

Improving Transition Outcomes

An Innovative State Alignment Grant for Improving Transition Outcomes
for Youth with Disabilities Through the Use of Intermediaries

Lessons Learned from the Improving Transition Outcomes Prototypes

Value of Collaboration and Partnership:

- There is a difference between talking about collaboration and actually making it happen. “Sitting around a table talking about working together is not collaborating and does not effect a systemic change.”
- Partnerships are crucial to success.
- Be sure to include all stakeholders.
- If you want to teach youth the importance of networking, model that behavior by maintaining strong networks with your community partners.

Governance Group

Iowa Department
for the Blind

Iowa Department
of Education

Iowa Department
of Human Services

Iowa Division
of Persons with
Disabilities

Iowa Vocational
Rehabilitation
Services

Iowa Governor's
Developmental
Disabilities Council

Iowa Workforce
Development

Local Community Team:

- Include key school staff, i.e. counselors. The expertise of these professionals is valuable in planning and in tackling barriers that arise.
- Join forces with other groups that share similar goals. Alliances such as these strengthen the efforts of both groups.
- A skilled facilitator who can move the group toward solution consensus is paramount.
- Community ownership is vital to the sustainability of critical accomplishments.
- It is necessary to “Go Deep.” People leave and positions change. It is important to have multi-level contacts and commitment from each team member.
- It is critical to “Keep At It.” Periodically remember that by working together we can accomplish more and that a success is a shared success.
- Presenting information in a “non-blaming, non confrontational” manner is critical.

Local Chamber of Commerce:

- Develop a good relationship with the local Chamber of Commerce or business group.
- Rather than arranging the vocational exploration activities yourself, share your parameters with Chamber members and let them suggest the appropriate activities.
- Develop and nurture a contact within the Chamber. This individual can be an invaluable champion in setting up vocational exploration activities and business contacts.
- A strong partnership with the local business community is good for everyone involved.
- Whether you need supplies or equipment, negotiate free marketing in exchange for purchasing “at cost” from a local business. Doing so creates a win-win situation for all.
- Finding businesses and mentors is not difficult. Many businesses are eager to contribute to their communities and will encourage their employees to participate.

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- If you establish an entrepreneurship component, do not compete with a local business.
- Be ready with data and stories to tell businesses what's in it for them.

Value of Resource Mapping:

- Never stop resource mapping your community. Resource mapping is an on-going activity; think of it as a verb rather than a noun. We recommend that you start resource mapping earlier rather than later.
- A good way to start resource mapping is by attending local Chamber of Commerce meetings and sharing information on your prototype/intervention. At these meetings you can assess the willingness of members to serve as a guest speaker, allow business tours, or provide job shadow opportunities.
- If you can, conduct resource mapping as a group activity, the momentum created by a few volunteering may spur others to do the same. Be sure to note all who are interested in helping with vocational exploration activities.
- The ultimate goal is to have youth become their own resource mappers.

Value of Early Connection with Vocational Rehabilitation:

- Youth connected with Vocational Rehabilitation through the prototype had a 100% transition success rate; previously youth were "lost" a year or more before finally connecting with Vocational Rehabilitation and moving forward.
- Youth connected with Vocational Rehabilitation through the prototype knew that if they wanted a career change down the road that they could contact their local vocational rehabilitation counselor for assistance.
- Youth who don't have the resources to carry a transition plan from school to adulthood easily fall between the cracks and have a difficult time entering post-secondary education or the workforce later.

Value of Vocational Exploration and Work Experience:

- Job shadows, business tours and One-Stop Center tours are important elements to include.
- Youth learn about the variety of employment opportunities in the local community.
- Youth learn that work can be fun and reinforcing.
- Youth gain confidence in their ability to be an effective employee.
- Seeing enjoyable and successful work careers as possible makes school engagement more desirable.
- Vocational exploration is an excellent way for youth to find mentors.
- Continuous quality improvement among agencies that support transition is only possible once services become seamless.
- Good transition services can make adult services unnecessary.

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