

**Project SEARCH** was developed at Cincinnati Children's Hospital in 1996 to fill the need for capable, dependable staff to stock supplies in their Emergency Room. In the ensuing years, it has spread across the country -- there are now over 300 sites in 43 states and 3 other countries.

Here in Iowa, the first program began in Des Moines at Iowa Methodist Hospital in 2011. Since then, many sites have been established across the state, including the first site in eastern Iowa at UnityPoint St. Luke's Hospital in Cedar Rapids in 2014.

Funding for the Project SEARCH program is provided through UnityPoint Health – Allen Hospital in partnership with Waterloo Schools, Inclusion Connection and Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS). There is no charge to the employer.



**Project SEARCH** serves young adults (ages 18-30) with intellectual and developmental disabilities who have graduated from high school or the equivalent. The training program is nine to ten months in length with a business serving as the training site. Most Project SEARCH sites are located within a hospital but they can be done with any large business where there are a variety of jobs. Generally there are 6-12 interns enrolled in each training session. Project SEARCH interns complete three different workplace rotations over the course of the program.

**A typical day includes:**

- 8:30 to 9:30 am - Classroom instruction in employability and independent living skills.
- 9:30 am to 2:00 pm - Unpaid internship in a hospital department.
- 2:00 to 2:30 pm - Re-cap of the day.

**Project SEARCH** gives employers access to a diverse talent stream with skills that match their labor needs. When the program is complete and if a Project SEARCH graduate is hired, employers may also find that performance and retention in some high-turnover, entry-level positions will increase dramatically. Additionally, Project SEARCH is changing corporate culture and helping to add diversity to the workforce.

Project SEARCH training is conducted in a real work place with contact throughout the day with people without disabilities. Project SEARCH programs across the country have had great success in assisting individuals with disabilities to obtain employment. Cumulatively these programs have placed over 70% of their graduates into employment. This is due in large part to the employability skills they develop over the course of their training.



## Project SEARCH benefits...

- Internship training experiences
- Competitive, transferable, and marketable job skills
- Increased independence, confidence, and self-esteem
- Individualized coaching, direct instruction, and feedback daily
- Building personal and professional relationships
- Opportunity to obtain and secure employment in non-traditional jobs for people with disabilities

“Getting to know our interns as people has been a great experience. They bring a new perspective to the table.”

“My favorite thing about Project SEARCH is learning new things and meeting new friends.”

“It is amazing to watch them grow and overcome challenges.”

“I have become more independent since starting Project SEARCH.”

“I have enjoyed planning my intern’s duties and watching my staff embrace her. She has been a blessing to our unit.”

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*Finding solutions. Generating success.*



If you have questions or are interested in Project SEARCH please contact **Sally Sherwood** at (319) 235-3652.



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**Project SEARCH uses a combination of classroom instruction coupled with workplace internships to prepare individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities for competitive employment.**