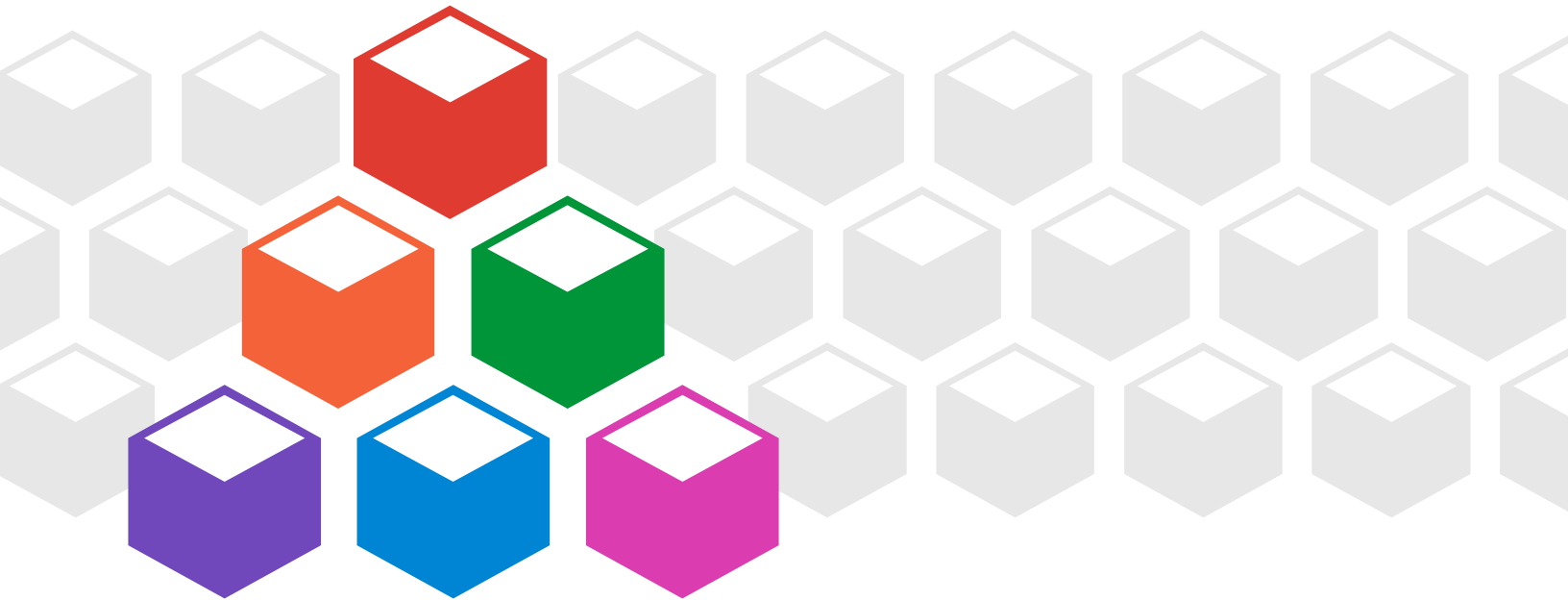




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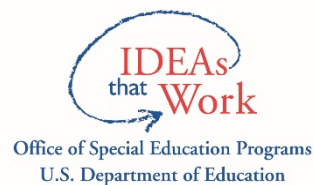
Resource Mapping and Flow of Services

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NTACT acknowledges the earlier work of the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition's (2005) *Essential Tool: Community Resource Mapping* as the impetus for this updated resource.



Resource Mapping and Flow of Services

As students transition from school to post-school life they will come into contact with multiple systems, entities, and professionals. For this reason, collaboration and interagency partnerships have long been promoted as essential components of effective transition practice (e.g., Noonan, et al., 2008; Test, et. al, 2009). Moreover, several recent policy initiatives have placed an increasing focus on programs and policies to facilitate transition planning to support students and youth with disabilities to make a seamless transition to adult life. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Rehabilitation Act as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in 2014, are two important examples of legislation, that place a strong emphasis on coordinating transition services for students and youth with disabilities using an outcome-oriented process to promote post-secondary education, vocational training, and competitive integrated employment (Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services, 2017). Effective alignment of systems and collaboration among various agencies can lead to desired outcomes including postsecondary education, training, and employment (National Technical Assistance Center on Transition, 2017).

Setting the Stage

To foster collaboration and effective alignment of systems, a critical first step in the planning process for interagency teams, with the assistance of a neutral facilitator, is to embark on a process of infrastructure assessment, analysis, and goal setting related to: interagency collaboration; data-based decision making; leveraging current initiatives; and professional development (PD) and technical assistance (TA) systems. This step-wise process can help facilitate data-driven decisions at the state and local levels for improving the implementation of evidence-based practices (EBPs), and increasing the number of students with disabilities receiving high quality transition services. Once this process is complete, the interagency team can begin to focus its effort on community resource mapping and developing a flow of services.

Community resource mapping and developing a flow of services is an effective strategy to promote a seamless transition for students and youth with disabilities. It is a process to organize information and to give direction to meet the common community goal. The major goal of community resource mapping is to ensure all students and youth have access to a broader, more comprehensive, and integrated system of services essential in achieving desired school and post-school outcomes. Resource mapping builds on the community's strengths by increasing the frequency, duration, intensity, and quality of services and supports in the community. When collectively pooled, resources for students and youth with complex needs can create a synergy that produces services well beyond the scope of what any single system can hope to mobilize (Crane and Mooney, 2005). As a result, families, students and youth with disabilities have more flexibility and choice in navigating the system.

The alignment of resources, streamlining of resources, and identification of service gaps within the community enables educators and service providers to:

- a) understand the full range of services available to students and youth within a community;
- b) understand the flow of services students and youth receive as they move through the transition process;
- c) define roles and responsibilities so specific supports needed by each student and youth are provided; and
- d) develop new services and supports targeted to fill existing gaps.

Organization of this Guide

In 2005, the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET), under the auspices of the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, developed an Essential Tool on Community Resources Mapping. The Toolkit was in response to numerous requests from states and local communities for community resource mapping guidance and tools. Since this time, we have learned more about what works to promote the collaboration and system linkages among those partners involved in providing transition-related services to youth with disabilities. As such, the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT) has revised the Essential Toolkit to offer new tools, examples, and outline evidence-based practices that work. It is our hope that key partners in the school-to-work transition process for students and youth, such as educators, vocational rehabilitation professionals, and other services providers, can use the information in this guide to better align services and promote collaboration.

What is it?

Seamless transition is a sequential delivery of specific preparatory and coordinated services that begin early in high school and continue beyond school exit. Critical components of those services include intentional activities to assess and build career interests, preferences, and skills including academic instruction and targeted curricula that prepare students and youth with competencies needed to be successful in employment and postsecondary education and/or training.

To create a seamless transition process, activities at each grade level should promote a natural progression with the goal of the young adult being employed after high school and/or enrolled in postsecondary education or training. Work experiences and paid employment should be central to the flow of services and include job development opportunities for student and youth with disabilities to be exposed to a number of different work experiences that lead to individualized, integrated jobs of their choice. Well-designed and consistently delivered services, focused on integrated employment, can lead to improved competitive employment outcomes for students and youth with disabilities.

Resource mapping is often the first step in defining a flow of services. This approach focuses on what the community (e.g., school, vocational rehabilitation, youth agencies and organization, etc.) has to offer by identifying available services and resources that can be aligned to define a flow of services, and ultimately build a seamless transition system. Although the research base for resource mapping is still growing, it is a proven methodology used to link available resources with an agreed upon vision, organizational goals, strategies, or expected outcomes (Crane & Mooney, 2005).

Why is it important?

A coherent transition service model, which includes research-supported interventions, allows for a more clearly defined pathway to employment. Work experiences and employment during secondary school years, family involvement, and direct connections with post-school supports are the key services that lead to a seamless transition for students and youth with disabilities (Luecking & Luecking, 2013), with the strongest predictor of post-school employment being paid work prior to school exit (Getzel, Rachel, Lau, 2013; Gold, Fabian, & Luecking 2013; Luecking & Luecking, 2013), regardless of disability label or intensity of special education services (Bullis et al., 1995, Wagner et al., 2014). A commitment to assisting students and youth with disabilities in accessing work experience opportunities in high school must include earlier and ongoing collaboration among schools, vocational rehabilitation, and other adult service agencies.

Resource mapping is a valuable process to identify career development activities and curricula offered by schools and other community partners. Additionally, resource mapping builds on what is currently available to develop a more results-driven system that supports an improved secondary school experience, and successful adult outcomes including competitive integrated employment and community living. In particular, the mapping process leads to: (1) in-depth information about a school and/or agency's policies, procedures, funding streams, curricula, and collaborative practices; (2) opportunities for meeting the transition needs of youth with disabilities; and (3) a comprehensive set of policy recommendations across agencies, along with opportunities for interagency collaboration.

Once community resources have been identified through the mapping process, interagency teams can then determine how the services will be delivered to students and youth with disabilities by completing their flow of services [See figure X. Flow of Services for the Maryland Seamless Transition Collaborative, 2013]. The flow of services depicts the sequence of how transition services will be delivered to students to promote achievement of a positive post-school outcome. Additionally, the flow of services development process provides an opportunity for cross-agency stakeholders to determine their specific role and responsibilities in providing these services to allow for enhanced coordinated planning, decreased duplication of effort, and alignment of student plans, such as the Individual Education Plan (IEP) and Individualized Employment Plan (IPE).

How do we implement?

In order to build capacity within a local service delivery system to better prepare students and youth with disabilities for competitive, integrated employment, time should be spent outlining the vision and key outcomes that partners want to achieve (Crane & Mooney, 2005). This initial process should not be overlooked or rushed and should occur after the interagency team has been developed. By spending time at the outset to identify a common vision and shared outcomes, via the infrastructure analysis process, for example, the team can identify and align their resources using the mapping process and subsequently develop a flow of services. Establishing this shared vision from the outset helps guide the mapping process, identify the key services and activities, and ultimately aligns with the overall vision and outcomes the team agreed upon.

It is often helpful to have an outside facilitator to assist the team to map resources and then define their flow of services. Once resources are identified, the team may want to start the flow of service process by outlining how and when the students and youth with disabilities will be connected to different services and/or agencies, such as VR, disability services, etc. By starting with this process, it ensures students and youth with disabilities are being connected to services that will increase the likelihood they can benefit from services agencies can collectively and collaboratively provide.

There are several principles unique to mapping efforts:

- Mapping strategies focus on what is currently available. The idea is to build on the strengths within a community and align them to develop a sequential flow of services.
- Mapping to define the flow of services is relationship-driven. A key to these efforts is the development of partnerships--a group of equals with a common interest to work together over a sustained period of time to accomplish common goals.
- This process embraces the notion in order to realize vision and meet goals, a community may have to work across programmatic and geographic boundaries (Crane & Mooney, 2005).

These principles provide the foundation for mapping resources. Resource mapping is a straightforward process which provides necessary information to define the sequential flow of services. Below are the four steps involved in mapping.

Step 1: Assessment or pre-mapping

- Identify partners and establish a task force to carry-out the mapping process
- Establish a vision for aligning systems for improved transition services
- Determine goals

Step 2: Mapping & developing a flow of services

- Select a process for gathering your data to “map”
- Identify and collect data

- Synthesize and analyze data
- Identify roles and responsibilities of key partners
- Align resource and services into a sequential flow of services for students and youth with disabilities, including pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities

Step 3: Implementation of services

- Communicate the flow of services to students and youth with disabilities, families, relevant stakeholders
- Prepare staff in delivering services in a sequential way and provide resources
- Provide technical assistance and support in implementing the flow of services
- Identify benchmarks or fidelity drivers for implementing the services consistently

Step 4: Evaluation/mid-course corrections

- Monitor progress and the impact of the flow of services
- Update the flow of services accordingly
- Continue to communicate with key partners and adjust implementation strategies as necessary

Several other best practices to consider during the mapping process to better define a flow of services include:

Early engagement in VR services:

Early and active engagement in VR has been shown to influence improved employment outcomes (Honeycutt, Bardos, & McLeod, 2014), therefore should play a key role in any effective transition system. The Rehabilitation Act, as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA), requires that VR agencies provide or arrange for the provision of pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities in collaboration with local educational agencies when a student in an educational program is 16 year of age, or earlier, if a State elects to provide pre-employment transition services at an earlier age. The VR program provides a continuum of services, including pre-employment transition services, transition services, and other VR services. Research demonstrates that it is important to provide employment-related services to students and youth with disabilities as early as possible. The Rehabilitation Act, as amended by WIOA, requires VR agencies to reserve an expend 15 percent of the Federal allotment on provision of pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities. There are five allowable Pre-ETS: (1) job exploration counseling; (2) work-based learning experiences; (3) counseling on postsecondary education; (4) workplace readiness training; and (5) instruction in self-advocacy. An effective transition system offers a structure to deliver these services to students. When partners take the time to map and identify what Pre-ETS are already being provided within the school/community, VR can then enhance services to students with disabilities by providing additional Pre-ETS that are not currently available in the school/community creating a more robust and efficient transition system for students with disabilities.

Developing partnership among key agencies:

Seamless transition depends upon functional linkages among schools, VR agencies, and an array of adult services and community agencies. The purpose of mapping resources into a coordinated flow is to more effectively deliver services, share information, solve problems, and continue to build a stronger structure to improve transition outcomes for students and youth with disabilities. Local educational agencies (LEAs) need to identify those key adult service agencies, including VR agencies, that can provide the critical services to help students and youth with disabilities successfully transition to adulthood and enter into employment. . The intent is to bring these partners together as a team to foster their collective expertise and combined resources to improve the quality of transition planning and competitive integrated employment outcomes. Establishing clear roles and responsibilities for each professional on the cross-functional team helps reduce gaps in service delivery, minimize duplication of services, and decrease unnecessary expenses.

Curriculum Mapping:

Curricula are integral to preparing students and youth with disabilities for competitive integrated employment. *Curriculum mapping* is a process to index the current curricula to identify and address gaps, redundancies, and misalignments. As a result, students and youth with disabilities have greater access and participation in courses and skill development that improve their career development and employment outcomes. Mapping a curriculum helps define the sequence of courses to better prepare students and youth with disabilities for college and careers of their choice.

Curriculum mapping is a collaborative process among special general, and career and technical educators, as well as other community partners (e.g., vocational rehabilitation agencies, adult service agencies, higher education, and employers). This team works to identify specific evidence-based practices (EBPs) and learning outcomes that prepare local students and youth with disabilities for successful employment in integrated, competitive jobs that align with existing college and career standards. The process identifies courses and activities currently in place, which offer youth with disabilities the opportunity to develop the skills necessary to gain the competencies needed to be successful in employment. The mapping process also can uncover gaps in skill development and issues with vertical course alignment across grades that allows the team to determine areas of need. Once areas have been identified, teams can determine how best to build the curricula, implement evidenced based practices and provide experiences to address the career development needs. Filling these needs can be addressed in a number of ways such as redesigning a current class curricula, adding a course to the schedule, establishing partnerships to provide community experiences for students and youth with disabilities, etc.

As a result, the curricula and mapping framework provides local systems a tool to:

(1) communicate expectations to students and youth with disabilities, families, employers, and community; (2) define skill development in the flow of services; (3) develop course content, materials, and supportive activities; and (4) ensure all students and youth with disabilities have

to access skill development necessary to prepare them for integrated competitive employment or enrollment and completion of post-secondary education opportunities.

Implications for Practice

System Level:

- Obtain buy-in from leadership within all partnering agencies at the outset of the resource mapping process.
- Develop a clear communication plan so all partners are informed in an efficient and timely way.
- Identify existing resource and services that align with your vision to define a seamless flow of services.
- Determine overlaps and gaps in services.
- Share information with the school and community about the resources available within the school, district, and surrounding community that may benefit all stakeholders.
- Ensure all assessments are collaborative and provide the job seeker with enough information to make informed choices about his/her future.

Student Level:

- Align the IEP and IPE, as well as other transition planning documents to promote a seamless transition from high school to postsecondary education and/or competitive integrated employment.
- Develop a transition plan to help inform the student or youth's preparation for the transition to college and/or career.
- Design a course of study to meet the student or youth's postsecondary expectation by integrating community work experience and appropriate academic curriculum, including career and technical courses.
- Identify the employment skills students and youth with disabilities need to be successful in their career.
- Ensure that students and youth with disabilities have access to all available school-wide career technologies, work-based learning, and vocational and occupational courses.
- Link eligible students and youth with disabilities to appropriate adult services (e.g. Vocational Rehabilitation, Developmental Disabilities Services, America Job Centers, etc.) prior to exiting school that will support him/her in work or further education.
- Provide systematic, age appropriate student assessments of career awareness (e.g., interest inventories, aptitude tests) for students and youth with disabilities to learn about their preferences and aptitudes for various types of careers.

Potential Roadblocks

Partners may lose momentum if they focus solely on long-term accomplishments.

Suggested approaches:

- Gather input from your partners and ongoing evaluation to determine whether the mapping process needs to be revisited to meet goals.
- Establish both short-term (i.e., “What can we accomplish in the next three months? Six months?”) and long-term goals.
- Ensure diverse stakeholders play a key role in helping the organization to meet its goals and sustain its vision.
- Do not be afraid of making mid-course corrections, as it is a sign of progress. Revisiting and revising the map and/or flow of services as needed can prevent costly missteps down the road.

Families, students and youth with disabilities may not be aware of, or be connected to, services that are necessary to maintain competitive integrated employment after exiting high school.

Suggested Approaches:

- Share information with students and youth with disabilities and families early and often to allow them an opportunity to understand and connect with needed services.
- Invite and engage VR and adult service agencies at parent teacher conferences, freshmen orientation, open houses, and other parent outreach activities to share information and build relationships.
- Provide brochures and one-page information sheets to families with timelines for when they should be connecting their students and youth to services.
- Provide opportunities for school staff to learn how to connect students and youth with disabilities to available employment and adult resources before they exit high school.
- Have students and youth with disabilities research their local VR agencies as well as various adult service agencies in their community as part of a school project.

Schools are unsure what employability skills are needed for students and youth with disabilities to be successful in competitive integrated employment.

Suggested Approaches:

- Invite businesses to be part of the planning team and ensure when they are present, the topic is relevant to their needs.
- Invite businesses to share their workforce needs, including the job skills required.
- Conduct informational interviews with employers.
- Coordinate additional business contacts and leads with current employer partners.
- Connect with VR agency and other adult service agencies who can share information about current labor market needs.

Staff do not see the value of incorporating employability skills into curriculum.

Suggested Approaches:

- Offer community-based experiences that allow students and youth with disabilities to develop employability skills.
- Reinforce the importance of teaching employability skills during professional development activities.
- Encourage school staff to visit local businesses so they can gain a better understanding of employer needs and the necessary skills for students and youth with disabilities to succeed after high school.
- Invite VR staff or other workforce partners to assist in identifying and delivering employability skills in the classroom (e.g., provide input into curriculum or guest lecture).
- Enlist general education and career technical education staff to help identify courses and activities across the curriculum that include employability skills development.

Resources

Below is a list of other resources you may find useful.

Toolkits

Competitive Integrated Employment Toolkit

<https://transitionta.org/cietoolkit>

Essential Toolkit on Community Resource Mapping

<http://www.ncset.org/publications/essentialtools/mapping/>

Interagency \Agreement Toolkit

<https://transitionta.org/interagencytoolkit>

Seamless Transition Toolkit

<http://www.transitiontoemployment.org/toolkit.html>

Tools (available in conjunction with this guide at www.transitionta.org)

- **Flow of Services Map** (TransCen, Inc.) – 1 page chart, depicting student outcomes, services, and roles and responsibilities of various stakeholder partners – See pages 3 - 5 of this guide to get started.
- **Mapping Worksheet** (National Center on Secondary Education and Transition – original *Essential Tool: Community Resource Mapping*) – charts with instructions, reflecting the steps on pages 4 - 5 of this guide.

- **Pre-ETS Mapping Worksheet** – tool for use by Vocational Rehabilitation staff to inventory existing employment-related services and resources provided in the school
- **Curriculum Mapping Worksheet** (Center on Transition to Employment for Youth with Disabilities) – instructions and a blank chart – See page 6 in this guide for more information.
- **[School/District Predictor Implementation Self-Assessment](#)** - a tool to facilitate identifying the degree to which researched-based predictors of post-school success are present in a program
- **Infrastructure Analysis Guide** – a guide to assist a team in identifying key components (implementation drivers) of capacity and infrastructure that may influence a program’s success

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