# Board VR Requirements Chapter 3: Student HireAbility Navigator Program

**Revisions will take effect on September 19, 2018.**

## 3.1 Introduction

The Student HireAbility Navigator program establishes a mechanism by which pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) are provided to students with disabilities, as required under Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which amended the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act). The Student HireAbility Navigator program is a statewide strategy to improve and increase services to students with disabilities.

WIOA requires States to reserve and expend fifteen percent (15%) of the federal portion of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Basic Grant allotment for the provision of pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities. The list of required pre-employment transition services is listed in Section 3.5.1.2 of this chapter.

A student with a disability must meet the following criteria:

* The student must be between 14 and 22 years of age, and must be less than 22 years of age as of September 1 of the previous year;
* The student is eligible for and receiving special education or related services under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or is an individual with a disability for purposes of §504 of the Rehabilitation Act; and
* The student is in an educational program, including:
  + secondary education;
  + nontraditional or alternative secondary education programs, including home schooling;
  + postsecondary education programs; and
  + other recognized educational programs, such as those offered through the juvenile justice system.

TWC has previously approved Pathways to Careers Initiative (PCI) to expand opportunities for Texas students with disabilities to receive pre-employment transition services. PCI also complements and advances the Tri-Agency initiative by TWC, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the Texas Education Agency (TEA) by providing applied learning opportunities through internships and work experiences, ensuring that students have better information about career pathways to enable informed choices, and increasing the number of Texas students who complete a postsecondary degree or credential.

To build on these existing pre-employment transition services and initiatives, and most effectively and efficiently serve students with disabilities, TWC will expand systemic capacity within the Texas Workforce Solutions system by establishing partnerships and developing innovative and evidence-based approaches to service delivery. The Student HireAbility Navigator program is designed to support this capacity building priority.

The Student HireAbility Navigator program is based on TWC's prior successful Texas Disability Navigator initiative. It will foster the development of innovative and effective approaches to service delivery and ensure strong coordination between TWC VR and independent school districts (ISDs), as well as with the other WIOA core programs.

## 3.2 Student HireAbility Navigator Role

Like the Texas Disability Navigator initiative, the role of Student HireAbility Navigators is to improve access to employment and training services and increase employment opportunities for job seekers with disabilities. However, the Student HireAbility Navigator program will focus exclusively on services for students with disabilities who are in the early phases of preparing for transition to postsecondary education and employment. Each Student HireAbility Navigator serves as a resource in the workforce development area to support, expand, and enhance the provision of pre-employment transition services that are provided by VR as well as by the other partners and programs in the workforce development area.

Navigators perform duties and provide deliverables in the following three focus areas:

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

The overarching goal of the activities within the three focus areas is to increase the likelihood of students' independence and inclusion in communities and competitive integrated workplaces, and their successful participation in postsecondary education experiences.

The Student HireAbility Navigators achieve this goal through execution of the deliverables listed in Section 3.5 of this chapter. Although not their primary role, Student HireAbility Navigators may assist with some direct services to students with disabilities as appropriate, but only if the Student HireAbility Navigator is not a Board staff member. It is important to emphasize that the primary role and responsibility of the Student HireAbility Navigator is not direct service delivery, but the development, planning, coordination, and promotion of systemic and collaborative strategies that result in the provision of quality pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities in the workforce development area.

## 3.3 Student HireAbility Navigator Structure

TWC will execute a contract with each Local Workforce Board for the Student HireAbility Navigator program. This chapter describes the scope of work, responsibilities, and deliverables of the Student HireAbility Navigator Program.

TWC will pay the Board the amount specified in Section 3.6.1.1 of this chapter for each Student HireAbility Navigator. TWC will pay for one Student HireAbility Navigator in each of the 22 small and mid-sized Board areas, and two Student HireAbility Navigators for each of the 6 large Board areas. (See also Section 3.6 Payment Structure and Billing). The 6 large Boards are Dallas, Tarrant, North Central, Gulf Coast, Alamo and Lower Rio. These 6 Board areas have a concentration of at least 5% of all students with disabilities in Texas between the ages of 14 and 22\* and, therefore, need for the additional Student HireAbility Navigator.

\*Population Age 14-22 is based on U.S. Census disability estimates and Texas State Data Center population estimates.

The Student HireAbility Navigator may be Board staff or the Board may subcontract the position. Boards with funding for two positions may use Board staff, subcontract or use both approaches to fill the positions.

Student HireAbility Navigators must meet the minimum qualifications in Section 3.4.

## 3.4 Student HireAbility Navigator Qualifications

### 3.4.1 Education

3.4.1.1 Graduation from an accredited four-year college or university.

3.4.1.2 One additional year of full-time qualifying experience may be substituted for each year (30 semester hours) of the required education.

### 3.4.2 Experience

3.4.2.1 Four years of full-time work experience.

3.4.2.2 Work experience in the fields of education, vocational rehabilitation, workforce development programs, human services programs, or non-profit organizations serving students or persons with disabilities is preferred.

3.4.2.3 A master's degree from an accredited college or university may be substituted for two years of the required qualifying experience.

## 3.5 Student HireAbility Navigator Program Responsibilities and Deliverables

### 3.5.1 Student HireAbility Navigator Duties and Responsibilities

#### 3.5.1.1 Student HireAbility Navigator Plan Development and Submittal

1. In consultation with the local VR offices in the workforce development area, identify the pre-employment transition services available to students with disabilities in the workforce development area.
2. Convene partners, including school districts and Education Service Centers, to discuss successful strategies and services, gaps, and opportunities for collaboration to improve the quality and/or availability of pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities.
3. In consultation with the Board and the VR offices in the workforce development area, school districts, and other community partners, create a three-year action plan to achieve the deliverables in Sections 3.5.1.2 – 3.5.1.4.
4. The plan must include goals, strategies, deliverables, accountable parties and timelines for each deliverable listed in Sections 3.5.1.2 – 3.5.1.4.
5. The Board’s completed Student HireAbility Navigator Plan must be submitted to TWC within six months of the initial contract effective date or, no later than six months after the initial hire date of the Student HireAbility Navigator, whichever Is later. For Boards with two Student HireAbility Navigators, the hire date is that of the first Navigator hired. Plans must be submitted to TWC at the following email address: [studentnavigators@twc.state.tx.us](mailto:studentnavigators@twc.state.tx.us). After submission of the initial Student HireAbility Navigator Plan, plan updates are to be submitted at least annually as part of the Board’s quarterly report.
6. TWC VR staff will review and accept the Student HireAbility Navigator Plan within 30 days of submission and may request additional detail or revision prior to final acceptance of this deliverable.

#### 3.5.1.2 Capacity Building and Systems Development Responsibilities

1. Increase community and system awareness of the resources and activities available to students with disabilities in the following five pre-employment transition services:
   1. job (career) exploration counseling;
   2. work-based learning experiences, which may include in school or after school opportunities, or experience outside the traditional school setting (including internships), provided in an integrated environment to the maximum extent possible;
   3. counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education;
   4. workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living; and
   5. instruction in self-advocacy, which may include peer mentoring.
2. Develop and sustain relationships with the school districts and Education Service Centers in the workforce development area to promote awareness and availability of pre-employment transition services and Workforce Solutions resources to schools, parents, and students.
3. Promote the use of career exploration, postsecondary education planning, and work readiness tools available through TWC's Labor Market and Career Information Department.
4. In consultation with Workforce Solutions Offices, local VR offices, local education agencies, parents and students with disabilities, employers, and community partners, develop effective and innovative strategies to:
   1. Improve the transition to postsecondary activities of students who are members of traditionally unserved and underserved populations.
   2. Expand or enhance the provision of the five required pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities in the workforce development area
5. Coordinate and/or monitor implementation of the strategies developed in Subsection D, above.
6. Develop and/or disseminate information and resources to Workforce Solutions Offices, local VR offices, local education agencies, employers, community partners, parents, and students.

#### 3.5.1.3 Partnerships and Collaboration Responsibilities

1. Convene and/or attend workgroups, committees, coalitions, and cross-agency teams to foster system and community coordination of pre-employment transition services and activities for students with disabilities.
2. Provide information, training, and technical assistance to Workforce Solutions Offices, local 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, employment, or both.
3. Develop and coordinate events, campaigns, and other activities to increase and foster student and family awareness of and access to pre-employment transition services provided by local VR offices, school districts, Education Service Centers, other Workforce Solutions programs, and community partners and resources.

#### 3.5.1.4 Responsibilities to Inform and Engage Employers

In consultation and coordination with local VR offices, and other Board and Board contractor staff, such as business services staff:

1. Organize events and activities to increase employers' understanding of the abilities of students with disabilities.
2. Provide training and/or resources to increase employers' awareness of disability etiquette and accommodations for students with disabilities.
3. Collaborate with partner agencies to develop work- based learning opportunities for students with disabilities, including internships, summer employment, other employment opportunities available throughout the school year, and apprenticeships.

#### 3.5.1.5 Additional Duties and Responsibilities

1. The Student HireAbility Navigator must ensure that state and/or local VR staff receive the data and information necessary to fulfill federal reporting requirements regarding the provision of pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities that occur as a direct result of the deliverables in Section 3.5 of this chapter.
2. The Student HireAbility Navigator must comply with federal and state requirements regarding confidentiality of student data, as applicable to each of the deliverables in Section 3.5 of this chapter.
3. The Student HireAbility Navigator must ensure that resources and materials developed for the deliverables in Section 3.5 are available in accessible formats for students who use screen reader software, screen magnification software, large print, and Braille.
4. The Student HireAbility Navigator must ensure that reasonable accommodations are available and provided as requested for activities associated with the deliverables in Section 3.5.
5. The Student HireAbility Navigator must participate in meetings called by TWC for training, information sharing, and Student HireAbility Navigator Program development and improvement.

### 3.5.2 Board Responsibilities

#### 3.5.2.1 Quarterly Deliverables Report Submittal

1. Each Board shall submit the Student HireAbility Navigator Program Quarterly Deliverables Report. The first quarterly report is due on June 15, 2018. Thereafter reports will be due the 15th of September, December, March, and June of each year.
2. Payment will be made on a quarterly basis, contingent upon TWC receipt and acceptance of the Quarterly Deliverables Reports by the Student HireAbility Navigator.
3. TWC will provide instructions at least 30 days prior to the due date for submission of the first Quarterly Deliverables Report to ensure that the report includes necessary data and information about the Navigator's deliverables. As necessary, TWC will provide revised instructions 30 days prior to the due date for submission of subsequent quarterly reports.
4. The Quarterly Deliverables Report must be submitted using the Student HireAbility Navigator Initiative Quarterly Deliverables Report template provided by TWC.
5. TWC will review and accept the Quarterly Deliverables Report within two weeks of submission. Acceptance within two weeks is contingent upon submission of a complete report and TWC may request additional detail or revision prior to final acceptance of the deliverable.
6. The Quarterly Deliverables Report must be submitted to the following email address: studentnavigators@twc.state.tx.us
7. Boards must retain documentation sufficient to demonstrate completion of each deliverable and must make that documentation available to TWC upon request.

#### 3.5.2.2 Confidentiality of Student Data

The Board must retain a signed statement of acknowledgement from each Student HireAbility Navigator regarding compliance with federal and state requirements regarding confidentiality of student data, as applicable to each of the deliverables in Section 3.5 of this chapter.

## 3.6 Payment Structure and Billing

### 3.6.1 Payment Structure

3.6.1.1 For each Student HireAbility Navigator hired by a Board to fulfill the requirements of this Chapter, TWC will pay a Board up to $100,000 for a 12-month contract term as further described in this section. No additional amounts will be paid by TWC to a Board for the salary, benefits, operating, oversight costs, or other costs necessary to fulfill the requirements of this chapter.

3.6.1.2 A Board will receive multiple purchase orders from TWC. The first purchase order will cover the period March 1, 2018, through August 31, 2018 (which is the end of the state fiscal year). A second purchase order will cover the period September 1, 2018, through August 31, 2019 (which is both the end of the initial contract period, and the end of the state fiscal year). If TWC extends the project, it may issue one or more additional purchase orders for future terms.

3.6.1.3 TWC will make an advance payment at the beginning of the contract if it determines it is necessary and in the best interest of the state to provide an advance payment to support Program activities. The advance payment will apply toward the total amount finally determined to have been earned by the Board at the end of the first purchase order (August 31, 2018). If the amount finally determined to have been earned by the Board at the end of the first purchase order is less than total payments made by TWC (including the advance payment), TWC will recoup unearned amounts at that time, such as through a payment offset or by the Board's submission of payment with a TWC Cash Remittance Report.

3.6.1.4 If TWC determines that a second advance is justified at the beginning of the second purchase order period, TWC will make a separate advance payment at that time. That advance will be reconciled in a like manner to the reconciliation process described in Section 3.6.1.3 at the end of the second purchase order period (August 31, 2019).

3.6.1.5 An advance payment will not exceed $25,000 per Student HireAbility Navigator that TWC requires the Board to hire under the contract.

3.6.1.6 With exception of advance payment process described in this section, a Board will invoice TWC quarterly. The amount owed each quarter will be based on the number of days that the Board employed a Student HireAbility Navigator to fulfill the requirements of this chapter during that quarter. Payment will accrue at a rate of $25,000 per quarter, per Navigator. Payment for quarters during which a Student HireAbility Navigator was not employed for the full quarter will be prorated based on the number of days that the Navigator was employed for that purpose during that quarter.

3.6.1.7 TWC payment of quarterly invoices is contingent upon TWC receipt and acceptance of the Quarterly Deliverables Reports described in Section 3.5.2.1.

3.6.1.8 For Boards required to hire more than one Student HireAbility Navigator, the TWC payment to the Board of up to $100,000 per Student HireAbility Navigator per year does not establish a requirement that the amounts paid to a Board's Student HireAbility Navigators be equal.

3.6.1.9 Where TWC determines that the quality of work provided by a Student HireAbility Navigator, as demonstrated by the three-year plan and Quarterly Deliverables Reports described in this chapter, or by other information available to TWC, does not fulfill the requirements of this chapter, TWC may require such actions as it and the Board agree necessary to achieve the required results.

### 3.6.2 Billing

3.6.2.1 A Board requiring an advance payment under the first purchase order must invoice TWC for the advance no later than April 30, 2018. TWC will reconcile the advance at the end of that purchase order, August 31, 2018, as described in Section 3.6.1.3.

3.6.2.2 A Board requiring an advance payment under the second purchase order must invoice TWC for the advance between September 1, 2018, and November 30, 2018. TWC will reconcile the advance at the end of that purchase order, August 31, 2019, as described in Section 3.6.1.4.

3.6.2.3 For regular payments, a Board will invoice TWC quarterly, at the rate described in Section 3.6.1.6.

3.6.2.4 The quarterly invoice will be remitted to TWC no earlier than the Board's submission of the Quarterly Deliverables Report required in Section 3.5.2.1.A. In the first year of this Program, the first invoice will be for the quarter ending May 31, 2018.

3.6.2.5 To invoice TWC, including an invoice for an advance payment, a Board will e-mail the TWC Student HireAbility Navigator Invoice to: [LWDB\_VR\_Invoice@twc.state.tx.us](mailto:LWDB_VR_Invoice@twc.state.tx.us).

3.6.2.6 TWC will make payment in accordance with the Texas Prompt Payment Act, upon receipt of complete, timely submitted invoices and upon TWC receipt and acceptance of the Board's Quarterly Report.

3.6.2.7 TWC will make payment by direct deposit.