

Closing the Gap: A Research-to-Practice Partnership to Improve Transition Outcomes for Young People with Disabilities

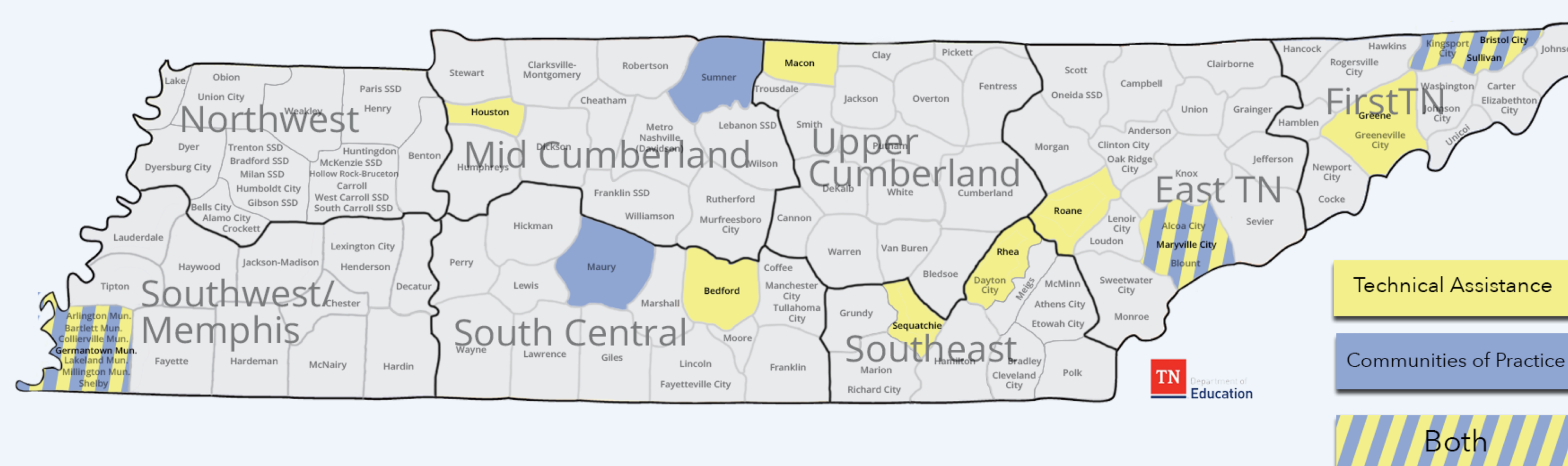
WHAT IS TRANSITION TENNESSEE?

- The purpose of Transition Tennessee is to improve the postsecondary education and career outcomes of students with disabilities in Tennessee.
- Transition Tennessee is a systems change collaboration with the Tennessee Department of Education, Tennessee's Department of Human Services, researchers at Vanderbilt, the Vanderbilt Kennedy University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, TennesseeWorks, and representatives from more than 40 organizations.
- Research, training, professional development (PD), and technical assistance (TA) are combined for practitioners serving students with disabilities transitioning to adulthood.
- We assist educators and agency personnel in delivering Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to students with disabilities.
- We seek to ensure effective agency partnerships, well-trained personnel, and high-quality practices for transition services delivery.

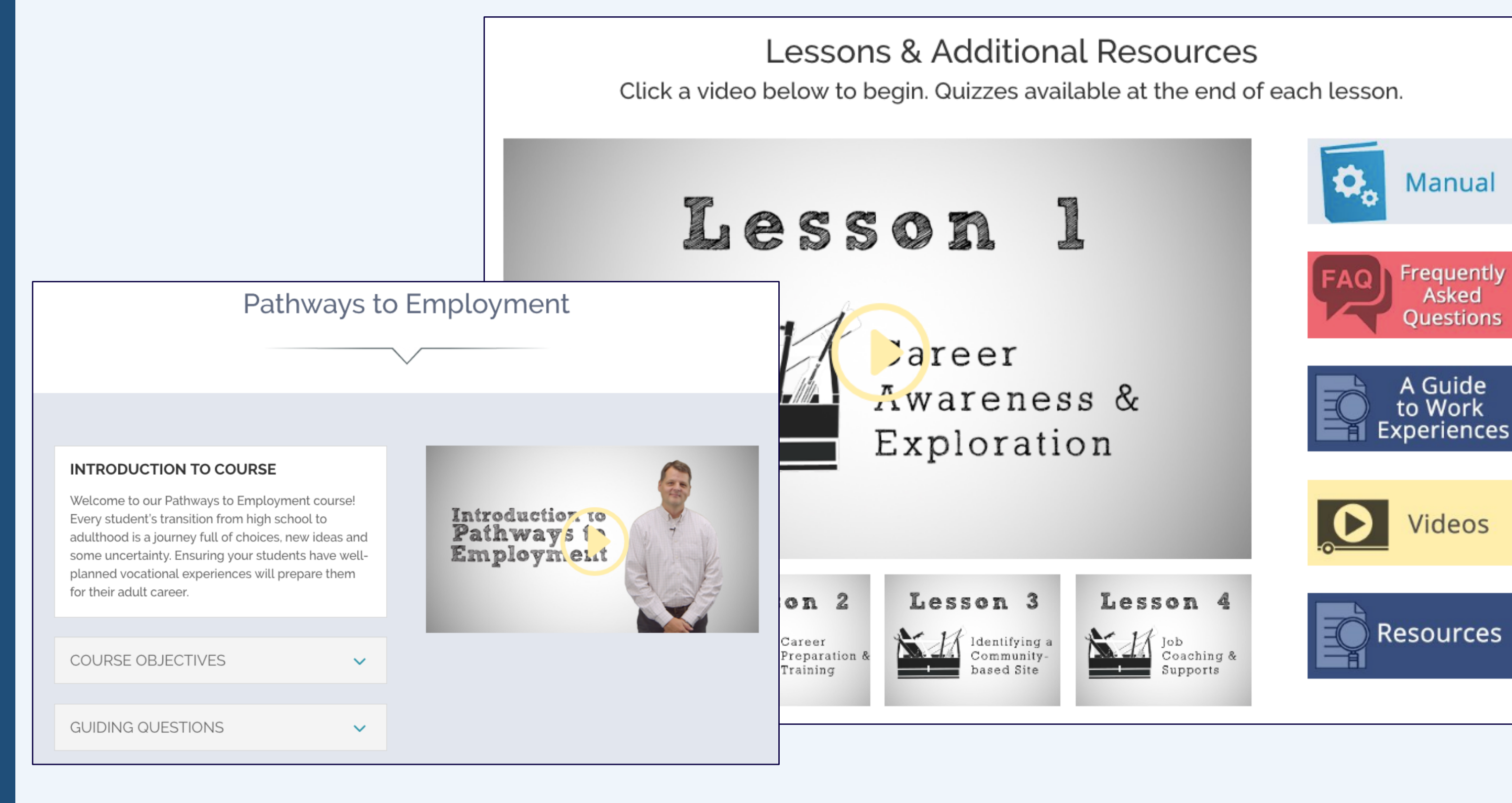
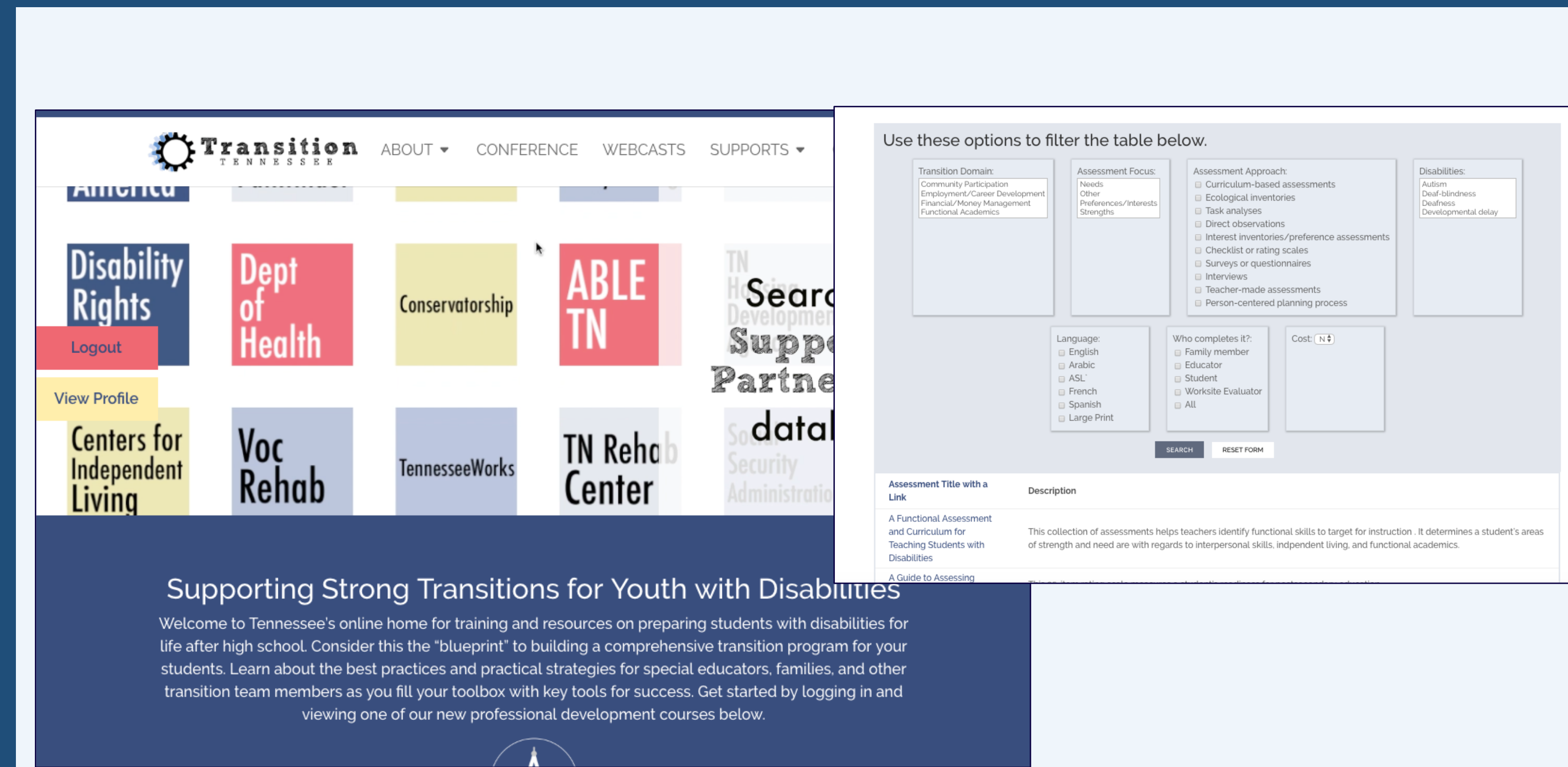
TRANSITION TENNESSEE: BLUEPRINT FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

- Transition Tennessee: Blueprint for Student Success provides training and support to schools districts and educators across Tennessee to improve transition planning and postsecondary outcomes of youth with disabilities entering adulthood.
- Beginning in November 2017, Vanderbilt entered into a 5-year contract with the Tennessee Department of Education to implement the following activities:
 - Targeted TA
 - Special education teams across Tennessee applied for free TA
 - 11 schools were chosen out of 40 applications
 - Consultants work with school teams, creating individualized plans to improve the quality of transition services for youth with disabilities
 - Each team holds a "community conversation" and surveys staff and parents
 - Communities of Practice
 - Educators meet with peers from neighboring districts to connect and network ideas
 - Best practices in transition are explored, while strategies for teaching these skills are developed

Areas of Technical Assistance & Communities of Practice



- Professional Development Portal
 - Over 4,500 registered users
 - Blueprint for comprehensive transition programming
 - Provides educators with knowledge, resources, and evidence-based practices that promote collaboration and leads to students being ready for postsecondary success
 - Release monthly transition webinars
 - Includes eight modules
 - Guiding principles, age-appropriate transition assessment, developing a high quality transition plan, pathways to employment, pathways to postsecondary education, pathways to community life, pathways to self-determination, supports and partnerships



TRANSITION TENNESSEE: PRE-ETS BLUEPRINT

- The purpose of Transition Tennessee: Pre-ETS Blueprint is to expand the capacity of agency personnel across the state of Tennessee to provide Pre-ETS to help students with disabilities achieve successful postsecondary education and employment outcomes.
- The following are three initial and ongoing efforts:
 - Pre-ETS Policy and Literature Review: includes the regulations for Pre-ETS under WIOA, a review of Pre-ETS implementation across the country, and resources for delivering Pre-ETS to youth with disabilities.
 - Initial development of a Pre-ETS online portal and modules:

Foundations and Fundamentals	Pre-ETS
Power of Early Work Experiences	Job Exploration Counseling
Overview of WIOA and Pre-ETS	Postsecondary Education Counseling
Partnering with Schools and Employers	Work-Based Learning
Student-Centered Approach to Transition Instruction	Workplace Readiness
Connecting to Employers	Training In Self-Advocacy

- Statewide needs assessment of stakeholders serving students with disabilities
 - Pre-ETS providers
 - School Staff working with transition-age students with disabilities
 - Parents of students with disabilities ages 14-22

Needs Assessment Topics
Introduction to Pre-ETS
Pre-ETS Knowledge
Barriers to Postsecondary Education and Employment
Interagency Collaboration
Training and Resource Needs
Demographic Information

INITIAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of Agency Personnel and Educators in Tennessee

Description	Agency Personnel		Educators	
	n	%	n	%
Total Cases	190	100.00	729	100.00
Age				
18-24	1	0.63	9	1.62
25-34	19	12.10	80	14.39
35-44	40	25.48	136	24.46
45-54	53	33.76	174	31.29
55-64	38	24.20	143	25.72
65 or over	6	3.82	14	2.52
Gender				
Female	132	81.48	495	86.39
Male	30	18.52	78	13.61
Race				
American Indian/Alaskan Native	7	4.24	17	2.72
Asian American	3	1.82	17	2.72
Black/African American	38	23.03	111	17.79
Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	2	1.21	7	1.12
Hispanic/Latino (a)	3	1.82	28	4.49
White	111	67.27	436	69.87
Other	1	0.61	8	1.28
Education				
High school or less	2	1.25	0	0.00
Some college	6	3.75	7	1.21
2-year/Associates degree	4	2.50	6	1.04
4-year/Bachelor degree	22	13.75	134	23.18
Masters degree	124	77.50	392	67.82
Doctoral degree	2	1.25	39	6.75
Type of Community				
Rural	72	43.90	283	48.21
Suburban	39	23.78	146	24.87
Urban	53	32.32	158	26.92

- 97% of agency personnel and 63.92% of educators have heard of Pre-ETS
- Agency personnel report more knowledge and confidence in identifying students who need Pre-ETS and implementing Pre-ETS
- Agency personnel and educators feel students with disabilities need Pre-ETS
- Both agency personnel and educators desire additional training related to Pre-ETS
- Agency personnel and educators believe that students with disabilities expect to go to postsecondary education and/or employment
- A majority of agency personnel and educators do not believe that students have realistic goals for education and employment and do not achieve their goals
- Barriers to success include: under prepared students; the students' type of disability; parent, teacher, and agency expectations and involvement; employment opportunities in the community; supports and services after graduation
- Overall, agency personnel reported a quality collaborative relationship with schools, whereas educators reported limited collaboration with agencies.
- Both agency personnel and educators believe collaboration to be important and have a strong desire to increase the collaborative relationship

WHAT'S NEXT

- Parent needs assessment
- Focus group interviews
- Statewide longitudinal datasets (P-20 Connect, TERA)
- Partners in Education: Passport to the Future Conference
- New Pre-ETS portal
- Statewide in-person trainings

For information about Transition Tennessee, visit us at <https://transitiontn.org/> or email jessica.m.awsumb@vanderbilt.edu