

A photograph of two women in an office environment. The woman on the left is younger, with long dark hair and glasses, wearing a light-colored top. The woman on the right is older, with curly red hair and glasses, wearing a dark blazer over a white shirt. They are both smiling at the camera. The background shows a modern office with large windows, a potted plant, and a bulletin board with sticky notes.

OVR and BSE Initiative: Youth Ambassadors

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The provider will hire Youth Ambassadors (YA) within their service area in collaboration with their local OVR district office (DO). The YA shall work collaboratively with teachers, Local Education Agencies (LEAs) Transition Coordinators and OVR, Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) and Bureau of Special Education (BSE) staff to improve the transition of students with disabilities from school to postsecondary education or an employment outcome.

YAs will participate in local and statewide meetings, assist with program development, assist in the development of youth engaging media and support students with disabilities in their communities.

- Up to 4 Youth Ambassador (YA) per technical assistance network or IU.
- The position may be remote or in-person. Weekly hours may vary but will average 10 hours per week, but not exceed 20 hours per week. Hours must comply with child labor laws. YAs must be paid at least \$12.00 per hour.

1. Must be enrolled in final 2 years of high school or in post-secondary training and a current OVR customer in a plan status.
2. Excellent human interaction skills to build cooperative working relationships with students, as well as agency partners, in the provision of services.
3. Strong self-advocate.
4. Interest/experience in working with youth.
5. Must be willing to travel as needed.
6. Must be able to pass a Criminal Background Check or Childline Clearance.
7. Must be proficient with PC, office equipment, related software programs, social media and the internet.
8. Students from a diversity of backgrounds and identities, such as people of color, LGBTQ+ individuals, English Language Learners, students from low-income backgrounds and students from rural and urban communities, are encouraged to apply.

- The YA shall work collaboratively with teachers, Local Education Agencies (LEAs) Transition Coordinators and OVR, PaTTAN and Bureau of Special Education (BSE) staff to improve the transition of students with disabilities from school to postsecondary education or an employment outcome.
- YAs will participate in local and statewide meetings, assist with program development, assist in the development of youth engaging media and support students with disabilities in their communities. This position is designed to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) as well as the practical application of learned skills.

Pre-ETS Objectives

- Observe work tasks of interest in a realistic work environment by participating in up to 40 hours of job shadowing and informational interviewing.
- Learn basic components of becoming an effective self-advocate by participating in up to 90 hours of training and mentoring from T.E.A.M. Navigator, IU TAC, PYLN and PaTTAN Transition Leads to develop self-advocacy skills and workplace readiness training.
- Learn about specific types of soft skills (Ex: communication, teamwork, networking, critical thinking, professionalism, time management, accepting constructive feedback) and the type of behaviors associated with them.

YA Position Goals

- Participate in monthly virtual YA network meetings led by PaTTAN, IU TAC, PYLN and OVR Transition Staff.
- Engage in PYLN training for onboarding affiliate sites.
- Give updates to State Leadership team.
- Review materials for the youth perspective.
- Participate in photos, trainings and webinars to speak about being a youth with a disability.
- Provide activity reports to the OVR Regional Transition Specialist and submit a Final Report at the end of school year.
- Meet at least three (3) times during the school year with the OVR Regional Transition Specialist and/or other appropriate OVR staff for monitoring.
- Attend local Transition Coordinating Council (TCC) meetings.
- Maintain regular contact and attend meetings with local DOs if invited.
- Encourage students to return OVR Transition Services customer satisfaction surveys.

Pre-ETS Objectives

- Develop decision-making skills to make informed choices about their future training and employment.
- Be able to discuss how their disability impacts them (in school, work, home, community).
- Be able to model and demonstrate self-advocacy skills to other students with disabilities.
- Participate in work tasks in a realistic work environment of interest.
- Identify and practice work appropriate behaviors.

YA Position Goals

- Participate in monthly virtual YA network meetings led by PaTTAN, IU TAC, PYLN and OVR Transition Staff.
- Provide the youth voice in directing and supporting the work of PDE/BSE, PaTTAN, Local Intermediate Units, LEAs, OVR and PYLN.
- Mentor other youth to develop and enhance leadership skills.
- Engage with PDE/BSE, PaTTAN, Local Intermediate Units, LEAs, OVR and PYLN to provide the perspectives of youth with disabilities and be informed by those perspectives.
- Provide a model to state and local teams regarding effective youth engagement strategies and activities.
- Assist in expanding the network of PYLN Affiliates across the state and engage in PYLN board meetings.
- Attend and collaborate in youth functions including parent centers and agency partners.

YA Position Goals

- Give updates to State Leadership team.
- Participate in photos, trainings and webinars to speak about being a youth with a disability.
- Review materials for the youth perspective.
- Participate in trainings and webinars to speak about being a youth with a disability.
- Attend conferences and assist in facilitation of youth workshops and activities.
- With support of supervisor, research, develop and write blog entries, youth newsletters, social media posts or podcasts to engage youth in their community.
- Encourage students to return OVR Transition Services customer satisfaction surveys.

- Be an Intermediate Unit (IU), a Local Education Agency (LEA), Approved Private School (APS), educational non-profit, special education professional development/technical assistance program or other educational entity.
- Serve a maximum of 4 students with a disability within their identified service area.
- Maintain a maximum ratio of 4 students to 1 worksite supervisor at an identified worksite location. Students are not required to work together at the site.
- Ensure that the work (as identified in the YA job description) done by the student with a disability shall not displace regular employees at the employer's worksite.

- Create a diverse workload for the YA position that may be remote, virtual or onsite. Travel to meetings may be required.
- Develop a schedule of YA weekly hours that may vary but will average 10 hours per week and not exceed 20 hours per week. Scheduling of weekly work hours should be done in compliance with the Commonwealth's Child Labor Laws which restrict working hours according to age.
- Maintain a positive working relationship with their local education partners, OVR and service providers.
- Pay YAs at least \$12.00 per hour.

(CWDS reports will be reviewed by OVR staff)

1. Per academic term, 85% of YAs will maintain measurable skills gain (MSG) by obtaining a 2.0 GPA or higher while enrolled in secondary education, as indicated by the receipt of semesterly grade reports.
2. Student Customer satisfaction surveys at program completion will have 85% favorable ratings.
3. OVR Staff satisfaction surveys at program completion will have 85% favorable ratings.

1. Referrals to be a YA will come from collaboration with the local OVR District Office (including Supervisory/Management staff, Early Reach Coordinators (ERCs), Business Services Representatives (BSRs) and OVR Counselors). Students must be referred directly by OVR staff.
2. Marketing materials should include OVR's collaboration and must be reviewed and approved by OVR before public distribution.

1. The student must be compensated for his/her work hours, and OVR will reimburse these funds through one of the methods defined below:
 - a. **Student Stipend** - Stipend rate is variable but must be paid at a minimum rate that is equivalent to at least \$12.00 per hour. Provider must work with their internal payroll departments to determine the most effective method for providing the stipend to the student.
 - b. **Employer Reimbursement** - Provides reimbursement directly to the employer for 100% of the individual's wages and is designed to reduce the expense of hiring new employees and training them. The reimbursement is paid to the employer by OVR for hours worked at up to 100% of the hourly wage. Wages must be paid at \$12.00 an hour or higher.

These individuals teach general job tasks to students and provide supervision and coordination onsite at the organization's office, community locations or virtually.

Duties include:

1. monitoring to ensure the YA is meeting expectations of the employer and has the supports necessary to be successful.
2. ensuring that YA's work hours comply with child labor laws.
3. coordinating with the YA's school to ensure that the position does not conflict with their educational requirements.
4. teaching and reinforcing skills.
5. coordination of student schedules.
6. monitoring up to 4 students to ensure the student's and the employer's needs are being met.

Requirements:

1. A high school diploma or GED and at least 2 years of experience with youth and/or adults with disabilities is required.
2. Or a bachelor's degree in psychology, disability services, social services, business, education or another related field.
3. Experience in job placement services and supports preferred.

Provider will supply worksite supervisor for onsite coordination and support. A worksite supervisor teaches general job tasks to students and provides supervision and coordination at a worksite. Duties include monitoring to ensure the YA is meeting expectations of the worksite and has the supports necessary to be successful; teaching skills and reinforcing skills; and coordination of student schedules. For those students requiring assistance arranging travel to and from the worksite, the worksite supervisor will assist in this planning. If someone other than the TEAM Navigator acts as the supervisor of the Youth Ambassador, OVR will reimburse the following:

- a. **YA Orientation:** To cover costs to orient student to the job, including, but not limited to, obtaining student work permit, worksite identification, coordination of student schedules, collaboration with OVR staff to conduct worksite training and transportation coordination for student. For students who receive Social Security or other public benefits, orientation must include referral and coordination of benefits planning services prior to student placement at a worksite. \$1000 upon receipt of confirmed student work schedule.
- b. **YA Worksite Supervision:** Students with disabilities should be scheduled to work 4-20 hours per week. Worksite Supervision will be reimbursed by OVR at a cost of **\$165 per week for a maximum of 30 weeks or \$4950 per year.** May be group or individual and students must receive a minimum of 3 hours of supervision per week.

Approval Process 1 of 2



Providers will be approved using a two-tier approval process that requires approval by the local OVR District Office District Administrator (DA) followed by the Central Office Transition Specialist. Providers will submit a signed agreement and all required documentation to the local OVR District Office DA to begin the approval process.

The local District Office DA will complete an initial review of the services identified by the provider. If the DA approves the provider as having the capacity, personnel and qualifications to provide the services, the DA will sign the agreement then submit it to the Statewide Provider Coordinator for review and final approval. All approved Provider Agreements will be placed in the appropriate CWDS Provider Business folder. The following documents are required for the review process:

1. For ALL providers:

- a. Signed Provider Agreement.
- b. Completed Provider Profile.

2. As applicable:

- a. Completed “W-9” form if not currently uploaded or if provider information has changed.
- b. Signed “Verification Document for FBI, Act 34 and Act 151 Clearances” if not currently uploaded or if provider information has changed.
- c. Copy of Professional Liability Insurance issued within last calendar year if not currently uploaded in CWDS.

3. For NEW providers (documents must be reviewed by Renee Foley first):

- a. Completed “Provider Enrollment Form” in addition to the documents listed above.

- Collaborate with your local IU or Special Education Technical Assistance Programs to get agreements approved.
 - Examples of Special Education Technical Assistance Programs: HUNE, PEAL, PaTTAN
- Identify students who may be interested in being YAs.
- Utilize an officewide referral process for program(s).
- Staff should plan to visit program and monitor student progress.
- Authorize and pay bills timely.
- Coordinate trainings and presentations with providers.

Questions?