



# Carbon Lehigh Intermediate Unit #21

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## Project SEARCH High School Transition Program

**An internship program designed to transition young adults into competitive employment through a partnership with the following:**

- Carbon Lehigh Intermediate Unit #21
- Participating Districts
- Good Shepherd Rehabilitation Network (GSRN)
- St. Luke's University Hospital
- Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)
- Goodwill Keystone Area
- Office of Intellectual Disabilities
  - Sam Inc.
  - Quality Progressions



### Program Overview

The Project SEARCH High School Transition Program is a unique one-year school-to-work program that takes place entirely at the business. Interns participate in employment-related instruction and are assigned internships within St. Luke's and Good Shepherd.

The program provides real-life work experience combined with training in employability and independent living skills. Project SEARCH helps young adults with disabilities make successful transitions from school to productive adult life. The goal for each intern is competitive employment.

The Transition Program is for interns who are:

- In their last year of school eligibility.
- Interested in working within a business setting.
- Working to achieve competitive employment.
- Willing to utilize public transportation.



All interns are involved with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) and/or Office of Intellectual Disabilities (OID). Agencies meet with Project SEARCH staff, family, and interns throughout the year to provide vocational rehabilitation counseling and guidance along with various support services as required. All interns are linked with LANta for transportation.

### Program Eligibility

The following guidelines for eligibility are required for candidates:

- Ability to work independently with minimal prompting and/or supervision.
- Employer/community acceptable social skills.
- Basic communication skills (verbal or supported by technology).
- Ability to take direction and basic problem solving.
- Meets personal appearance and hygiene standards.
- Minimum of 18 years of age.
- Ability to use restroom and cafeteria facilities independently.

- Ability to pass a drug screen and various background checks.
- Documentation of current immunizations, including an annual flu shot.
- Ability to access and willingness to use independent transportation options.
- Desire to work in a business setting.
- Currently eligible for Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) services.
- Currently registered with the Office of Intellectual Disabilities, if eligible.
- Desire to become competitively employed and develop a strong work ethic.

### Application Process

Students are referred to the program through their school district. The students and families complete and submit the application by a predetermined deadline in February. Space is limited for students applying and the selection is carried out by members of the Project SEARCH team. The committee reviews the application packets and schedules interviews.

An Open House is held annually to potential students, family members, the community, and interested businesses. It provides an opportunity to learn about potential worksites, meet the Project SEARCH staff and interns, and discuss program goals. All in attendance have an opportunity to ask questions.

All interested students are encouraged to request an Application Packet from their District Special Education Director or by contacting Melissa Johnson at johnsonmelissa@cliu.org or 610-769-4111 ext. 1058.

### Project SEARCH Curriculum

Throughout the school year, interns participate in a functional academic curriculum that stresses employability and independent-living skills. Project SEARCH office time instruction is designed around seven major focus areas:

1. Working responsibly.
2. Communicating effectively with or without accommodations.
3. Solving problems and developing critical thinking skills.
4. Planning and managing employment.
5. Applying technology.
6. Developing self-advocacy skills.
7. Demonstrating independent community travel skills.

The curriculum is flexible and allows the instructor to design lessons around the core topics and adjust the curriculum based on specific intern and employer needs.

### Work Rotations

Interns build communication and problem-solving skills, as well as job specific skills, through work rotations. These are unpaid internships. Work rotations are approximately 10 weeks long, usually totaling three to four rotations per intern by the end of the program. Worksites are assigned based on the intern's previous work experience, interests, preferences, and assessments. Job Coaches, Mentors, and other department staff collaborate to provide support for the intern. The goal is to have supports fade out as an intern gains independence.

**If you have any questions, contact  
Melissa Johnson at johnsonmelissa@cliu.org or  
610-769-4111 ext. 1058.**

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