

# It's Your Future!



Did you know that students who have work experience during high school are twice as likely to have a job and will earn more money after they leave school?

**The Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS)** is a vocational program that can – if you are eligible – help you:

- ✚ Plan your career
- ✚ Participate in paid work experiences
- ✚ Find a job that matches your abilities, interests and needs
- ✚ Work with you and your employer or college to make sure you receive help when you need it

## What is the Southwest Cooperative DRS Vocational Program?

The Southwest Cooperative DRS Vocational Program is a partnership between the State of Illinois Division of Rehabilitation Services and several area high schools including: Andrew, Bremen, Hillcrest, Lemont, Oak Forest, Sandburg, Stagg and Tinley Park.

## Who is Eligible?

You may be eligible for DRS services if you receive special education services or other help because you have a disability.

A disability may be a medical condition such as diabetes or epilepsy, an orthopedic or other physical condition, or a mental, emotional or learning disability. The counselor will work with you to find out if you are eligible and what types of services you need to prepare for work. If you are eligible, you and your vocational rehabilitation counselor will plan a program to help you prepare to go to work.



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## Is DRS only for Special Education Students?

No, the DRS counselor works with all students in high school who have a disability.

## But I don't want people to know I have a disability!

Information about you, including the fact that DRS is assisting you, is kept **CONFIDENTIAL**.

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## What if I have a job already and I am doing well?

DRS can still be a great resource for you. We can help you plan your future by setting goals and guiding you to achieve them. DRS will advocate for you in the workplace or in further education.

DRS may find other job opportunities for you through vocational testing or training.

**Learn more today at:**

**Southwest Cooperative DRS /Vocational Program**

**[www.swcccase.org/drs.htm](http://www.swcccase.org/drs.htm)**



### How can DRS help me with college?

DRS can assist you in planning, getting connected to supports and services and based on financial need and your vocational goal, can assist with funding.

### Why should I be thinking about this during school?

You need to make the right connections before leaving school so there is no gap in services. After you leave school, no single agency is required to provide or coordinate all needed services. Each agency has its own application process and way of providing service.

### When should I apply?

We recommend that students be referred to the Southwest Cooperative DRS office while in their last two years of high school. This timing allows the Transition Specialist to work with you and the school to help identify a suitable work goal and suggest work readiness activities that can take place before you finish school. The Transition Specialist can assist by linking you to resources and supports that will continue after high school. Students can be referred as early as age 14.



### How do I get connected?

Your school will help you apply. Your school vocational coordinator or case manager can help you get in contact with the Southwest Cooperative DRS office to arrange an appointment.

Additional information regarding the Southwest Cooperative DRS/Vocational Program may be found at [www.swcccase.org/drs.htm](http://www.swcccase.org/drs.htm).

### When students plan ahead for adult life, they are more successful in:

- + Completing school
- + Going to college
- + Finding a job

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