

WorkAbility 1 Education Code Requirement Report for Year-End 2022-2023

Ventura County SELPA (034-02)

WorkAbility I Mission Statement

The mission of WorkAbility I (WAI) is to promote the involvement of key stakeholders, including students, families, educators, employers, and other agencies in planning and implementing an array of services that will culminate in successful student transition to employment, lifelong learning and quality adult life.

WorkAbility I Program Description

- Provides pre-employment skills training, work site training and follow-up services for youth in special education who are making the transition from school to work
- Offers special education students the opportunity to complete their secondary education while also obtaining marketable job skills
- Benefits students, employers and the community at large
- Seeks employers in the business community who will give students with special needs a chance to prove themselves

WorkAbility 1 California Education Code

56470 - The legislature finds and declares all of the following: (a) That an essential component of transition services developed and supported by the (CDE) is project WorkAbility. (b) that the WorkAbility program provides instruction and experiences that reinforce core curriculum concepts and skills leading to gainful employment. (c) That since project WorkAbility was established in 1981, substantial numbers of individuals with exceptional needs have obtained full or part-time employment.

56471 (d) - WorkAbility project applications shall include, but are not limited to, the following elements: (1) recruitment, (2) assessment, (3) counseling, (4) pre-employment skills training (5) vocational training, (6) student wages for try-out employment, (7) placement in unsubsidized employment, (8) other assistance with transition to a quality adult life and (9) utilization of an interdisciplinary advisory committee to enhance project goals.

Our Project's Description

The Ventura County SELPA WorkAbility I program is operated by the SELPA to provide career and vocational services to the special education students in our member districts. Two districts in the SELPA have separate WorkAbility I projects and operating budgets and although they do not participate in the SELPA program, they are collaborative SELPA partners in working with local agencies and businesses. This project has 9 districts with high schoolers, with 9 coordinators who meet throughout the year to collaborate. Each district program operates the according to their own policies and procedures with the goal for all students being competitive integrated employment. Students eligible to participate are 15-22 years of age, with disabilities spanning all 13 categories. The Ventura County SELPA encompasses a range of communities from urban to rural and varying industries from agricultural, retail and manufacturing to hospitality, human services and the food service industry.

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STUDENTS SERVED AND PLACED IN 2022-23

Eligible:	3,716	Enrolled: *	1,067
To Serve (HS):	970	Served (HS):	1,031
To Place:	145	Placed:	272
On Campus:	0		

* Students count as Enrolled once a school of attendance is entered.
Only currently enrolled students are included in this count.

FOLLOW-UP SURVEYS FOR 2023

Students to Follow Up:	312	Still Trying to Reach:	0
Successfully Reached:	233	Unreachable:	79

1. Recruitment:

Within Ventura County SELPA, each district/site has a clear process for recruitment which is well articulated in district policies/procedures. Each have been reviewed, signed by school district/site administration, shared with families/students. Students with IEPs over 15 with an active transition plan are eligible for referral/participation, including students who are diploma or certificate-bound or attending 18-22 programs, mostly juniors/seniors. WorkAbility1 (WAI) staff introduce themselves at SPED department meetings. Teachers invite them to speak to their classes. Staff contact case managers for a list of eligible students. WAI staff send group emails to the SPED department to share opportunities. They determine interest through presentations about WAI services and benefits in SPED classes. WAI contact students directly on consult services (don't have a SPED class). Teachers recruit for the program while speaking with parents, informally and during IEP meetings. When referrals are received, staff print copies of student schedules to determine the best time to meet and call for students. Staff who already work within SPED department are always screening/talking with students who they might refer, looking for employment attributes like classroom participation, respectful conduct, grades and attendance. Curriculum assessment tools are used to recruit. Teachers from SPED only school, recruit during school professional learning community meetings, as all teachers attend. When staff introduce themselves, students know who to contact if interested in working; students refer themselves. Once staff contact students, share their flyer/brochure/permission slips with students, parents and staff. This year, one district's recruitment was impacted when WAI staff resigned while recruiting students and not able to find a new employee. Students are referred by parents or from WAI at previous school/district. WAI are available for walk-ins (self-referrals). Students are considered by case manager/school counselor/work experience teachers/program specialist and those referred are interviewed. Criteria students must meet include interview, identified needs from the transition plan, satisfactory behavior, attendance. Input from student, family members, peers, teachers, administrators, service providers, agencies is considered during referral. Recruitment process, WAI elements (1:1, group activities), benefits, strategies for participation in WAI are communicated to families via home-school correspondence, flyers/brochures, online learning platforms, mail/email, phone/text, IEPs, transition fairs.

2. Assessment:

Students were assessed via Google Classroom, Canvas, Teams, email, in-person. The following vocational assessment tools are used by various staff at our sites: current IEP, O'Net, Unique Transition,

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Career Interest Survey, Naviance, Ventura County SELPA SCANS Inventory, CACareerZone, and college/career interview. Student interests and needs guide the specialist in counseling them. Once interests are established, WAI and the student meet, review the results and proceed to investigate the steps/path needed toward their goal. WAI specialist shares this information with the case managers via email/via the IEP system. The CACareerZone report summarizes interests, strengths and ensuing conversation with students. The results can be shared if student registers their account. One district has a specific assessment guide for 9th-12th grade, as well as for post-secondary. 9th-12th assessments are given in SAI English and shared with WAI, who maintains student files. Working frequently with 11th-12th grade students, their assessment results guide the year's activities for the program. Case Managers share results of assessments in IEPs and If an agency (such as DOR) is working with a student, WAI share information that may be useful to them. Assessment results are used to find worksites that would benefit the students and to develop transition goals. Assessments are shared by placing them in their transition portfolios and discussing with parents at IEPs. Assessments are used as a platform to discuss/determine career outcomes and services in the areas of education/training, employment, and independent living (including community access), which in turn, drive career planning, and are used to develop transition goals and a course of study in the IEP. Students/adult students/parents (if conserved) are encouraged to share assessment results at transition planning meetings (IPE and IPP) with other agencies (DOR and the Regional Center).

3. Counseling:

Following assessment, students are counseled 1:1 about career interests/skills prior to the IEP, present levels are determined, post-secondary plans are discussed, and transition related goals and services are determined. WAI meets with students to review assessments and determine next steps. Text/email are used to schedule appointments. Districts with large populations prefer to work with whole classes, as 1:1 is not feasible, unless requested by a teacher or the student. One specialist uses a curriculum outline for the year, that guides/tracks activities. Based on current job readiness, opportunities and transition plans, whole class/group/individual vocational counseling activities occurred in-person, supported by online platforms. Counseling models include: Special education case managers and/or WorkAbility I (WAI) specialists developing transition goals with the students; Using the transition plans from the IEP to map the year's transition related career activities; Reviewing career interest assessment results, then the student researches and discusses some of the careers on the internet; Conference with student about job readiness, self-advocacy (disability awareness, work accommodations activities); Career and college readiness/pathways/adult education/military options/vocational programs (educational pathways at Ventura County and Los Angeles County Community Colleges, Ventura County Office of Education Career Education Center, CTE Pathways)/18-22 programs/adult day programs; Resume/job application guidance/workshops; Interview skills workshop to prepare for mock interviews and peer review feedback; Follow up on classroom based mock job site stations; Community business/employer presentations; Job coaching with students using a work assessment rubric or situational assessment; Work site follow up with employers/business partners; Workability I specialists available for walk-in/at will counseling; Collaborative career development with DOR potentially eligible and student services and Regional Center (TCRC) at the IEP meeting; FAFSA counseling, including what the FAFSA does for students and the requirements.

4. Pre-employment skills training:

WAI staff conduct group/classroom activities integrated into the curriculum (Unique, Naviance, teacher-designed). Topics include: job searching skills, interview attire/skills, master job application, cover letters, resumes, sexual harassment prevention training, portfolio development, social skills, personal hygiene, mock timecard (work hours and required breaks), transportation training, obtaining an ADA card, sending thank-you cards, state and federal labor laws, food handler's certification, "soft skills" for employment. Others work on self-advocacy/disability awareness/workplace accommodations, PPE, digital citizenship, email etiquette, handshakes, online safety and communication. WAI staff brought career speakers, peer/school staff mock interviews (with community employers) and school-based businesses

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providing pre-employment skills training, as well vocational experiences. Students dress the part, hand them their resume & cover letter and are graded on a rubric system. They can interview with as many employers as they wish! This is an amazing event and some students have actually been hired. After the mock interviews, students are expected to write thank you letters to show their appreciation.

On campus training included classroom jobs, lunch orders, laundry, vacuuming, dishes, window cleaning, transportation training, photo copying, culinary, recycling, gardening and the student store. Off campus experiences training continued. Case managers and/or WAI staff discuss the purpose of pre-employment training (preparation for CIE) with families at IEP meetings, follow up with staff. The DOR provided interview skills, practice job applications, development of the "elevator speech resume" to high school classes and modified for students with moderate/severe disabilities. In Santa Paula, WAI works closely with College and Career Center in promoting college/career fairs/workshops. Simi Valley Transit initiated a "Youth Ride Free" program for students who show their school badge. When students participate in CBIs, transportation training (how to look up the bus routes, how to know which bus stop they need, and where they get on the bus) is embedded. Students participate in school-wide Career Fairs.

5. Vocational training:

Job placements continued this year: Santa Paula Animal Rescue, Carrara's Pastries, Coffee ALaMode, Moorpark Active Adult Center, Tractor Supply, El Capricho, Bank of Books, SP Garage Fit, La Flor Bonita, Fillmore Animal Hospital, Golden State Storage, Pizza Man Dan's, STS Education, Zumiez, The Breakfast Café, CVS, A Place To Grow (district preschool). In some districts, students are enrolled in ROP, employed through DOR student services. Santa Paula Adult Transition has a campus business like Uber Eats, where they collect pre-orders for lunch at Garden Market and pick up/deliver. In OUHSD, post-secondary has Anacapa Flowers. Students are paid for delivery to other school sites. Other students volunteer at their school site. In Moorpark, functional skills students operate recycling on/off campus. They partner with local businesses to collect recyclable materials and handle the needs to the high school campus. They supply classrooms/offices with containers for recyclables, schedule pick days/times with teachers/staff. They sort, process, bag the materials and bring the bagged materials to the local market. At VCOE schools, students get training through an opportunity to work in the student store. There are a variety of school jobs that the students rotate to complete. These jobs include delivering meals to classes, raising the flag, filling the copier, cleaning the courtyards, the front of the school, washing the windows, washing the door handles, cleaning the kitchen, staff lounge, laundry room. All classrooms have microbusinesses: candles, succulents, gift baskets, pom-pom critters, cards, coasters, ornaments, coffee beans, recycling. In one district, there aren't any subsidized placements, due to funding challenges. WAI facilitates unsubsidized placements and partners with DOR Student Services and TPP. The post-secondary programs do not have an on-campus business. They used to sell fresh eggs from the school chicken coop, but the coop is gone. In another district, students were not placed due to staff shortage. Last year's WAI business partners/employers are celebrated on the SELPA website. Work-based learning is part of the students' individual course of study, driven by their education/training, employment, independent living IEP goals. Schools incorporated online sources for vocational, educational opportunities and advocating for workplace safety precautions.

6. Student wages for subsidized employment:

Our county's interpretation of [Ed Code 45125.1](#) is that community businesses are not contractors of the district, therefore placements have not been impacted. Our project continues to have the goal of placing 25% of students we are funded to serve. This year, we placed 28%. The districts have reestablished business partnerships since COVID. Students worked at a variety of restaurants, hair salons, animal rescues/hospitals, pet stores, grocery stores, auto parts, drug stores, teacher assistants, childcare, senior centers, custodial, and local private businesses. Student workers fill out employment packets with the HR department, turn in necessary documents and fill out timecards, as

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do regular district classified employees. Students participate in sexual harassment prevention training adapted to their learning style and earn a certificate when completed, which is added to their portfolio. Student workers are paid to complete required training. Students were paid California minimum wage. District WorkAbility I policies outline site specific procedures for subsidized placements, including 2.0 GPA (considered and based on individual student needs), attendance, behavior, school staff input and guided by the transition plan in the IEP. WAI staff supervise subsidized placements, working closely with owners/managers. Staff ensure that all students apply for work permits, complete employment packets and necessary training required by the district, including digital citizenship and workplace. Sites provide subsidized wages for a short time (3-40 hours) and establish an agreement with the employer that the student will be considered for unsubsidized hire at the end of the training period. Others use the subsidized wages to give students a variety of training opportunities which are determined in the student's individualized plan. During the training period, students are monitored/evaluated by staff using observation, task analysis, situational assessments. Progress is shared with case manager, student and family which is used to inform subsequent transition plans. Some students are applying for paid internships through TCRC service coordinators and accessing work experiences coordinated with DOR.

7. Placement in unsubsidized employment:

Students obtained employment more than in the previous school year. Assessments, goals and services on the IEP continued to inform transition services and a course of study that lead to employment. Students who attained and/or maintained employment were employed at many places in town: restaurants, agriculture, retail, supermarkets, nurseries, farms, big box, department stores, variety stores, lifeguarding, construction. A few students moved from subsidized placements to unsubsidized. Some have an unsubsidized placement that resulted from ROP/CEC or that resulted from a WAI, DOR or Regional Center subsidized placement. Staff worked with the Work Experience teacher to support Special Education students in finding and/or maintaining unsubsidized employment in the community. WAI staff continued to develop rapport, relationships with potential/current employers in the community. WAI conducts mock interviews/employment panels that includes community employers who are currently hiring. Students who would like to obtain unsubsidized placements seek WAI for assistance with resume writing, job searches and availability, job applications, interview coaching, proper attire, work permit, common procedures when applying and seeking jobs, following up with potential worksites. This occurs in whole class, small group or individually. WAI advises students on when and how to follow up with potential jobs after they have applied. WAI practices using tone of voice and how long it takes to answer a question appropriately. WAI follows-up with students on how their interview went to find out what questions they were asked, how they answered, and they could have answered that question better. WAI distributes a "Who's Hiring" list to teachers about once per month to post in classrooms. Some students ask to meet with WAI 1:1 to help them apply for a specific job. We review key points on the interview process and share a copy of the Interview Skills packet that has valuable information. Sometimes, we role play a mock interview. If the student doesn't have a resume, WAI assists students 1:1 with a job specific resume. WAI shares who their business partners are in the community, encouraging students to apply. Employment informs subsequent transition planning, goals, and services in the IEP.

8. Other assistance with transition to a quality adult life:

WAI refers students to agencies upon graduation such as DOR, Regional Center, DSPS programs at the colleges. Throughout the year, WAI shares information regarding transition fairs and independent living programs with students/families. WAI supports post-secondary planning with students/parents by referring

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to vocational programs, transportation, budgets, FAFSA, Job Fairs, assistance with obtaining a Social Security Card or where to apply for one, and brochures/flyers for upcoming events as they become available. With parent/adult student permission, DOR, Regional Center, DSPS and agencies potentially serving the students after school are invited to IEP Meetings. WAI supports students/families with picking day programs when nearing aging out. DOR, Regional Center, Information is communicated to students/parents via email/phone/text. WAI supports students with their transition to adult life by exploring post-secondary plan options including investigating/creating college schedules, determining college costs. WAI partners with DOR and Simi Institute for Careers and Education for post-secondary services and employment opportunities. At one site, WAI collaborates with SLP who covers career topics. WAI takes seniors on college tours, including the DSPS/EAC, assist students with making appointments for registration. WAI assists with assembling Transition portfolios for graduating seniors to share with community agencies after they leave school. WAI has a google classroom, where all resources are posted for students/families. It is used to answer questions/provide direction as needed and for follow-ups. WAI collaborated with Arc of Ventura County for work experience. Student interest in certain jobs is used to recruit new businesses. WAI created a recruitment folder for businesses, with a flyer, brochure, student worker sign-in sheet, standard business agreement, business partner fact sheet, student expectations, work permit info and WAI business card. Parents are informed about WAI via email: sexual harassment parent info sheet, which includes the link and training materials. WAI calls parents before subsidized placement for approval and to discuss transportation to work. Communication with student is maintained via texting, as it's the easiest and most direct message to students. WAI shares interview, manager info, address, interview time, what to wear. WAI hand delivers thank you cards/appreciation certificates to businesses.

9. Utilization of an interdisciplinary advisory committee to enhance project goals

The SELPA has operated an Interagency Transition Coordinating Council (ITCC) since 1987. It is comprised of representatives from DOR, Tri-Counties RC, Rainbow FEC, CAC rep, vendors of TCRC, private non-profit agencies serving adults with disabilities, parents, WAI, district reps. It focuses on the quality of transition from school to adult life serving as an advisory council to WAI, promoting program goals, discussing, addressing youth employment issues, building and strengthening community and interagency partnerships/coordination. All three of the WAI projects in the SELPA participate/share project info. Meetings are all hybrid format. The SELPA sponsored bi-annual Transition Fairs for students/families, with 30 local adult services agencies participating. To meet family needs, the Transition Fair committee held one virtual and one in-person fair. The SELPA maintains a local agency guide online, which contains local contact information, videos, presentations, college/career guides (for teachers and families), transition checklists, online resource links which available to the public in both English and Spanish. These activities and resources exemplify the linkage and ongoing commitment between schools and agencies in Ventura County. ITCC sponsored four Transition Network Team (TNT) meetings for WAI and secondary teaching staff. The SELPA director chairs the TNT and the meeting content planned with a steering committee consisted of teachers. This year, the network hosted in-person meetings addressing current needs: Transition planning, mini agency fair, education panel (local colleges and vocational schools) and employment panel featuring DOR and the regional center. The SELPA director for transition attends the Post-secondary Employment Collaborative Network meetings facilitated by TCRC and collaborates to co-host one meeting with district transition representatives and local adult service providers in attendance. Our WAI project, along with Conejo and Las Virgenes is engaged in a Local Partnership Agreement (LPA) with DOR, TCRC, Rainbow FEC and community partners with an emphasis

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on the interagency coordination necessary for a smooth transition to adult life for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The Ventura County LPA is posted on the California Health and Human Services website and linked on the Agency Padlet. The LPA members strive for continuous improvement and meet annually to update the existing agreement.