

FUNDING OF TRANSITION SERVICES BY THE BUREAU OF REHABILITATION SERVICES

The funding of transition services or activities by BRS while the student is still in school continues to raise questions with many counselors assigned to school caseloads.

While each student's needs and situation must be looked at individually, there are some general procedures and questions that must be considered when making decisions to fund VR services during the transition period from special education:

1. If BRS counselors are asked to fund services during a Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meeting, without prior knowledge of this request or the student's specific needs, no commitments should be made at this time. The BRS counselor should inform the PPT administrator that they are unable to make this decision and it can be discussed outside the parameters of the PPT.
2. The BRS counselor should ask himself or herself,
 - "Is this service or activity the responsibility of the school district under the transition requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)?"

If the answer is yes, BRS should not be paying for this service, and a discussion with school district personnel should take place, outside of the PPT.

3. Recognizing that BRS counselors are often asked to fund services (particularly situational assessments) during the last few months of a student's high school program, the following questions should be asked:
 - "Will BRS need this information to assist the student and counselor in developing an appropriate Employment Plan?"
 - "Will denying payment for this service affect the student's ability to transition from high school with the "next steps" in place?"

If the answer is yes, a counselor may consider funding a particular service in this exceptional circumstance. However, BRS must begin the process of discouraging school districts from depending on BRS to pick up or provide services that could or should have been provided under the auspices of IDEA.

4. To begin this process, the following procedures must be followed if a counselor agrees to fund or co-fund a particular service:
 - The counselor should discuss the request with their respective supervisor or district director.
 - The counselor must initial any BRS financial commitment that is written into a student's individualized education program (IEP).

- The counselor should schedule a meeting with school personnel to discuss future commitments from BRS for an activity that clearly should have been provided under IDEA. School district personnel should be informed that this practice will not continue in the future and under IDEA, students should be prepared to transition to BRS and the adult world with the information needed to make definitive career plans and goals.
5. BRS counselors are encouraged to contact the State Department of Education transition coordinator to discuss if school requests are reasonable and are outside of their responsibilities under transition requirements of IDEA.