Resource Mapping

The purpose of resource mapping is to help transitioning youth find contacts so the barriers they face can be removed. Your resource mapping will identify the following types of resources:

* **Circles of support**—individuals who are close to a transitioning youth and are willing to be available to do whatever is necessary whenever it’s necessary
* **Individual contacts**—people who are willing to offer a specific type of resource when needed as long as it doesn’t interfere with their other priorities
* **Local associations, organizations, and clubs**—groups that exist for a specific purpose, but are willing to assist transitioning youth as part of their ongoing activities
* **Professional service agencies and institutions**—not for-profit and public agencies and institutions that have professional staff whose jobs involve providing services to youth

Your project will identify these resources and keep an ongoing record of them. While some, such as circles of support and local organizations, will not change over time, others will change. Individual contacts may move or withdraw their support. Professional service agencies may lose their funding, have key staff leave, or not be able to serve all the people requesting assistance. For this reason, **no resource map is ever complete. The minute it is finished, it needs revising**.

There are always more resources out there. Just because your team has completed its resource map, you can’t think of it as finished. It is critical that projects continually make new connections to expand and enrich your resource maps. This provides new resources, further engages the community in your project, prepares for the possibility that some resources may need to be replaced, and prepares the project for new youth requesting assistance.

**USING MAPS:**

Youth will require assistance with multiple barriers. Your project’s assessment of local barriers will determine where resources must be found, but the personal goals of each youth will determine what resources will need to be tapped. Previous projects have identified the following barriers:

* Opportunities to explore work settings
* Opportunities to get work experience
* Opportunities to interact with individual mentors
* Opportunities to be engaged in school and community activities
* Opportunities to take leadership role
* Transportation
* Health care
* Information in services provided by individual agencies
* Information on higher education and funding
* Information on careers and jobs

Resource mapping is an ongoing process that involves continually connecting with the resources your project identifies. While it is the responsibility of the project to begin and continually revise these maps, **each map belongs to individual transitioning youth and it tailored to their current situation and goals**. It is their map. Projects have a resource map ready so youth know what resources are available, and they may provide assistance in learning how to develop and access resources, but it is critical for successful transition that youth know how to access the resources on their maps, continually evaluate how useful each resource is, and develop new resources as their situations change.

The most resources will be needed by the transitioning youth who begin with the fewest resources. Youth not currently in school, youth with the most significant disabilities, youth with the least family support, and youth with the smallest or most dysfunctional circles of support will need access to the most resources. These will be the youth who face the greatest barriers to accessing resources. The role of the project involves:

* Improving and expanding access to resources
* Ensuring resources provide the services they are supposed to provide
* Ensure resources provide quality services
* Showing the benefit to youth and the community of your project’s successes

**In Summary**

* First you create the resource maps.
* Second, you share the maps with partner agencies so services flow more smoothly.
* Third, you share the maps with transitioning youth so they can use them in their transition planning.
* Fourth, you teach youth how to use resource maps to accomplish their personal goals.
* Fifth, you teach youth how to continually update and expand their own resource maps.
* Sixth, you recruit more members of the community to become resources.
* Seventh, you advocate for removing barriers so fewer resources have to be spent on fixing problems.
* Eighth, you expect youth to be leaders in providing and coordinating resources for the next generation of transitioning youth.