# Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manual C-1300: Transition Services for Students and Youth with Disabilities

Revised January 2, 2019

### C-1305-14: Student HireAbility Navigator Program

The Student HireAbility Navigator program is a part of the expansion of the Pathways to Careers Initiative (PCI) approved by the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) in 2017. The role of the Student HireAbility Navigator is to create strong partnerships between vocational rehabilitation (VR) Workforce Solutions offices, independent school districts (ISDs), community organizations, employers, and others to expand and improve access to employment and training services and to increase employment opportunities for students with disabilities.

The Student HireAbility Navigators are employees of the Local Workforce Development Board (Board) or Board contractor. There will be one Student HireAbility Navigator in each of the 22 small and midsize Board local workforce development areas (workforce areas), and two Student HireAbility Navigators for each of the six large Board workforce areas. The six large Boards are: Greater Dallas, Tarrant County, North Central Texas, Gulf Coast, Alamo, and Lower Rio Grande Valley. Each Student HireAbility Navigator serves as a resource in the workforce area to support, expand, and enhance the provision of preemployment transition services (Pre-ETS) that are provided by VR as well as by other partners and programs in the workforce area.

The Student HireAbility Navigators perform duties and provide deliverables in the following three areas:

* Capacity building and systems development
* Partnering and collaboration
* Informing and engaging employers

The goal of the activities within the three areas is to increase the likelihood that students with disabilities achieve independence and inclusion in communities and competitive integrated workplaces, as well as successful participation in postsecondary education experiences. If the Student HireAbility Navigator is not a Board staff member, he or she may assist with some direct services to students with disabilities as appropriate, although that is not the Student HireAbility Navigator’s primary role. The primary role and responsibility of the Student HireAbility Navigator is not direct service delivery, but rather the planning, coordination, promotion, and development of systemic and collaborative strategies that result in the provision of quality Pre-ETS for students with disabilities in the workforce area.

Examples of the tasks performed by Student HireAbility Navigators include, but are not limited to:

* Creating a three-year action plan for the workforce area in consultation with the Board and VR offices, ISDs, and other community partners;
* Identifying the Pre-ETS resources available to students with disabilities in the workforce area;
* Promoting the use of career exploration, postsecondary education planning, and work-readiness tools available through TWC's Labor Market and Career Information department;
* Developing and/or disseminating information and resources to Workforce Solutions offices, VR offices, local education agencies, employers, community partners, parents, and students with disabilities;
* Developing effective and innovative strategies to improve the transition to postsecondary activities of students who are members of traditionally unserved and underserved populations (for example, homeschooled students) and expanding and enhancing the provision of Pre-ETS;
* Developing and coordinating events, campaigns, and other activities to increase and foster student and family awareness of and access to Pre-ETS;
* Providing information, training, and technical assistance to Workforce Solutions offices, VR offices, school districts, education service centers, community partners, and employers regarding resources and activities available to assist students with disabilities to transition successfully to postsecondary education/or employment;
* Providing training and/or resources to increase employers' awareness of disability etiquette and accommodations for students with disabilities; and
* Collaborating and serving as points of contact with partner agencies to develop work- based learning opportunities for students with disabilities, including internships, summer employment (for example, the Summer Earn and Learn program), pre-apprenticeships, and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year.

The Student HireAbility Navigator’s role is intended to supplement the work done by VR counselors and staff, not replace it. Examples of how the two entities may work together may include:

* Providing information regarding the pre-employment transition services available to students with disabilities within the workforce development area;
* Supporting the Student HireAbility Navigator‘s efforts to develop and sustain relationships with the school districts and Education Service Centers in the workforce development area; and
* Contributing information needed for the development of the three-year action plan.

Refer to [Board VR Requirements Manual Chapter 3: Student HireAbility Navigator Program](http://www.twc.state.tx.us/partners/board-vr-requirements/student-hireability-navigator%22%20%5Cl%20%22s03.1) for information about the roles and responsibilities of Boards and VR staff.