

New Career Initiative & Programs



PREPARE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT

BY W. J. SCOTT

Teenagers and young adults who want to jump-start their careers can benefit from Pathways to Careers, a Texas Workforce Commission initiative to expand pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) to students with disabilities. These career-focused services will include work opportunities, such as internships, apprenticeships, summer employment and other job opportunities available throughout the school year.

The first Pathways to Careers program is Summer Earn and Learn which will launch statewide this year. The program will provide 2,000 students with disabilities with work readiness training and paid work experience. The 28 [Texas Workforce Solutions Board Offices](#), in partnership with Texas Workforce Solutions– Vocational Rehabilitation Services (TWS-VRS) staff will implement the Summer Earn and Learn program and coordinate the skills training and paid work experience.

The Boards will identify business partners and pay the students' wages.

Local TWS-VRS offices will assist with recruiting students and providing case management services.

[Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast](#) is partnering with the Houston Independent School District (HISD) to launch a Summer Earn and Learn program.

“We’re pleased to partner with HISD in providing summer jobs and

career exploration for students with disabilities,” said Gulf Coast Executive Director Mike Temple.” We truly appreciate HISD’s commitment to the future for these young adults.”

[Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County](#) is partnering with its local schools and Goodwill Industries of Fort Worth to implement its summer program.

“In addition to Goodwill, other employers we’ve reached out to include CVS Pharmacy, Klein Tools and the City of Mansfield Park and Recreation” said Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County Executive Director Judy McDonald. “Helping students with disabilities gain work-related knowledge and skills is extremely important, and we want to enlist the support of as many employers as possible.”

Other Pathways to Careers programs are still in development or preparing to launch and will expand upon Pre-ETS and career-related education to students with disabilities. Read more about those programs in future editions of Solutions. ■