Summer Youth Vocational Program (SYVP) 2027 – Frequently Asked Questions for VR Counselors

Program Basics

When does SYVP take place?

SYVP runs from **July 5 – July 30, 2027**, with an option for participants to add **two additional weeks** for a traditional CVRP experience.

Where is the program located?

Helen Keller National Center (HKNC) in **Sands Point, NY**, a quiet suburban area on Long Island.

What is the application deadline?

Applications are due by **May 21, 2027**.

How many students can participate?

SYVP accommodates **up to 11 participants**.

What are the age requirements?

Participants must be **16–24 years old**.

Eligibility & VR Alignment

Who is an appropriate candidate for SYVP?

Transition-age youth who are:

- DeafBlind or have combined hearing/vision loss
- Eligible for VR or Pre-ETS services
- Interested in vocational exploration, independence, and work experience

How does SYVP align with Pre-ETS categories?

SYVP provides structured services in all five required areas:

- Job Exploration
- Work-Based Learning Experiences
- Workplace Readiness Training
- Instruction in Self-Advocacy
- Counseling on Postsecondary Options

Program Components

What vocational experiences are offered?

Participants engage in **real-world job tasks** with job coach support, focusing on:

- Time management
- Workplace etiquette
- Following schedules
- Task completion and responsibility

What other training is included?

SYVP includes:

- **STEAM projects:** problem-solving, collaboration, and technical exploration
- **Leadership workshops:** motivational speakers and DeafBlind mentors
- **Adaptive recreation:** Outdoor education programming and adaptive surfing
- **Independent living:** scheduling, transportation, self-management
- **Technology & accessibility:** AT exploration, accessible design, tactile graphics, 3D printing

Housing & Campus Life

What is the residential setup?

Participants stay in HKNC's residence building, featuring:

- **Private rooms**
- A separate space from training facilities
- 24/7 staffing, including overnight awake staff

Are there evening or weekend activities?

Yes. HKNC offers:

- Community outings
- Social events
- Recreational activities tailored to participant interests

Outcomes & Documentation

What skills do participants gain?

Participants typically leave with measurable growth in:

- Vocational interests & skill strengths
- Communication and self-advocacy
- Workplace readiness and professional behavior
- Independent living and travel skills
- Technology proficiency

What documentation does HKNC provide to VR agencies?

VR counselors receive:

- End-of-program report detailing Pre-ETS skill development

Do participants build employment materials?

Yes. Participants complete:

- A resume
- Interview practice
- A work portfolio (where appropriate)

Special Program Elements

What is Adaptive Surfing and why is it included?

Adaptive surfing helps participants build:

- Executive functioning
- Problem-solving
- Confidence & emotional regulation
- Communication & teamwork, skills directly transferable to employment settings

What Sort of outdoor education and why?

We will partner with specialists to include adaptive recreation and leadership programming that provides:

- Exposure to careers in adaptive sports, education, and wellness
- Opportunities to co-lead activities
- Hands-on experience with equipment, planning, and facilitating recreation programs

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Referral & Contact Information

How do VR counselors refer a participant?

Contact the HKNC Regional Representative for your state.