



Office of Special Education Programs
U.S. Department of Education



National Center on Deaf-Blindness



The National Family Association
for Deaf-Blind



Helen Keller National Center
for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults

February, 2017

Dear State Partner,

The Helen Keller National Center (HKNC) is collaborating with the National Center on Deaf-Blindness (NCDB) and the National Family Association for Deaf-Blind (NFADB) to improve transition resources for young adults who are deaf-blind. HKNC and NCDB recognize that to achieve successful employment and independent living outcomes, educators and adult service providers must work as a team in conjunction or partnership with the parents, strengthening the continuum of supports and services. The HKNC National Registry is a key component for improving connections between the education system and community/VR service providers. Building a bridge between the Annual Deaf-Blind Child Count and the HKNC National Registry is one way to ensure that accurate data informs efforts to achieve positive transition outcomes for young adults served by State Deaf-Blind Projects.

The Annual Deaf-Blind Child Count has been a source of information for State Deaf-Blind Projects, NCDB and the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), working together to identify trends and needs within the population and the technical assistance required to address those needs. The HKNC National Registry, a confidential national registry of people who are deaf-blind, informs HKNC, its state Vocational Rehabilitation partners and Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) with important data to drive the allocation of resources and the development of services. Both data sources are powerful national indicators for planning and implementation.

HKNC and NCDB recognize that the Statewide Deaf-Blind Projects are in the best position to share information with parents, with whom they have developed trusting relationships, as to why they should consider registering their son or daughter with HKNC's national registry. While students you are working with are completing their educational experience, HKNC can be a helpful resource, providing an often missing and supportive resource to families and transition age young people.

The HKNC National Registry is just one tool to ensure transition services are fully explored by young adults and their families. We ask that all State Deaf-Blind Projects serve as a communication link to youth who are deaf-blind, and their parents, sharing information about the advantages of completing a registry form with the Helen Keller National Center during their high school transition years (14—25).

The advantages and benefits of registering with the HKNC National Adult registry are many. The one most important benefit is to the community. Advocacy for services and funding are better achieved with a functional registry that can help to identify the number of individuals and define their needs.

HKNC regional representatives (please refer to www.helenkeller.org/HKNC) are ready and available to share resources with you and the families you work with regarding vocational rehabilitation options at the local, state and national level. They are a valuable resource, understand how the system works and can help families with how to access these services. They possess an in depth knowledge of what is available in your state. If they do not have the answer to your question(s) they will conduct research within their network to get you an answer.

HKNC regional representatives are in a unique position to offer guidance and support to families and teams with putting a personal future's plan in to action. They can when possible facilitate a Personal Future's Planning meeting, and/or provide ongoing support to put the plan into action.

HKNC can offer access to a network of adult service providers who can work collectively with you and the families of youth who are deaf-blind to maximize efforts and outcomes during the transition planning process during the final educational years.

In addition, HKNC regional representatives can share information about HKNC's specialized programs to youth with a broad range of options geared towards the diverse and individualized needs among high school students transitioning to adult life.

The array of services extends to students with college and career preparation goals as well to those students learning about the concept of work and can benefit from communication and life skills training to increase independence and develop a personal lifestyle representative of strengths, interests and opportunities.

To support this request for your assistance we have included in this correspondence a sample letter for you to share with parents and their young family member. The letter conveys the importance of the registry and the potential implications and positive outcomes. We understand and respect your mandate to maintain strict confidentiality. Please utilize the sample letter as is or generate a personalized version to send to families.

We thank you for your cooperation and look forward to bridging more than our data systems. We look forward to strengthening our collective ability to impact youth who are deaf-blind and their families as they seek the support and service options needed to achieve success.

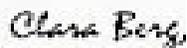
Best regards,



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