



**Project SEARCH**  
**NIH**



# Employment Opportunities for Transition-Age Youth with Intellectual Disabilities

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Project SEARCH  
NIH

***Purpose of Today's Presentation:***

**To provide an overview of Project SEARCH at NIH, an innovative school-to-work transition program that provides workplace training and hiring opportunities to young adults with intellectual disabilities.**

# Why Did We Implement Project SEARCH?



Clinical Center

Aligns with NIH  
Mission



Supports  
Executive Order to  
Hire Individuals  
with Disabilities



Represents a  
Well-Organized  
Collaboration



NIH Clinical Center  
has Spectrum of  
Entry Level Hiring  
Opportunities



# NIH Clinical Center

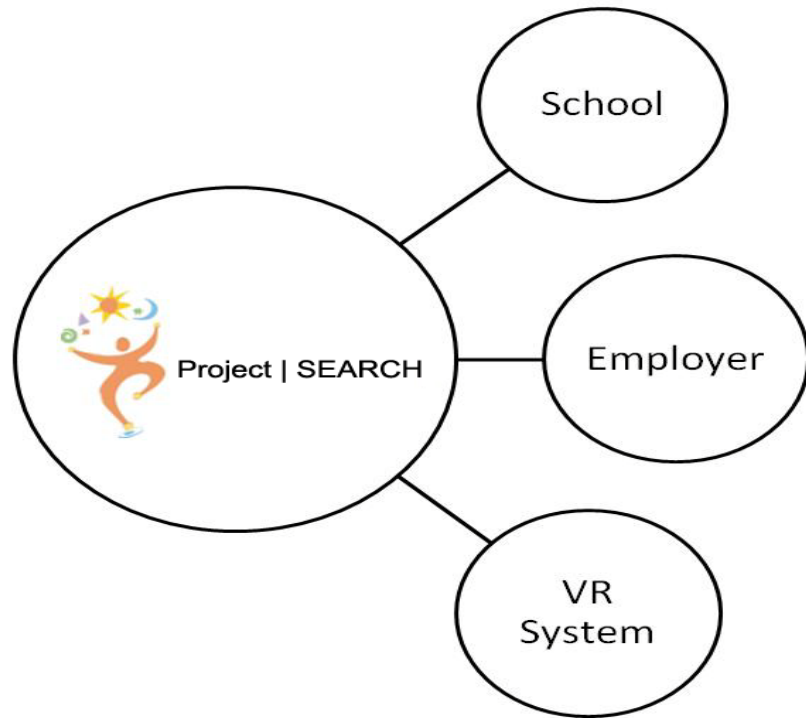
*America's Clinical Research Hospital*



*Leading the global effort in training today's  
investigators and discovering tomorrow's cures.*

# The Project SEARCH Model

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## Ivymount School and Programs

*Exceptional Programs for Exceptional Students*



*Seeking Equality, Empowerment, and Community  
for People with Developmental Disabilities*

# NIH Program Overview

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- **Provides 30-week unpaid internships for up to 12 individuals annually**
- **Each intern completes 3 ten-week rotations**
- **Demand-side model**
- **Interns matched to worksites based on skill and ability**
- **Monday-Friday: 1 hour classroom/5 hours work**
- **Full worksite immersion**

***GOAL: To generate an untapped recruitment stream for NIH and to secure paid employment outcomes for each intern...can use Schedule A for hiring!***



# Project SEARCH Nationally

- **Established in 1996 at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center**
- **Currently 200 sites across 20 states and 4 countries**
- **Sites include:**
  - **Hospitals**
  - **Banks**
  - **Federal agencies**
  - **Businesses**
  - **Universities**



# Examples of Assignments

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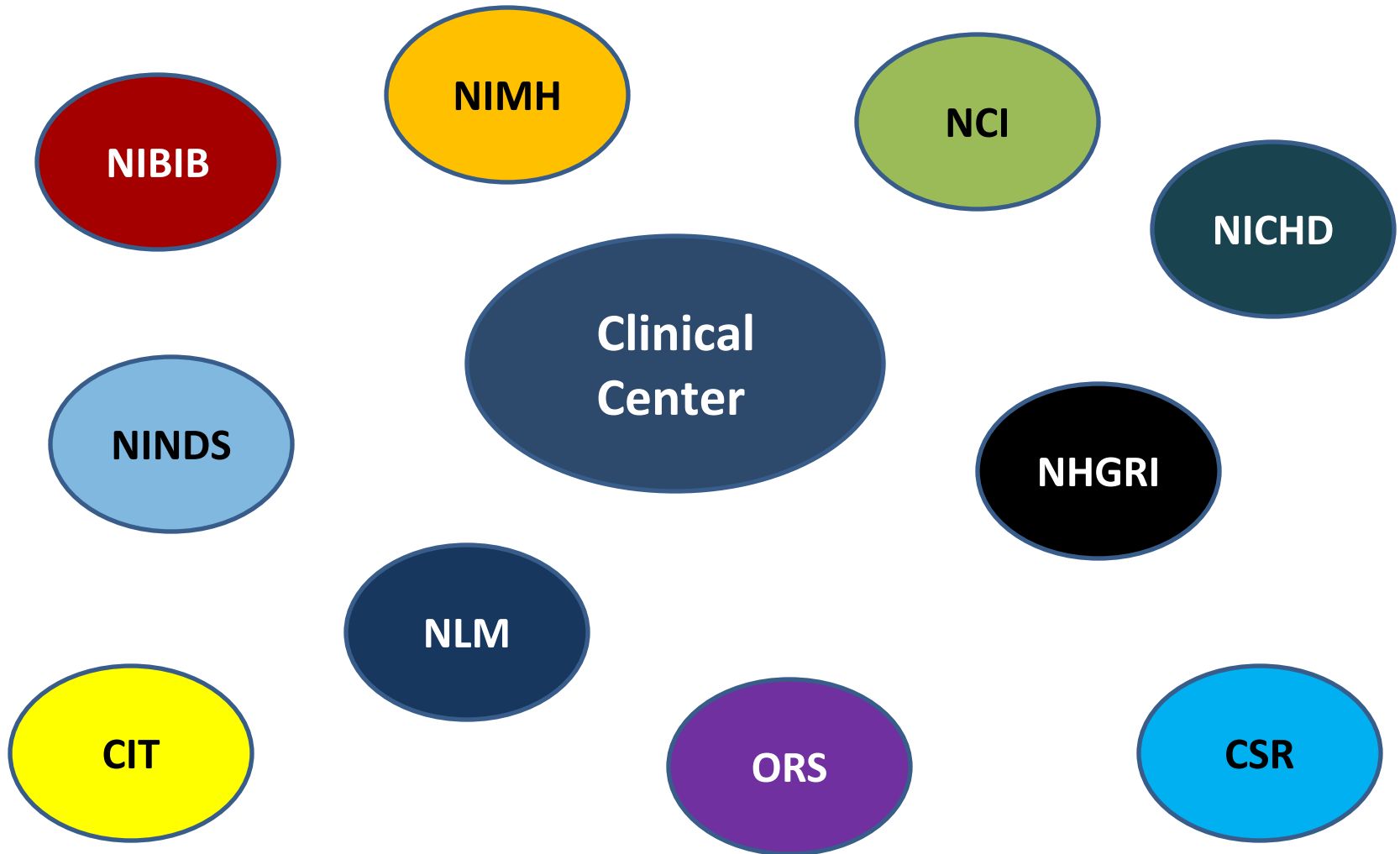
- **Patient bar-coding**
- **Hand hygiene**
- **Hospitality**
- **Pharmacy**
- **OR sterilization**
- **Automating linen inventory**
- **Data analysis on NIH alumni tracking**
- **Supply management**
- **Information technology**





# NIH Partners

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# Our Results

	Year 1 2010-2011	Year 2 2011-2012	Overall	
Interns Graduated	12	10	22	
Interns Hired at NIH	8	5	13	
Interns Hired in Community	2	1	3	
Hires Still Employed	8	6	14	--

**73% Hired**

**88 %  
Sustained**

# Significance of Project SEARCH

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- **30% lower national employment rate for individuals with disabilities** (Kesler Foundation/National Organization on Disability, 2010)
- **Employment gaps most problematic for transition-age youth (18-21) with intellectual disabilities** (Butterworth, Smith, Hall, Migliore, & Winsor, 2010)
- **Transition activities include:**
  - completing secondary education
  - obtaining meaningful employment
  - gaining financial independence
  - making autonomous decisions



# Societal Challenges

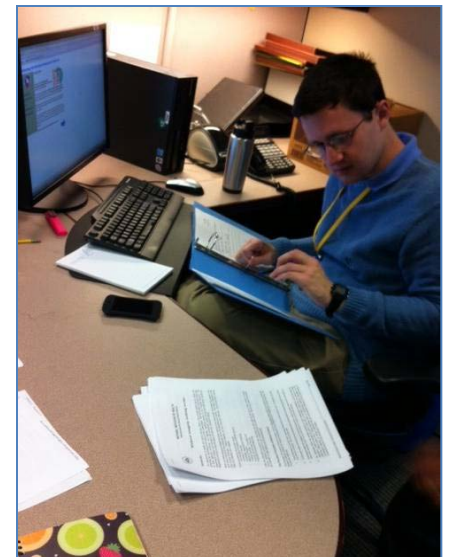
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- **Shifting the paradigm from segregated to integrated employment**
- **Increasing the notion of presumptive employability**
- **Moving from employer awareness to engagement**
- **Paying attention to factors that affect workplace assimilation**
  - perceptions of fairness of and expense of accommodations
  - Other judgments about disabled employees

# Reasonable Accommodation

## *Skill Level and Independence in:*

- Intellectual Functioning
- Social Adaptation



# Important Social Agenda

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- **Battling high unemployment levels for individuals with intellectual disabilities**
- **Overcoming stigma among employers and co-workers**
- **Understanding reasonable accommodations for individuals with ID**
- **Embracing organizational diversity**
- **Finding meaningful work**





# Meeting Business Goals

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- **Viewing businesses as vital partners in school-to-work transition planning**
- **Identifying important work that needs to be done**
- **Re-engineering the work so it can be accomplished**
- **Finding willing internal partners**
- **Understanding the value equation**
- **Managing organizational change**

# Ingredients for Success

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- **Collaboration across organizational boundaries**
- **Strong internal project manager**
- **Leadership support**
- **Employee accountability**
- **Coworker acceptance**
- **Continual learning**
- **Communication plan**



# Key Lessons

- **To reject negative stereotypes**
- **A deeper understanding of the potential contributions of intellectually disabled people in organizations**
- **An appreciation of the remarkable skills of this diverse group of individuals**



# Next Steps

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- **Address sustainable employment**
- **Increase further participation within NIH**
- **Identify additional job sites**





# 2010-2011 Project SEARCH-NIH Interns





# 2011-2012 Project SEARCH-NIH Interns





# 2012-2013 Project SEARCH-NIH Interns

