

Since 2000, the **HEATH Resource Center** has served as a national clearinghouse on postsecondary education for individuals with disabilities, managed by **The George Washington University Graduate School of Education and Human Development**. Now, **The HSC Foundation** has partnered with the George Washington University to expand the content of this resource and to designate it as the official site of The HSC Foundation's **National Youth Transitions Center**.

<http://www.hscfoundation.org/aboutus/publications/NYTCbrochure.pdf>

## Using Individualized Learning Plans to Increase College and Career Readiness

Mindy Larson, Senior Program Associate,

*National Collaborative on Workforce & Disability at the Institute for Educational Leadership's Center for Workforce Development*

College and career exploration and planning play a critical role in preparing all students for life beyond high school while also creating personalized learning opportunities that increase students' engagement and success in school. Individualized learning plans (ILPs) are one strategy increasingly used by schools to engage secondary students in a process of defining their personal interests, goals, and plans for careers, postsecondary education, and life after high school. Currently, 36 states and the District of Columbia require or encourage ILPs for secondary students. (See the list of states online at: <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/sites/default/files/ILP-Usage-by-State-October-2013.pdf>.)

The National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth) recently completed a multi-year research project examining how states are using ILPs including whether and how students with disabilities are participating. With support from the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy, NCWD/Youth sought to learn how ILPs may be considered a promising strategy for developing college and career readiness for all students.

Earlier this year, NCWD/Youth released the policy brief, [Using Individualized Learning Plans to Produce College and Career Ready High School Graduates](#), which summarizes findings and recommendations from its research. The policy brief recommends actions for a diversity of stakeholders including state officials, district/school officials, educators, organizations interested in supporting family engagement in schools, special education administrators and support organizations, national organizations, disability organizations, and Federal officials. Read or download the policy brief online at: <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/ilp/produce-college-and-career-ready-high-school-graduates>. This article highlights some of the key research findings as well as recommendations for disability advocates and organizations.

### ***What is an individualized learning plan (ILP)?***

An individualized learning plan (ILP) is both a document and a process that secondary students use – with support from school counselors, teachers, and parents – to define their career goals and postsecondary plans in order to inform students’ decisions about their courses and activities throughout high school.

States call ILPs by different names such as Student Success Plan, Individual Graduation Plan, Education and Career Plan, Career and Academic Plan, and High School and Beyond Plan. States’ purposes for adopting an ILP for all students also vary. These purposes include: ensuring students and families understand high school graduation requirements and plan the students’ high school courses accordingly; personalizing learning; and increasing students’ college and career readiness.

States that currently have an ILP requirement or initiative are in various stages of implementation. To learn more about how states and schools are using ILPs, NCWD/Youth conducted longitudinal research with a study group of 14 schools in four states (Louisiana, New Mexico, South Carolina, and Washington) (Phelps, Durham & Wills, 2011). This included focus group discussions, interviews, and surveys with a range of stakeholders including students, families, and school personnel. In addition, NCWD/Youth interviewed state and local district officials in the four study group states as well as 9 other states identified as having promising ILP policies and resources (Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Rhode Island, and West Virginia) (Wills, Solberg, vanBruinswaardt & Paine, in press).

Based on its research of practices across states, NCWD/Youth developed the following working definition of a quality individualized learning plan. A quality ILP is:

- A document consisting of: (a) course taking and post-secondary plans aligned to career goals; and (b) documentation of the range of college and career readiness skills the student has developed.
- A process that enhances the relevance of school and out-of-school learning opportunities, and provides the student access to career development opportunities that incorporate self-exploration, career exploration, and career planning and management skill building activities (Solberg, Phelps, Haakenson, Durham & Timmons, 2012).

NCWD/Youth's ILP Fact Sheet provides a fuller description: <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/fact-sheet/individualized-learning-plan>. Another resource for learning more about ILP policies and implementation strategies is the online guide, [Promoting Quality Individualized Learning Plans: A "How to" Guide Focused on the High School Years](http://www.ncwd-youth.info/ilp/how-to-guide), available at: <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/ilp/how-to-guide>.

### ***Should ILPs be considered a promising strategy for developing college and career readiness?***

NCWD/Youth's research set out to answer this question and its conclusion is, Yes, ILPs should be considered a promising strategy **when** the ILPs:

- Are implemented beginning in middle school and continue through and beyond high school graduation.
- Include using web-based career information systems that incorporate ILPs as an ePortfolio. An ePortfolio is a feature often found in online career information systems that allows the student to catalogue, store, and share various ILP and career development activities.
- Include family engagement activities.
- Incorporate quality career development opportunities that include: (a) self-exploration of interests, values, and skills; (b) career exploration of various career options and the post-secondary pathways needed to reach those careers; (c) developing career planning and management skills; and, (d) engaging in work-based learning and developing career readiness skills (e.g., social-emotional learning, soft skills, leadership skills, etc).

- Promote personalized learning by: (a) including advisory periods in the weekly class schedule to allow time for ILP activities; and (b) ensuring that students have at least one adult advisor they stay with throughout the high school years.

***Are students with disabilities participating in ILPs and should these plans also be considered a promising strategy for increasing their college and career readiness?***

NCWD/Youth's research indicates that in most, but not all, states that mandate ILPs, ILPs apply to all students. Some states, however, excuse students with significant disabilities from engaging in ILP activities because assessment tools and ILP activities are perceived as inaccessible to these students.

Some state and district officials report that engaging in ILPs may increase the likelihood that students with disabilities receive a regular diploma and are more effectively prepared for their post-school transition (Wills, Solberg, vanBruinswaardt & Paine, in press). These perceptions are speculative at this point but worthy of deeper study in order to provide solid evidence that students with disabilities benefit from quality ILP implementation.

NCWD/Youth concludes that ILPs should be considered a promising strategy for students with disabilities when the following conditions are met:

- General and special education officials and educators work together to ensure accessibility of ILP resources and activities.
- ILP implementation begins in middle school and engages families in the process so that students and families can be stronger advocates in designing the transition plan section of their IEP and in having the accommodations they view as necessary to achieving future career goals put in place.
- Staff responsible for ILPs and IEPs collaborate and are equipped with knowledge and skills to assist students in developing goals and identifying skills, interests, and accommodation-related needs in both plans.

For a more in-depth analysis of the experiences of students with disabilities in the ILP study group, see the research article, ["Quality Learning Experiences, Self-Determination, and Academic Success: A Path Analytic Study Among Youth with Disabilities"](#) published in the journal, *Career Development & Transition for Exceptional Individuals*.

### ***How does the individualized learning plan (ILP) connect to the Individualized Education Program (IEP) transition plan?***

While both IEPs and ILPs personalize the education process, there are some key differences. First, ILPs may engage students with disabilities and their families in transition planning starting well before IDEA's age 16 requirement. The grade level at which students start developing an ILP varies by state. Some states start using the ILP as early as 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> grade while others begin the process in 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> grade as preparation for entering high school. Starting transition planning in high school is seen by many as "too late" to effectively support students with disabilities with navigating the various support systems and opportunities needed to make a successful transition (U. S. Government Accountability Office, 2012).

Second, ILPs engage students in transition planning in a more in-depth fashion than is often possible with a single annual IEP meeting. When implemented with quality, the ILP engages students in assessing their interests and skills, exploring career and postsecondary options, and articulating personal goals related to careers and postsecondary education. Participating in this process through the ILP prepares the student and his/her family for the IEP transition planning discussion.

Special education officials and educators who perceived ILPs as valuable reported that ILPs contribute to making IEP meetings more efficient and improved the overall quality of the IEP meetings. The quality was improved because students and their families were able to be stronger advocates for ensuring that academic accommodations were in place to support the course plans identified in the ILP that align with their career goals. Students and families were also able to advocate for work-based learning opportunities that help them develop the employability skills needed to support their desired career and life goals.

Recently, some states have posted affirmative policy language that clearly articulates the value of ILPs in supporting the IEP process. A growing number of states have developed multiple technical assistance tools for use in districts and schools to assist IEP teams in strategically embedding ILP plans directly into IEP processes and to create alignment between the two plans.

### ***What can disability advocates and organizations do to support the ILP as a strategy for developing college and career readiness among students with disabilities?***

Disability advocates and organizations have an important role to play in promoting access and inclusion for students with disabilities. Currently, many states exempt students with significant disabilities from participating in ILPs (Social Dynamics, 2011; Wills, Solberg, vanBruinswaardt & Paine, in press). There are considerable variations within the states regarding the criteria for which, if any,

students will be held exempt from participation and parental sign off is normally required for this to occur. The percentage of students being excluded is unknown, and the lack of a common definition for what constitutes “significantly disabled” adds to the challenge. It is understood that students with significant disabilities represent a low incidence group composed of those with substantive cognitive, emotional, and/or significant physical challenges. Normally these students spend 50 percent or more of the school day in resource rooms and often stay in the public education system through the extended year programs that generally end at age 21 (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). Interviews with state officials indicate that some states use academic assessments at the 8th grade to determine whether a student must participate in the ILP process or whether they will be excluded.

One factor contributing to this exclusion of students with significant disabilities is a lack of accessible career development materials and web-based career information systems technology (Wills, Solberg, vanBruinswaardt & Paine, in press). While remarkable strides have been made over the last decade in improving access to technology for students with disabilities, the move from innovation to application has been slow. Without major accommodations, students with significant disabilities are often unable to complete available assessments needed to engage in self-exploration or career exploration activities. While many may receive work-based learning opportunities, these experiences need to be intentionally designed to support the student’s interests and skills in order to effectively prepare them with the career planning and management skills needed for successful post-school transitions (Joshi, Bouck & Maeda, 2012). The inaccessibility of tools and activities used for self-exploration and career exploration inhibit educators’ ability to tailor work-based learning opportunities to the individual student.

Based upon a history of local control, states traditionally have not provided transition-related curricula and instructional materials. However, this tradition is starting to change, evidenced by the implementation of common core state standards in courses required for graduation. States may therefore seize this opportunity to develop accessible and inclusive curricula for this population.

Disability advocates and organizations can assist in addressing these issues by advocating for the following actions within states and school districts that use ILPs:

- Districts and schools should convene a task force focused on designing accommodations for ILP activities and work-based learning opportunities to create quality transition support systems that allow students with significant disabilities to effectively prepare for post-high school education and career opportunities.

- Districts and schools should ensure that career development activities and web-based online career information systems adhere to universal design principles to ensure accessibility for all students.
- States and districts should reexamine any ILP exclusion policies and promote strategies to ensure that all students have access to ILP activities.
- State officials should consider designing demonstration projects for the purpose of evaluating whether students in resource rooms and extended year programs improve their college and career readiness outcomes through participation in ILPs.
- State education officials should consult with local special educators and family advocacy organizations to identify potential barriers that may impede some students' successful participation in ILPs (e.g., assessment instruments to determine eligibility to participate, capacity to access materials required to develop ePortfolios, or limiting their access to work-based learning opportunities). They should develop and implement a set of strategies to eliminate such impediments.
- States should develop tools to assist districts and schools to promote coordination and alignment between ILP and IEP plans and processes. The technical assistance tools should include examples of how to ensure ILP generated materials are accessible and identify strategies for building upon ILP generated career goals, course taking plans, and career planning and management goals to achieve IEP post-school outcome goals.

In addition, organizations concerned with the transition of youth with disabilities are encouraged to review this research and consider how the findings can inform strategies to improve or modify transition planning processes and tools such as the IEP and the Summary of Performance (SOP) documents. Some organizations may also be uniquely positioned to assure parent engagement and assist in addressing issues raised in this research around the involvement of students with significant disabilities in the ILP process.

NCWD/Youth's three primary recommendations for disability organizations are:

- Review and monitor what is happening nationally and within individual states regarding the experiences of youth with disabilities who have ILPs to understand and access their potential to improve career development opportunities. Through print material, conferences, webcasts, and other means, highlight the importance of family engagement to the ILP process and how the ILP is adding value to the IEP/ITP, etc.

- Work with local chapters of disability organizations that focus on youth with the most significant disabilities to become knowledgeable about what is happening in local schools regarding ILPs and to work to ensure the inclusion of these students.
- Consider how lessons learned from this research study can inform strategies to improve or modify transition planning processes and tools such as the IEP, transition plan, and SOP.

To learn more about individualized learning plans and NCWD/Youth's ILP Research & Demonstration Project, visit the project webpage at: <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/ilp/>.

*Contributed by Mindy Larson, Senior Program Associate, with the National Collaborative on Workforce & Disability for Youth at the Institute for Educational Leadership's Center for Workforce Development. Content from this article was adapted from the policy brief, [Using Individualized Learning Plans to Produce College and Career Ready High School Graduates \(February 2013\)](#), by Joan Wills, V. Scott Solberg, and Mindy Larson.*

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## The POINT Program

**Laura Harris Delrieu, HEATH NYTC Doctoral Intern**

The POINT Program (Pursuing Our Independence Together) is a collaboration among adults with disabilities, their families, and two private not-for-profit groups: Westchester Jewish Community Services (WJCS) and Jewish Child Care Association (JCCA). The program is based in White Plains, NY, and provides supports that enable young adults (aged 21+) with developmental disabilities, learning disabilities, and autism spectrum disorders to live independently.

The program was begun in 2008 by a group of 15 parents in Long Island, N.Y., who were looking for a different model of independent living for their adult children with disabilities. They wanted their children to live independently as any other young adult would and had their children make a commitment to work, attend school or complete an internship. To assist them in setting up the program, the families went to the Jewish Child Care Association (JCCA). JCCA, a local organization on Long Island, "...is a comprehensive child and family services agency.[Who] work with those most in need, including children who have been neglected or abused, immigrant Jewish families, and those building new lives" (Compass Project, 2012). The parents determined that the best place to set up the program and look for housing would be in an urban setting that would facilitate independence. Some of the participants had their driver's licenses but many did not, so access to public transportation was crucial as were proximity to other participants and access to a variety of activities and retail outlets (e.g., shops, restaurants, movie theaters).

The families did not find a community on Long Island to fit their needs and expanded their search to NYC and its boroughs, but, again, did not find what they were looking for. They eventually settled on White Plains, N.Y., as the location for their program as it served all their needs. Initially, all participants in the program found apartments in the same building in White Plains. Over time, the housing arrangements have changed, and the participants now live in buildings located throughout downtown White Plains. Several participants have roommates while others live alone; all receive the level of support necessary to be successful. Many of the parents finance the living arrangements themselves. Participants contribute to the rent or mortgage with social security benefits or with income from their employment.

Since JCCA is located in Long Island, it became difficult to provide the necessary services to the POINT program from such a distance. The families and JCCA began a search for local support in White Plains. Westchester Jewish Community Services (WJCS) agreed to partner with the families and JCCA to provide additional supports to the participants to enable them to live independently. WJCS is "...a non-sectarian, state-licensed, not-for-profit agency, and has been a leader in mental health, home health care, developmental disabilities and human services since 1943. They serve all individuals who live or work in Westchester County regardless of sexual orientation, race, or socio economic status" (Point program, 2009). The services WJCS provide through the POINT program include:

- Service coordination and benefits management;
- Life skills training in housekeeping, cooking and money and time management;
- Wellness programs;
- Social and recreational opportunities;
- Travel training and local and regional trips;
- Volunteer opportunities;
- Group dinner and community activities;
- Counseling and social skills training and crisis intervention;
- 24-hour emergency coverage (POINT Program, 2009).

Staffing is provided through WJCA, and includes:

- A full-time psychologist director;
- Program specialists who support participants and help them coordinate their programs;
- Life skills trainers;
- Service coordinator;
- Vocational specialists (who provide counseling, job development and job coaching);
- Instructors in wellness activities (POINT Program, 2009).

Although JCCA is a bit removed from the POINT participants, they continue to contribute to the program. JCCA assists in planning the calendar of activities which include: movie nights, card and videogame tournaments, group dinners and volunteering as well as sports teams (e.g., softball, hockey, basketball, and bowling), Special Olympics, miniature golf, yoga, hiking and rock climbing. As participants' interests evolve and new participants join the community, new activities are added. JCCA provides vocational and pre-vocational preparation to the participants.

Currently, the POINT program serves 42 participants who come from different areas of the United States. The number of participants changes from year to year and there is no waiting list. Participants live independently in 12-13 apartment buildings throughout downtown White Plains. They all live within walking distance of each other, malls, movie theater, and retail outlets.

Acceptance into the POINT Program requires a thorough application process involving interviews, observations, review of background information, records from previous programs and medical records. Once accepted into POINT, in addition to housing costs, the families also contribute an annual fee for the services provided. Participants new to the program generally receive two to four hours of Life Skills Training which is then tapered off to the amount of time that they need.

More than 50% of the participants work either full or part time. Their jobs include retail, healthcare, child care, receptionists, hospital and food service workers. Those who are not employed may participate in an internship program overseen by the JCCA. The internship program provides group internship experiences at a nursing home, food bank, local nature centers, and Meals on Wheels. Their individual internships have included work in day care centers, offices, gas stations and synagogues. Although POINT has just recently begun tracking this data, Barbara Greene, the Director of the POINT Program, states that

approximately one third to one half of internships lead to employment. Three of the POINT participants take classes at a local community college. The courses are, primarily focused on learning computer programs and operating systems.

If you are interested in finding out more about the **POINT** program, contact Barbara Greene, MPH, at [point@wjcs.com](mailto:point@wjcs.com) or 761-0600 X175.

You may also visit the program websites at: <http://www.wjcs.com/index.php?src=gendocs&ref=POINTProgram&category=Special%20Needs>  
[http://www.jccany.org/site/PageServer?pagename=programs\\_compass\\_point](http://www.jccany.org/site/PageServer?pagename=programs_compass_point)

***Laura Harris Delrieu** is a doctoral student in the Applied Neuroscience in Special Education program at The George Washington University in Washington, D.C. Ms. Harris Delrieu focuses her doctoral research on students with ASD and their successful transition to postsecondary settings and employment. She is completing an internship with the HEATH Resource Center in Washington, D.C. In addition to pursuing her doctorate, Ms. Harris Delrieu serves as a special education teacher for the Loudoun County Public School System working primarily with students with ASD. She holds an M.A. in Special Education from the University of New England and a B.A. from the State University of New York at New Paltz.*

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# HEATH Resource Center at the National Youth Transitions Center (NYTC) Collaborative Announcements!!

## Portrayal or Betrayal: People with Disabilities in Film and Media

December 3, 2013--1:00-3:00 p.m.

American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) is coordinating a joint presentation with the Library of Congress Motion Picture, Broadcast and Recorded Sound Division (LC/MBRS) exploring research and resources regarding people with disabilities in film and media. The panel will take place on Tuesday, December 3rd from 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm at the Library of Congress, Pickford Theater, 3rd Floor, The Madison Building, 101 Independence Ave SE.

Panelists include Brianna Gross, Communications Associate, AAPD; Tari Hartman Squire, CEO, EIN SOF Communications, Inc.; Lawrence Carter-Long, Public Affairs Specialist, National Council on Disability; Beth Haller, Professor, Towson University; Mike Mashon, Head, LC/MBRS; Rosemary Hanes, LC/MBRS Reference Librarian.

**Limited seating is available and an RSVP is required to attend. To RSVP or for additional information, please email Adam Aboedra at [aabosedra@aapd.com](mailto:aabosedra@aapd.com).**

LC Accessibility Statement: Request ADA accommodations five business days in advance at [\(202\) 707-6362](tel:2027076362) or [ADA@loc.gov](mailto:ADA@loc.gov).

## Inviting High School Students with Disabilities in Northern Virginia and DC Metro to learn about Different Types of Careers

The American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) is seeking high school students with disabilities in the Northern Virginia and DC Metro area interested in different types of careers and industries through a half day interactive program hosted at Accenture, a management consulting, technology services and outsourcing company helping clients become high-performance businesses and governments, in Arlington, VA. The program will provide students an opportunity to learn first-hand from Accenture employees about different work experiences through two mentoring sessions. This event will be co-hosted by AAPD on **December 6th from 9AM - 1:00PM**. Breakfast and lunch will be provided. Participants will have to provide their own transportation, but the event is Metro-accessible. If interested, please send your full name, email and number to: [aabosedra@aapd.com](mailto:aabosedra@aapd.com).

## Applications Open for the 2014 Paul G. Hearne AAPD Leadership Awards Call for Applications

This year, AAPD will once again recognize outstanding individuals personifying leadership, advocacy, and dedication to and for the disability community at large. Two individuals, emerging as leaders in the cross-disability civil rights movement will each receive a cash award in order to help them continue their progress as leaders and further connect their work with the national grassroots of AAPD. The recipients of the 2014 Hearne Leadership Awards will also have an opportunity to meet and network with national disability leaders at the AAPD Leadership Gala in Washington, DC in March 2014. U.S. residents with any type of disability are eligible to apply. Self-nominations are preferred.

Submissions are due **December 6, 2013**. For more information and to apply visit [www.aapd.com/leadershipawards](http://www.aapd.com/leadershipawards). If you have any questions, please email [awards@aapd.com](mailto:awards@aapd.com).

## National Youth Transitions Resume Database

The Youth Transitions Collaborative is developing a resume database. We are seeking the resumes of young people and young veterans with disabilities, who are looking for work (full-time or part-time) in the private sector. These resumes will be incorporated into a database that will help employers connect with qualified young candidates with disabilities. The National Youth Transitions Resume Database will be national in scope and will be open to young people and employers from across the country.

If you are, or know of someone, interested in submitting a resume, please contact Frances Vhay at [ytf@aapd.com](mailto:ytf@aapd.com). Once a resume is received individuals will be asked to complete a short form which details their occupational and geographic preferences, etc.

### Resume Guidelines

All resumes should include the following:

- Objective statement (a 1-2 sentence statement regarding your skills, interests, or career aspirations to give employers a better sense of the type of employment you are seeking)
- Contact information (Name, Address, Phone Number, and Email Address)
- Education history
- Work history
- Volunteer experience
- Professional skills
- Font size no smaller than 11 pt.
- Word or PDF format
- Maximum of 2 pages

## Follow the National Youth Transitions Center Facebook and Twitter Page!

The National Youth Transitions Center officially has a Facebook page (at [www.facebook.com/thenytc](http://www.facebook.com/thenytc))! If you or your organization has a Facebook account, please "Like" the NYTC page. The NYTC has a Twitter account (at [https://twitter.com/The\\_NYTC](https://twitter.com/The_NYTC)). Please check out their information and resources for youth and veterans with disabilities!! Please "Like" and "Follow" their Facebook and Twitter pages!!

## Follow the HEATH Resource Center at the NYTC Facebook and Twitter Page!

The HEATH Resource Center at the National Youth Transitions Center has a Facebook page (at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Heath-Resource-Center>). We have a Twitter account (at <https://twitter.com/#!/heathcenter>). Please check out both of our social media sites for the latest updates, resources, and scholarship information for students with disabilities!! Please "Like" our Facebook page and "Follow" us on Twitter!

## Educational Opportunities at The George Washington University

### Transition Special Education Distance Education Certificate Program

There is still time for candidates to enroll in the Spring '14 cohort for our 12-credit Transition Special Education Certificate Program. Students who have enrolled in this program will be given priority when being considered for admission to the Master's program and all credits earned will be easily transferred.

Candidates who decide to apply to this program using ApplyYourself, the on-line application system, can use the link: <https://app.applyyourself.com/AYApplicantLogin/ApplicantConnectLogin.asp?id=GWUGRAD>. Please list only official degree transcripts that indicate completion of a Bachelors and/or Masters. Listing all colleges attended may delay approval of your application. This will allow sufficient time for your application to be reviewed and approved, which must

take place before they can register for class. **Deadline: Rolling Admissions.** For further information or additional questions, please contact Dr. Michael Ward, Program Coordinator, by e-mailing [mjward@gwu.edu](mailto:mjward@gwu.edu).

## Secondary Special Education and Transition Services: Distance Education, Master's of Arts (Non-teacher Licensure)

This 39 credit, on-line Youth Transition, Career, and Vocational Services Master's degree program prepares professionals as change agents in teaching, leadership and support roles that assist youth with disabilities and youth at-risk to make successful transitions through high school to post-secondary education, employment and independent adulthood. Students will build knowledge and skills for performing the roles and functions of transition specialists through assessment, interdisciplinary planning, collaboration, and implementation of services for individuals with disabilities. The program encourages student involvement in research, scholarship, publishing and leadership activities as adjuncts to their program of study. Candidates who decide to apply to this program using ApplyYourself, the on-line application system, can use the link: <https://app.applyyourself.com/AYApplicantLogin/ApplicantConnectLogin.asp?id=GWUGRAD>. For more information about the program, please email Dr. Michael Ward at [mjward@gwu.edu](mailto:mjward@gwu.edu) or Bridget Green at [greenb@gwmail.gwu.edu](mailto:greenb@gwmail.gwu.edu).

**Deadline: December 1, 2013**

## Secondary Special Education and Transition Services: Acquired Brain Injury Master's Degree Program with Teacher Licensure

Prepare to become a special education teacher to serving school age children and youth with traumatic and acquired brain injuries. The program includes on-campus and on-line coursework, and is possible to complete within two years. The George Washington University was the first post-secondary institution in the nation to have developed and implemented a specialized graduate degree program, geared toward training professionals in the field of special education and brain injury. The brain injury special educator may work directly with children with acquired brain injury (ABI) or with the school teams and families who support them.

The curriculum is focused on training teachers to work in high need school districts and high poverty schools where the incidence of pediatric brain injury is very high. Students are offered the opportunity of specialized coursework, high quality supervised practica and internships, as well as ongoing school and community-based mentorship opportunities. For more information on the ABI focus, please contact Theresa Sacchi Armstrong at [tjsacchi@gwu.edu](mailto:tjsacchi@gwu.edu).

**Deadline: Rolling Admissions.**

# Transition Headliners

## **Improving Post-High School Outcomes for Transition-Age Students with Disabilities: An Evidence Review**

Cobb et al. (2013) reviewed 43 studies that focused on programs (e.g., strategies, interventions, or sets of services) that are designed to improve post-high school outcomes for transitioning youth with disabilities (p. vi). The studies were measured against the What Works Clearinghouse evidence standards. Based on the review, Cobb et al. (2013) recommended hypotheses as well as concerns in developing programs for transitioning youth. The publication is designed to enhance transition services for students with disabilities as well as encourage dialogue between key stakeholders in moving forward. To receive a PDF copy of the paper, please go to: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20134011/pdf/20134011.pdf>

## **Predictors of Postsecondary Success**

The College & Career Readiness & Success Center has recently published an issue brief on predictors of postsecondary success. The issue brief is designed to assist states, districts, and school personnel in planning for postsecondary success for all students. The brief highlights a review of studies, identifying indicators and predictors, from early childhood to postsecondary education that inform states and districts how to better prepare students for postsecondary success. To receive a PDF copy of the paper, please go to: [http://www.ccrscenter.org/sites/default/files/CCRS%20Center\\_Predictors%20of%20Postsecondary%20Success\\_final\\_0.pdf](http://www.ccrscenter.org/sites/default/files/CCRS%20Center_Predictors%20of%20Postsecondary%20Success_final_0.pdf)

## **Connected by 25: A Plan for Investing in the Social, Emotional and Physical Well-Being of Older Youth in Foster Care**

The Foster Care Work Group (FCWG) has released an executive summary on a plan for investing in the social, emotional and physical well-being of older youth in foster care. The FCWG created a framework to better assist youth and young adults in foster care to adult life. The framework focused on three areas: social, emotional, and physical well-being; safety and permanency; and economic success. The executive summary highlights recommendations on how organizations and private entities can better support transitioning youth in foster care. To receive a PDF copy of the summary, please go to: <http://www.fostercareworkgroup.org>

### **ADA Live!**

The Southeast ADA Center, a member of the ADA National Network, produces ADA Live! on blogtalkradio. Youth and young adults with disabilities can learn as well as ask questions about their rights and responsibilities on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Several episodes have been uploaded on a variety of topics regarding the ADA, such as: employment and reasonable accommodations; beyond yellow ribbons: veterans/wounded warriors; and accessible meetings and events. For more information, please go to: <http://www.blogtalkradio.com/wada-se>

## **High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSL:09) First Follow-up: A First Look at Fall 2009 Ninth-Graders in 2012**

The National Center for Education Statistics recently released a follow-up study on juniors in high school who were ninth-graders in 2009. The researchers gathered the information on students' academic performance in math and science as well as postsecondary expectations. This study is designed to assist states and districts in preparing students to successfully transition into the STEM fields. To learn more about this study and outcomes, please go to: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2014360>

## Federal Partners in Transition National Online Dialogue

Federal Partners in Transition hosted a National Online Dialogue on May 13-May 27, 2013. The Federal Partners in Transition includes the U.S. Department of Labor, Education, Health and Human Services and the Social Security Administration. Stakeholders from all over the United States invested in transitioning youth participated in online discussions and posted ideas on how to better serve youth with disabilities. A final report was recently published highlighting the ideas and discussions that took place during the national online dialogue. To learn more about the dialogue, please go to: [http://fptepolicyworks.ideascale.com/community-library/accounts/90/909643/FPT-National-Dialogue-Metrics-Report\\_September-2013-FINAL-a.pdf](http://fptepolicyworks.ideascale.com/community-library/accounts/90/909643/FPT-National-Dialogue-Metrics-Report_September-2013-FINAL-a.pdf)

## What Do Parent Center Transition Specialists Need to Know?

The Technical Assistance on Transition and the Rehabilitation Act (TATRA) Project at PACER Center published a white paper on what parent center transitions specialists should know about serving youth with disabilities. The white paper focuses on the following topics for parent center transition specialists: adults services and benefits; youth and parent engagement and training; self-determination and self-advocacy; career development and post secondary education; and community connection and networking. To learn more about the white paper, please go to: <http://www.pacer.org/tatra/pdf/What-do-Parent-Center-Transition-Specialists-Need-to-Know.pdf>

## Healthy Transitions: A Pathway to Employment for Youth with Chronic Health Conditions and Other Disabilities

The Office of Disability Employment Policy at the U.S. Department of Labor recently released publication entitled, Healthy Transitions: A Pathway to Employment for Youth with Chronic Health Conditions and Other Disabilities. The policy brief highlights the results of the interviews with stakeholders and an in-depth review of the literature. The topics focused in the brief are as follows: what is health care transition planning; the role of health care providers; challenges to purposeful, planning health care transition planning; opportunities to transform health care transition planning through the Affordable Care Act. This policy brief is designed to assist states and districts, schools, and families to better assist transitioning youth with chronic health conditions and other disabilities. For a

more in-depth review of the policy brief, please to: <http://www.dol.gov/odep/pdf/2013ODEPHealthyReport.pdf>

### **High Expectations: Transforming the American Workforce as the ADA Generation Comes of Age**

Senator Tom Harkin, Chairman, of the Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions published a report on the experiences of young adults with disabilities. These young adults with disabilities grew up as members of the ADA Generation. The report addresses four areas of opportunity for young adults with disabilities in transitioning into workforce: continuing and expanding supports in high school; supports and services in accessing postsecondary education; rethinking disability benefit programs to encourage employment; providing support in competitive employment settings. To learn more about the report, please go to: <http://www.harkin.senate.gov/documents/pdf/52446704c3501.pdf>

## **Conference, Webinar and Forum Opportunities**

**December 11-14, 2013**  
**2013 TASH Conference**  
**Chicago, Illinois**

The TASH Conference theme is entitled, "A Movement United". The conference will take place in Chicago, Ill from December 11 to December 14. The early bird registration ends on September 3, 2013. The conference will be held at the Hilton Hotel in Downtown Chicago. The conference is designed to bring together families, people with disabilities, and educators to address the challenges facing the disability community. If you are interested in learning more about the conference, please go to: <http://conference.tash.org>.

**January 10, 2013**

**4<sup>th</sup> Annual Post-Secondary & Career Education Conference  
Washington, DC**

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education's (OSSE) Postsecondary and Career Education Conference is an annual event that serves as a catalyst for best practices, new trends, networking opportunities and professional development for District of Columbia's college and career education providers.

"Developing the District's Workforce," the theme for the 2014 conference, will offer up to nine dynamic workshops and panel discussions that highlight current conversations in the postsecondary and career education landscape. The conference discussions will include "Early College and Dual Enrollment Strategies," "Career Programs for District Students," "District-level Data Presentation," "Demystifying the College Admissions Process" and "Smart College Choices: Improving College Match and Fit."

The 4th Annual Postsecondary and Career Education Conference is open to educators, college access providers, and those engaged in workforce development across the District of Columbia. Please join us for a day of meaningful discourse, networking and collaboration.

No cost for attendance, but space is limited. Contact: Nelson R. Santiago  
Email: [nelson.santiago@dc.gov](mailto:nelson.santiago@dc.gov)

**January 21-23, 2014**

**14<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Autism, Intellectual Disability & Developmental Disabilities  
Kona, Hawaii**

The Division on Autism & Developmental Disabilities (CEC) will host the 14<sup>th</sup> International Conference in Kona, Hawaii. The conference will present the latest research and best practices on teaching individuals with Autism & Developmental Disabilities. For more information about this conference, please go to: <http://www.daddcec.org/Conferences.aspx>

## **January, February, and March 2014 National Community of Practice on Transition Youth Webinars–Youth Role in Transition Planning**

The IDEA Partnership’s National Community of Practice on Transition is facilitating the development of a series of webinars on Youth Role in Transition Planning. Youth from across the nation will produce and organize the webinars. The webinars will focus on leadership development and self-determination. Youth webinars will address the following topics:

January: Get The Picture–Current status of youth with disabilities in and after HS

February: Get In The Picture–Who is doing what to support youth leadership and self-determination?

March: Change The Picture–Based on information presented in the previous two webinars, from a youth perspective what do we need more of and what do we need less of.

To sign up for the Youth Series Webinars, please contact Mariola Rosser at [mariola.rosser@nasdse.org](mailto:mariola.rosser@nasdse.org).

## **February 19-22, 2014 Learning Disabilities Association (LDA) 51<sup>st</sup> Annual International Conference Anaheim, California**

LDA will be hosting the 51<sup>st</sup> Annual International Conference at the Disneyland Resort in Anaheim, California. The conference presents best practices and latest research in teaching students with learning disabilities. The conference encourages adults with learning disabilities and ADHD; teachers of special education and general education; counselors, social workers, education policy advocates, parents; principals and administrators; researchers, medical, and mental health professionals; and college student support personnel to attend the conference. For more information about the conference, please go to: <http://www.ldanatl.org/conference/>

**April 9-12, 2014**  
**CEC 2014 Convention & Expo**  
**Philadelphia, PA**

Registration for CEC 2014 is open! Register by September 30, 2013, to get the early bird rate. The CEC Convention and Expo is the largest conference for special educators and professionals who serve students with disabilities. For more information about the conference, please go to: <http://www.cec.sped.org/convention>

**May 19-20, 2014**

**30<sup>th</sup> Pacific Rim Conference on Disability and Diversity**  
**Honolulu, Hawaii**  
**Call for Proposals: Due January 31, 2014**

The 30th Pacific Rim International Conference on Disability and Diversity will take place at the Hawaii Convention Center, Honolulu, Hawaii on May 19 & 20, 2014. For more information email [prinfo@hawaii.edu](mailto:prinfo@hawaii.edu), or call 808 956-7539. Please visit [www.pacrim.hawaii.edu](http://www.pacrim.hawaii.edu). The Pacific Rim International Forum on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities will take place on May 17, 2014, at the Hilton Hawaiian Village, Honolulu, Hawaii. Email [prinfo@hawaii.edu](mailto:prinfo@hawaii.edu), or call 808 956-7539. Visit our website at [www.pacrim.hawaii.edu](http://www.pacrim.hawaii.edu).

# Money, Money, Money!

## Who's got the money?

**Congress Bundestag Youth Exchange (CBYX)**

Spend an academic year in Germany living with a host family and attending a German school. Attend a four- to eight-week orientation and language camp. This program is open to high school students (ages 15-18), graduating seniors of vocational studies (age 18), and young professionals (undergraduates ages 18-24).

**Deadline: December 1, 2013.** Learn more: <http://www.usagermanyscholarship.org/>

## Youth Leadership Programs

Travel abroad for three to four weeks to gain firsthand knowledge of foreign cultures and collaborate on solving global issues. Current programs operate in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America. Some programs draw from a national applicant pool while others are limited to a region or group of states. You may have the opportunity to host an exchange participant as well as travel abroad. Deadlines vary. Learn more: <http://exchanges.state.gov/us/program/youth-leadership-programs>

## SILVER CROSS Ability Achievement Scholarship

The SILVER CROSS Ability Achievement Scholarship is calling students with disabilities who use a manual wheelchair, power wheelchair, or mobility scooter to apply for this scholarship program. Students must meet the following criteria:

- Enrolled at an accredited college or university within the US or Canada as an undergraduate or graduate student
- Must complete at least one full year of college/university
- Use a manual wheelchair, power wheelchair, or mobility scooter
- Minimum 3.0 GPA
- **Deadline: December 31, 2013**
- Legal resident of US or Canada or have a valid student visa

For more information and application, please go to: <http://www.silvercross.com/scholarship.html>

## 1800wheelchair.com Scholarship

1800wheelchair.com is calling students (high school and college) with disabilities to apply for the 2014 1800wheelchair.com Scholarship program. The program will award two \$500 scholarships. The entries must be **postmarked by January 5, 2014**. For more information about eligibility and how to apply, please go to: <http://www.1800wheelchair.com/scholarship/>

## Youth Exchange and Study Abroad (YES Abroad)

Study in local high schools and live with host families in countries in the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and the Balkans. **Deadline: January 9, 2014**. Learn more: <http://www.yes-abroad.org/impact/2014-15-program-application-available>

## 2014 DO-IT Scholar Application

DO-IT Scholars with the University of Washington is recruiting high school students for their capstone program. Students must be sophomores or juniors in Washington State, interested in attending college, have a disability, and want to meet/work with other students with disabilities. Scholars are loaned computer equipment and adaptive technology while at college. Scholars attend a summer program for three summers at the University of Washington at Seattle. **Deadline: January 30.** For more information, go to:

<http://www.washington.edu/doi/Newsflash/nf.10.21.13.html>

## AIAA Foundation: Grants for Excellence in Math, Science, Technology and Engineering

American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics Foundation Classroom Grants encourage excellence in educating students about math, science, technology, and engineering. Eligibility: current AIAA Member, undergraduate student, graduate student. Maximum award: \$1,500-@2,500. **Deadline: January 31.**

<https://www.aiaa.org/Secondary.aspx?id=3199>

## Microsoft Scholarships for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities interested in obtaining an undergraduate degree in computer science or related technical disciplines are requested to apply for the Microsoft scholarship program. The scholarship will go towards the 2014-2015 academic year. Microsoft selects candidates based on eligibility, quality of application, interest in software industry, commitment to leadership, and financial need. **All applications must be received by January 31, 2014.** For additional information on the application process, please go to: [http://careers.microsoft.com/careers/en/us/internships-scholarships.aspx#tab\\_urscholarship-0](http://careers.microsoft.com/careers/en/us/internships-scholarships.aspx#tab_urscholarship-0)

## The Travelers Protective Association (TPA) of America Scholarship Trust for the Hearing Impaired

Every year, the TPA disseminates a scholarship for students who are deaf and hard of hearing. The scholarship fund can be used towards mechanical devices, medical or specialized equipment or specialized education as well as speech classes, note takers, interpreters, etc. All applications are **due March 1, 2014.** For more information on the application process, please go to: <http://www.tpahq.org/scholarshiptrust.html>

### Council of Citizens with Low Vision International (CCLVI) Scholarships

The CCLVI provides three scholarship opportunities to individuals with low vision. The Fred Scheigert Scholarship Program awards three full-time college students with low vision with \$3,000. The Dr. Sam Genensky Memorial Video Magnifier Award awards multiple video magnifiers to students and adults with low vision. The Carl Foley Graduate Scholarship Program awards graduate students with low vision.

**Deadline: March 1, 2014.** For more information on eligibility and application requirements, please go to: <http://www.cclvi.org/scholarship.htm>

### Marion Huber Learning Through Listening (LTL) Awards

Learning Ally will present three \$6,000 scholarships and two special honor \$2,000 scholarships to high school seniors with learning disabilities. Learning Ally is seeking high school seniors with learning disabilities to recognize them for academic excellence, outstanding leadership, and service to others. **Deadline:**

**March 1, 2014.** For more information about eligibility requirements and application process, please go to: <https://www.learningally.org/about-learning-ally/awards/#tl>

### American Council of the Blind 2014 Scholarship Program

The American Council of the Blind is offering a scholarship to high school and college students who are blind. Students must have certification of legal blindness from their ophthalmologist, optometrist, or physician to apply for this scholarship.

**Deadline: March 1, 2014.** For more information on the eligibility requirements, please go to: <http://www.acb.org/scholarship>

### Possibilities: A Financial Resource for Parents of Children and Youth with Disabilities

"Possibilities: A Financial Resource for Parents of Children with Disabilities," first published in 2004 by the National Endowment for Financial Education (NEFE) and PACER, updates this financial planning guide to an online format, and includes more content relevant to parenting transition-age youth with disabilities. The guide offers tips and information on many financial issues and concerns of families raising children with disabilities from infancy to young adulthood. Topics include organizing financial records, managing money, preparing income taxes, health insurance options, dealing with debt, saving for college, preparing youth for adult employment, etc.

<http://www.pacer.org/publications/possibilities/>

### **2013-2014 HEATH Resource Center Financial Aid Information Publication**

While education beyond high school in the United States is optional, it has become a necessary investment in future employment and life satisfaction for many people. Most, however, cannot afford to make this investment without some outside monetary assistance. Over the years, public and private sources of money have been developed specifically to meet this need. As increasing, but limited, amounts of money have become available, a standardized method of determining eligibility has evolved to promote equitable distribution of student financial aid. <http://www.heath.gwu.edu/publications/2013-2014-heath-financial-aid-information/>

### **2013-14 Federal Student Aid at a Glance**

Federal Student Aid has created a fact sheet that provides an overview of the major federal student aid loan and grant programs. The federal government provides federal funds for students attending colleges, including career colleges and universities. Students can find more information about federal student aid programs at [www.studentaid.gov](http://www.studentaid.gov). To receive a copy of the fact sheet, please go to: <http://studentaid.ed.gov/sites/default/files/2013-14-do-you-need-money.pdf>

### **The Washington Center Scholarship**

The Washington Center Scholarship for Students with Disabilities funded by the AT&T Foundation and HSC Foundation, these awards provide housing assistance in varying amounts (up to a full housing scholarship) to competitively selected students who self-identify as having a disability, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Priority consideration is given to undergraduate students; however, Postgraduate Program applicants may be considered. <http://www.twc.edu>

# Websites to Check Out

## Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD)–Recently Updated

AHEAD is a professional membership organization for those involved in developing and advocating for quality higher education of students with disabilities. AHEAD started in 1977, and since then, the organization has been working to promote equal opportunities for students with disabilities in higher education. The organization also offers professional development through conferences, workshops, and publications for those who teach students with disabilities in higher education. The site offers a wealth of transition resources for teachers, students, and families that can be beneficial to the transition planning process. The site gives website laws, assistive technology, and job opportunities. The site also lists annual conferences for those interested in attending. <http://www.ahead.org>

## The HSC Foundation

The HSC Foundation works to improve services to individuals who face social or health care issues due to disabilities or chronic illness. The HSC Health Care System combines services from several organizations to create a comprehensive care plan for their clients. The foundation has several programs including National Youth Transition Initiative, Advocates in Disability Award and family supports. Much more information is available on their website: [http://www.hscfoundation.org/HSC\\_Foundation\\_Home](http://www.hscfoundation.org/HSC_Foundation_Home)

## Developing Tools for Job and Career Readiness

Located within the School of Education, the Center on Education and Work (CEW) has a long history of designing, disseminating and supporting research-based innovations that bolster college and career outcomes. CEW works with stakeholders in Wisconsin and across the globe delivering career-development materials and services in a variety of media and formats. As a part of their Wisconsin Careers unit, the CEW provides a wealth of useful information to students and adult clients through its popular, subscriber-supported [WISCareers website](#).

WisCareers is a web-based product designed to serve those involved with career development, career education and related fields. The site helps students explore how their individual interests, skills and values can be applied to education, career development and job-seeking. Used by more than 60 percent of the school districts across the state, the website garners more than a million log-ins each year, and some 35 million page hits.

### **WISCareers is designed to help youth and adults:**

- Explore how their unique patterns of interests, skills and values can be applied in their career
- Become aware of how their current educational experiences serve as the foundation for future aspirations
- Develop the job-seeking skills needed to acquire meaningful employment and make successful transitions into and throughout the world of work

In celebration of American Education Week, CEW is offering K-12 educators and parents six weeks of access to WisCareers at no charge. Read all it has to offer below, or see for yourself at <http://wiscareers.wisc.edu/>

### **Offering students and job-seekers...**

- Self-assessments matching occupations to interests, values and skills
- Comprehensive information on more than 700 occupations and overviews of more than 450 specializations
- Career Clusters and Pathways for easy exploration of occupations and a better understanding of how they are related to one another
- An emphasis on Wisconsin Labor Market information
- Comprehensive information for more than 3,400 post-secondary schools and over 1,200 programs of study
- An Individual Learning Plan to support career and education planning
- A Career Planning Guide for high school students
- Resume and Cover Letter programs
- A Budget Builder program
- Links to job openings

### **Offering professionals who work with students and job-seekers...**

- Features, content and activities that align education and learning with work
- More than 400 classroom activities that promote career development and decision-making skills and are aligned with standards and guidelines

- Extensive customizable reports that reflect individual and organizational use and patterns
- A Message Center feature that allows professionals to post announcements and assignments
- An advertising-free career resource
- Free regional trainings, webinars, online demos, and tech support

**For free six-week access to WisCareers, follow the instructions to register below:**

GO TO: [wiscareers.wisc.edu](http://wiscareers.wisc.edu), CLICK ON: Register Now, TYPE REGIS CODE: aew-p937, then FILL OUT REQUIRED INFORMATION

**Accounts registered with this special American Education Week code will be active until 12/31/13.**

### *Acknowledgements*

A special thanks to the following individuals and organizations for their support in the development of this newsletter:

- Mindy Larson, Senior Program Associate, Institute for Educational Leadership, National Collaborative on Workforce & Disability For Youth with Disabilities (NCWD/Youth), which can be found at <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/>;
- Laura Harris Delrieu, HEATH NYTC Doctoral Intern, George Washington University, Washington, DC;
- Ryan Easterly, Manager, National Youth Transitions Initiative at The HSC Foundation, which can be found at <http://www.hscfoundation.org>;
- John Gugerty's Listserv, Wisconsin Center for Education Research, School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison;
- Florence Parkhill, National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC), which can be found at <http://www.nsttac.org>;
- Theresa Sacchi Armstrong, Research Associate & Coordinator, George Washington University, Washington, DC;
- Bridget Green, Graduate Research Assistant, George Washington University, Washington, DC;
- National Center on Secondary Education and Transition E-News, which can be found at <http://www.ncset.org/eneews>

## *Submissions*

We welcome submissions from transition-related organizations and entities to post resources and information in our quarterly newsletter. Please email us at [askheath@gwu.edu](mailto:askheath@gwu.edu) to include your submission in our next newsletter.