**State Services for the Blind**

**Federal Fiscal Year 2024 School Year 2023-2024**

#  Pre-Employment Transition Services Blueprint

## Background

**The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) clearly focuses on ensuring students with disabilities have skills for independence and are vocationally ready when they leave secondary school. To support meeting that goal, WIOA requires States to reserve 15% of their grant award for vocational rehabilitation towards pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS). At State Services for the Blind (SSB), this is approximately** $1,561,000 **for the Federal Fiscal Year 2024.** **Minnesota General Vocational Rehabilitation Services is anticipating $7,611,773 for its Pre-ETS program, bringing the combined total to** **$9,172,773.**

SSB **believes that students who receive opportunities to live and work independently while in school are more successful when they leave the educational setting. Our pre-employment transition services are designed to build and integrate skills over each student’s tenure in school. We are committed to being proactive and creative with our students who are blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind.**

**We have identified a number of historical trends among our student population:**

* **Students are not clear about the purpose of the vocational rehabilitation program. They do not understand the role of the rehabilitation counselor and their own responsibilities and expectations of the vocational rehabilitation program. This results in several students leaving the program without an employment outcome.**
* **Students lack the necessary skills of blindness and DeafBlindness after leaving school. While many have sufficient academic skills to be accepted into post-secondary training, they are often not successful in their program. We have observed that students need additional skills in literacy, technology, and orientation and mobility to be successful in college. Staff at the University of Minnesota approached SSB with these concerns and they asked us for solutions that would increase the likelihood of success for SSB students who are blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind.**
* **Students were not introduced to an assortment of assistive technology aids and devices early on during their secondary education. They were using outdated, old, and inefficient methods to read, write, and access computers. They too often relied on one method for accessing print and when that method failed or their vision changed, they were no longer able to continue what they were doing, resulting in increased college dropout rates.**
* **Often, the first time students were exposed to work was after they graduated from their secondary education program. They often had an unrealistic idea of what work was about and believed they would have the same level of support on the job as they did in high school and college. Students did not realize the level of independence they would need to sustain a career. They also did not realize the amount of responsibility and accountability placed on their shoulders. Fear, anger, and frustration were common responses, leading to individuals leaving the vocational rehabilitation program.**

**Additional information about data and trends for students who are blind, visually impaired, or DeafBlind in Minnesota can be found in the** [2022 Legislative Report](https://education.mn.gov/mdeprod/idcplg?IdcService=GET_FILE&dDocName=PROD059220&RevisionSelectionMethod=latestReleased&Rendition=primary)**.**

**SSB has developed and implemented a yearly Pre-ETS blueprint that addresses solutions for these historical trends while using the framework put into place by WIOA. WIOA outlines Pre-ETS as five required activities and nine authorized activities. The five required activities are:**

* **Job Exploration Counseling**
* **Work-Based Learning Experiences**
* **Counseling on Postsecondary Education Opportunities**
* **Workplace Readiness Training to develop social skills and independent living**
* **Instruction in Self-Advocacy, including peer mentoring**

**The nine authorized activities are:**

* **Implementing effective strategies to increase the likelihood of independent living and inclusion in communities and competitive integrated workplaces.**
* **Developing and improving strategies for individuals with intellectual disabilities and individuals with significant disabilities to live independently, participate in postsecondary education experiences, and obtain and retain competitive integrated employment.**
* **Providing instruction to vocational rehabilitation counselors, school transition personnel, and other persons supporting students with disabilities.**
* **Disseminating information about innovative, effective, and efficient approaches to achieve the goals of this section.**
* **Coordinating activities with transition services provided by local educational agencies under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.).**
* **Applying evidence-based findings to improve policy, procedure, practice, and the preparation of personnel, in order to better achieve the goals of this section.**
* **Developing model transition demonstration projects.**
* **Establishing or supporting multistate or regional partnerships involving States, local educational agencies, designated State units, developmental disability agencies, private businesses, or other participants to achieve the goals of this section.**
* **Disseminating information and strategies to improve the transition to postsecondary activities of individuals who are members of traditionally unserved populations.**

## Set-aside Determination

**Pre-ETS are comprised of these five required activities and nine authorized activities. There must be enough funds available for the five required activities. Any funds remaining can be used towards the nine authorized activities.**

**We analyze the previous three years of Pre-ETS expenditures to determine our annual set-aside. Our formula is as follows:**

1. Calculate how many students received a paid Pre-ETS service during each of the last 3 federal fiscal years.
2. Calculate how much was spent for Pre-ETS per student during each of the last 3 federal fiscal years.
3. Calculate an average Pre-ETS cost per student using the above two items.
4. Use that average cost per student to calculate the upcoming year’s forecasted expenditures for required Pre-ETS.
5. Calculate staff salaries by reviewing payroll costs from the prior federal fiscal year and amending to include any projected vacancies or additional FTEs.
6. Add the dollar amount from steps 4 and 5 and subtract this amount from the 15% set aside. The remaining dollars are what is available for authorized Pre-ETS.
7. Reconcile the information each quarter by reviewing actual Pre-ETS expenditures plus salaries and adjust available dollars for authorized activities as needed.

In determining SSB’s set-aside for FFY 2024, we looked at our projected grant award of $10,400,000 and the set aside of 15% or $1,561,000. We also have a carry forward of $351,000. We reviewed the annual amount expended in FFY 2020, 2021, and 2022 in the five required and authorized Pre-ETS areas. As of September 21, 2023, $1,210,000 was spent on Pre-ETS services (including $660,423.00 in staff dollars) for FFY 2023. Analysis of data from the last three years indicates that about 52.3% of our Pre-ETS students received a paid service for an average of $5,181.23 per student. Using that figure, we estimate that 156 of the 298 projected students will receive a paid Pre-ETS service in FFY 2024.

Based on this, we are projecting the following budget for FFY 2024:

* $700,000 in staff salaries (Pre-ETS coordination)
* $808,272 on the five required Pre-ETS areas (case services)/coordination of services.
* $52,728 plus the carry forward of $351,000 on the nine authorized Pre-ETS areas.
* This amount is combined with MN-General in reporting our annual expenditures. Minnesota General is anticipating a grant of approximately $50,745,153 for FFY 2024 and their 15% set aside is $7,611,773, bringing Minnesota’s anticipated combined Pre-ETS 15% set aside requirement to $9,172,773.

**Per Section 7(37) of the Rehabilitation Act and** [34 C.F.R. § 361.5(c)(51)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-III/part-361) **SSB considers a student with a disability to be:**

1. **Ages 14 through 21;**
2. **Is in an educational program; and**
3. **Is eligible for and receiving special education or related services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or is a student who is an individual with a disability for purposes of section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act as amended.**

## **Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) has indicated in their “Unduplicated Child Count” report that there are approximately 248 students reported in secondary education whose primary disability is blindness or DeafBlindness. Additionally, we serve some Pre-ETS students enrolled in post-secondary education programs. Based on our current numbers, we estimate there to be 50 additional students in post-secondary, for a total of 298 students. Our data is reviewed quarterly to adjust as needed.**

**MDE is able to provide SSB a report of the location of the 248 students in secondary education whose primary disability is blindness or DeafBlindness. This report includes the school district and contact information for the district special education director in that school district. Per our Memorandum of Understanding, SSB can reach out to the special education directors to request directory information (name, address, phone) for the potentially eligible students. In addition to contacting these families directly, the SSB Pre-ETS Transition Coordinator asks the special education directors to share information about SSB and our services with the students. Historically, we have found teachers to be the critical linking point for students accessing SSB services and so we have high expectations for success with this effort.**

**SSB has a Potentially Eligible flyer that helps give informed choice about applying for services or receiving services under potentially eligible when initially connecting with SSB. As of October 16th, 2023, SSB was serving 4 potentially eligible and 161 eligible students.**

### **Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment**

**SSB is working with the Needs Assessment Task Force of our State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind to jointly develop the overall plan and strategies for Federal Fiscal Year 2024. This information will be incorporated into the 2024-2027 Combined State Plan. One area of the needs assessment considers individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program; This includes students with multiple disabilities (see below for how SSB is addressing this gap), immigrants, and new Americans. We’ve included immigrants and new Americans in SSB’s goals and priorities, and this is in alignment with the proposed updates to the WIOA combined state plan strategic vision, goals, and strategies for the entire state of Minnesota.**

## BRIDGE to Success

**SSB has implemented a framework for the comprehensive provision of Pre-ETS to our students who are blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind. We call this framework the BRIDGE to Success.**

**As students navigate the world of high school and begin thinking about the future, we offer services and resources that provide a foundation for success. Each of the core areas highlights an essential component that students need in order to succeed after high school:**

**•Basic Skills**

**•Role Models**

**•Initiative**

**•Discovery**

**•Goal Setting**

**•Experiences**

**Through SSB, students can explore each of these core components and cross the BRIDGE into the future of work, study, and living independently. In building that BRIDGE, SSB offers resources in technology, career exploration, work experience, adjustment to blindness training, and peer connections to help students who are blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind develop skills and confidence for a bright future.**

**This framework is central to all of the activities and services we provide our students. Part of the BRIDGE to Success is the Transition Core Team, an internal, multi-disciplinary group that focuses solely on the provision of Pre-ETS. That team is comprised of the following staff complement:**

* **Director**
* **Deputy Director of Program Services**
* **Pre-ETS and Transition Manager who oversees the performance of Pre-ETS and transition services, as well as supervises those staff providing these services.**
* **Pre-ETS Transition Coordinator, who is responsible for the statewide coordination of services provided under the BRIDGE to Success framework.**
* **Pre-ETS Work Opportunities Navigators, who are responsible for the statewide coordination of work-based learning experiences and workplace readiness training.**
* **Pre-ETS Rehabilitation Counselors who have a metro caseload of only students who are receiving Pre-ETS.**
* **Pre-ETS Assistive Technologist who is responsible for the assistive technology assessments and technology needs and recommendations for all students statewide.**
* **WDU Employment Specialist for customers who are DeafBlind and is responsible for working with students and potential employers.**
* **Rehabilitation Teacher, who is responsible for teaching workplace readiness skills to students and adults.**
* **Orientation and Mobility instructors providing mobility training statewide to adults and students.**
* **Job Coaches who are available for job coaching statewide for both students and adults.**
* **Greater Minnesota Rehabilitation Counselors and Vocational Rehabilitation Technicians who provide consultation on Pre-ETS for students living in rural Minnesota.**
* **SSB is adding a Multiple Systems and Pathways Navigator position dedicated to working with students with multiple and/or complex unique needs.**

**To track and organize the activities of the Transition Core Team, a calendar of events and activities is maintained for the year. As another tracking tool, staff will add case notes in Workforce One, our state’s case-management system. These case notes are tagged using special categories that delineate which Pre-ETS was provided.**

SSB will analyze data from case closures for youth aged 24 and under in order to identify patterns and trends related to successful and unsuccessful case closures, allowing us to evaluate and learn about gaps in programming as well as program essentials.

## Blueprint: Required Pre-Employment Transition Services

**SSB will ensure the statewide provision of services in the five required activities by equipping all vocational rehabilitation staff with the tools and materials to conduct training and provide opportunities to Pre-ETS students. Staff also ensure that services offered can meet everyone’s geographic needs. We use both community partners and SSB staff to carry out the provision of services. Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.125 requires all students beginning no later than 9th grade to have a Personal Learning Plan around several key elements. This plan** includes academic scheduling, career exploration, career and employment-related skills, community partnerships, college access, all forms of postsecondary training, and experiential learning opportunities. **School districts determine how to implement this requirement, and SSB collaborates with teams to share information.**

### Job Exploration Counseling

**SSB staff will meet with students to discuss their vocational interests and tailor services and activities based on those discussions. Individualized and group services to students will include:**

* Provision of interest inventories to help the student determine what career pathways to explore. This includes the purchase of interest inventories and staff time to administer, interpret, and review the results with the student. This can include payment to a vendor for the provision of the interest inventories.
* Labor market research and information provided to students on the different types of career pathways they are interested in.
* Counseling about career pathways including using resources developed by other WIOA partners and with Cooperative Youth Services through the Department of Economic Development.
* Engage with students and Individual Education Plan (IEP) teams to learn about the career exploration profiles that students currently have in school (i.e. Minnesota Career Information System) so that programs and services can build upon prior learning.
* SSB is planning to bring back the career fair most recently held in 2019 and paused due to the pandemic. This will be an opportunity for students to speak with several blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind professionals who work in various sectors of the workforce to hear about their journeys to employment.

### Work-Based Learning Experiences

**SSB staff will ensure all students have opportunities to participate in work experiences, internships, apprenticeships, and other types of short-term employment. Individualized and group services to students will include the following:**

* The Work Opportunities Navigators will identify and track potential work experience sites and employers based on individualized student interests.
* The Transition Coordinator and Work Opportunities Navigators will identify students for targeted outreach for programs like Step Up, Right Track, BrookLynk, and other internship-based programs.
* SSB staff will contract with community partners to identify and place students in competitive, integrated work experiences, internships, and other types of short-term employment.
* As appropriate, SSB will provide the student with a competitive-level stipend during their work experiences as long as they are meeting their individualized goals for that work experience.
* Students who have completed 10th grade or above are offered an opportunity to participate in the Summer Transition Program (STP), which has a work experience component. STP is a collaboration between MDE and SSB to provide workplace readiness training, adjustment to blindness training, career exploration, instruction in self-advocacy, and work experience for students.
* SSB has developed a student worker program within the agency. Historically, SSB has hired student workers to provide clerical support for the Aging Eyes Initiative, aid in creating podcasts, and assist front desk staff. SSB continues to explore additional work opportunities for students within SSB.
* The Work Opportunities Navigators will assist students in connecting with working professionals, with and without disabilities, for informational interviewing opportunities.
* The Work Opportunities Navigators will coordinate individualized and group employer site tours to assist students in learning about different career pathways.
* Work Opportunities Navigators will connect with Department of Labor partners to pursue student apprenticeships.

SSB is involved in the E1MN partnership that was launched on July 1st, 2021. E1MN is Minnesota’s state partnership dedicated to advancing employment-first outcomes for youth and adults with disabilities. This partnership evolved from Minnesota’s Employment First policy adopted by the Olmstead Sub-cabinet in 2014.

### Counseling on Postsecondary Education Opportunities

**SSB staff will ensure students are given counseling, guidance, and information on a wide variety of transition and post-secondary programs. Individualized and group services to students will include:**

* SSB staff will review the SSB College Student Handbook with students and parents. The College Student Handbook outlines expectations of the student, necessary skills for success, and other critical pieces of information the student will need to know to make an informed decision on enrollment in post-secondary education.
* SSB will host “College 101” post-secondary information session(s) for students and parents.
* SSB is toward the end of contractual negotiations with Perkins School for the Blind to allow college-aspiring high school students to engage in their Compass program, a college readiness program designed to assist students in building the critical academic and blindness skills they need to be successful in post-secondary.
* For students considering post-secondary education, SSB will connect students and parents with resources in the following areas:
	+ Completing the financial aid form,
	+ Working with the disability services offices whether at a community college, public university, or private college, and
	+ Review of expectations and responsibilities of college students
* SSB staff will review academic curriculum and course offerings with students considering post-secondary education.
* SSB staff will assist with completing financial aid documents and college applications.

### Workplace Readiness Training

**Students will receive comprehensive workplace readiness training to improve and enhance their independent living and vocational skills so they are prepared for eventual employment. Individualized and group services to students will include:**

* Students who have completed 10th grade or above are offered an opportunity to participate in STP. STP is a collaboration between MDE and SSB to provide workplace readiness training, adjustment to blindness training, career exploration, instruction in self-advocacy, and work experience.
* Two year-round pre-employment transition programs offer group and individualized services to students. [Duluth Center for Vital Living](http://www.lcfvl.org/) and [BLIND Incorporated](https://www.blindinc.org/) provide a setting for students to develop and practice soft skills and employment readiness skills.
* Financial literacy and benefits counseling is provided on an individualized basis and in group settings. Additionally, benefits counseling will be provided individually as needed.
* SSB promotes comprehensive adjustment to blindness and DeafBlindness training for all students who are blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind who require it to be successful in independent living and employment. This training includes rehabilitation teaching (cooking, cleaning, and other activities of daily living), assistive technology, Braille, and orientation and mobility.
* SSB requires all students in their last year of high school to have an orientation and mobility assessment to determine their level of travel skills in their schools and communities. If they still have areas of need, SSB will purchase additional orientation and mobility training for that student.
* SSB staff provide many methods for students to access job-seeking skills training, including year-round pre-employment transition programs; STP; one-on-one or group training with the rehabilitation counselor, working with a Work Opportunities Navigator, or contracted community partners; and Creative Job Search classes provided by Workforce Centers.
* For students who require it, SSB will purchase and provide workplace trainers and occupational communication specialists (OCS) so they can learn the work requirements and responsibilities on the job site. An OCS is a person who provides workplace training in another language, such as American Sign Language.
* SSB is planning a collaboration event with the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities campus for an assistive technology workshop for prospective and current college students. This will provide training and awareness of the tools and skills blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind college students need to be successful in higher education.
* SSB continues to develop partnerships and programming for students through community partners both local and nationally. Our Request for Proposal process remains active for partners to complete and engage in contractual conversations about offering services to students to assist in their training and preparedness for the workforce.

### Instruction in Self-Advocacy

**Students will have access to instruction in self-advocacy through SSB staff, blind and DeafBlind advocacy groups, and other external partners. Individualized and group services to students will include:**

* SSB staff connects students with professionals employed in the student’s vocational interest areas to help them learn about the tools needed to be successful in that area. These professionals may also have disabilities.
* Instruction in self-advocacy, disability disclosure, and requesting accommodations is provided through counseling with SSB staff, the year-round pre-employment transition programs, and STP.
* Opportunities will be available for students to attend and participate in local, state, and national advocacy conventions and workshops hosted by advocacy groups, including the National Federation of the Blind (NFB), the American Council of the Blind (ACB), and the American Association for DeafBlind (AADB).
* SSB promotes and encourages a youth voice. We are working on creating a student ambassador program that will spotlight students’ voices and create options for peer mentoring across the state.
* Youth are invited to serve on the State Rehabilitation Council-Blind Transition and Pre-Employment Transition Committee.
* In collaboration with the schools and advocacy organizations, SSB will ensure that students have opportunities to participate in leadership activities.
* SSB staff and partners will explore facilitating workshops for students who are DeafBlind focusing on specific strategies and techniques needed to be strong self-advocates.
* SSB is updating its high school timelines resource and will communicate these with students, parents, and teachers respective to which grade they are in. This will provide a reference on the skills and other areas students should be mindful of developing while in secondary education to be prepared for high school graduation and their plans after high school.
* SSB is coordinating with Helen Keller National Center to provide group training for students with DeafBlindness at Metro Deaf School in St. Paul. This partnership with Helen Keller National Center is also being utilized for individual student needs who are DeafBlind.
* SSB staff are gauging interest from first-generation college students in order to explore a pilot community of peer mentoring.

# Blueprint: Authorized Pre-Employment Transition Services

**Funds available after the provision of the required activities may be used to improve the transition of students with disabilities from school to postsecondary education or an employment outcome. The following strategies have been developed in partnership with the State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind and take into consideration historical concerns that have caused many students to be unsuccessful in achieving independence and employment.**

**SSB will make the following authorized activities available:**

## Implementing effective strategies to increase the likelihood of independent living and inclusion in communities and competitive integrated workplaces.

* **SSB will explore the potential to provide assistive technology to those Independent Living Centers that provide programs to Pre-ETS students.**
* **SSB has developed an assistive technology (AT) loaner program specifically for Pre-ETS students so they can access and participate in Pre-ETS. If an item is not in the AT Loaner Library, it can be purchased for a student to use, but ownership cannot be transferred. Once a student has completed Pre-ETS activities, the technology is returned so it can be loaned to another student.**
* **In order to participate successfully in Pre-ETS, auxiliary aids and services will be provided to all students who require them. SSB will provide auxiliary aids and services to students with disabilities consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Auxiliary aids and services include but are not limited to:**
	+ **Qualified interpreters**
	+ **Notetakers and readers**
	+ **Assistive living devices**
	+ **Videophones**
	+ **Audio recordings**
	+ **Braille materials and displays**
	+ **Screen reader software**
	+ **Magnification software**
	+ **Large print materials**
	+ **Accessible electronic and information technology**

## Developing and improving strategies for individuals with intellectual disabilities and individuals with significant disabilities to live independently; participate in postsecondary education experiences; and obtain, advance, and retain competitive integrated employment.

* **SSB staff will encourage and facilitate college tours and visits to the disability services offices.**
* **SSB staff engage in the youth E1MN planning team, which is a Minnesota state agency partnership advancing Employment First.** E1MN is led by the State of Minnesota Departments of Education (MDE), Career and Technical Education and Special Education Unit, Employment and Economic Development (DEED) Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) and State Services for the Blind (SSB) Units, and Human Services (DHS), Disability Services Division. **This collaboration put together the Minnesota Transition Framework; a framework that defines high-quality transition programming for youth with disabilities and those who support them in achieving:**
	+ **Employment – finding competitive, integrated work that youth enjoy;**
	+ **Postsecondary Education and Training – obtaining youth engage in and obtain industry-recognized credentials;**
	+ **Independent Living – helping youth successfully live as independently as possible; and**
	+ **Best Life – helping youth use skills to envision and advocate for their best life.**
* **The youth in transition toolkit is another resource as a result of the E1MN collaboration that provides statewide access to up-to-date resources, guidance, and tools to help professionals implement the transition framework. There are three sections to the toolkit:**
	+ **Educate yourself – professionals can learn about the transition framework and locate transition tools and resources available to youth teams; learn about Pre-ETS and identifying strengths and needs within Pre-ETS; learn about roles of team members supporting youth with disabilities in different areas; hear from youth who have utilized transition services to make their own success and plenty more transition resources for various team members.**
	+ **Engage families – information on the transition process and the family's role; person-centered planning information and an introduction to Charting the LifeCourse framework; resources and supports for families to inform of services available and build partnerships to lead to a successful transition into adulthood and more.**
	+ **Support youth – resources and support to help youth**
		- **Live their best life;**
		- **Progress toward living as independently as possible;**
		- **Achieve high-quality employment outcomes; and**
		- **Learn about postsecondary education and training.**

## Providing instruction to vocational rehabilitation counselors, school transition personnel, and other persons supporting students with disabilities.

* **On an ongoing basis SSB presents information about the BRIDGE to Success program and Pre-ETS to education, advocacy, training, and other entities working with students to increase and enhance positive career outcomes for youth.**
* **SSB has a Pre-ETS resources toolkit for counselors state-wide. The toolkit will list specific resources in each of the five required Pre-ETS activities.**
* **SSB Pre-ETS staff will participate in workshops, trainings, and conferences in order to continually embed best practices and federal policies.**
* **SSB addresses parent outreach through a bi-monthly newsletter, “The Spectacle.”**
* **SSB collaborates with Work-Based Learning Coordinators to better align the schools’ work planning and the vocational rehabilitation program. SSB provides technical consultation about work accommodations for blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind students.**
* **The Work Opportunities Navigators will train and consult with employers to provide guidance about adding student interns and workers who may be blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind to their workforce.**
* **SSB will facilitate a meet and greet between SSB staff and staff from Minnesota State Academies to strengthen connections between the two organizations.**
* **SSB staff participate in regional Pre-ETS community of practice meetings hosted by MN-General. These meetings include VR staff and community rehabilitation providers serving students in various areas of Minnesota. These have been a great way for SSB staff to connect with other colleagues serving transition and collaborate to learn effective transition planning and resources available across the state.**

## Disseminating information about innovative, effective, and efficient approaches to achieve the goals of this section.

* **The Pre-ETS Coordinator sends out a bi-monthly newsletter called “The Spectacle.” This newsletter highlights upcoming events, tips and tricks, resources, and other information helpful to students.**
* **SSB developed and actively promotes materials, including updated intake materials, targeted towards students. These materials are used to find students and inform them about our program. SSB’s Audio Services Unit and Radio Talking Book have developed pre-employment transition-specific audio materials and broadcasts for distribution and access.**
* **SSB will promote two Pre-ETS videos to share with educators, parents, and employers to show the benefits of receiving vocational rehabilitation and Pre-ETS.**
* **The Pre-ETS Coordinator is a key presenter about Pre-ETS at educational conferences and groups (i.e. Charting the C’s, the Statewide Vision Network, and other special education networks).**

## Coordinating activities with transition services provided by local educational agencies under the IDEA.

* **There is ongoing coordination with SSB, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, MDE, community rehabilitation providers, and other agencies to set up summer and year-round pre-employment transition programs.**
* **Rehabilitation counselors and other related Pre-ETS staff attend IEP meetings whenever they are invited.**
* **SSB staff attend the Site Council for the Minnesota State Academy for the Blind and also attend the Advisory Committee for Blind and Visually Impaired for MDE.**
* **SSB’s Braille and Audio Unit is responsible for the Braille, e-text, and audio transcription of elementary, secondary, and some post-secondary educational materials for students. This transcription is supported through an arrangement with MDE. A portion of these services are funded through Pre-ETS to support the literacy and accessibility of print for our students. The program operates as a Braille and Audio lending program.**

## Applying evidence-based findings to improve policy, procedure, practice, and the preparation of personnel, in order to better achieve the goals of this section.

* **SSB’s Pre-ETS staff, in collaboration with SSB’s data analyst, is developing a data collection and analysis process regarding the effective provision of pre-employment transition services. The results will aid SSB’s implementation and adjustment of service provision.**
* **SSB will survey parents and students about their program experiences in order to make improvements in the programming offered.**
* The Work Opportunities Navigators will develop and maintain an employer network to track work experiences, internships, and apprenticeships for students.

## Developing model transition demonstration projects.

**No activities identified at this time.**

## Disseminating information and strategies to improve the transition to postsecondary activities of individuals who are members of traditionally unserved and underserved populations.

* **SSB’s Outreach Coordinator and the Work Opportunities Navigators will develop an outreach strategy to reach students in minority communities.**
* **SSB continually works to locate and identify students who are home-schooled or attending private and charter schools. These students, who are not included in the Minnesota Unduplicated Child Count, may not be aware of SSB and available pre-employment transition services.**

# Conclusion

**Given the critical importance of maintaining Pre-ETS as identified in WIOA, SSB has continued to educate** Workforce Development Unit (WDU) staff so they understand and are literate in the policy implications and the practical applications of the regulations. This means that staff know what each of the five required and nine authorized pre-employment transition services are, how to deliver them, and how to document compliance.

We will continue statewide outreach and information efforts to transition students and their families, employers, and external stakeholders so the objectives of the SSB transition program meet the needs of Pre-ETS students.

We will work to locate unserved blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind Pre-ETS students so they and their families are aware of SSB programs and services available to them, specifically targeting students in private, charter, and home school settings. By establishing networks, an email list, and workshops and training experiences we seek to find every student possible that can benefit from Pre-ETS.

An important part of our plan is to develop and maintain an employer network. We will do this by building relationships with businesses through ongoing in-person telephone and e-mail contacts to establish a ready pool of potential work experience settings for students.

Last, we want to identify resources students can independently access in their communities that facilitate the five required Pre-ETS activities, particularly focusing on students and families in Greater Minnesota where resources in some locations may be limited.