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|  |  February, 2017Dear Parent or Family Member,Transitioning from school to adult life and services can be both challenging and exciting. Experience has taught us that the time to think about life after high school begins early, and that successful transition from high school to adult life requires early planning, gaining knowledge of resources and options, and collaboration with educational and adult service providers. The Helen Keller National Center (HKNC), the National Center on Deaf-Blindness (NCDB) and the National Family Association for Deaf-Blind (NFADB) are working together to strengthen the types of services that might be offered to your son or daughter to collaboratively facilitate the transition between educational and adult services. HKNC maintains the HKNC National Registry, a confidential registry of persons who are deaf-blind. This registry serves as a tool to ensure that necessary services continue and are fully explored by young adults and their families in the transition process. HKNC is extending an invitation to you, and your son or daughter, young adults over the age of 14, to be added to the national registry.We will not provide any information from the Annual Deaf-Blind Child Count directly to HKNC. If you choose to contribute information you can visit the Helen Keller National Center’s website at [www.helenkeller.org/hknc](http://www.helenkeller.org/hknc). You can access the HKNC Registry from the menu on the landing page. As your son or daughter nears completion of their high school education, it is our belief that HKNC can be an additional helpful and invaluable resource.The advantages and benefits of registering with the HKNC National Adult registry are as follows: * HKNC regional representatives are there for you! You can contact them via phone or email and they are the experts who can guide you and share resources regarding vocational rehabilitation options at the local, state and national level. If they do not have the answers to some of your questions they will make it their business to find out.
* HKNC regional representatives are in a unique position to offer guidance and support to families and teams with putting a personal futures plan into action. They have experience facilitating Personal Futures Planning. Given their experience and access to a national network they can support you with planning and advocacy.
* HKNC has the specialized knowledge and a network to maximize efforts and outcomes during the transition planning process during the final educational years. Additionally, HKNC offers specialized summer programs to youth in New York with a broad range of options geared towards the diversity among students. Individualized services are available to youth, whether they are contemplating college and a career or just beginning to explore and learn about work and developing a preferred lifestyle in the community as a young adult.

The registry is a work in progress. Through our collective efforts we strongly believe that HKNC’s national registry is a vital link to changing and improving services to deaf-blind youth. Having accurate information about the national transition age youth population and their needs will strengthen our advocacy efforts to demand greater resources and allow us to allocate these resources appropriately. To support and facilitate your child’s transition, consider enrolling in the national registry, [www.helenkeller.org/hknc](http://www.helenkeller.org/hknc). It may be the best gift you are giving to your child – the assurance of knowing transition from high school to adult services will happen. We thank you for your consideration of this invitation and look forward to working with you to improve national transition supports and services.  Best regards, LindaLinda McDowell, Ph.D.National Center on Deaf-Blindness, Executive DirectorSusan RuzenskiHelen Keller National Center, Executive DirectorClara BergNational Family Association for Deaf-Blind, President |