

# Facts & Details

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May 2025

## Project SEARCH

### What is Project SEARCH?

Project SEARCH is a business/organization-led collaboration that enables young adults with disabilities to gain and maintain employment through training and career exploration during a one-year rotational internship. The goal for each student participant is competitive employment. Project SEARCH has proved successful, with over 70% of graduates attaining employment.

### Which agencies are involved in Project SEARCH locally?

Project SEARCH is based on a partnership that includes a local business or organization, a school district, the Sedgwick County Developmental Disability Organization (SCDDO), and Kansas Rehabilitation Services. The participating school districts in Sedgwick County include: Wichita and Derby Public Schools.

### How many Project SEARCH sites are in Sedgwick County?

Currently there are three Project SEARCH site locations in Sedgwick County, KS: Sedgwick County government, Via Christi and McConnell Air Force Base. Wichita Public Schools hosts the Sedgwick County and Via Christi sites. Derby Public School students intern at McConnell. While sites are paired with a specific school district, students from any school district served through the Sedgwick County Area Educational Services Interlocal Cooperative may participate.

### Who can participate as a Project SEARCH intern?

Students with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities in their final year of school are eligible for Project SEARCH. Each participating school district recruits potential Project SEARCH interns and

conducts skills testing to ensure a good fit with the program requirements. The most important qualifications for participating as a Project SEARCH intern are the desire to achieve competitive employment and a willingness to learn.

### How does the program operate?

Students participate in three unpaid internships led by a school instructor or para-educator/job coach during the school year. Each internship lasts about 10 weeks.

### What type of work will the students do?

Students are matched to specific internships based on previous work history and predetermined interests. Job tasks vary but can include data entry, scanning, janitorial/custodial, general administrative duties, food service, housekeeping, and laundry among others.

### How many internship opportunities are available?

The size of each year's Project Search class depends upon student interest and ability. County-wide there are approximately 20-25 internships annually.

### What role does the SCDDO play?

The SCDDO serves as the single point of entry for all intellectual and developmental disability services in Sedgwick County. Increasing the expectation and incentive to work towards competitive, community-based employment at minimum wage or better has been a driving force behind the SCDDO's employment initiatives. Project SEARCH is a key strategy in the SCDDO's employment efforts.

### For Additional Information

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