



PATHWAYS TO PARTNERSHIPS

GVRA + CILs + LEAs

Pathway to **DREAMS**



2025-2026 Strategic Planning Guide for Educators

Facilitating and Planning Pre-ETS
Services for Students with Disabilities
Grades 6-8



GEORGIA VOCATIONAL
REHABILITATION AGENCY

Table of **CONTENTS**

Welcome Message

3

Planner Purpose

4

Mission and Goals

5

Acronyms

6

Meet Our P2P Team

7

Cohort Partners

10

Partnerships and Roles

11

Program Impact

12

Pre-Employment Transition Services

14

P2P Curriculum Overview

10

Eligibility and Enrollment

15

Progression of Services

17

Core Work Groups (CWG)

18

Framework for Strategic Planning

19



Welcome to **PATHWAY TO DREAMS**

Welcome to **Pathway to Dreams**, the Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) curriculum designed specifically for students with disabilities in grades 6-8. This program is part of a five-year initiative by the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA), funded through the Rehabilitation Services Administration's Disability Innovation Fund. The curriculum's purpose is to introduce participating Georgia middle schoolers to skills necessary for obtaining competitive integrated employment after completing their educational journeys.

The success of this project is driven by important partnerships between GVRA, local school districts, nine Georgia-based Centers for Independent Living, the Georgia Department of Education, and other entities. GVRA's implementation team, Pathways to Partnerships (P2P), will work with these centers, which are distributed across the state, to coordinate programming in local school districts. We are excited about this collaboration because in addition to soft skills curriculum, it provides students in middle school, along with their families, information regarding available support, services, and resources prior to entering high school.

We appreciate your commitment to preparing students for future career success and independence. Your dedication to this initiative plays a vital role in shaping their opportunities and long-term outcomes. Thank you for your partnership, and we look forward to working together to make a meaningful impact in the lives of Georgia's students!

Planner

PURPOSE

This planning guide is designed to support you as you begin implementing the Pathway to Dreams program at your school. Inside, you will find key information about eligibility, enrollment, curriculum structure, and the progression of services. Additionally, we have outlined roles, responsibilities, and best practices to ensure a smooth and effective implementation. This resource will provide the necessary tools and guidance to help your students succeed.

The Pathways to Partnerships (P2P) Planner is a strategic tool designed to facilitate collaboration among educators, P2P Team Instructors (including Educator Liaisons and CIL Instructors), and other key stakeholders in planning and delivering early intervention transition lessons for middle school students with disabilities. Developed in alignment with the P2P Grant requirements, this planner provides a structured framework for ensuring the effective implementation of essential instructional components.

Planner

PURPOSE

continued

The Planner serves as a guiding framework for P2P services and designed to:

- Strengthen partnerships between school districts, local schools, GVRA, CILs, and P2P Educator Liaisons to enhance early intervention transition services for middle school students with disabilities.
- Develop a clear implementation plan that outlines schedules, permission form collection, and logistical considerations to support students in achieving their high school and post-secondary goals.
- Customize strategies to address the unique needs of each school and district.
- Increase awareness of and access to Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services and post-secondary opportunities.

By providing a structured approach, the P2P Planner ensures a cohesive and collaborative effort in delivering high-quality transition services to students with disabilities.



P2P Mission

To improve training and preparation of children and youth with disabilities in Georgia to eventually obtain and maintain competitive integrated employment in conjunction and coordination with other state, local, and private entities.

P2P Program Goals

GOAL 1

Increase children and youth with disabilities and their families' ability to access available resources to achieve positive postsecondary outcomes and competitive integrated employment (CIE) through participation in innovative P2P instructional programming.

GOAL 2

Foster strategic collaborations and partnerships among entities (GVRA, CILs, LEAs, SEA, and other youth service professionals) to promote shared accountability for children and youth with disabilities. Developing a seamless transition system that supports both individuals and providers, while identifying and removing barriers, leveraging unique strengths, increasing capacity, and fostering collective collaboration among all entities involved.

GOAL 3

Increase children and youth with disabilities and their families' ability to access available resources to achieve positive postsecondary outcomes and competitive integrated employment (CIE) through systematic outreach and sharing of available resources in local communities and state.



P2P Planner ACRONYMS

Pre-ETS

Pre-Employment Transition Services

LEA

Local Education Agency

CIL

Center for Independent Living

GVRA

Georgia Vocation Rehabilitation Agency

CIE

Competitive Integrated Employment

P2P

Pathways to Partnerships (Grant)



Meet Our **TEAM**

Shannah Mabry

Ms. Mabry has been in education for 17 years. She has been a middle school teacher, PK-12 instructional coach, elementary school assistant principal, and principal. She is currently the P2P Project Manager.

shannah.mabry@gvs.ga.gov

Vince Bass

Mr. Bass has been in education for 34 years. He has been a teacher at elementary, middle and high school levels, middle and high assistant principal, principal, director of human resources, and assistant superintendent. He is currently the P2P Project Coordinator.

vincent.bass@gvs.ga.gov

Lorraine Johnson

Ms. Johnson has been in education for over 30 years, serving as a middle school ELA teacher and team leader, assistant principal, and middle school principal. She was the 2003 Georgia Teacher of the Year and National Finalist and has used her instructional leadership to present and speak to educators and leaders at the state and national levels. She is currently the P2P Lead Educator Liaison serving Walton Options and *Multiplechoices* Independent Living Centers and identified LEAs.

lorraine.johnson@gvs.ga.gov



Meet Our **TEAM**

Julie Moilanen

Ms. Moilanen has been in education for 30 years, serving as a high school special education teacher, special education coordinator, assistant director, executive director and chief officer of academic and behavior supports. She has also served as Program Manager for Special Education Compliance with the Georgia Department of Education. Ms. Moilanen has held various roles in state organization such as Georgia Council for Administrators of Special Education, State Advisory Panel for Special Education and the Georgia Parent Mentor Advisory Council. She is currently a P2P Educator Liaison serving disABILITY LINK/Metro Atlanta area.

julie.moilanen@gvs.ga.gov

Jennifer Whetstone

Ms. Whetstone has been in education for 28 years. She has been a middle and elementary school teacher, team leader, assistant principal, and principal. She has taught in inclusive co-teaching, general education, and collaborative classrooms and worked with teachers and students in the adapted curriculum setting and in specialized programs (EBD, Autism/ABA). She is currently a P2P Educator Liaison serving NWGACIL/Polk County area and Access 2 Independence/Muscogee County area.

jennifer.whetstone@gvs.ga.gov



Meet Our **TEAM**

Peggy Davenport

Mrs. Davenport brings over 20 years of experience in public education as a middle school English/Language Arts teacher. She has served as team leader and department head for both ELA and Gifted programs, teaching across general education, collaborative, co-teaching, and gifted classrooms. Twice recognized as Teacher of the Year, she has contributed to multiple school leadership teams and has guided, mentored, and trained educators in diverse instructional settings. She currently serves as a P2P Educator Liaison.

margaret.davenport@gvs.ga.gov

Jennifer Whitley

Ms. Whitley brings a diverse professional background including education, business ownership, and administrative leadership. A 1996 graduate of LaGrange College, she began her career in education, including serving as a Day School director, and later owned and operated a successful fundraising business for 16 years. She also served as Office Administrator at Cópia Investments, developing strong client relationship and organizational skills. Jennifer currently serves as P2P Intake Specialist, where she applies her experience to maintain and build meaningful connections with clients.



Meet Our

TEAM

Leigh Thrailkill



Ms. Thrailkill has been in education for 30 years. She has been a teacher, gifted facilitator, Title I Support Specialist, and Director of Federal Programs. She started her teaching career in a special education classroom and also was a co-teacher with general education teachers. She is currently the P2P Family Liaison serving all partner area students and families.

leigh.thrailkill@gvs.ga.gov

Felicia Money Penny



Ms. Money Penny has been in education for 12 years serving as a special education teacher leader. She has taught inclusive co-teaching, resource pull-out services, and adapted curriculum settings at the elementary and high school levels. She has developed functional academics, independent living, transition, and vocational curriculum. As a teacher mentor, Felicia provided a wide variety of professional learning sessions at the district and state level. She served as the adapted curriculum mentor for new teachers, providing one-on-one mentoring in classrooms as well as continued individualized support. She developed a district Professional Learning Community for adapted curriculum teachers and an annual resource expo for families. She is currently a P2P Educator Liaison serving Disability Connections/Houston County area and LIFE/identified LEA area.

felicia.money penny@gvs.ga.gov

Cohort 1 **PARTNERS**

2024-2025 School Year

Disability Connections

Michael Leverett, Executive Director

(478) 741-1425 (Voice/Text)

michael@disabilityconnections.com

NWGACIL

Christina Holtzclaw, Executive Director

706-314-0008

choltzclaw@nwgacil.org

Walton Options

Tiffany Clifford, Executive Director

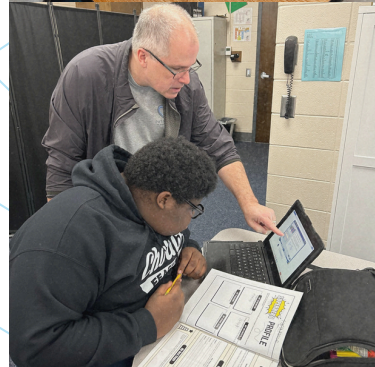
706-724-6262

tjohnston@waltonoptions.org

**Houston County
School District**

Polk School District

**Columbia County
School District**



Cohort 2 **PARTNERS**

2025-2026 School Year

Access 2 Independence

Kirk Holcombe, Executive Director

(706) 405-2393

kirk@access2independence.com

disABILITY LINK

Kim Gibson, Executive Director

(404) 687-8890

kgibson@disabilitylink.org

LIFE

Neil Ligon, Executive Director

(912) 920-2414

nligon@lifecil.com

Multiplechoices

Garrick Scott, Executive Director

(706) 850-4025

gscott@multiplechoices.us

**Muscogee County
School District**

**Liberty County
School District**

Atlanta Public Schools

**Elbert County
School District**





Partnerships **AND ROLES**

Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA)

Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency is a state agency that helps students and adults with disabilities become active members of society by finding employment.

- Oversee grant initiatives and guidance.
- Provide collaborative oversight to transition services instructional component.
- Oversee collaborative efforts between LEAs, CILs, students, and parents.
- Assist in providing avenues for CIL support efforts to students and parents.
- Cultivate relationships between CILs, GVRA, LEAs, students' families, and community partners.

Centers for Independent Living (CILs)

Centers for Independent Living provide training, coaching, and resources to individuals experiencing barriers due to disabilities

- Actively participate in transition services instructional initiative.
- Provide unique learning opportunities through CIL programs for students participating in the P2P initiative.
- Cultivate and sustain relationships with stakeholders and school systems.

Local Education Agencies (LEAs)

A Local Education Agency such as a school system or individual school

- Provide time in school day for Pre-ETS lesson implementation.
- Build relationships with GVRA and CILs

Empowering Students:

Parent Perspectives

- *This is an amazing program that I hope continues for future students.*
- *Every child should have this course. It truly was helpful. Learned new words, resume writing, and interview preparation.*
- *My son is more confident - more engaged in talking about jobs/careers for the future.*
- *My daughter has loved the program at Columbia Middle School. She has shared about the different speakers, and she has been encouraged to share her own thoughts and ideas about her future career goals. It's a wonderful program to get students thinking about their futures, and I hope it will continue.*
- *This class has been a great tool for my son. I am sure what he's learning will translate into young adulthood.*
- *My daughter is talking about what college she would like to attend in the future.*



Student Reflections

- *It's been amazing! We learn about life lessons and things we will need for the future. **RC, 7th grade student***
- *I never thought about my future a lot, but since I have been in this class, it has helped me think about it more. **VG, 7th grade student***
- *I learned that self-advocacy means speaking up for what I need. **KC, 8th Grade***
- *I am glad she (another student) shared that. I didn't realize there was somebody like me. **KI, 7th grade***

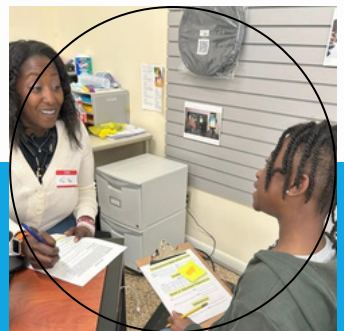
Classroom Teachers

- *It's been a wonderful experience! The kids are enthusiastic, and they're learning valuable skills. They've learned how to interview, write a resume, and skills they will need when they get out of high school.* **Dr. Lee Anne Desilets, Teacher, Feagin Mill Middle School**
- *This program has opened my students' eyes to possibilities of employment and what it takes. The interview process at Disabilities Connections was wonderful.* **Duchess Blanton Hunter, Lead Teacher in the Special Education Department, Houston County**
- *This program began my students thinking about their plans after high school. My students enjoyed identifying their interests and strengths.* **Britt Reese, ASD Teacher, Columbia County**



District and School Leaders

- *This program provided an introduction for middle school students who would not have received Pre-ETS services until high school. Early exposure is very important for students to start setting goals and analyzing personal career interests. This early exposure will follow each student into high school where conversations around career exploration will continue. This project gave each student an opportunity to self-reflect and interact with instructor on a weekly basis. Ours students loved it and would ask when the instructors were coming back. Instructors were caring, compassionate, and took time to develop relationships with each participant.* **Brandi S. Pardo, Ed.D., Transition Specialist, Houston County**
- *The program has had a very positive impact on our students. They have gained such wonderful skills and insights into what it takes to be employed and to be successful in their adult life.* **Nancy Woods, Exceptional Student Services Coordinator, Polk County**



PRE-ETS

What Are Pre-Employment Transition Services? (Pre-ETS)

Pre-ETS (Pre-Employment Transition Services) is a program that helps students with disabilities get ready for life after high school by building important skills for future jobs and education. It includes fun and engaging lessons on career exploration, workplace skills, self-advocacy, and independent living to help students feel more confident about their future.

Right now, under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), **GVRA offers five key Pre-ETS services** to eligible students and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) customers. These services are designed to help students **aged 14-21**, including those with disabilities, prepare for a successful transition into the workforce. The services include:

- **Job Exploration Counseling:** Helping students understand various career options and the skills needed for different jobs.
- **Counseling on Postsecondary Opportunities:** Helping students explore different education paths like college or vocational training.
- **Workplace Readiness Training:** Teaching students' important skills like communication, teamwork, and problem-solving for the workplace.
- **Work-Based Learning:** Offering internships and real-world experiences to build practical skills.
- **Self-Advocacy Instruction:** Helping students understand their rights and how to advocate for themselves in school and at work.

PRE-ETS

Pathway to Dreams Pre-ETS

Pathway to Dreams will introduce **middle school students (ages 10-14)** to important soft skills from **three** of these Pre-ETS areas:

- **Job Exploration**
- **Workplace Readiness**
- **Self-Advocacy**

These lessons, specially designed for grades 6-8, will give students a head start in learning key skills, connecting with resources, and discovering their educational options for the future.



CURRICULUM

Pathway to Dreams: Middle School Pre-ETS Program Helping Students Build Skills for the Future

Pathway to Dreams is an engaging program to develop essential soft skills, explore career possibilities, set goals, and build self-advocacy skills which are important to success in school and the workplace.

How It Works

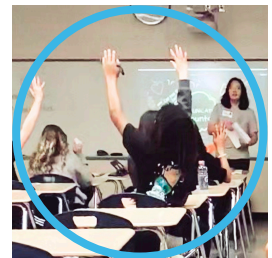
- **Taught by CIL Instructors** – Trained instructors from Centers for Independent Living (CILs) will come to participating schools and teach Pre-ETS lessons during the scheduled time selected by the district or school.
- **Flexible & Engaging** – Our team will adjust lessons to your allocated time to maximize benefits of the program. Lessons are designed to be 30-45 minutes long; however, 45 minutes is optimal if possible because it allows for deeper discussion and practice.
- **Designed for All Learners** – The curriculum follows the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework, allowing activities to be adjusted based on student needs.



CURRICULUM

About the Curriculum

- **Interactive Lessons** – Students learn soft skills through discussions, role-playing, and hands-on activities.
- **Multiple Learning Formats** – Lessons include visuals, audio, and interactive elements to support different learning styles.
- **Flexible Expression** – Students can demonstrate their learning in ways that work best for them, such as writing, speaking, or performing a task.
- **Standard Alignment:** Lessons are aligned to CTAE Foundational Standards, Georgia State Standards, and WIDA (English Language Development).
- **Tiered Lessons** Pre-ETS skills are designed to build developmentally by grade level and progressively building upon one another from sixth through eighth grade.
- **Outreach:** Students connect with their Center for Independent Living (CILs) to explore available programs and community connection opportunities.
- **Family Support:** Parents and families gain access to resources through CIL and GVRA outreach, including informational family learning sessions designed to support and empower them.
- **CIL Culminating Activity, CIL Connect Day:** Students will be given an opportunity to participate in a hands-on experience to gain more knowledge about their CIL and to apply skills.



Eligibility & **ENROLLMENT**

01

Receiving special education services through an IEP

02

Receiving services under a Section 504 Accommodation Plan



Enrollment

01

Identify Students

1. School staff identifies 65 students they would like to participate.
2. Outreach will be initiated to parents to complete the P2P Student Permission Form.

02

Parental Permission Forms Completed

1. Once a P2P Student Permission Form is completed by a parent, the student may participate in the P2P in-school delivery of programming.
2. Families will be enrolled in communications of CILs additional programming, local resources, and family learning session opportunities.

A white rectangular sign with a red pushpin at the top center, pinned to a brown corkboard background. The sign has the text "REGISTER NOW!" in bold, black, sans-serif capital letters.

REGISTER NOW!

Progression of SERVICES

6th-8th Grade



- P2P In school programming for identified students with an IEP or 504.
- Students participating in the P2P program complete Pre-ETS permission form.
- Enroll in local CILs programming and peer support services.

9th Grade

- Can receive Pre-ETS through GVRA
- Enroll in local CILs programming and peer support services



10th-12th Grade

- Apply to be a VR client through GVRA
- Enroll in local CILs programming and peer support services



**Learn more about
High School Pre-ETS**



**Learn more about
Pre-ETS client versus
VR Client**

Core Work Groups



Who We Are

The Core Work Group includes the Project Sponsor (GVRA), participating CILs, participating LEAs, key personnel, evaluation team and training subgrantees.

Purpose

The purpose of the Core Work Group is to collaborate as a team to manage the project work plan and outcomes. As a P2P Grant requirement, and great collaborative practices, we will meet twice monthly to accomplish this work. We will have a CWG All-Team Meeting and a CWG Service Area Meeting each month as outlined below.

Core Work Group All-Team Meetings: Once per month (3rd Monday) at 3:00 PM starting June 2025.

If Monday is a state holiday, move to Tuesday at 3:00 PM.

Core Work Group Service Area Meetings: The purpose of the service area meeting is to facilitate a partnership-focused meeting for CILs, LEAs, and GVRA in each designated service area. Once per month, 30 minutes prior to the CWG Meeting at 3:00 PM. Service areas will meet one time every 3 months. The rotation starting, June 2025, will be LIFE/Savannah-Chatham, Access 2 Independence/Muscogee, and Multiplechoices/Elbert.

Core Work Group Meeting Dates



June 16, 2025
LIFE/Savannah-Chatham Service
Area, 2:30 PM
All-Team, 3:00 PM

July 21, 2025
Access2Independence/Muscogee
Service Area, 2:30 PM
All-Team, 3:00 PM

August 18, 2025
Multiplechoices/Elbert Service Area,
2:30 PM
All-Team, 3:00 PM

September 15, 2025
LIFE/Savannah-Chatham Service
Area, 2:30 PM
All-Team, 3:00 PM

October 20, 2025
Access2Independence/Muscogee
Service Area, 2:30 PM
All-Team, 3:00 PM

November 17, 2025
Multiplechoices/Elbert Service Area,
2:30 PM
All-Team, 3:00 PM

December 15, 2025
LIFE/Savannah-Chatham Service
Area, 2:30 PM
All-Team, 3:00 PM

January 20, 2026
Access2Independence/Muscogee
Service Area, 2:30 PM
All-Team, 3:00 PM

February 17, 2026
Multiplechoices/Elbert Service Area,
2:30 PM
All-Team, 3:00 PM

March 16, 2026
LIFE/Savannah-Chatham Service
Area, 2:30 PM
All-Team, 3:00 PM

April 20, 2026
Access2Independence/Muscogee
Service Area, 2:30 PM
All-Team, 3:00 PM

May 18, 2026
Multiplechoices/Elbert Service Area,
2:30 PM
All-Team, 3:00 PM

June 22, 2026
All-Team, 3:00 PM

Strategic

PLANNING GUIDE

Purpose

This Strategic Planning Guide is designed to facilitate collaboration between local schools and P2P Team Instructors (Educator Liaison and CIL Instructor) in delivering early intervention transition lessons to middle school students with disabilities.

Together, we strive to optimize opportunities for students with disabilities (SWD) and 504 students to:

- Access Pre-ETS services through GVRA in high school.
- Become aware of CIL resources available in their local community.

This guide will aid in establishing a clear and smooth process for planning and implementing program operations.

Before proceeding, please review the full contents of this P2P Planner.

Key CONTACTS

Please list the name, email, and phone number of school Points of Contact (POCs), along with their role(s).



Notes

01 Contact 1

- NAME:
 - ROLE:
 - EMAIL:
 - PHONE:
-

02 Contact 2

- NAME:
 - ROLE:
 - EMAIL:
 - PHONE:
-

03 Contact 3

- NAME:
 - ROLE:
 - EMAIL:
 - PHONE:
-

04 Contact 4

- NAME:
- ROLE:
- EMAIL:
- PHONE:

Student IDENTIFICATION

Identify 65 students recommended for enrollment in the P2P in-school curriculum.



- An enrollment packet will be sent home for identified students.
- Our P2P Family Liaison will follow up with families who have not completed the Pre-ETS Parent Permission Form.



Notes

- **Through a P2P shared spreadsheet, provide a student list including:**
 - First and last name
 - Date of birth
 - Grade level
 - Parent names, emails, and phone numbers
 - Media release (Yes/No)

Student SCHEDULING

- Create a schedule serving 65 students during the school year.
- Each student receives 11 lessons
- Goal: Minimize instructional interruption and maximize student support



Action Item



Considerations

- **Who:** Which classes and/or grade levels will you select?
- **Staff:** Which certified staff member at your school will join the CIL instructor's groups/lessons?
- **Time:** How will time be scheduled in your building for the CILs instructor to meet with small groups of students? (For example: during a connections class, a homeroom block, an advisory block, etc.). We can help with planning.
- **Frequency:** How would you like lessons delivered?
 - once a week for 11 weeks, 11 consecutive days, twice weekly, etc.
- **Structure:** What scheduling structure works best?
 - small groups at designated time slots such as: 8:00-8:40, 9:00-9:40, etc.
 - or within a pre-existing class period

Additional **CONSIDERATIONS**

Management/Organization

- When and where will the CILs instructor meet with students?
- How will class release of students be handled?
- What should the CIL instructor do in case of a called school drill or emergency code called? (Outline procedures.)

Instruction

- What technology resources are available to the CILs instructor and students in the designated space?

Communication

- Who will join the Core Work Group Meetings for your local school? First and last name, number, and email. (meeting dates on page 18)
- Regular highlights of classroom learning will be emailed to the school's principal and district points of contact. Determine who should receive these and share their contact information with your educator liaison.
- In the event of a school closing, daily schedule change, or special event that would alter the P2P instructional schedule, who will communicate to the CIL instructor and education liaison?

Additional **CONSIDERATIONS**

Procedures

- Do CIL instructors, their staff, and P2P team members need background checks of volunteer training before instruction begins? (We provide training on mandated reporting and confidentiality.)
- We have a GVRA media release that goes home to parents. What are your guidelines? Is there an additional school or district form?
- What is your policy for pre-approval of parent flyers or letters to send home? (CIL outreach flyers, parent survey, classroom learning highlights, etc.)
- What is the policy and/or procedures for service animals in your school?
- Are there specific student behaviors, medical needs, or other concerns we need to be aware of beforehand?

Culminating Activity: “CIL Connect Day” (off campus at CIL or designated location)

- Collaboration for culminating activity “CIL Connect Day” will continue with the school point of contact during this year’s program implementation.

Empowering **STAFF**

Would your P2P Team benefit from engaging and informative Professional Learning sessions for:

- Middle school exceptional education teachers
- 504 case managers
- Administrators



Action Item

Our goal is to equip educators with comprehensive knowledge of VR and CIL services, helping them connect students to valuable resources and opportunities.



Considerations

When is the best time in your schedule for this training during the school year?



PATHWAYS TO PARTNERSHIPS

GVRA + CILs + LEAs

The contents of this planner were developed under grant H421E230027 from the U.S. Department of Education (Department). The Department does not mandate or prescribe practices, models, or other activities described or discussed in this document. The contents of this planner may contain examples of, adaptations of, and links to resources created and maintained by another public or private organization. The Department does not control or guarantee the accuracy, relevance, timeliness, or completeness of this outside information. The content of this planner does not necessarily represent the policy of the Department. This publication is not intended to represent the views or policy of or be an endorsement of any views expressed or materials provided by any Federal agency. (EDGAR 75.620)



**Pathways to
PARTNERSHIPS**

Empowering students with disabilities to achieve their career goals through skill development, self-advocacy, and community connections, ultimately leading to competitive integrative employment



**Scan Here for
P2P Video**