



Issue BRIEF

Roadmap for Change—Linking Learning to Careers Program

The Rehabilitation Services Administration awarded five-year grants to state VR agencies to identify and demonstrate evidence-based practices for providing work-based learning experiences in integrated settings. Five state VR agencies in five states received awards: California, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, and Vermont. Mathematica is involved with the evaluations of the Maryland and Vermont demonstrations.

Linking Learning to Careers (LLC) is a five-year statewide initiative to improve the college and career readiness of high school students with disabilities. The program builds on existing vocational rehabilitation (VR) services (or “core” services), engaging students in additional (“enhanced”) services to help them make a successful transition to adulthood. All services are offered in a team-based environment, with several professionals working with each student. This brief describes LLC’s roadmap for change, or how it intends to help students achieve positive outcomes.

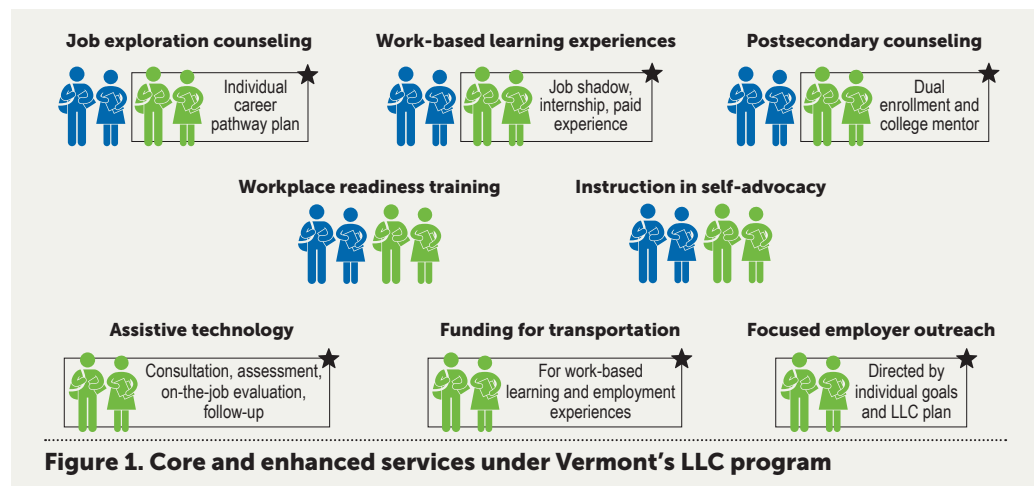
WHAT DOES LLC ADD?

Vermont’s Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) makes the following core services available to all high school students with disabilities: (1) job exploration counseling, (2) work-based learning experiences, (3) postsecondary education counseling, (4) workplace readiness training, and (5) instruction in self-advocacy. Students who apply for and are found eligible for DVR services receive additional VR services specific to their needs and goals.

In addition to these core services, LLC students receive enhanced services that provide further support and training. Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between core and enhanced services.

LLC’s enhanced services include:

- In-school career development work, including an individual career pathways plan (LLC plan)
- Enhanced work-based learning experiences, including at least one job shadow, one unpaid internship or volunteer experience, and one employer-paid job
- Additional college exploration activities including opportunities for dual enrollment and connection with a college mentor
- Dedicated assistive technology support
- Funding for transportation for work-based learning and employment experiences
- Employer outreach guided by students’ goals and LLC plans



Team member	Responsibilities	Core	Enhanced
Transition counselor (TC)	Manages DVR cases, serves as primary point of contact with school, and provides core services	✓	✓
Youth employment specialist (YES)	Helps students explore work options, provides training in work-related skills (such as resume writing and interviewing), and arranges work-based learning experiences	✓	✓
Career consultant (CC)	Works intensively with students to develop their personalized career pathways plan, partners with colleges and universities to arrange dual-enrollment opportunities, collaborates with TCs and YESs on organizing work-based learning activities, and refers students for assistive technology services		✓
Assistive technology specialist (ATS)	Provides consultation, assessment, on-the-job evaluation, delivery of assistive technology equipment, and follow-up		✓

Table 1. LLC team members

Much of the work that TCs, YESs, and CCs conduct overlaps (e.g., TCs and CCs connect students with postsecondary opportunities, and YESs and CCs connect students with work-based learning experiences), so collaboration and communication within the team are essential.

WHO PROVIDES LLC SERVICES?

LLC services are provided by teams of professionals who collaborate closely with one another. Table 1 contains descriptions of the primary roles.

WHAT ARE KEY LLC INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES?

To monitor progress of the students involved in LLC, DVR will track short-term outcomes such as completion of work-based learning experiences, completion of secondary school, dual-enrollment in postsecondary education courses, and receipt of employment-based DVR services.

WHAT ARE KEY LLC LONG-TERM OUTCOMES?

LLC services eventually end, but the effects of participating in the program are expected to endure (Figure 2). LLC participation is intended to increase employment and/or postsecondary education enrollment among students with disabilities. The program is also intended to increase students' confidence and motivation to achieve career goals.

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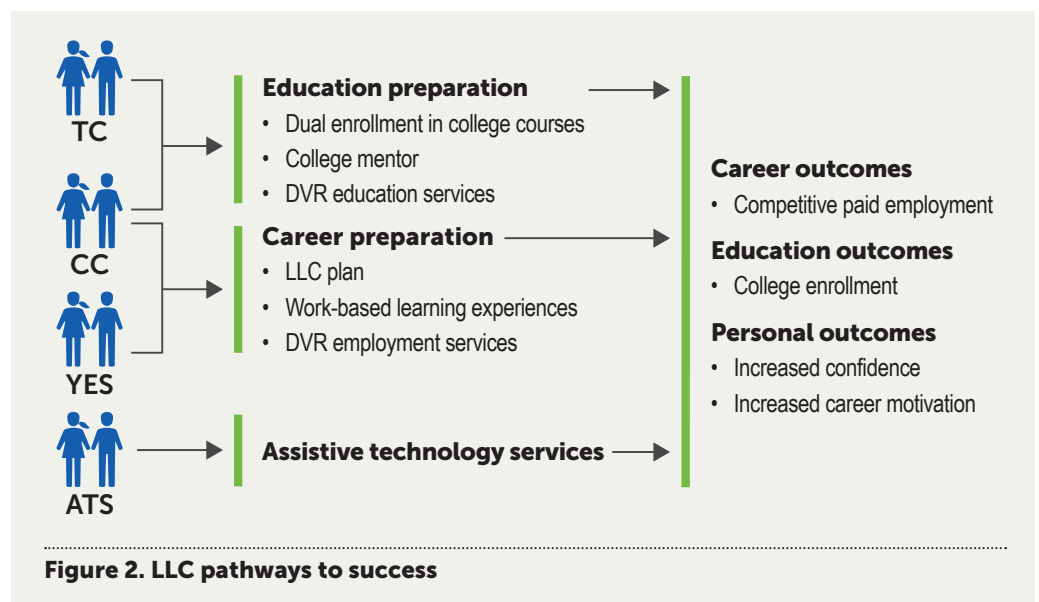


Figure 2. LLC pathways to success