps most importantly, she is passionate about empowering others to lead their best lives. Her résumé, along with those of other key staff, can be found in **Attachment 1**.  Ms. Briggs has been given the authority necessary to carry out the responsibilities and duties of the PM by the PQC Trains Executive Program Manager (PQC’s President/CEO). This delegation of authority provides Ms. Briggs the ability to respond immediately to contract requirements. The authority and responsibilities of our PM are summarized below.   * Manage the total Pre-ETS effort. * Maintain an integrated master schedule. * Prioritize the work. * Schedule resources. * Direct work assignments. * Monitor progress. * Ensure proper Quality Assurance (QA) procedures are followed. * Integrate partner efforts. * Recruit and staff personnel. * Conduct frequent liaison with Directors of Special Education at High Schools in our assigned counties. * Participate in meetings and reviews. * Conduct Progress Report Meetings. * Report weekly to PQC corporate leadership.   Ms. Briggs reports to the PQC Trains Executive Program Manager, **Ms. Stacey Smith**, who oversees the successful initiation, planning, design, execution, monitoring, controlling, and closure of our work with the Pre-ETS program. While Ms. Smith conducts broad program oversight and strategic planning for the PQC Trains division and Pre-ETS program, Ms. Briggs manages the day-to-day program activities. Both Ms. Briggs and Ms. Smith are stationed at PQC Headquarters, which allows them to expediently meet over program matters and coordinate with PQC’s Corporate Support Teams—such as our Finance and Human Resources departments—who stand ready to provide program support when needed.  Our Community Coordinator, **Ms. Elizabeth Dodson**, also directly supports Ms. Briggs. In her role, Ms. Dodson is focused on further developing and enhancing our overall program and offerings. Ms. Dodson works closely with our leadership to identify and develop partnerships with organizations and employers to create learning and experience-based opportunities for our students. In addition, as part of our growth initiative, our organization is presently in the process of expanding our PQC Trains leadership team to include two (2) **Regional Leads** (one based in Fort Wayne and the second based in South Bend) that will also directly support and report to Ms. Briggs; the Leads will oversee our Job Coaches in their assigned regions and work with the Community Coordinator to create new partnership opportunities. We are presently working on establishing a South Bend office, following feedback from local VR/Pre-ETS leadership, and will have this satellite office on E. Colfax Ave. in our possession beginning February 2024.  For our overall program, PQC uses a Project Management Institute–supported 3-phase approach:   * Manage Program Scope, Schedule, Budget, Risk and Performance. * Initiate, Plan, Execute, Control and Close Projects. * Provide Deliverables as Required.   At the kick-off meeting, we will reaffirm our understanding of each awarded local high school’s program needs and provide tailored plans, schedules, and staffing that depict how we will successfully support students with disabilities, including setting up any necessary reporting requirements for task tracking. Because of PQC’s global presence and unique staffing requirements across Government agencies at Federal and State levels, we invested in Google Workspace to enhance our overall management, information, and communication processes. This tool enables an enterprise approach to managing programs. Google Workspace supports each member of our team; its family of tools supports our ability to manage tasks and schedules; delegate and bring up issues; create and share materials; collect, organize and protect information; and quickly communicate with our field staff while also allowing field staff/Job Coaches to communicate and collaborate with one another.   * Our process for providing Pre-ETS in our proposed primary and secondary counties includes: * Conducting detailed, accurate student intake in our process as demonstrated in **Attachment 2**. * Tracking individual student outcomes via PQC’s Case Notes. * Tracking progress through the 5 essential activities of Pre-ETS via PQC’s Case Notes. * Offering on- and off-site job supports to students as needed to support retention in job shadow and work experiences. * Interfacing with High School Program Directors. We regularly will check in on student performance as well as vigorously pursue developing small- and large-scale employer partnerships and memoranda of understanding. * Working with vocational counselors as needed to support student integration into continued support programs like FSSA VR or Ticket to Work (TTW). PQC is a VR Community Resource Provider as well as an Employment Network under TTW, and we are highly knowledgeable and experienced in the opportunities and requirements related to each service. * Quality assurance checks conducted by the PM.  1b-2. Provide a high-level project plan, based on the information provided in this RFI. Our project plan was created by encompassing the following criteria: having a strong understanding of the scope and value of our project, conducting extensive research through our comprehensive survey, asking tough questions, creating a project plan outline, and holding continuing conversations with the team.  As detailed below and highlighted in the graphic in **Attachment 3**, our high-level project plan includes:   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Phase** | **Action During Phase** | | **1** | 1A: Acquire requirement.  1B: Review needs. | | **2** | 2A: Analyze based on other programs.  2B: Evaluate based on analysis and identify additional subcontractors. | | **3** | 3A: Validate research and plan.  3B: Update and finalize curriculum and programming. | | **4** | 4A: Perform tasks. |  1b-3. 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. *Preferred List:*   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **County** | **School Systems & Schools** | | **Adams** | * North Adams Community Schools: Bellmont Senior High School * Adams Central Community Schools: Adams Central High School * South Adams Schools: South Adams High School | | **Blackford** | * Blackford County Schools: Blackford High School | | **Carroll** | * Carroll Consolidated School Corp.: Carroll Jr/Sr High School * Delphi Community School Corp.: Delphi Community High School | | **Cass** | * Lewis Cass Schools: Lewis Cass High School * Logansport Community Schools: Logansport High School * Pioneer Regional School Corp.: Pioneer Jr/Sr High School * Century Career Center * Logansport Area Jnt Spec Ed | | **Delaware** | * Burris Laboratory School * Cowan Community School Corp: Cowan Jr/Sr High School * Daleville Community Schools: Daleville Jr/Sr High * Delaware Community School Corp.: Delta High School * Liberty-Perry School Corp.: Wapahani High School * Muncie Community Schools: Muncie Central High School * Muncie Area Career Center * Wes-Del Community Schools: Wes-Del Middle/High School * Yorktown Community Schools: Yorktown High School * IN Aca for Sci Math & Humanities * Youth Opportunity Center | | **Elkhart** | * Baugo Community Schools: Jimtown High School * Concord Community Schools: Concord High School * Elkhart Community Schools: Elkhart High School * Fairfield Community Schools: Fairfield Jr/Sr High School * Goshen Community Schools: Goshen High School * Middlebury Community Schools: Northridge High School * Wa-Nee Community Schools: NorthWood High School * Elkhart Area Career Center * Oaklawn Hospital School | | **Fulton** | * Caston School Corp.: Caston Jr/Sr High School * Rochester Community School Corp.: Rochester High School | | **Grant** | * Eastbrook Community School Corp.: Eastbrook High School * Madison-Grant United School Corp.: Madison–Grant Jr/Sr High School * Marion Community Schools: Marion High School * Mississinewa Community Schools: Mississinewa High School * Grant County Community Justice Center * Tucker Area Voc Tech Center * Grant County Special Education Coop. | | **Henry** | * Blue River Valley Schools: Blue River Valley Jr/Sr High School * Charles A. Beard Memorial School Corp.: Knightstown Community High School * New Castle Community Schools: New Castle High School * Shenandoah School Corp.: Shenandoah High School * South Henry School Corp.: Tri Jr/Sr High School | | **Howard** | * Kokomo School Corp.: Kokomo High School * Eastern Howard School Corp.: Eastern Jr-Sr High School * Northwestern School Corp.: Northwestern High School * Taylor Community School Corp.: Taylor High School * Western School Corp.: Western High School * Kokomo Area Career Center | | **Huntington** | * Huntington County Community School Corp.: Huntington North High School | | **Jasper** | * Kankakee Valley School Corp.: Kankakee Valley High School * Rensselaer Central School Corp.: Rensselaer Central High School | | **Jay** | * Jay School Corp.: Jay County Jr-Sr High School | | **Kosciusko** | * Tippecanoe Valley School Corp.: Tippecanoe Valley High School * Warsaw Community Schools: Warsaw Community High School * Wawasee Community School Corp.: Wawasee High School * Whitko Community Schools: Whitko Jr-Sr High School | | **Madison** | * Alexandria Community School Corp.: Alexandria-Monroe Jr/Sr High School * Anderson Community School Corp.: Anderson High School * Elwood Community School Corp.: Elwood Community Jr-Sr High School * Frankton-Lapel Community Schools: Frankton Jr-Sr High School, Lapel Jr-Sr High School * South Madison Community School Corp.: Pendleton Heights High School * ACS High School Options Program * Ebbertt Education Center * John H. Hinds Career Center | | **Marshall** | * Argos Community Schools: Argos Jr/Sr High School * Bremen Public Schools: Bremen High School * Culver Community Schools: Culver Community Middle/High School * Plymouth Community School Corp.: Plymouth High School * Triton School Corp.: Triton Jr/Sr High | | **Miami** | * Maconaquah School Corp.: Maconaquah High School * North Miami Community Schools: North Miami Middle/High School * Peru Community Schools: Peru Jr/Sr High * Oak Hill United School Corp.: Oak Hill High School | | **Pulaski** | * Eastern Pulaski Community Schools: Winamac Community High School * West Central School Corp.: West Central High School | | **Randolph** | * Union School Corp.: Union Jr/Sr High School * Randolph Eastern School Corp.: Union City Jr/Sr High School * Randolph Southern School Corp.: Randolph Southern Jr/Sr High School * Randolph Central School Corp.: Winchester Community High School * Monroe Central School Corp.: Monroe Central Jr/Sr High School | | **St. Joseph** | * John Glenn School Corp.: John Glenn High School * Penn-Harris-Madison School Corp.: Penn High School * School City of Mishawaka: Mishawaka High School * South Bend Community School Corp.: Adams High School, Clay High School, Riley High School, Washington High School * Union-North United School Corp.: LaVille Jr/Sr High School * Joint Service Campus Program * Joint Service Program * Bendix School * Eggleston Center * South Bend SNAP * Madison Center * Juvenile Justice Center | | **Starke** | * Knox Community School Corp.: Knox Community High School * North Judson-San Pierre Schools: North Judson-San Pierre Jr./Sr. High School * Oregon-Davis School Corporation: Oregon-Davis Junior-Senior High School | | **Tippecanoe** | * McCutcheon High School * William Henry Harrison High School * West Lafayette Jr/Sr High School * Greater Lafayette Area SE | | **Wabash** | * Manchester Community Schools: Manchester Jr/Sr High School * MSD of Wabash County: Northfield Jr/Sr High School, Southwood Jr/Sr High School, White's Jr/Sr High School * Wabash City Schools: Wabash High School * Wabash/Miami Area Prog Excpt * Heartland Career Center | | **Wells** | * Bluffton-Harrison School District: Bluffton High School * Northern Wells Community Schools: Norwell High School * Southern Wells Community Schools: Southern Wells Jr/Sr High School | | **White** | * Frontier School Corp.: Frontier Jr/Sr High School * North White School Corp.: North White Middle-High School * Tri-County School Corp.: Tri-County Jr/Sr High School * Twin Lakes School Corp.: Twin Lakes Senior High School |   *Secondary List:*  Our team is willing to provide Pre-ETS to any school in outlying counties that are underserved or not currently being served by any provider. 1b-4. Describe how you would evaluate the effectiveness of services provided. Our team is poised to deliver measurable outcomes. Our evaluation process involves multiple assessment points, which allows us to continually monitor needs and progress while providing our Job Coaches with guidance to support when changes are needed in service activities. Our evaluation process incorporates the following measurement tools:  **1. Pre- and Post-Service Interview Rubrics**  PQC Pre-ETS Job Coaches conduct an interview with students both prior to and after each student receives Pre-ETS assistance. We have Pre- and Post-Service rubrics for each of the 5 core Pre-ETS service areas. Students are asked to rate statements on a Likert-style scale from 1 to 10 (with “1” being “Not At All” and “10” being “Expert Level.” These rating responses help determine the student’s knowledge level of the core area in question. The Pre-Service interview establishes the foundation for what the student’s aims include and what experiences they’ve had to that point. From the initial responses, the Job Coach can begin developing recommended activities to help the student improve and work toward their goals. At the conclusion of Pre-ETS, the Job Coach conducts a Post-Service interview to reevaluate the student’s knowledge growth and skill development as well as further document outcomes for each core area served.  **2. O\*Net Assessments**  We utilize O\*NET Assessments to help determine student suitability for programs and what gaps they may need to overcome. Our Job Coaches help students explore the O\*NET site, use the Career Exploration Tools to create profiles for abilities and interests, and facilitate discussions with their student on goals, gaps and plans. The O\*NET tools aid our Job Coaches in developing tailored training plans to help students develop the skills they need to support their interest areas.  **3. Portfolio Evaluations**  While receiving Pre-ETS, students develop a portfolio to document work readiness to potential employers as well as other accomplishments. Each portfolio contains a résumé, cover letter, list of skills, and community resources and employers. Other potential items may include a copy of initial and final assessments, certifications, and post-secondary information. The portfolio also includes an action list of next steps for students as they complete transition.  A task analysis is developed for each portfolio item. Our Pre-ETS Job Coach works with the student to ensure that each step of the task analysis for each item has been completed at a satisfactory standard for the learner’s skill level. The learner will be prepared to explain portfolio items as appropriate and will engage in receiving feedback on these items, which may be accomplished utilizing peer-review, roleplay, and voluntary feedback from community partners.  **4. Case Review Task Notes**  Each day, our Job Coaches document detailed case notes for each student and activity they supported. We document the activity date, class period, student name, group or individual activity, core service type, and specific lesson topic and information. These notes are then also uploaded daily into the State’s web-based portal under the appropriate student. We also confirm the upload to the portal in our in-house documentation. These case notes help us ensure accurate documentation for service activities which in turn aids in accurate billing practices.  **5. Monthly Reviews**  We conduct monthly reviews of notes to verify appropriate content, verify direct vs indirect activities and category correctness, and ensure unbillable tasks are not included. Additionally, we review all notes returned during the monthly YVRC audits. Based on their review, less than 1% is kicked back and all issues are given a written response based on our findings. If we feel the audit issue is fair, we delete the case note without pause. When returning the monthly YVRC review, we also include monthly statistics associated with # of students, sessions, categories, etc. 1b-5. 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. As described previously, PQC utilizes the ULS for most of our curriculum, coupled with Jump$tart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy curriculum for finance-specific instruction. The ULS is used every day across the United States and offers students standards-based instruction on topics that align with each of the 5 required Pre-ETS activities. Our Job Coaches provide in-person training to individuals or groups, and can also utilize PQC’s online LMS—which currently stores over 250 classes—as another delivery option. Job Coaches can identify specific training topics courses in the LMS relevant to the student’s needs and allow the student to review on their own or work through the activities together with the student. The LMS allows for tracking of student progress through courses, and upon course completion they receive an achievement certificate that can be included with their student portfolio. Copies of all of our ULS curriculum are accessible via the LMS.  Throughout our curriculum and training delivery, our Job Coaches incorporate the LifeCourse framework and the Employment First focus. We help students explore their career interests, develop skills, and engage them in considering their futures and what they want their life to look like. We help them in identifying and exploring competitive and integrated employment opportunities that align with their interests, in understanding the trajectory or pathway they would need to follow to achieve their goals, and in mapping the resources they can use to help them reach their goals.  Building upon the regular curriculum, our organization has also created supplemental courses/materials and hands-on resource kits that our Job Coaches can incorporate into their training where beneficial for their students. We have a number of additional courses and kits focused on different topics that assist in both assessing and cultivating job skills, and each contains worksheets and activities associated with its topic to further strengthen and reiterate the lessons in the required activities. Below, we provide a small sampling of our curriculum topics and supplemental materials/activities and how they align within the core Pre-ETS activities.   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Core Pre-ETS Activity** | **Example ULS / Curriculum Lessons** | **Example Supplemental Materials / Activities** | | **Job Exploration** | * Exploring Jobs for Receptionist or Security Technician * Job Interest Survey: Children & Education, Finance & Banking, Transportation, Travel & Lodging | * Resource Kit: Bakery Assistant * Resource Kit: The Restaurant * Point of Sale for Retail activities * Cash Handling * Becoming a Welder (includes an assessment, information on next level, DOL statistics, the types of jobs, and school information) | | **Work-Based Learning** | * Applications & Interviews * Volunteer Jobs | * Volunteer experiences * Internships * Work-Based Learning: Stipend experience | | **Postsecondary** | * My Future, My Pathway * Compare/Contrast Your School Options | * College Prep Guide * Campus Visits/Tours * ASVAB training * FAFSA support | | **Workplace Readiness** | * Jump$tart Financial Reality Check * Everyday Communication: Asking for Help * Time Matters | * Cashiering: Cash Basics * Resource Kit: Dexterity Training | | **Self-Advocacy** | * Rights & Responsibilities: On the Job * Rights & Responsibilities: Speak Up! | * Decisions are Tough * What Would You Do? * Don’t Cross the Line training |   Along with the LMS, our Job Coaches have access to PQC’s Padlet system, which provides a “hub” where our team can quickly find helpful resources, documents/forms, links and other information to use in training. Our Master Padlet link is provided to each Job Coach to keep in their Google Desktop; from that Master Padlet, our Job Coaches can then navigate to our Forms collections, Pre-ETS Category Materials, PQC-Developed Materials, County-by-County Neighborhood Mapping information, Employment Resources, our Cool Jobs series, and more.  Please see **Attachment 4** for a few examples of our curriculum, and LMS and Padlet dashboards where Job Coaches and students can access our supplemental materials.  As part of our incorporation of best practices, PQC:   * Believes in providing active coordination with schools. We conduct in-person meetings with schools to make sure our curriculum and training come alongside each school’s requirements in addition to meeting the student portfolio and other Pre-ETS program requirements. We regularly follow-up with community partners, too, to see what their needs are and develop potential opportunities for students to participate in work-based learning and other activities. * Encourages continuous training and learning for our staff. Our Pre-ETS personnel attend conferences, meetings and training opportunities, such as attending the LifeCourse Training and the APSE Conference; our team also participates in online training and webinars provided by the State of Indiana, such as training on Student Transition Portfolios. Recently, members of our team participated in the 2023 Level Up Indiana Employment Summit: Navigating Barriers, where they learned about identifying and navigating unique employment barriers; deploying proven strategies for quality placements; sparking creativity using assistive technology and natural supports; and unpacking the relationship between poverty, employment, and benefits. Following these trainings and events, our team identifies, discusses, and reviews what we learned and work on incorporating updates and new best practices and strategies into our services. * Is committed to participation and involvement in groups and committees that play vital roles in the guidance and legislation connected to the programs and services we provide. For example, members of our leadership presently participate in committees at the State level: Ms. Dodson is on the Indiana Transitions Committee and PQC President/CEO (and PQC Trains Executive Program Manager) Stacey Smith is part of the State’s Commission on Rehabilitation Services. By being an engaged part of these committees, we continue to enhance our knowledge and connections to transition programming. * Brings extensive knowledge and experience in Vocational Rehabilitation and the Ticket to Work program, and we collaborate within our team to provide information and resources to assist students that may need further support services once they’ve transitioned outside of the high school-based Pre-ETS program. | |
| **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. |
| 2a. Staffing Approach PQC/PQC Trains will work to provide staffing coverage for our respective counties and schools. Among our team, there are currently 19 Job Coaches providing Pre-ETS in schools. The PQC Trains CEO acts as the Executive Program Manager for the Pre-ETS contract; her role is to create a strategy by which to maximize and grow the Pre-ETS activities. Building relationships and identifying curriculum and information that helps our Job Coaches have significant materials at hand is her primary focus. The PM reports directly to the PQC Trains Executive Program Manager. Ms. Briggs, PQC’s PM, will provide oversight with our team’s Pre-ETS Job Coaches directly supporting students in our assigned counties/schools. Our PM is directly supported by a Community Coordinator and two Regional Leads, all of whom will be dedicated to developing and enhancing our overall program. Our Job Coaches report directly to their Regional Lead, who will connect to the PM. The PM can also directly communicate and coordinate with the PQC Trains Executive Program Manager (PQC’s President/CEO).   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Key Staff Roles & Responsibilities** | | | **Key Staff Title / Name** | **Roles & Responsibilities** | | **PQC Executive Program Manager**  Ms. Stacey Smith | * Responsibility for the successful initiation, planning, design, execution, monitoring, controlling, and closure of a project. * Estimate costs (in collaboration with PQC Director of Finance). * Develop a budget (in collaboration with PQC Director of Finance). * Plan and define scope. * Plan and sequence activities. * Plan resources. | | **Program Manager (PM)**  Ms. Paige Briggs | * Support the successful initiation, planning, design, execution, monitoring, controlling, and closure of a project. * Support resources planning. * Develop schedules; create charts and schedules. * Estimate time. * Provide documentation. * Conduct risk analysis. * Manage risks and issues. * Monitor and report progress. * Team leadership. * Support strategic influencing. * Develop and support business partnerships. * Work with vendors. * Conduct scalability, interoperability and portability analysis. * Control quality. * Benefits realization. * Develop and implement strategies. * Prepare reports and policies. * Liaise with interested groups and individuals to set up new services. * Plan, attend and coordinate meetings and events. | | **Regional Leads**  *\*New positions currently being recruited for\** | * Serve as Regional Lead overseeing the productivity and effectiveness of a growing team geographically located in assigned counties. * Manage, coordinate, evaluate and supervise all operations within assigned program services. * Work with leadership to create materials (training, coursework, research materials) to improve programming and outreach. * Provide personnel management functions for all assigned vocational staff including involvement in hiring, orientation, supervision, annual evaluations, corrective actions, etc. * Assist in innovation, development and implementation of services, especially those focused on assisting PQC Trains consumers. * Assist in program evaluation components; collect, compile and interpret data. * Submit required reports in a timely and accurate fashion. * Partner with Community Coordinator and discuss vocational services with area employers and referral sources. * Provide job contact information for employer database and work collaboratively with job development team. * Assist with preparing the service for accreditation, license, certification and audits. | | **Community Coordinator**  Ms. Elizabeth “Liz” Dodson | * Identify and develop partnerships with potential employers, support organizations, industry partners, etc. * Conduct onboarding training. * Work with industry partners to create job skills training programs. * Liaise with interested groups and individuals to set up new services. * Develop and support business partnerships. * Serve as Job Coach Trainer, overseeing orientation of new Job Coaches. * Research and develop funding avenues to support creation of new job skills training programs. |   Resumes for all Key Staff are provided in **Attachment 1** as is a position description for our planned Regional Lead positions. Additionally, an organizational chart supporting our proposed Pre-ETS program is provided in **Attachment 5**.  In addition to our Key Staff, our team has dedicated Job Coaches who work with our students and help empower them to achieve their goals. Roles and responsibilities for all Job Coaches include:   * Providing Pre-ETS services to students in the classroom and in the community. * Exposing students to hands-on job experiences. * Developing activities and services to generate aspiration and confidence. * Building relationships with local businesses to create hands-on job experiences for students. * Working with individuals, families, and communities to empower them to identify their assets, needs, opportunities, rights, and responsibilities. * Collecting data and reporting on student gains. * Teaching curriculum. * Identifying community skills, assets, issues and needs. * Accompanying students on job experiences in the community. * Collaborating closely with the local high school teachers and administrative staff. * Building links with other groups and agencies. * Helping raise awareness on issues relevant to the community.   All of our Pre-ETS Job Coaches are dedicated personnel for the Pre-ETS project. Our PM, PQC Trains Executive Program Manager, Regional Leads, and Community Coordinator support both our Pre-ETS and VR programs. 2b. Collaborative Partners / Resources We also work to cultivate resource relationships with programs and organizations such as VR and WorkOne offices, education and training sites, potential employers, and other service providers. These resource partnerships help us provide options as well as new and relevant opportunities for our Pre-ETS students to learn about potential supports available to them as well as receive needed services or experiences. After award of the 2020 Pre-ETS contract, PQC Trains reached out to incumbent agencies to offer an ongoing relationship as a subcontractor. Initially, we were able to offer subtracts to Park Center and Cardinal Services. Throughout this contract period, we were able to maintain positive relationships with collaborative conversations. During this new RFS request period, subcontracting agreements are limited based on the fact that their lead agencies will be bidding for similar schools. We understand that building positive relationships is critical and, upon award, we will immediately outreach to those agencies and put in place subcontracts that allow them to continue support of the Pre-ETS contract.  Please see **Attachment 6** for our list of collaborative partners and resources based on the counties with schools we are proposing to serve. 2b-1. Discuss strategies for improving collaboration to increase access to Pre-ETS for students with disabilities and minimize duplication of services by multiple organizations. To provide Pre-ETS, an alliance of support is required and a coordination of effort is created to ensure services specific to Pre-ETS are separate from other programming. In agencies with multiple services, such as housing, day services, respite care, etc.), a coordinated effort to keep services separate can be a challenge. For PQC Trains, our only purpose is to create long-term successful employment. We have worked to create alliances not only based on the school but based on the community as well as based on the employment goals for each student. We work with our schools to identify potential internal goals as well as other agencies that might also be working toward employment goals. When those resources are identified, we work to add them to our community level plan so that we can maximize the effort and increase the available options to the student.  Having a plan for service delivery means we need to understand the partners we have and what role each will play. For PQC Trains, we do the initial plan development by assessing our mutual goals and discussing how those actions fit within the Pre-ETS model. In schools, there tends to be more focus on life skills programming, but there are a few where they have had longstanding programing around employment. An example of this is the South Bend Community Schools INTERN programming. This program is over 30 years old and focuses on providing employment skills to their students on a certificate track. When we initially met with the program leadership, we started with understanding their goal and activities. The INTERN program is meant to help students stay in school, learn work skills, and provide them with a way to make a living. Initially, we need to make sure we know who is in the program as well and understand their schedule. Once a student is done for the day, Pre-ETS programming is still an option as we are able to work more closely on skills like self-advocacy and workplace readiness skills. We are able to reinforce skills development that can lead to competitive integrated employment.  In 2020, on the heels of COVID, PQC Trains had to find ways to develop our programming while working to create a learning environment that required support for our collaborative partners. Today, we’ve built working relationships with each local Vocational Rehab office, WorkOne Offices and other local employment agencies (up to and including staffing firms). Being able to bring students into the VR office keeps local CRPs from having to start "from scratch" with our students. PQC Trains is an approved CRP and we have been successful in working jointly with students enrolled in Pre-ETS and VR concurrently or transitioning to VR after graduation. This reduces the discovery time as most of that work has occurred in Pre-ETS and we can move into Milestones much quicker. We’ve also worked to build on solid relationships with local colleges and universities to understand how we can bring our students on site and be the supporting staff that previously a school might have needed. We’ve worked with local employers to create a network of resources we can pull on from that previously might have been needed from special education providers. To ensure all parts of our network, PQC Trains has put in place Elizabeth Dodson, our Community Coordinator, who works closely to align and provide employment experiences, understand community needs, engage employers, and maximize our relationships in providing employment experiences.  In 2023, PQC Trains coordinated that network into five (5) very successful resource fairs as well as participated with the AWS Disability Expo. Using our relationships, we staged resource fairs that included the involvement of agencies, employers, and other transitional services. This allowed us to bring other services into the conversation without duplicating their activities. For each event, WorkOne, VR, and BDDS representatives were there. We worked to also include housing, transportation and education partners. We proudly can also say that each fair also provided a work-based learning experience to our students who were involved with the planning, outreach and day-of operations. Students were excited to see how event management applied the skills they’d learn in classroom activities. For each fair, we created information that was specific to teaching parents about transitions, and had experts who helped with questions about guardianships as well as cleared up questions associated with decision making after age 18. All these services were provided at no cost as all the fairs were free to attend. In 2024, we have been asked to conduct the same five (5) fairs; we will also add an additional location and will be working to create our first virtual job fair that allows us to increase the outreach to regional services. 2b-2. Discuss strategies for increasing referrals to VR for students close to exiting high school or those in need of VR services earlier in their high school career. Along with providing Pre-ETS, PQC is an experienced VR Community Resource Provider. We understand the importance of laying a strong foundation and building connections to help individuals with disabilities continue to receive services that help them prepare for, obtain, and retain employment. In order to maximize state resources, we work with assigned YVRCs to discuss student needs, identify areas where we can gain assistance from the YVRCs, as well as bring VR counselors to the classroom. We encourage schools and parents with students who may benefit from VR services to allow us to take the student to the local VR office so the student knows what to expect when they come for the referral appointment. During postsecondary counseling activities, our Job Coaches provide students and their guardians with information about VR services, the benefits and support it can offer, and how it might be able to aid the student with their career and overall life journey. We have added verbiage to our consent agreements that allow us to advocate for the student and work closely with the VR office to get students enrolled. When students express an interest in obtaining VR services, we assist them with the referral process; connect and introduce them to PQC Trains VR Employment Specialists, who can provide further information and respond to program questions the student might have; arrange a tour of their local VR office(s); and help set a path for transition with a warm hand-off to VR for any graduating students. We also have copies of English– and Spanish-language VR referral forms and an introduction email on our padlet that all of our Job Coaches have access to. 2b-3. Include testimonials from existing partners (e.g., secondary and postsecondary institutions, VR) reviewing your current collaborative services and the state of your collaboration with them. *Mr. Bruce Stanley and Ms. Chelsea Kilian, Teachers of Record (TORs) at Shenandoah High School:*  “PQC has done an amazing job working with our students. They have gone above and beyond to make sure that they are meeting the needs of all of our students. They attend our school two days a week and spend the entire day making sure they are working hard to prepare our students for life after high school. We are very happy we partnered with PQC. We are excited for all they can and have provided for our students.”  *Ms. Sue Davis, former TOR at Wes-Del:*  "As soon as we began working with PQC, our Pre-ETS program just blossomed. PQC went above and beyond to pilot a digital animation program at Wes-Del. They also worked with Wes-Del for over a year to create a graduation pathway for the students that helped Wes-Del earn their STEM certification. Wes-Del has come so far since they started working with PQC. Since I took another position at Pendleton High School, we would like to know how we can get PQC to be the Pre-ETS provider here as well."  *Mr. Mike Cline, Ivy Tech DSSA Assistant Disability Support Services:*  “Collaborating with PQC has been a pleasure. They invited me to participate in several Resource Fairs last Spring and, as a result, a lot of students and their parents were able to learn about Ivy Tech Disability Support Services. We would not have reached those students had we not been asked to participate in the Resource Fairs. The Job Coaches at PQC really go the distance for their students.”  *Ms. Madison Willmann, TOR at Monroe Central:*  “It is a pleasure working with PQC for Monroe Central Pre-ETS. They are always willing to go the extra mile to help our students as they transition out of high school. PQC has worked tirelessly with us to create programs and Transition Fairs for our students. We are so happy to be working with PQC!”  *Ms. Kristin Singleton, the Special Services Teacher at Logansport High School:*  Ms. Singleton attended PQC’s 2023 Resource Fair at North Miami and was thrilled about all of the different services that were there. After speaking with her and answering questions about Pre-ETS, she asked how she could get PQC to be the Pre-ETS provider at Logansport.  *Mr. Mathiew Lewis, Education Account Manager for Toon Boom Animation:*  “From the initial interactions with the PQC Trains Community Coordinator, Elizabeth Dodson, we saw the dedication towards creating a pathway for students to be ready for a career.  “This pathway includes a detailed learning of our software and gives the opportunity to the students to pass a certification that proves the understanding of our softwares.  “This is especially important for career opportunities in the future. With the mix of both of our products, PQC Trains is ensuring that the students have the most doors open to them within Entertainment, Marketing and other fields of work and not only limited to 2D Animation.  “With this vision in mind, Todd Heard, the teacher for the Toon Boom training, brings 30 years of experience, which I have personally worked with in the past. He leads his classroom with a strong attention to the students’ needs and offers insight from his past experiences.  “PQC Trains have not only done with pathway for themselves, as they were able to approve this graduation pathway with the IDOE/Indiana Department of Education CTE (Career and Technical Education). This has allowed other highschools to benefit from the graduation program offering even more possibilities to students in the State of Indiana.  “In summary, the working relationship between Toon Boom and PQC Trains will allow current and future students to be prepared to apply to the workforce and have the industry alignment they need to succeed.”  (A copy of this letter is available in **Attachment 11**.)  *Mr. Chad Dodd, Principal of Jay County High School:*  “The personal connections that our PQC leaders make with our kids has been super impactful. They teach them job skills. They go to work with our kids. They give our kids a level of confidence that I haven’t seen in some of our students, [and it] gives our community an opportunity to see the value in all of our students. Our students want to contribute positively to the community, and the skills that PQC teaches our students makes them an asset.  “We had a student who enrolled in a trade school in Ohio. We had a student who got an opportunity to work at the radio station, who—a year and a half later—is still working at the radio station. He has slowly received more and more responsibilities. We’ve had students go to Walmart and work in various capacities there. Just the ability to be gainfully employed has been pretty remarkable.  “I guess what I would like to say is that I appreciate PQC’s willingness to be flexible to meet the needs of each student, because they’re very different, and the commitment of those employees to give their time outside of maybe the traditional work day to help our kids feel some success.”  (A copy of the video interview this testimonial is from is available at https://vimeo.com/695866587.)  *Ms. Nikki Priestly with ARC of Southwest Indiana:*  “PQC has been a champion of the Toyota Talent Internship Program since the very first year in 2022. PQC worked with their participants to help them complete the application and interview process. PQC has been very helpful in getting the word out about this exciting program by inviting us to participate in 5 Transition Fairs in 2023, which gained more participants from many different providers. PQC exemplifies what collaboration really means!"  *Mr. James Mitchell, Executive Director at Minnetrista Museum and Gardens:*  “PQC created a partnership with Minnetrista in 2023 to provide summer internship opportunities for some of the students that they work with. We were hesitant at first as we had had another youth program a few years ago that ended with disastrous results. After working with PQC and the students in 2023, we are happy to invite them and the students back. The students worked with our horticulture staff, and our gardens and grounds looked better than ever. The students were able to learn valuable information from our staff that they can use in their everyday lives."  *Ms. Margaret Jones with Disability Legal Services:*  Ms. Jones participated in the Spring 2023 Spring Resource Fairs that PQC conducted. She said she was really happy to be invited to participate and a lot of the school staff, students and parents learned about Disability Legal Services and what they do.  *Tri High School:*  Two TORs from Tri High School in Henry County attended the Monroe Central Resource Fair that PQC conducted in April 2023. After the event, they came to the PQC Community Coordinator and requested a meeting at their school to get Pre-ETS started. As a result, PQC now has a Job Coach providing services at Tri.  *Mr. Sean Shukrun, Business Development Executive for Toon Boom Animation:*  “They are great at what they do and have a recipe for success for teaching youth animation. I'm glad we could be resourceful.”  *Mr. Adam Perdue, Principal of Wes-Del:*  "PQC has worked with Wes-Del Middle/High School for the past several years. During this time, they have been beneficial in supporting our students with disabilities in the following areas:   * job exploration to help students with their transition plan after high school. * work experiences. * job fairs and postsecondary education opportunities. * service and support from outside agencies to support our students with disabilities." | |
| **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. |
| 3a. Relevant Experience PQC is an experienced provider of Pre-ETS and VR services supporting individuals with disabilities, and we have supported programs in the State of Indiana since 2016. Additionally, we are an approved Ticket to Work vendor with extensive knowledge of Federal regulations related to SSI and SSDI. Our experiences supporting Pre-ETS, VR and similar programs are provided in further detail in the following sections.  **Pre-ETS**  PQC began providing Pre-ETS in 2018 in Jay and Randolph counties, supporting 130+ students at Jay County High School, Randolph Southern High School, Monroe Central High School, Union City High School, and Winchester Community High School. To date, we have supported 1,567 students across 40 schools, and conducted 57,238 sessions helping those students develop in the Pre-ETS core activities. As part of our growth initiative, we are currently in the process of establishing a satellite PQC office in South Bend, Ind., to further bolster our program as it continues to grow in the north/northwest region of the state. This second office will be established by February 2024.  Our dedicated Pre-ETS Job Coaches meet with students to understand their goals and desires. We identify strengths, interests, and gaps, and then tailor curriculum and activities to support students in developing skills and knowledge to help them reach their goals. Our curriculum and activities center on the core Pre-ETS areas:   1. Job exploration – We focus on assisting students in exploring potential career pathways, helping students complete interest inventories and explore careers through a variety of resources. Examples of job exploration activities our Job Coaches have supported include:    1. When a Pre-ETS student took an interest in potential military service, the PQC Job Coach reached out to the National Guard Recruiting Office and organized a visit by 2 recruiters to the school to speak with students considering military service.    2. Assisting a senior student in setting up a ride-along with the Richmond Police Dept. This concept then ultimately developed into the department’s Cadet Program.    3. Connecting a student to an entrepreneur and speaker who educated the student on the pros and cons of starting a business and being your own boss.    4. Setting up a group tour at a local factory to learn more about available job paths. Following the tour, the Job Coach discussed the experience with the students, including which students had an interest in that possible path and the pay, hours, and qualifications needed for the company and positions.    5. Helping a student identify and use helpful job search websites to find available local positions. 2. Work-based learning – We support the development of in- and/or after-school work-based learning opportunities. Among their support services, our Job Coaches build networks of local community-based work experiences and guest speakers, facilitate job shadowing, explore corporate internship opportunities, etc. Examples of work-based learning activities our Job Coaches have arranged include:    1. Regularly supporting students in developing resumes and cover letters.    2. Assisting a student in successfully obtaining a job at a radio station within weeks of beginning Pre-ETS supports.    3. Developing the Food Patrol program (discussed further below) to create work-based learning opportunities with the potential to receive work readiness certification. 3. Work-based learning: Stipends – PQC began offering stipend opportunities to students in 2021, providing them an opportunity to receive payment for duties they performed via stipend checks while also gaining hands-on work experience. Some work-based learning: stipend experiences from our program have included:    1. Coordinating a large summer internship program across 84 students in different counties. Students participated in a range of opportunities and ultimately supported 26 programs. Some worked in schools to help clean, prepare, and reset the school to be ready for the new year. Others worked jobs in their communities, including helping at food banks, businesses, and even a couple of programs related to creative media or new advanced manufacturing options. Each student’s hours were tracked, and they received a fair wage for their time.    2. Discussing the stipend program with an employer and student, and finalizing the stipend plan with a schedule, an agreed-upon start date, an hourly rate to be applied for time worked, and an understanding that the Job Coach would also periodically observe the student.    3. Observing student participation in stipend experiences as they support city maintenance crews, event staff, teachers, etc. (Our Job Coaches also conduct evaluations for each student on attendance, timeliness, appearance/hygiene, on-the-job relationships and communication, comprehension, concentration, desire to learn, confidence, behavior, etc.) 4. Counseling on post-secondary transition/education opportunities – We provide students support in researching and obtaining more knowledge on the opportunities they can pursue after high school, including information and experiences related to college applications and admissions processes, Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) forms, disability support services, opportunities associated with specific career fields and pathways, etc. Examples of post-secondary counseling activities our Job Coaches have organized include:    1. Discussing postsecondary education plans; admissions and cost requirements; and ideal focuses/majors with students, helping them explore what they would like about certain paths and what a typical day might look like.    2. Developing and conducting college visits to campuses like Ball State University, Indiana University-East, Ivy Tech, etc. PQC also assisted in coordinating student visits to the Indianapolis Job Corps to learn more about its Heavy Equipment program.    3. Assisting students in understanding and completing FAFSA and other financial aid forms, college and program applications, and scholarship forms. Our Job Coaches also directly reach out to Financial Aid Officers and work with students to estimate the cost to attend preferred universities.    4. Helping to identify programs and resources available at different colleges, trade schools, etc., based on disability and financial needs.    5. Providing students with information about Vocational Rehabilitation and Bureau of Developmental Disabilities Services (BDDS) programs that can be entered into after graduation. When applicable, we complete program referral forms and provide an introduction for our students to our VR and/or BDDS Employment Specialists. 5. Workplace readiness – We provide programming aimed to develop student social skills and independent living capabilities. Workplace readiness skill development can focus on building a variety of skills, including but not limited to communication, financial literacy, time management and punctuality, transportation training, etc. Examples of workplace readiness our Job Coaches have conducted include:    1. Assisting a student in the car-buying process by helping them learn and understand insurance requirements. PQC contacted a local insurance agent who took time to explain the options and different policies to our student.    2. Helping a student practice the online driver’s test and complete paperwork required for the driver’s exam.    3. Setting up meeting for junior- and senior-grade students to speak with Vocational Rehabilitation representatives about services.    4. Providing lessons on business etiquette, appropriate attire, and good hygiene.    5. Developing student financial knowledge, including online banking, checking balances, transferring funds, depositing checks, and protecting banking information. 6. Self-advocacy – We help students learn about their rights and responsibilities as well as how to request accommodations or services/supports they need for post-secondary education and/or employment. Examples of self-advocacy supports our Job Coaches have implemented include:    1. Reaching out to a local Vocational Rehabilitation office to obtain services to assist with accommodations needed for a student who had obtained a job. PQC also helped set the student up for a VR appointment for a job coach and provided transportation assistance.    2. Accompanying a student to the Medicaid office in order to have the student’s Medicaid reinstated. (When it was discovered the student needed proof of work from 2 prior employers, PQC accompanied the student to the previous jobs to obtain the appropriate documentation while explaining the student’s rights and responsibilities for receiving the benefits.)    3. Discussing the potential for Walmart to provide assistance for a student needing accommodations to take the assessments for employment.    4. Coordinating individual and group-based games/activities to reiterate self-advocacy and communication lessons, with topics including “I” messages, assertive/passive/and aggressive communication, non-verbal communication, and picture communication.   We incorporated our Pre-ETS curriculum into our online LMS, which allows our Job Coaches to select individual courses for additional training coverage, either on the student’s own or together with their Job Coach. Presently, we have more than 250 courses covering training topics within the 5 core Pre-ETS areas; some topics include Financial Wellness, Finding the Right Job for You, Work Attitudes, Dressing for an Interview, My IEP Meeting, What Is Self-Advocacy?, Self-Awareness: Who Are You?, Rights at Work, College Prep, and Interview Questions. The LMS automatically tracks student progress through their assigned training course(s), and provides them with a proof of completion achievement certificate that they can add to their portfolio.  To enhance our training, PQC has also developed and incorporated our own hands-on training materials, including:   * ***Beyond Able Resource Kits***—These are convenient and easy-to-transport training kits focused on specific training areas. We developed these kits after realizing there was a need for assessment and training tools that were mobile enough to go where our participants were rather than needing the participants to come to a centralized location. These kits allow the Job Coach to engage a student or group of students in a hands-on activity to assess and/or build specific job skills and understanding. For example, with our Cash Basics kit, students learn to count and handle coins and bills during monetary transactions, like they would if they were working as a cashier. This includes activities such as totaling up purchases, receiving and counting money, and ensuring appropriate change is returned. Each kit contains hands-on elements as well as structured courseware and worksheets that are specific to related types of jobs and job exploration. Participants can also use the kits to refresh their understanding and build up repetitive steps to increase their capacity and overall confidence. Upon completion of the training, our participants receive a certificate, and this can be added to their résumé/portfolio. * ***My Toolbox Training***—This training course is designed to help students ages 14 to 22 to work on mastering employment skills and getting a job. With 10 hours of training over 5 days, it covers a variety of topics useful in obtaining and maintaining employment. The subjects include: Taking initiative and self-direction, work ethic, critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and innovation, integrity, listening/speaking, conflict resolution, customer service, respect for diversity, teamwork, productivity, professionalism, workplace safety, information literacy, and information security. Students will receive completion badges and certifications as they master skills.   Additionally, our team is always on the lookout for new opportunities for programs and service offerings. Over the years, some of the Pre-ETS-focused programs we have developed and supported have included:   * ***Toon Boom Training***—This program began with Wes-Del School Corp., who we worked closely with to create and write the Digital Animation Graduation Pathway, which led to 2 industry certifications that were added to the Indiana CTE-approved certification list. Initially, this program was an in-person offering at Wes-Del; however, it has since expanded into the PQC Trains Toon Boom Digital Animation Program and offers virtual training opportunities in Storyboard Pro as well as Harmony software. * ***Resource/Transition Fairs***—In Spring 2023, PQC spearheaded and facilitated Resource/Transition Fairs in 5 different regions. These events brought together local service providers, employers, students and their families to provide an opportunity to share the different resources available to students when they graduate or leave high school. * ***The Food Patrol Program***—In prior program years, PQC developed the Food Patrol program in collaboration with Second Harvest Food Bank and local schools to create work-based learning opportunities with the potential to receive work readiness certification. This program focused on supporting volunteer staffing for the food bank, with students helping to feed families while cultivating their skills and building their resumes in a low-risk business atmosphere. Food Patrol was designed as a year-long program with two segments that students could participate in:   + ***Second Harvest Food Bank Support***—During the summer, students worked at the Food Bank one day per week. While there, PQC’s Pre-ETS Job Coach remained on site and provided supportive employment coaching. Students completed training and assigned tasks, such as housekeeping, logistics, food safety, etc.   + ***School Pantry Services***—This part of the program occurred during the school year and provided families in need with a safe and convenient school environment to shop for food to fill their pantries. Pantry services were held after the school day, and Food Patrol students took on specific jobs before, during, and after the event to help with the weekly distribution of food, such as setting up and cleaning stations, restocking items, providing customer service to families, etc.   *Testimonials from PQC Pre-ETS Students:*   * ***Kimberly Alanis-Reyes, Adams High School:*** “I enjoy working in Pre-ETS because I get an opportunity to get help preparing for a job and help with other things that will allow me to be successful. I have learned through job shadowing and volunteering whether or not the career I’m interested in is a good fit for me. My job coach is very helpful and caring.” * ***Benjamin Decker, a 2023 Norwell High School graduate:*** “I was in high school, having only 4 more years of required school, and in my freshman year, I took an assisted study hall class. A new staff member offered my class an opportunity to be in a program that would help us transition into the real world after high school. Later, a new sub-program was established, where we students would go out into the community and give volunteer service. I signed up for the program, and I am confident that I am capable of working toward my goals, persevering through the hard times, and communicating effectively. Being in [the Pre-ETS] program helped me to later go on to college for a bachelor’s degree in civil engineering. Without this program, it would be tough to picture how I would get to where I am today.” * ***Julia Schultz, Cowan High School:*** “I have enjoyed working with Pre-ETS. Pre-ETS has provided me with the opportunity to experience the ToonBoom program. The program has helped me further my animation skills that I will use to get a job in the future.” * ***Owen Laisure, Bluffton High School:*** “Pre-ETS has helped me so much to give me different experiences. I learned all about different jobs like the real-world work settings, getting tips on interview skills, and how to advocate for myself. Megan, my Job Coach, makes learning fun, and I love working with her.” * ***Corbin Trigg, Bluffton High School:*** “Pre-ETS has helped me get out of my comfort zone and be more confident about having a disability. I’ve learned how to advocate for myself. “ * ***Hannah Sexton, Bluffton High School:*** “Whenever I first met my Job Coach through Pre-ETS, I had no idea what I wanted to do. I was working at Pizza King and I was making $9.50. Often times, I would be overworked and didn’t know it. I didn’t know that I could ask for help when reading things for my job. I didn’t know anything about my IEP or what it meant. All I knew is that I had a disability. Pre-ETS and my amazing Job Coach taught me about what my IEP stood for and what it means. Before Pre ETS, there were teachers that wouldn’t let me go test in private rooms, wouldn’t let me use calculators, wouldn’t read things to me or allow me to go somewhere where they could read it to me. I had no idea this was against my IEP. Until Pre-ETS, I didn’t believe I could be anything else other than working at Pizza King. Nobody asked me what my dream job was until my Job Coach. She helped me study and practice my skills for my CAN test. This is something that I never thought I could do. Pre-ETS doesn’t only help you with jobs and education, they also teach you the things that go into organization, workplace readiness, workplace attitude, and how to get along with people that are hard to work with. Thank you, Pre ETS, and thank you to my amazing Job Coach that’s helped me grow and learn as much as I have!”   **Vocational Rehabilitation**  PQC began serving as a Community Resource Provider (CRP) in Connecticut in 2015 and in Indiana in 2016, providing vocational rehabilitation (VR) services, including transition support, that aligns with the Pre-ETS RFS activities. As a CRP, we provide VR services that assist individuals with disabilities as they work, enter, or re-enter the workplace through the use of assessments, evaluation, job placement/retention services, and work-site supports such as job coaching. We maximize on-the-job learning and engage participants in on- and offsite career readiness activities, including interview preparedness, work assessments, personal and career development, job coaching, and job placement. We work with participants to establish a consistent pattern of accountability, promptness, attendance, and reliability. Our staff develop employer partnerships and make arrangements with employers for the VR participants to engage in working interviews and skills assessments, or compete for permanent positions, which provides an opportunity for participants to receive feedback and/or potentially gain employment. Since we began our work as a CRP, we have successfully supported 432 participants with transition services including placement, employment support, and work readiness. Our services are divided into support categories including, but not limited to, Discovery Services and Milestone Services.  Our Discovery Services are aimed at career readiness and planning. Discovery Services includes activities such as job exploration counseling through vocational and situational assessments, job shadowing, workplace readiness skills building, and more. These services help our participants plan and prepare for job opportunities. As part of this process, we provide an on-site evaluator/job coach to assist the participant with learning new tasks and to assess the individual’s ability to identify career interests and work competitively in the targeted environment.  Activities under our Milestone Services category include work-based learning experiences, workplace readiness training, and on-the-job supports. As part of our transition services support for CRP participants, we engage them in career readiness activities, including interview preparedness, work-based learning opportunities, personal and career development, job coaching, and job placement. Our Employment Specialists help participants experience the application process, produce a marketable résumé, practice interviewing, and overcome obstacles. Participants can also engage in Trial Work Experiences, which are designed to create connections with employers and open opportunities for job shadowing, and allows a participant to maximize training in their chosen field before entering the workforce.  PQC also offers one-on-one coaching or workshop-based training focused on developing life skills or work readiness skills. Our life skills courses focus on identifying and cultivating personal strengths for a successful career path, regardless of the career a person may choose. This may include content such as: independent living, building natural supports, financial literacy, self-esteem and empowerment, etc. Our work readiness workshops are aimed at individuals with little exposure to the “world of work.” Here we empower attendees to gain the core competencies they need to launch a rewarding career. Course offerings include but are not limited to: interview preparation and interviewing skills, customer service, conflict management, job search strategies, transition planning, résumé and cover letter support, etc.  Additionally, we work to have our VR personnel attain Benefits Information Network (BIN) certification. BIN training gives Employment Specialists the knowledge and expertise they need to provide accurate and up-to-date information about work incentives and state and federal benefits to Vocational Rehabilitation Service participants. All BIN liaisons must also undergo an annual training and recertification process that includes training exercises, competency tests, and field assignments. We have provided 73 participants with BIN support since we first began offering the services in 2018.  We have supported VR services in the State of Indiana since 2016, and previously supported the State of Connecticut from 2015 through 2017. Our challenge as a Connecticut CRP provider was that we had built a program (similar to our Indiana program) that was based on building a client base and engaging highly qualified Employment Specialists, but due to internal state financial burdens, the Connecticut program had several limitations to the number of clients they could serve. Throughout the project, PQC leadership made several trips to Connecticut to meet with state leadership, seek input, address issues, and work to improve services for our consumers. Ultimately, we felt that as a smaller CRP focused on higher quality services, it became financially difficult for us to continue our CRP services. As we transitioned out of the Connecticut CRP services, we were dedicated to working closely with the state and ensured that our consumers were our number one concern as we concluded that program.  PQC is proud of our work supporting VR programs, and we have a variety of success stories. A couple of these are highlighted below:   * PQC is knowledgeable in helping others obtain grants into Technical Service training organizations, like Erskine Green. In fact, one of our VR participants recently graduated from Erskine Green in the field of Inventory Distribution. This participant then successfully obtained a job at a car dealership. After the participant began working and acclimated to the dealership, our VR Employment Specialist went to the dealership and spoke with the Parts Dept. to see whether there was a new opening for our participant to then work in Inventory. A few weeks after that discussion, the participant informed their Employment Specialist that they were going to be an Inventory Clerk for the dealership. Since starting in the position, the participant has now been able to acquire their own car. * One of PQC’s Employment Specialists works with a participant that has vision impairment and a traumatic brain injury (TBI). They obtained a job as a Doorperson (Security position) for a large venue, but needed assistance with arranging transportation from work. (The participant does not have Internet access on their phone, nor do they own a computer.) They use city-based bus transportation to get to work, but are unable to use the bus system to return home because their regular shift ends around 11 p.m. Our Employment Specialist was able to obtain authorization for an Uber card to assist with transportation and also made an “Uber ride guide” for the participant. When the participant was unable to arrange their own Uber transportation, our Specialist worked with the participant to create a communication system to help them provide notification of when they needed an Uber ride. Additionally, our Specialist received the direct phone numbers of two Uber drivers so that, when the Uber transportation amount happens to run out, the participant could still easily establish a transportation system with the two drivers, who may charge less.   **Ticket to Work Program**  Since 2017, PQC has been an approved Employment Network (EN) supporting the Social Security Administration’s Ticket to Work program, which provides Social Security beneficiaries with disabilities the choices, opportunities and supports needed to obtain and retain employment and reduce their dependence on cash benefits. Eligible adult “Ticketholders”/beneficiaries are able to assign their Tickets to the EN of their choice to obtain employment services, VR services, or other support services necessary to maximize their economic self-sufficiency through work opportunities.  When we receive a Ticket, PQC directly contacts the beneficiary. We begin working to understand the beneficiary’s needs to ensure we’re the right EN match for them. Once we accept the Ticket assignment, our Specialists coordinate and provide appropriate services to help the beneficiary find and maintain employment. We offer a variety of services, including career counseling, job search and placement, job training, job accommodation planning, etc. We also help the beneficiary understand how the program works in regard to the benefits they receive.  As part of the program, we work to develop an Individual Work Plan (IWP) in partnership with our beneficiary in such a way that also allows the beneficiary to exercise informed choices in selecting an employment goal and the services they need to achieve that goal. The IWP is a written agreement developed and signed by both the beneficiary and the EN, and it serves as a descriptive record of the beneficiary’s employment goals while also detailing the specific services and ongoing supports that the EN will provide to help the beneficiary achieve their employment goals. We reference the IWP as we coordinate the next steps in the program. The IWP is considered a “living document” and can be amended as needed to reflect changing beneficiary needs and goals.  The next phase of the program is the initial job acquisition phase. At minimum, PQC provides career planning and job placement assessment. We can also provide supports for job training and job accommodations.  In the last stage of the program, our specialists provide beneficiaries with ongoing employment support. This can include providing the beneficiary with assistance to retain and/or advance employment, developing further job placement opportunities, and more. At minimum, we conduct quarterly follow-ups with each beneficiary to ensure they’re continuing to succeed and meet their goals in employment and financial independence.  **Bureau of Developmental Disabilities Services (BDDS) Extended Employment/Waiver Services**  PQC has been a Medicaid/Home- and Community-Based Services (HCBS) waiver provider with Indiana’s BDDS since 2020. Tee BDDS oversees a variety of services for individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities, including two HCBS waiver programs—the Family Supports Waiver (FSW) and Community Integration and Habilitation (CIH) Waiver. These waiver programs provide person-centered individualized supports that assist individuals in living in their own home or family home and have full access to the benefits of community living.  When BDDS services may be applicable, PQC provides information and support services for these two programs to our participants and their guardians. Both programs serve persons with a developmental disability, intellectual disability or autism and who have substantial functional limitations. Through these waivers, PQC helps provide participants with access to meaningful and necessary HCBSs and supports; implements services and supports in a manner that is respectful of the participant’s preferences, aspirations, and health and safety needs; ensures services are cost-effective; and facilitates participant involvement in their community, development of social relationships in their home and community, and independent living.  **Job Corps Career Technical Training**  In addition to our work as a CRP and Pre-ETS provider, PQC previously performed Career Technical Training (CTT) at Paul Simon Chicago Job Corps Center from 2014 through 2018, teaching more than 330 students ages 16–24 in the career fields supported by the center (i.e., Office Administration, Pharmacy Technician, Certified Nursing Assistant, Computer Services Technician, and Material Handling). Along with providing CTT instruction, our instructors supported short- and long-term placement efforts and developed opportunities for work-based learning, including field trips, internships, community service-learning projects and career exploration activities. These experiences offered a deeper understanding of the tasks that students needed to master to be successful from Day 1 in their career field. Our team developed relationships with the local workforce investment board, community and employers on a consistent basis. Our staff regularly interfaced with and visited the American Job Centers and engaged employers for the center’s workforce council. Securing these partnerships offered benefits for Job Corps students, including building work-based learning opportunities as well as the potential for future job and training options. These relationships provided our instructors with insight into new certifications and credentials required in certain fields and/or by specific employers, ultimately helping our team ensure students are fully prepared with the necessary knowledge and training upon entering the workforce. Each month, we also required our CTT instructors to support placement efforts by identifying no less than two new placement connections per month—this could include employer, military, college, or advanced training opportunities. 3b. Key Staff Background & Experience Résumés detailing the experience for all current Key Staff (i.e., our PM, Executive Program Manager, and Community Coordinator as well as a position description for our future Regional Leads are provided in **Attachment 1**. Below, we provide brief summary highlights for our Key Staff.   * Our **PM, Ms. Paige Briggs**, has a diverse background in business and human services. She brings a passion for helping others, building relationships, and problem solving as well as in-depth capability in program administration and training. Ms. Briggs has over 15 years of management experience, including 10+ years of case management, intake and assessment experience of diverse populations. She has worked with individuals with different ability levels and assisted people with finding employment. Prior to coming to PQC, Ms. Briggs served as:   + YouthBuild Director for the Fort Wayne Housing Authority, providing program planning, development and oversight for long-term program sustainability. She supervised 14 team members and worked to build and develop community partnerships in an effort to increase recruitment, engagement, and overall program support.   + Regional Supervisor responsible for managing the IMPACT Project and the Rhode Island (RI) Unemployment Project. She managed a staff of 85 and worked with project management teams and state officials to ensure metrics were being met.   + Lead Case Manager for River Valley Resources (YouthBuild Indy), where she monitored day-to-day operations and oversaw 70 students in the program.   Ultimately, Ms. Briggs has dedicated her career to making a difference in the lives of those she serves while implementing efficient processes through Lean Six Sigma Green Belt expertise. (Lean Six Sigma is a project management methodology and process improvement approach that uses a collaborative team effort to improve performance while reducing process variations and inconsistencies.)   * Our Executive Program Manager, **Ms. Stacey Smith**, is the detail-oriented founder of PQC and PQC Trains with 30+ years of project management and operations experience, including previously working with organizations like Northrup Grumman, Lockheed Martin, and Lincoln Financial before starting her own business—PQC—in 2004. As President/CEO of PQC, she oversees all program operations and develops and adapts policies to ensure performance compliant with federal and state requirements. With the development of our PQC Trains division, Ms. Smith sought to focus on employment and giving everyone a chance to see how they fit in their life, their family and their community—everyone has a purpose! She has served as the PQC Trains Executive Program Manager since 2015, providing executive-level oversight and strategic planning to maximize and grow our programs; build relationships; and identify curriculum, materials and information to ensure our staff have significant resources. Since 2021, Ms. Smith has also been part of the Indiana Commission for Rehabilitation Services, which works with the State’s Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services program matters affecting VR policies and procedures, goals and priorities, and the state plan; as well as on the effectiveness and customer satisfaction with VR services provided to participants. * Our **Community Coordinator, Ms. Elizabeth (“Liz”) Dodson**, brings 25+ years of experience working in various social services positions, including serving as an Eligibility Specialist for the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration. Elizabeth assisted participants with applying for and receiving Medicaid, SNAP, and TANF. She also worked with many Public Housing Authorities in Family Self-Sufficiency. Ms. Dodson has worked with many individuals with disabilities through job coaching, financial literacy training, and hands-on assessments to overcome barriers to housing and employment. She loves being a part of helping people achieve their personal best, and she finds great joy when they succeed in reaching their goals. In fact, along with her work at PQC, Ms. Dodson serves on the Indiana Transitions Committee, which works to help improve postsecondary transitions in Indiana, by promoting navigational supports, developing and scaling transition pathways, and more.   As the PQC Trains Community Coordinator, Ms. Dodson identifies and develops partnerships supporting the 40+ Indiana high schools awarded to our organization under the Pre-ETS program. In spring 2023 alone, she spearheaded and facilitated Resource/Transition Fairs in five (5) different regions, where local service providers, local employers, students and their families learned about different resources available to the student once they graduated or left high school. Ms. Dodson has also been instrumental in our program creation process; for example, she worked closely with Wes-Del School Corp. in Delaware County to create and write the Digital Animation Local Graduation Pathway, where two (2) industry certifications were added to the Indiana CTE approved certifications list as well as the Indiana Department of Workforce Development’s Promoted Industry Certifications list. In addition, she created the PQC Trains Toon Boom digital animation program in collaboration with industry partners. | |
| **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.). |
| We conduct staff training in a variety of forms. Our training process includes the following activities:  **1. New Hire Training**  After being hired, new PQC Pre-ETS Job Coaches attend an in-person 3-day training at PQC Headquarters in Fort Wayne. Day 1 provides the new Job Coach with a thorough introduction to PQC, were we work (county and schools), and a detailed discussion on the aspects our Pre-ETS work, discussions about working with students with disabilities and the basics (eligibility, categories, and a review of the LifeCourse framework. The Job Coach also meets and hears from one of our on-site Vocational Rehab (VR) team members and learns a little about PQC’s work with VR, BDDS and the Ticket to Work program, developing a little understanding of each program and how they correlate with Pre-ETS.  Day 2, the focus turns to a more detailed conversation about being a job coach. New Job Coaches discuss activities towards different phases a student has during the program. We start with discussions around a new student (regardless of age). A review of the new student intake, consent and most importantly, the review of the student IEP is done. We talk about attending IEP meetings and how to move forward with student transition plans based on the IEP. We move into discussions about 8th grade/Freshman/Sophomores and their introduction to the idea of working. As we move on to working with Juniors and Seniors, we have a more strategic discussion about career planning and training on critical workplace readiness and job exploration. Job Coaches are trained to have discussions with students about the difference in advocating for themselves at home, church, school and friends versus the workplace. It’s important for job coaches to learn how to teach a student to speak for themselves. Finally, we cover elements of Post Secondary. We help our job coaches understand that college is a good option but not the only option. We talk about trade schools, and military options. We also go over the steps required to discuss needs for accommodations and the possibility for Vocational Rehab.  During Day 3, we spend most of the day working through outputs of the Pre-ETS process. We have test models set up for our job coaches to review the intake, validate the consent and to complete the student transition profile based on information gathered. Job coaches are given activities with scenarios for student meetings that include all 5 categories. Job coaches are required to complete over 20 different scenarios and create case notes that are compliant with the state requirements. We work with them to see the whole student—being able to plan for their specific jobs, understanding where they need to work on workplace skills and address how to capture key details that will build on meeting to meeting to grow the student through their learning cycle. Day 3 is where we put the idea of Pre-ETS into actionable activities that meet our strict guidelines for quality and performant. At the end of the day, a review is done of the training and assessed on areas where the job coach may need more help before entering the school.  **2. Online Training**  New PQC employees participate in online onboarding courses in our Learning Management System (LMS) at https://pqctrains.talentlms.com/index. These onboarding courses introduce new personnel to our organization and expectations. In addition, we also have separate training courses specific to our Pre-ETS and VR program needs. The LMS tracks user course assignments and completion, and it creates a certificate upon the completion of each course. Our employees also have ongoing access to their assigned courses, so they can easily return and review at any time if they need a refresher.  PQC also has a robust training program in their internal padlet. The 87-page training manual is there for reference. We also maintain links to every form, access to our robust county by county neighborhood mapping, process and documentation for JCs to use for creating a successful work base learning activities, required forms for the assessment, the pre-post rubric, school calendars, and outcome-based case note guidelines. Along with Job Coach training materials, there are padlets focused on the 5 categories, employment resources, our “Cool Jobs” board as well as links to the IU Portfolio Padlet designed specifically for student transition activities.  **3. Shadowing**  For new Pre-ETS Job Coaches, we like to incorporate a “shadowing” opportunity, where a new employee spends up to 2 weeks shadowing one of our experienced Job Coaches as they conduct Pre-ETS support with their students. This allows our new team member to (1) better connect with another PQC Job Coach and develop a working relationship; and (2) gain first-hand experience for the expectations of our Pre-ETS Job Coaches and the activities, interactions, etc., that can take place. During this period, they are also assigned the PCG VR 101 program that they are required to complete. When the Program Manager is satisfied that the JC is ready for the classroom, we do a warm handoff (in person) to help the JC go to the school, meet key personnel from the school and get their bearings to the student and TOR schedules.  **4. Peer Mentoring**  Because each student and school environment is unique, each new hire is teamed with an experienced PQC Pre-ETS mentor to guide and support the new staff member. The mentor serves as a resource for information and answers, and also visits the new hire’s school to provide situational support and guidance.  **5. On-Site Staffing Meetings/Trainings**  On a weekly basis, there is a 1-hour conversation/training session led by our PM. This session is meant to provide updates, talk as a team to what successes have been had and where someone might need help. We encourage our job coaches to reach out and ask questions that others may have a good answer for. This allows them to work together and build a support structure that isn’t just driven by typical management tactics. Additionally, the PM conducts on-site meetings and training events with Pre-ETS Job Coaches, visiting individual employees to observe and provide constructive support.  **6. In-Service Training**  Quarterly, PQC conducts in-person “in-service” training days, where all of our Pre-ETS personnel visit PQC Headquarters in Fort Wayne. During these sessions, our PMs introduce curriculum for the upcoming quarter and the team discusses concerns/questions and shares their recent experiences and student success stories.  **7. Regional Training Opportunities**  Whenever possible, PQC sends our Pre-ETS staff to attend conferences, meetings and training opportunities to expand their skills and knowledge in the field, such as attending Level Up conferences, the APSE Conference, and the LifeCourse Training provided by the Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation Agency. Additionally, staff will participate in online training and webinars provided by the State of Indiana, such as the training on Student Transition Portfolios.  **8. Ongoing Reference & Materials Access**  PQC provides ongoing access to training and reference materials for our Job Coaches. Along with ULS and other skills training classes in our LMS, our Job Coaches also have access to our Padlet system. We adopted the use of Padlets into our training process back in 2021; they offer a great capacity for sharing information while providing a single, easy-to-find space for our Job Coaches to locate and download documents and forms as needed. Our Master Padlet link is provided to each Job Coach to keep in their Google Desktop; from that Master Padlet, our Job Coaches can then navigate to our Forms collections, Pre-ETS Category Materials, PQC-Developed Materials, County-by-County Neighborhood Mapping information, Employment Resources, our Cool Jobs series, and more.  Included in **Attachment 7** is a sampling of our Job Coach orientation and training materials, including:   * The outline of our initial orientation/onboarding topics. * The initial pages and table of contents in our Pre-ETS Training Guide for Job Coaches. * A sample list of our Pre-ETS Job Coach LMS-based Orientation courses. * Sample screenshots of a couple of PQC Trains’ Padlet dashboards. | |
| **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. |
| 5a. Procedures for Data/Documentation Collection and Entry into Pre-ETS Web Portal Prior to receiving Pre-ETS services from PQC, students (or guardians of students as appropriate) are provided with a detailed information packet about the program and its offerings. This packet includes a thorough referral/intake form that helps PQC collect information aligning with the Pre-ETS Data and Documentation Requirements (e.g., name, birthdate, disability, contact information, IEP/504 plan, etc.). From this form, we are able to take the completed information and transfer it manually into the Pre-ETS Web Portal and upload a copy of the original document. Additionally, we receive a signed consent form and a copy of the students’ current IEP/504. Upon enrollment, the student completes a Rubric Pre-Test and the O’Net job exploration assessment. The O’Net and Rubrics provide the Pre-ETS Job Coaches with an understanding of the student’s interests, knowledge of the 5 core Pre-ETS activities, and provide a baseline to measure the students’ progress with Pre-ETS over time. All documentation is uploaded to the Pre-ETS web portal.  Throughout the school day, the Pre-ETS Job Coach is required to complete documentation of their activities for every class period. If the activity is related to a Pre-ETS student, the documentation must include the participant name, type of Pre-ETS activity performed, amount of time spent, specify if the event was with an individual or a group, and specific case notes detailing the activity. As services are performed, we require our Pre-ETS Job Coaches to enter this same information into the Pre-ETS Portal on a daily basis for monthly billing. Our personnel document the service sessions conducted, including the service categories provided and students that participated for each service.  **Privacy Rights**  PQC and our personnel consider protecting an individual’s information of utmost importance. We have policies in place to inform and educate our employees and students about how we will protect their information and the responsibilities everyone has as part of our program. As part of our information security process, we:   * Provide a Rights and Responsibilities Statement that is signed by each Pre-ETS Job Coach and student. * Conduct quality assurance checks of all documentation and records. * Incorporate feedback loops into our customer service, ensuring we maintain active and regular communication chains.  5b. Process to Meet State Expectations for Billing & Expense Alignment Our process to meet the state’s expectations for timely and accurate billing, and to ensure that expenses claimed align with service delivery data entered into the Pre-ETS web portal is as follows:   * Our PM audits the internal tracking system to case notes; time is entered daily per student within the Pre-ETS web portal. * A second audit is completed by an internal financial specialist, and updates are made as needed and steps repeated until internal notes and the State Pre-ETS web portal match appropriately. * Once all changes are made and the PM accepts all entries as complete, the State portal numbers are extracted and sent on to the PQC finance team to make the invoice. * The invoice is reviewed along with the State claim form for accuracy and approval by the PQC Director of Finance. * After this approval, the file is sent out to the State of Indiana Pre-ETS Coordinator for approval to submit for payment. * Once the State of Indiana Pre-ETS Coordinator gives the “okay” to submit for payment, this invoice and claim form are sent to the State for payment. * All invoices are submitted on/around the 15th of each month, give or take a few days depending on the influence of stipend processing and verification.   Additionally, our stipend invoicing follows a process similar to the one detailed above. | |