

Pre-Employment Transition Services:

A Guide for Collaboration Among State Vocational
Rehabilitation Agencies and Education Partners



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Introduction

Pre-Employment Transition Services

State educational, local educational and vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies each have mandates to assist students with disabilities in preparing for, obtaining, and maintaining competitive integrated employment. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), expanded the population of students with disabilities VR may serve and also requires that VR agencies provide, or arrange for the provision of, pre-employment transition services (pre-employment transition services). Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), schools are required to begin transition planning for students with disabilities no later than age 16 (many States start transition planning at 14 years old), or earlier, if the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team determines it is appropriate. Given VR and educational agencies are Federally mandated to provide transition services, there is benefit for agencies, students and their families to collaborate and coordinate services.

Collaboration among agencies, parents, and students has been cited in research as a predictor of positive post-school outcomes including paid employment (Test, Mazzotti, et al., 2009). Meaning, if partners effectively collaborate and coordinate services, students with disabilities are more likely to graduate high school, attend postsecondary training or education, and gain paid employment. However, anyone working as a VR counselor, or within a local educational agency (LEA), knows effective collaboration is often challenging to achieve and difficult to sustain. With that in mind, this practical guide has been developed to help facilitate collaboration and build effective partnerships at the local level between LEA and VR personnel. Unfortunately, there is no magic formula that will instantly create these partnerships; however, there are proven strategies and processes that when established, will help facilitate building effective collaborative partnerships.

This guide is divided into four sections with a variety of resources provided in the appendix. The four sections are:

Section 1: A Shared Understanding of Transition Services which provides an overview of WIOA amendments to the Rehabilitation Act and IDEA, offering a foundation to begin or enhance collaboration between VR and LEAs and schools

Section 2: Building Local Partnerships where day-to-day and annual practices are outlined that can be incorporated into local level collaboration to improve effectiveness of the partnership

Section 3: Coordination and Collaboration for Individualized Student Planning which outlines ways partners can identify roles and responsibilities to support the students as they guide their transition planning towards desired post-school goals

Section 4: Partnering with Families: Reimagining the Possibilities is devoted to the importance of family involvement and provides practical strategies on new ways to collaborate with families

The Guide sections are designed to provide the processes and steps necessary to build effective collaboration at the local level; specifically between educators, VR counselors, parents and other staff involved in assisting students with disabilities in preparing for, obtaining, and maintaining competitive integrated employment. Based on the current collaborative practices between VR, SEAs, and as appropriate, LEAs, teams may find some sections more relevant than others. Regardless of what section(s) a team uses, each section is equipped with tools local partners can use and adapt, along with resources to help further enhance and improve partnerships. The information and resources found in this guide include evidenced-based and promising practices, resources gathered from collaborative teams working across the country, and tools developed by federally funded national technical assistance centers.

A Shared Understanding of Transition Services

The IDEA and the Rehabilitation Act, as amended by Title IV of the WIOA, provide definitions of transition services, and though there are differences in language, the intent and purpose of these Federal laws have many similarities. For example, both laws have a common purpose for what constitutes the delivery of high-quality transition services. This provides a natural foundation for teachers and VR counselors to collaborate as they work with students and their families to reach their post-school goals.

In IDEA and the Rehabilitation Act, as amended by WIOA, the definition of 'transition services' means: a coordinated set of activities that are designed within a results- or outcome-oriented process that promotes movement from school to post-school activities including:

- postsecondary education,
- vocational education,
- competitive integrated employment,
- supported employment,
- continuing and adult education,
- adult services,
- independent living, and
- community participation.

The coordinated set of activities mentioned above is based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's strengths, preferences, and interests. Activities include:

- instruction,
- related services,
- community experiences,
- development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and/or
- daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation when appropriate.

In addition to the above, IDEA's definition includes a focus on improving the academic and functional achievement of students to assist with movement to post-school activities, while the Rehabilitation Act definition includes outreach to and engagement of parents or, as appropriate, the representatives of students or youth with disabilities.

Understanding Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Transition Services

IDEA lays out a process for education to follow in the design and delivery of transition services for students with disabilities. For individual students, this process is driven by the development of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) when a student turns 16 years old, as mandated by the IDEA (many States start transition planning at 14 years old), or earlier if determined appropriate. This transition component of the IEP is some-

times referred to as the *Transition Plan*; but should be considered as integral to the entire IEP and must include:

- Appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age-appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and when appropriate, independent living skills; and
- The transition services (including a course of study) needed to assist the student in reaching those goals.

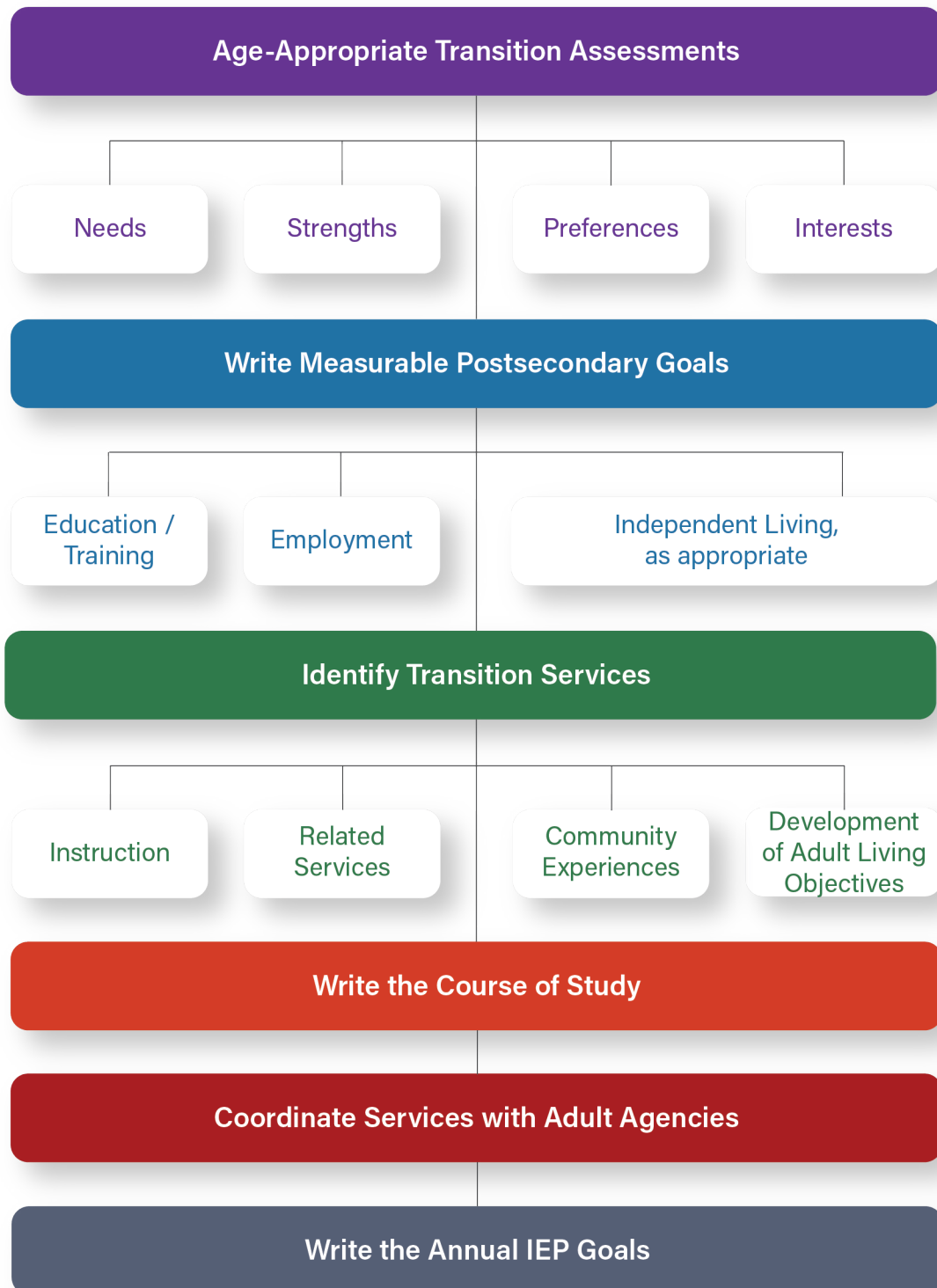
Additionally, IDEA defines transition services as:

- (a) a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that —
- (1) Is designed to be within a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, and/or community participation;
 - (2) Is based on the individual child's needs, taking into account the child's strengths, preferences, and interests; and includes:
 - (i) Instruction;
 - (ii) Related services;
 - (iii) Community experiences;
 - (iv) The development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives; and
 - (v) If appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.
- (b) *Transition services* for children with disabilities may be special education, if provided as specially designed instruction, or a related service, if required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education. [300.43]

To the extent appropriate, with the consent of the parents or a child who has reached the age of majority, in implementing the requirements of paragraph (b)(1) of this section, the public agency must invite a representative of any participating agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services [300.321b]

The *Transition Services Flow Chart* illustrates the process used in creating a coordinated IEP for a transition-age student.

Transition Services Flow Chart



Seattle University - Center for Change in Transition Services, 2010

The elements included in the transition components of the IEP include transition assessment, measurable post-school goals, course of study, and transition services. Coordination and alignment across the IEP and its *Transition Plan* (or transition components) is essential to helping the student identify and reach the goals they have set for themselves. It is also important to keep in mind that the focus of transition is on what the student will be doing after they complete high school.

Age Appropriate Transition Assessment

In the development and review of the IEP for a transition-age student, transition assessment is an ongoing process that collects information on the student's strengths, interests, abilities, preferences, skills, and needs related to current and future career, educational, personal, and social environments (Sitlington & Payne, 2004). Information gathered then helps the student, family, and IEP team develop post-school goals, measure progress toward these goals, identify transition services and design activities to support skill development needed for success in employment and the community. It's important to understand the assessment information each agency working with a student collects and how the information can be shared across agencies. Identifying how and what assessment information is shared will help align student goals and assist in coordination of transition services.

Measurable Post-School Goals

Post-school goals are considered the 'drivers' of the IEP. They are developed based on what is learned through the transition assessment and must consider the student's preferences and interests. Post-school goals are written to address each area; education or training, employment and as appropriate, independent living. Additionally, they are written so they may easily be measured.

Course of Study

The course of study is a multi-year plan that includes both the classes and activities necessary for the student to achieve their identified post-school goals. It is important to take into consideration not only the requirements for high school graduation but also requirements necessary to attend postsecondary education or training and for success in the student's chosen career.

Transition Services

Transition services are wide ranging and designed to help the student build skills and knowledge needed to achieve their post-school goals. IEP teams identify services needed in the following:

- **Instruction** in the skills necessary to achieve the student's identified post-school goals. This can take place in the school and/or community settings.

Examples:

- Instruction in self-advocacy/self-determination skills
- Instruction in workplace skills (delivered via CTE course)
- Participate in driver's education class
- Learn and demonstrate study skills

- **Community Experiences** that take place in integrated community settings and are designed to provide opportunities for career exploration, development of workplace skills and experiences that provide students information about post-secondary education and training.

Examples:

- Tour postsecondary schools and training programs
- Job shadow
- Business and industry tours
- Paid work in integrated employment
- Participate in internship or apprenticeship program

- **Related Service (Adult Services)** needed to achieve a student's post-school goals, both during and after high school

Examples:

- Complete an assistive technology evaluation
- Enroll in substance abuse program
- Participate in pre-employment transition services
- Work with school nurse on medication management
- Meet with college disability support office
- Meet with school counselor for assistance locating community mental health services

- **Development of Postschool Adult Living and Employment Objectives:** Employment objectives are designed to help students develop work related behaviors, career exploration, skill training and experience paid work. Adult living objectives include things such as registering to vote, renting a home, acquiring transportation, accessing medical services, applying for college, and benefits planning

Examples:

- Conduct informational interview with health care provider
- Complete vocational interest inventory and discuss results
- Learn about voting and where to register to vote
- Meet with benefits counselor

- Obtain information on managing personal health and fitness
- **Acquisition of Daily Living Skills** that will allow the student to live as independently as possible or desired. This includes the development of skills in self-determination/advocacy that develop a student's ability to make choices about where they live, learn, recreate and work in their community.

Examples:

- Manage daily time schedule
- Plan and participate in social activity
- Learn basic emergency procedures
- Learn how to purchase and care for clothes
- Plan transportation route from home to work and back

Annual IEP Goals

To ensure the IEP supports the attainment of post-school goals, it is important to develop annual IEP goals that directly address the student's areas of need (academic and functional skills) and will lead to the attainment of their post-secondary goals. It is helpful to identify and use the industry standards for the career the student has identified when developing and measuring progress toward annual and post-secondary goals.

Inviting Agencies to the IEP Meeting

To ensure that the students' interests and preferences are considered, IDEA requires that agency partners (i.e., VR, postsecondary education, Centers for Independent Living, Mental Health, ID/DD), be invited to the IEP team meeting as appropriate. After identifying which agencies should attend the IEP, the education agency must obtain written permission from the parents (or student at the age of majority) to attend the IEP. Schools should have a process in place that will facilitate communication with parents and provide timely invitations to agency personnel that will allow them time to arrange to participate.

Understanding Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

The Rehabilitation Act, as amended by WIOA (2014), expands the types of services, including pre-employment transition services, VR agencies may provide to students with disabilities transitioning from school to postsecondary education to postschool activities. Pre-employment transition services provides an early start to job exploration that assists

students with disabilities in identifying career interests which may be further explored through additional vocational rehabilitation (VR) services, such as transition services and other individualized VR services. Pre-employment transition services may begin once a student requests or is recommended for one or more pre-employment transition services; and must be provided or arranged in collaboration with LEAs.

These services are intended to provide students with disabilities the opportunities to practice and improve workplace readiness skills, through work-based learning experiences in competitive, integrated work settings, and explore post-secondary training options, leading to more industry recognized credentials, and meaningful post-secondary employment.

This increased emphasis on transition-to-employment in the Rehabilitation Act, as amended by WIOA, aligns with the IDEA to ensure that students with disabilities are provided work experiences before leaving high school.

Required Activities

The required five pre-employment transition services include:

- Job Exploration Counseling;
- Work-Based Learning experiences, which may include in-school or after school opportunities, or experiences outside of the traditional school setting including internships, that is provided in an integrated environment in the community to the maximum extent possible;
- Counseling on Opportunities for Enrollment in Comprehensive Transition or Post-secondary Education Programs at institutions of higher education;
- Workplace Readiness Training to develop social skills and independent living;
- Instruction in Self-Advocacy, (including instruction in person-centered planning), which may include peer mentoring (including peer mentoring from individuals with disabilities working in competitive integrated employment).

Pre-Employment Transition Coordination Activities

In addition to the five required pre-employment transition services, each designated State unit must also carry out responsibilities consisting of four pre-employment transition coordination activities that are essential for arranging and providing pre-employment transition services. Those are listed as follows:

1. Attending Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings, when invited.
2. Working with the local workforce development boards, one-stop centers, and employers to develop work opportunities for students with disabilities.

3. Working with schools to coordinate and ensure the provision of pre-employment transition services.
4. Attending person-centered planning meetings for students with disabilities receiving services under Title XIX of the Social Security Act, when invited.

Students with Disabilities who Can Receive Pre-Employment Transition Services

The Rehabilitation Act also expanded the population of students with disabilities who may receive pre-employment transition services. Prior to the reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act, VR could only serve students who were eligible for VR services. Now, pre-employment transition services can be provided to students who are eligible and potentially eligible for VR services.

Potentially eligible students are defined as:

1. All students with disabilities, including those who have not applied or been determined eligible for VR services.

A student with a disability is an individual with a disability in a secondary, post-secondary, or other recognized education program who falls within the minimum and maximum age requirements, and is either:

- Eligible for and receiving special education or related services under IDEA; or
- Is an individual with a disability for purposes of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

For the purposes of the definition of a student with a disability under the Rehabilitation Act:

- A recognized education program may include:
 - Secondary education programs;
 - Non-traditional or alternative secondary education programs, including home schooling;
 - Postsecondary education programs; and
 - Other recognized educational programs, such as those offered through the juvenile justice system;
- Minimum and maximum age:
 - is not younger than the earliest age for the provision of transition services under Section 614(d)(1)(A)(i)(VIII) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1414(d)(1)(A)(i)(VIII)) unless the State elects a lower minimum age for receipt of pre-employment services and is not younger than that minimum age; and

- is not older than 21; unless the individual State law provides for a higher maximum age for receipt of services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.); and is not older than that maximum age; and
- is eligible for, and receiving, special education or related services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1411 et seq.);
- is an individual with a disability, for purposes of Section 504.

The Five Required Pre-Employment Transition Services:

This section more closely illustrates each of the five required pre-employment transition services activities. Each activity illustrates examples of group and individual activities that can be provided.

Job Exploration Counseling

Job Exploration Counseling is meant to provide students with a variety of opportunities to gain information about careers, the skills needed for different jobs, and to uncover their personal career interests. A study by Solberg et al. (2012) revealed that students who participated in career exploration and other transition services in a quality learning environment had higher career search self-efficacy. This study also found that students with greater career search self-efficacy were more engaged in setting their goals, which further predicted their motivation to attend school.

If provided as a pre-employment transition services, job exploration counseling may be delivered in a group setting or on an individual basis and may include information regarding in-demand industry sectors, and occupations, as well as non-traditional employment, labor market composition, and vocational interest inventories to assist with the identification of career pathways of interest to the students.

Job Exploration Counseling includes activities and experiences that assist students to:

- Explore career options and identify career pathways of interest;
- Uncover specific vocational interests using inventories or surveys learn about skills needed in the workplace and for specific jobs/careers;
- Understand the labor market including in-demand industries and occupations; and
- Learn about non-traditional employment options.

Examples activities to deliver Job Exploration Counseling:

Individual	Group
<p>Complete a student Career Portfolio</p> <p>With student, review vocational interest inventory results</p> <p>Learn about and explore career pathways using State career information systems</p>	<p>Provide information about in-demand industry sectors and occupations</p> <p>Share and discuss local labor market information and how it impacts them</p> <p>Use O*NET to explore careers</p> <p>Arrange a panel of local employers meet with students</p> <p>Develop a local career fair</p>

Work-Based Learning Experiences

Work-Based Learning (WBL) is an educational approach or instructional method that uses the workplace or real work to provide students with the knowledge and skills to help them connect school experiences to real-life work activities and future career opportunities. It is essential that direct employer or community involvement be a component of the WBL to ensure in-depth student engagement. WBL may include in-school or after-school opportunities, experiences outside the traditional school setting, and/or internships. When paid WBL experiences are provided, the wages are to be paid at no less than minimum wage.

WBL includes activities and experiences that assist students to:

- Develop work skills through participation in paid and unpaid work experiences such as internships and summer or short-term employment in community integrated employment;
- Experience the application of classroom knowledge to the workplace through informational interviews to research employers;
- Gain greater understanding of necessary job skills important to success in the workplace through work-site tours and on-the-job trainings; and
- Learn from job shadowing or mentoring opportunities with people currently practicing in the occupations and career of interest to the student.

Examples activities to deliver Work-Based Learning Experiences:

Individual	Group
Connect student with a business mentor	Support students to participate in career competitions
Develop work sites aligned with student interests	Coordinate work-site tours to learn about necessary job skills
Students participate in local volunteer opportunities	Develop Job shadowing opportunities
Paid work experiences	Explore mentoring opportunities in the community
Internships	Tour local businesses
Individual job shadowing	
Share work site accomplishments with teachers, parents and student	
Informational interview	

Counseling on Opportunities for Enrollment in Comprehensive Transition or Postsecondary Education Programs at institutions of Higher Education

To improve employment outcomes and increase students with disabilities' opportunities for 21st century jobs, it is essential that students with disabilities and their family members are provided information and guidance on a variety of postsecondary education and training opportunities. These services may include information on course offerings, career options, the types of academic and occupational training needed to succeed in the workplace, and postsecondary opportunities associated with a career field or pathway. It may also include advising students and parents, or representatives on academic curricula, college application and admissions process, completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), and resources that may be used to support individual student success in education and training, to include disability support services.

The postsecondary options that should be explored include:

- Community Colleges (AA/AS degrees, certificate programs and classes)
- Experience the application of classroom knowledge to the workplace through informational interviews to research employers;

- Universities (Public & Private)
- Career pathways related workshops/training programs
- Trade/Technical Schools
- Military
- Postsecondary programs at community colleges and universities for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities

Example activities to deliver Counseling on Opportunities for Enrollment in Comprehensive Transition or Postsecondary Education Programs at Institutions of Higher Education include:

Individual	Group
<p>Learn about accommodations for college entrance exams</p> <p>Develop 'class shadows' in college and vocational training classrooms</p> <p>Work with student to identify, document and explain needed accommodations</p>	<p>Tours of university and community college campuses</p> <p>Plan a visit to local Job Corps campus</p> <p>Students learn the difference between special education services and post-secondary disability services</p> <p>Students learn about adult services and benefits that can be used during college attendance</p> <p>Set up a 'hands on' assistive technology exploration experience</p>

Workplace Readiness Training to Develop Social Skills and Independent Living

Workplace readiness traits describe a number of skills employers expect from most employees. Workplace readiness skills are a set of skills and behaviors that are necessary for any job, such as how to interact with supervisors and co-workers; and the importance of timeliness. These skills are sometimes called soft skills, employability skills, or job readiness skills. These abilities help students learn and build an understanding of how they are perceived by others. Employers value employees who can communicate effectively and act professionally. No matter what technical skills a job may require every job requires good social skills/interpersonal skills.

In addition to developing social skills and independent living, workplace readiness training may also include:

- Financial literacy
- Orientation and mobility skills
- Job-seeking skills
- Understanding employer expectations for punctuality and performance

Example activities to deliver Workplace Readiness Training to Develop Social Skills and Independent Living include:

Individual	Group
<p>Identify and learn how to use assistive technology in the workplace</p> <p>Use computer assisted simulation to learn specific job skills</p> <p>Discuss financial literacy and gaining a general understanding of how benefits may affect working</p> <p>Provide orientation and mobility skills training or travel training to help students prepare to travel independently to school, work, etc. by reviewing bus schedules and how to access various types of transportation that might be available in their home community.</p>	<p>Provide lessons on strategies to support independence at work such as time management, self-monitoring performance</p> <p>Simulations to develop social and communication skills</p> <p>Provide community-based experiences in shopping, leisure, and housekeeping (social skills and independent living skills necessary to prepare for employment)</p> <p>Develop financial literacy including banking and budgeting skills</p> <p>Provide team building experiences to learn how to work as a team or on a team project</p> <p>Provide lessons that cover a general or broad discussion of the types of things students need to consider if they would look to obtain a license, versus other methods of transportation.</p>

Self-Advocacy Skills/Peer Mentoring

The development of self-advocacy skills should be started at an early age. These skills will be needed in education, workplace, and community settings. Specifically, self-advocacy refers to an individual's ability to effectively communicate, convey, negotiate or assert his or her own interests and/or desires. Schools also work with

students to develop self-determination skills so students with disabilities have the freedom to plan their own lives, pursue experiences that are important to them, and have life opportunities in their communities. These acquired self-advocacy skills will enable students to advocate for any support services, including auxiliary aids and services, and accommodations that may be necessary for training or employment.

Self-advocacy skills are developed when students are provided experiences to develop:

- Knowledge of self,
- Knowledge of rights and responsibilities,
- Communication skills, and
- Leadership.

Example activities to deliver Self-Advocacy Skills/Peer Mentoring include:

Individual	Group
<p>Work with students to understand their disability and strategies that help them at school, work, and socially</p> <p>Use computer-assisted instruction to learn about and participate in their IEP</p> <p>Assist the student in developing goals and information to share at their IEP</p> <p>Mentoring with educational staff such as principals, nurses, teachers, or office staff; or</p> <p>Mentoring with individuals employed by or volunteering for employers, boards, associations, or organizations in integrated community settings</p> <p>Participating in youth leadership activities offered in educational or community settings</p>	<p>Develop and present a panel of recent graduates to share their experiences</p> <p>Select and deliver a disability disclosure curriculum</p> <p>Teach a class using 'Who's Future is it Anyway' to teach self-determination skills</p> <p>Work with students to select a community need and create a plan to address it</p>

Aligning the Work of VR Counselors and Schools

As discussed, aligning the work of VR counselors and school personnel will help strengthen collaboration, increase positive post-school outcomes for students, and, enhance agency (VR agencies, SEAs and LEAs) performance outcomes. Specific areas that are important to address are:

- Financial Responsibilities and/or Obligations
- Align IDEA Transition Activities with Pre-employment transition services activities
- Coordinate goals and objectives/post-secondary goals in the IEP with employment goal and services in the IPE

We have a lot of common goals and in a lot of ways we're facing the same challenges and we have different resources so it's important to know what each other does and to ask how we can use our resources best and identify what we do to really jointly work together.
– District Transition Coordinator.

Financial Obligations of VR and Schools

To support the delivery of pre-employment transition services, the Rehabilitation Act requires VR agencies to reserve and expend a minimum of 15 percent of the State's 4th quarter grant award amount or at least 15 percent of the amount of Federal funds that it had matched by the end of the FFY of appropriation, whichever is less, for the Statewide provision or arrangement of the provision of pre-employment transition services to all students with disabilities in need of such services. VR agencies may use the reserved funds to pay for the pre-employment transition services and any other VR services necessary for the eligible student to benefit from those pre-employment transition services in accordance with an approved individualized plan for employment (IPE) consistent with the requirements of Section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act. However, for those students with disabilities who have not yet applied or been determined eligible for the VR program (i.e., potentially eligible students), the VR agency may use the reserved funds to pay only those costs incurred in providing the pre-employment transition services identified in Section 113 of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 C.F.R. § 361.48(a), as well as auxiliary aids and services needed to access or participate in pre-employment transition

State VR agencies are also required to work in collaboration with education agencies to identify how these funds can best be used to address needs at the State and local levels. It is important to remember that VR funds reserved for pre-employment transition services should either enhance current services or create new services for students.

Pre-employment transition service funds should not be used for expenses that are the responsibility of the school, rather funds from both entities should be leveraged in accordance with the laws and regulations for those funds to create robust transition programs and services for students with disabilities.

Financial Responsibilities of VR Agencies and Local Education Agencies (LEAs)

LEAs are responsible for providing and paying for any transition service that is considered special education or related services necessary for ensuring a free appropriate public education (FAPE) as required under IDEA.

Nothing under title I of the Rehabilitation Act shall be construed as reducing a LEA's obligation to provide the above-described services under IDEA (see Section 101(c) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 C.F.R. § 361.22(c) of the VR regulations).

Section 113 of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended by WIOA, requires VR to provide or arrange for the provision of pre-employment transition services in collaboration with local educational agencies. Decisions as to who will be responsible for providing services that are both special education services and vocational rehabilitation services must be made at the State and/or local level as part of this collaborative process and will be further defined in the formal interagency agreement.

The State's formal interagency agreement lays the foundation and provides the basis for determining which agency pays for certain services.

Decisions about whether the service:

- is related to an employment outcome or educational attainment,
- or if it is considered a special education or related service,
- as well as whether the service is one customarily provided under IDEA or the Rehabilitation Act, are ones that are made at the State and local level by VR and education personnel.

The mere fact that some of those transition services typically provided under IDEA are now authorized under the Rehabilitation Act as pre-employment transition services does not mean the school should cease providing them and refer those students to the VR program.

If any of the five required pre-employment transition services are needed by the student with a disability and are not customary services provided by an LEA, the VR agencies and LEA must collaborate and coordinate the provision of such services. For example, work-based learning experiences, such as internships, short-term employment, or on-the-job training located in the community may be appropriate pre-employment transition services under the Rehabilitation Act, or may be considered transition services under IDEA, as determined by the IEP Team, in collaboration with the VR counselor, and dependent upon the student's individualized needs. The mere fact that those services are now authorized under the Rehabilitation Act as pre-employment transition services does not mean the school should cease providing them and refer those students to the VR program. If these work-based learning experiences are not customary services provided by an LEA, the VR agencies and LEA are urged to collaborate and coordinate the provision of such services.

Coordinating Resources

Coordinating resources for programs and/or positions can be one option that VR and educational agencies (i.e., SEAs and LEAs) consider when determining how best to leverage each entity's financial obligations in providing pre-employment transition services and transition services. For example, VR and educational agencies may enter into third-party cooperative arrangements or interagency transfer agreements or service contracts for the provision of pre-employment transition services. Some VR and local educational agencies have entered into agreements or contracts through which each pay a portion of the salary of a transition coordinator employed by the LEA. It is imperative that the VR agency maintain proper internal controls to ensure the proper accounting of the transition coordinator's time in order to ensure accurate cost allocation and accounting of the Federal funds reserved for the provision of pre-employment transition services. For more information on charging a portion of a school transition coordinator position toward the cost of pre-employment transition services, go to: <https://www.wintac.org/topic-areas/pre-employment-transition-services/faqs>.

Crosswalk of IDEA Transition Services and The Rehabilitation Act, as amended by WIOA Pre-Employment Transition Services

The following table lists examples of the five required pre-employment transition service activities under the Rehabilitation Act that VR counselors typically provide cross-walked with examples of IDEA transition activities/services typically facilitated by school-level practitioners via special education services under the IDEA. Activities align with the mandates of IDEA and the Rehabilitation Act and should continue to be facilitated by

both school and VR personnel. Together, schools and VR personnel should collaboratively implement pre-employment transition services that support students with disabilities in achieving positive in-school and post-school outcomes. It should also be noted that in addition to providing pre-employment transition services directly, VR may arrange for the provision of pre-employment transition services with another entity like a community rehabilitation program, center for independent living, school district, other vendor.

<p>Pre-Employment Transition Services (Rehabilitation Act, as amended by Title IV WIOA, 2014)</p> <p>provided and/or arranged by VR Personnel</p>	<p>School-Level Transition Services (IDEA, 2004)</p> <p>facilitated by School-Level Practitioners</p>
<p>Job Exploration Counseling:</p> <p>Conduct career and vocational interest inventories</p> <p>Connect interests to career pathways and in demand occupations</p> <p>Assist with transition and career fairs</p> <p>Facilitate activities related to job exploration</p>	<p>Conduct age-appropriate transition assessments in multiple areas (e.g., career interests, independent living, self-determination)</p> <p>Develop post-school goals aligned with transition assessment data (this may inform the identification of interests).</p> <p>Provide opportunities to watch career videos</p> <p>Invite guest speakers to present about careers within the community</p> <p>Organize and provide opportunities for students to attend transition fairs</p>
<p>Work-Based Learning Experiences:</p> <p>Facilitate opportunities for students to obtain work-based learning/work experiences within an integrated setting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recruit business mentors ▪ Paid or non-paid work experiences ▪ Informational Interviews ▪ Creating internships ▪ On the job training ▪ Job shadowing ▪ Worksite tours 	<p>Provide job shadowing activities</p> <p>Provide work experience rotations</p> <p>Provide school-based work preparation (e.g., mock interviews, resume writing, job applications, school-based enterprises)</p>

<p>Pre-Employment Transition Services (Rehabilitation Act, as amended by Title IV WIOA, 2014)</p> <p>provided and/or arranged by VR Personnel</p>	<p>School-Level Transition Services (IDEA, 2004)</p> <p>facilitated by School-Level Practitioners</p>
<p>Counseling on Opportunities for Enrollment in Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Educational Programs at IHEs (Postsecondary Exploration):</p> <p>Identify college and career exploration activities</p> <p>Connect students to resources that may be used to support them in postsecondary settings including application and admission process</p> <p>Assist in identifying academic accommodations</p> <p>Provide counseling on college affordability</p>	<p>Organize and provide opportunities for students to attend transition fairs</p> <p>Provide opportunities to visit college campuses</p>
<p>Work-Place Readiness Training:</p> <p>Assist students in understanding employer expectations</p> <p>Facilitate opportunities for students to apply soft skill knowledge within an integrated setting</p> <p>Assist students in gaining an understanding of independent living skills including financial literacy and orientation/mobility</p>	<p>Organize field trips to explore agency programs</p> <p>Connect students with agencies and encourage them to apply for adult services</p>

<p>Pre-Employment Transition Services (Rehabilitation Act, as amended by Title IV WIOA, 2014)</p> <p>provided and/or arranged by VR Personnel</p>	<p>School-Level Transition Services (IDEA, 2004)</p> <p>facilitated by School-Level Practitioners</p>
<p>Instruction in Self-Advocacy:</p> <p>Assist students in learning about their rights, responsibilities, and becoming self-aware</p> <p>Educate students on available accommodations, including how to request accommodations, services, and supports</p> <p>Develop leadership skills</p>	<p>Involve students in completing age-appropriate transition assessments in multiple areas (e.g., independent living, self-determination)</p> <p>Develop post-school goals aligned with transition assessment data (this may inform the identification of self-advocacy needs)</p> <p>Seek input from parents, students, and other IEP team members, related to post-school goals and transition planning</p> <p>Provide instruction on student led IEPs</p> <p>Provide instruction to support student involvement in transition planning, including research opportunities to identify what is needed to reach post-school goals</p> <p>Involve students in completing the Summary of Performance as a tool to access to services post-school</p>

In addition to the services provided by each agency (as indicated above), there are multiple areas for collaboration. The following table provides suggestions for areas of collaboration between schools and VR.

Areas for Collaboration to Enhance Services when Providing Pre-Employment Transition Services

Develop a formal interagency agreement with the SEA, as required in 34 C.F.R. § 361.22(b), and LEAs, if applicable, between VR and Schools that describes consultation and technical assistance, transition planning, outreach, roles and responsibilities specific to the provision of transition services, pre-employment transition services and VR services. SEA agreements may include the processes through which VR agencies, SEAs, and LEAs, if applicable, share information (e.g., data sharing, transition assessment information, student planning documents such as the IEP and IPE). SEA agreements are separate and distinct from any agreements or contracts through which VR agencies may procure VR services through LEAs (e.g., third-party cooperative agreements, interagency transfers, fee-for-service agreements).

Conduct joint planning with VR and School personnel to host a transition fair or parent information night

Invite and provide opportunities for VR counselor(s) to speak to students about the difference between pre-employment services transition services, and other VR services

Jointly plan and identify how VR pre-employment transition services might be coordinated and delivered differently for students with disabilities who are potentially eligible and eligible for VR services

Review how school programming may align with the five pre-employment transition services currently offered within the school, and discuss what, among the five Pre-employment transition services, is not currently available to all students with disabilities at the school in order to create a plan to fill those gaps

Jointly conduct mock job interviews with students

Ensure transition services and activities provided by schools and pre-employment transition services provided by VR align with the predictors of positive post-school outcomes

Identify and provide work-based learning experiences both at school and in community settings

Areas for Collaboration to Enhance Services when Providing Pre-Employment Transition Services

Implement a research-based model of interagency collaboration (e.g., CIRCLES) to address transition planning needs of students, to include pre-employment transition services

Jointly plan self-advocacy/self-determination training and experiences both in school and the community (e.g., self-directed IEPs, advocating for accommodations, disability awareness)

Continuum of VR Services

Pre-employment transition services may be provided for students with disabilities who are eligible or potentially eligible for VR services, and are designed to provide an early start in career exploration that begin a student's journey and should enrich, not delay, transition planning; application to the VR program and the continuum of services necessary for movement from school to post-school activities. If a student needs more individualized or intensive services, beyond the scope of pre-employment transition services, the student is encouraged to apply for VR services. It is not required for students with disabilities to participate in pre-employment transition services before applying for VR services.

Since the addition of the five required pre-employment transition services, the VR program can be characterized as providing a continuum of services, with pre-employment transition services being most beneficial to students with disabilities in the early stages of employment exploration. Pre-employment transition services represent the earliest set of services available for students with disabilities under the VR program, are short term in nature, and are designed to help students identify career interests.

Transition services represent the next set of services on the continuum of VR services available to eligible individuals. Transition services, for eligible students with disabilities, provide for further development and pursuit of career interests with postsecondary education, vocational training, job search, job placement, job retention, job follow-up, and job follow-along services. VR services, which include VR transition services for students and youth with disabilities facilitate the transition from school to post-secondary life, such as achievement of an employment outcome in competitive, integrated employment. VR transition services may be provided to students or youth with disabilities who have

applied for VR services, been determined eligible for the VR program, and in accordance with an approved Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

The IPE must list all the services the individual needs in order to achieve an employment outcome. For students or youth with disabilities, the IPE may include a projected post-school employment outcome. The IPE with a projected post-school employment outcome should outline the services and activities that will guide the individual's career exploration. The projected post-school employment outcome facilitates the individual's exploration and identification of a vocational goal based upon his or her informed choice. The projected goal may be amended during the career development process, and eventually it must be revised to a specific vocational goal once this process is completed.

Once a student has been determined eligible for vocational rehabilitation (VR) services, any pre-employment transition services the student receives must be included on the IPE. Even for those students who may use a projected-post school employment outcome and the plan includes only those services to assist in refining that employment goal, any pre-employment transition services the student would receive would still need to be included.

Employment-related services to eligible individuals are next in the continuum of services. These services typically are provided once eligible students have identified their career interests, have further developed and pursued their career interests through postsecondary education and vocational training offered through transition services, and are pursuing specific employment outcomes. Employment-related services are identified in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.48(b) and are intended to assist the eligible individual with a disability in preparing for, securing, retaining, advancing in, or regaining an employment outcome that is consistent with the individual's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice. While a continuum of services across pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities, and transition services and employment-related services for eligible individuals who have IPEs, exists under the VR program, the five required pre-employment transition services are the only services available to potentially eligible students with disabilities.

Coordination of the IEP and IPE

In addition to collaboration between education and VR around financial obligations/responsibilities, and providing and arranging for pre-employment transition services, WIOA amendments to the Rehabilitation Act strengthened legislation requiring the development of the IPE for a student with a disability to be coordinated with the IEP or 504 services.

For students with disabilities who have been determined eligible for VR services, the counselor will need to:

1. Develop an IPE in consideration of the student's IEP or 504 services, which means the counselor will need to not only have a copy of the most current IEP or 504 plan, but coordinate the goals and objectives from the transition planning section of the IEP into the IPE; and
2. Develop the IPE as early as possible during the transition planning process and not later than the time a student with a disability determined to be eligible for VR leaves the school setting or, if the State VR agency is operating under an order of selection, before each eligible student with a disability able to be served under the order leaves the school setting; and
3. Provide a copy of the IPE, with appropriate student/parental consent, to the school to ensure proper coordination of IEP and IPE services, and alignment of IEP and IPE goals and objectives leading toward a common post-secondary employment outcome.



Resources

- Pre-Employment Transition Services Common Terms and Acronyms (Appendix 1-A)
- Coordinating Resources- Arkansas Fact Sheet
<http://www.arkansastransition.com/images/wioa%20facts.pdf>
- Pre-Employment Transition Services Resources (Appendix I-B)

Building Your Local Partnership

Delivering pre-employment transition services and transition services required by the Rehabilitation Act and IDEA in a way that provides the greatest benefit for students can best be done through a well-developed partnership between VR and education agencies (LEAs) at the local level. This partnership that will provide the support necessary for collaboration and coordination required to deliver effective transition services students need to achieve their vision for life after high school. For collaboration to be effective, it needs to be focused on outcomes, be purposeful, and have carefully designed processes. This section of the guide is designed to walk VR counselors and local educators through the steps of developing a Local Partnership Plan that will assist in developing this type of effective collaboration.

The Local Partnership Planning Guide is developed using a series of practices that facilitates effective collaboration. A descriptor of each practice is provided along with guiding questions that teams can use to determine how that particular practice can be implemented locally. Additionally, resources and examples that other teams have found helpful are provided to assist with the implementation of the practice.

The Local Partnership Planning Guide can serve as a reference, for all partners, in outlining the organizational components of the partnerships. As partners evaluate the effectiveness of their collaborative efforts, a planning document is a way to reflect on what has been agreed upon as well as determine what, if any, changes need to be made in moving the work of the partnership forward. A template for the Local Partnership Planning Guide has been provided and can be found in the Appendix Section II- K.

The reminder of the Guide practices, resources and questions are labeled in the following manner:

 <p>Resources</p>	 <p>Local Partnership Guide</p>
 <p>Case Study</p>	 <p>Reflections from the Field</p>
 <p>Guiding Practices</p>	

Review Current Interagency Agreements at State and Local Levels

As the team develops the Local Partnership Plan it is important to understand and be-

come familiar with any current formal interagency agreements between Education and VR agencies. Both the Rehabilitation Act and IDEA requires that the State educational agency and the State VR agency have a formal interagency agreement outlining each agency's specific roles and responsibilities in providing transition services, including pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities. It is important to note that beyond the State interagency agreement, there may be a local interagency agreement between the LEA and VR agency. These interagency agreements are important to review to determine what has already been agreed upon by the SEA and VR agencies. The Local Partnership Plan is an effective practice should support and help operationalize any existing Interagency Agreements already in place, but does not replace the requirement for a SEA agreement that meets all of the requirements in Section 101(a)(11) (D) of the Rehabilitation Act.

Below are some questions to begin your review of State and local interagency agreements.



State Interagency Agreements

- What are the responsibilities of each agency in the State interagency agreement (e.g., VR agency, SEA, LEA, if applicable)?
- Does the SEA agreement include consultation and technical assistance, transition Planning, Outreach, and section 511 requirements?
- Are responsibilities for local schools included in the State interagency agreement? If so, what are they?
- Is there an agreement in place between VR and the local school district for delivery of pre-employment transition services and transition services? If so, what is included?

Local Interagency Agreements

- How will transition and pre-employment transition services be implemented locally?
- How will planning for individual students take place?
- How and when will agencies share student information?
- Are other service providers delivering pre-employment transition services? How are these coordinated?
- How does VR and the LEA work together to coordinate outreach to students and families regarding VR services?
- How does VR and the LEA work together to coordinate outreach to students and families regarding VR services?

A full set of questions for both the State and local levels are available in the NTACT Interagency Toolkit listed in the Resources, as well as on the WINTAC website.



- NTACT Interagency toolkit
<https://transitionta.org/interagencytoolkit>
- WINTAC Discussion Prompts - Interagency Agreement State Level
<http://www.wintac.org/topic-areas/pre-employment-transition-services/resources/discussion-prompts-interagency-agreement-state-level>
- WINTAC Discussion Prompts - Interagency Agreement Local Level
<http://www.wintac.org/topic-areas/pre-employment-transition-services/resources/discussion-prompts-interagency-agreement-local-level>



Administrative Engagement

Building solid collaborative partnerships between schools and VR requires administrative support from both entities. The importance of gaining administrative support cannot be overstated and should be your first step when developing a system for local collaboration.

School building administrators oversee the daily functions of a high school and it is important they understand VR's role and the value VR brings in working within the high school and with the students. Administrators can set the tone for the partnership as well as provide support to ensure staff have the time to plan, implement, and evaluate their joint work. Having the school building administrator's understanding and support, can help promote easier access to the school environment and students. In a larger school district, you may need to initially work with a Director of Special Education or Student Services and later, the school Principal. In smaller school districts you may be able to start with the school principal. The key is that school administration and front office staff must be aware and supportive of VR's role and presence in the schools.

The VR Regional/Office Manager and/or VR District Supervisor oversees counselors across the VR region/district and makes decisions about their schedule and workload. It's important that they be supportive of the time the VR counselor commits to the school and understand the value and time needed to build effective partnerships with school staff and LEA partners.



We keep the needs of the student at the center of our work. It makes sense to collaborate with VR because we both want our students to be successful.

– School Principal –

It is recommended that a face-to-face meeting be held between the VR Regional Manager/Office Manager and/or VR District Supervisor and the building/district administrator(s). This meeting provides an opportunity to discuss the common goals and student outcomes of each agency and how collaboration between the two partners can help build each partner's capacity to meet those goals/outcomes. It is important that both the VR counselor assigned to the school and the designated school point-of-contact for VR (if one has been identified) attend this meeting. Sufficient time needs to be allocated for this meeting to allow for meaningful conversation. Scheduling these meetings prior to or at the beginning of the school year is a good practice so expectations can be set for the upcoming school year.

Identifying a point-of-contact for both VR and Education in a local school provides a person who acts as a central resource for each agency. VR may have multiple staff working in a school; however, the point-of-contact would be the primary person for communication and answering questions related to VR. The point of contact(s) for education agencies serves as the primary persons responsible to assist VR staff in negotiating the school environment, i.e. determining a process for scheduling students, information exchange, obtaining documents, etc.

At this meeting, it is also important to discuss who else needs to be involved from VR and education agencies as plans are developed for how the agencies will work together and coordinate services for students with disabilities. Staff to consider are:

- administrators
- special educators
- general educators
- guidance counselors
- school nurse
- CTE teachers
- family liaisons
- work experience coordinators
- other VR staff (in addition to the counselor who will be working in the school)
- any community rehabilitation partners who are being contracted to provide Pre-employment transition services or are working with students on other services

It is helpful to identify a date in the near future when this broader team can be brought together to continue to work on the Local Partnership Plan.

Suggested Agenda for Administrator Face-to-Face Meeting:

- Identify common student outcomes
- Discuss individual and joint roles and responsibilities
- Discuss how collaboration between VR and LEA can leverage these roles and responsibilities – the value of the partnership
- Determine a process /date for how local education staff and VR personnel will plan, implement, and evaluate their joint work
- Identify points-of-contact for VR and the school if not already established
- Identify other VR and education personnel who support the delivery of pre-employment transition services and transition services
- Identify a space in the school where VR personnel can meet with students
- Discuss VR and school personnel schedules, to include school holidays/breaks, professional development days, early release days; and VR holidays



What's the plan?

- Who has been identified as the point(s)-of-contact for SEA and LEAs?
- Who is the assigned VR contact for the schools?
- What common student outcomes were identified?
- Where will VR personnel meet with students?
- Will VR personnel have internet access? If yes, any limitations?
- When will VR personnel have access to students?
- When can a larger group of VR and educators meet to complete the Local Partnership Plan?



Resources

- An agenda example for the Administrator Meeting: Appendix II-A

PRACTICES

Establishing a Process and Logistics for Day-to-Day Collaboration

The designated point-of-contacts for VR and the school should meet to determine how to operationalize decisions that were made at the administrative meeting.

These would include the following:

Scheduling VR Counselor School Time

Given the complexities of school schedules, setting-up a pre-determined schedule for the school year that includes the VR counselor and school staff is critical to fostering collaboration and delivering pre-employment transition services and transition services.

Things to consider when developing the schedule:

- Needs of school/students and VR counselor schedule
- Schoolwide and specific student schedules including assemblies, sports, family nights, school holidays and in-service days
- Coordination of teacher's planning times with times the VR counselor can be at the school
- School staff meetings and trainings that would be appropriate for VR to attend and share information
- Additional times when the VR counselor is available to meet with school staff, including general and special education teachers for coordinating planning for students
- Identification of when the schedule will be reviewed to address needed changes. This could happen at the semester, trimester, or other natural breaks in the school schedule
- Communication plan for the schedule, i.e., once a schedule has been identified, it will need to be communicated to educational personnel so they are aware when VR staff will be at the school
 - The school secretary or administrative support professional is a key contact who can assist with this communication
 - If there are multiple VR staff going into the school, they all should be aware of the agreed-upon schedule
- Identify dedicated space for the VR counselor to meet with students

When determining the VR counselor's schedule at a school it is important to discuss any specific check-in procedures, they need to follow including securing school clearances, background checks and security procedures. Additionally, a process should be developed on how students will be scheduled to meet with the VR counselor when they are at the school. Deciding from the outset how students' release time will be addressed will be beneficial for both the VR counselor's and school's planning.



For VR when partnering with schools

- Create a consistent, predictable schedule that is communicated to school personnel, and ensure any outside agency personnel meeting with the students do the same
- Send a reminder email to point-of-contact before your scheduled time to be at the school
- Build trust – follow through: do what you say you are going to do
- Understand the VR point of contract/VR counselor should be the link with the school even if multiple VR personnel are working within the schools
- Make yourself “visible” in the school

For Education agencies when partnering with VR

- Assist VR counselor in scheduling and gaining access to students
- Make time for VR counselor
- Understand that VR is dependent on schools to build connections with students and families
- Provide a dedicated space for the VR counselor to meet with students (even if it’s used for other purposes when the VR counselor is off-site)



- What will be the VR counselor’s individual schedule at the school?
- Are there other VR personnel coming to the school? If so, what will be their schedule?
- How will the schedule be communicated to staff and students?
- How will the schedule be adjusted if student caseloads increase or decrease?
- How will changes in the VR counselor’s schedule be communicated to impacted school staff and students?
- What are the building check-in procedures the VR counselor needs to follow?
- Where will the VR counselor meet with students?
- What internet access will be available?
- How will student release time be handled?



- Start of year Checklist (Appendix II - B)

Student Referral for Pre-Employment Transition Services and VR Services



When I started with a VR agency, there were very broken relationships with the schools I was assigned to. In the past, there wasn't much follow-through by the previous VR counselor, therefore teachers were not making referrals to VR because they did not see the value in doing so. My first step in getting more referrals was to start to rebuild those relationships. I started being present in the school, setting-up specific times to be there and met with the transition facilitators at each school.

Once I had a relationship with the facilitators and began to connect with other teachers our team was able to discuss how best to work together. We developed a tracking document for referrals, so everyone was aware of status of students in regard to their referral to VR. I met monthly with the transition facilitator to go through the tracking document. With this system, the referrals started coming in and I started to meet with families.

– IA VR counselor –

To build capacity of both school and VR, addressing a few important areas such as referral, parental consent, and communication will be beneficial. For students to benefit from VR services, the school and the VR counselor need to understand the referral process and the required documentation needed for students with disabilities to participate in pre-employment transition services and if needed, additional VR services that can be provided once a student is determined eligible for VR.

When determining a process for referral, education and VR partners need to discuss:

- Which students should be referred to VR?
Students with disabilities verified for special education, student under a 504 Accommodation Plan, and students with a disability for the purposes of section 504 (even if they do not have a 504-accommodation plan in place)

- When should a referral be made?

There is nothing in the statute or regulations that permit the VR agency to deny a VR application based upon a minimum age. The VR agency should take all applications regardless of age and regardless if the student has participated in or is currently receiving pre-employment transition services. 34 C.F.R. § 361.42(c) lists the prohibiting factors in the assessment for determining eligibility and priority of services which include age.

- What are documentation requirements?

For all students with disabilities, including potentially eligible to participate in pre-employment transition services, the following information is needed:

- Unique Identifier e.g., Student ID number
- Social Security Number (if available)
- Date of Birth
- Race-required if student is in secondary education
- Ethnicity – required if students is in secondary education
- Student’s disability
- Start date of pre-employment transition services
- Pre-employment transition services provided

Supporting documentation, relevant to the above-identified required documentation, may include:

- Case note documenting counselor observation, review of school records, statements of education staff; or
- Referral form for pre-employment transition services with the identification of a student’s disability, signed by school staff and parent/guardian if the student is under the age of majority in a State (parental consent to participate in pre-employment transition services is governed by State law, as well as policies of the educational programs and the DSU); or
- Copy of an individualized education program (IEP) document, SSA beneficiary award letter, school psychological assessment, documentation of a diagnosis or disability determination or documentation relating to 504 accommodation(s).
 - How will parental consent be secured?



For this county to have someone come in as the transition coordinator that families trust, and then have her invite other agencies, that's been the key for us in getting connected to students and families.

– MD DORS Counselor –

Education and VR agencies will also need to determine the best way to secure parental consent, if needed, for the student to participate in pre-employment transition services or VR services. Often the lack of a parent signature is the reason for the delay in students participating in VR services. This isn't to say it is the parents fault, rather to encourage Education and VR agencies to look at a process that not only educates parents on the value of their young adult participating in VR services but also development of process that is effective and efficient for the parent to complete the necessary paperwork.

In some cases, a VR agency's referral/application packet is sent home to the family without any explanation except for an introductory letter explaining VR services. The return rate of getting these referral/application packets back, or even a signed release/referral form, is often very low. Teams are encouraged to develop a system that is more individualized and personal to families. An entire family section is included in this guide to provide additional strategies on how to meaningfully engage families (see Section 6).



VR

- Develop a tracking form that can be shared with school that outlines which students have been referred, paperwork received, made eligible, etc.
- Communicate benefit of VR services to schools – share easy-to-understand information about VR services to include pre-employment transition services
- Thank key school personnel for the opportunity to work with their students, and share student success stories
- Maintain connections with school personnel – stop by the teacher's classroom, the counselor's office, nurse, the front office staff, and even the principal or vice-principal
- Be a valuable resource for educators and assist in making connections to other agencies
- Know your community and build relationships with other agencies/providers in the area who can meet the other needs of students/families in that school

Education

- Understand the VR agency is dependent on education to make connections to students and their families – school is the “trusted source”
- Have a champion for VR services in the school
- Assist with securing needed paperwork – teachers are the trusted source with families
- Provide support and partnering on a tracking system that outlines which students have been referred, paperwork received, made eligible, etc.



- How will the student be referred to the VR agency for pre-employment transition services or other VR services?
- What is the referral process for students who want to apply for VR services?
- How will parents/guardians and students be made aware of pre-employment transition services and VR services?
- What are the processes to gain parental consent?
- What will be the process to secure required documentation and paperwork?
- How will education and VR agencies work together to track receipt of paperwork, student connections to the VR program and eligibility decisions?



- Student Tracking form for VR Referral (Appendix II - C)

Coordination of Transition Services/Pre-Employment Transition Services



I'm just reiterating that I'm here to serve them and help make their job easier because when they're having to do transition plans for their students, I can help provide information, and I can help provide that missing link that they've had.

– VR Counselor –

The **Local Partnership Plan** is a best practice designed to assist local teams in planning for day-to-day operations of the partnership and in determining how to plan, coordinate, and implement services for individual students with disabilities. The identification of current services as well as the identification of service gaps enables educators and VR counselors to:

- Understand the full range of services available to students within the school/community

- Understand the flow of services students receive as they move through the transition process
- Define roles and responsibilities so specific, identified supports are provided to each student
- Develop new services and supports targeted to fill existing gaps
- Assist with communication to families on what services occur across years to support student skill development and employment outcomes
- Provide information to use for individual student planning

There are a number of ways to complete this analysis of services, however the important point is to ensure that time is allowed to complete this step to minimize duplication of effort and to ensure you are leveraging resources to create the most robust continuum of pre-employment transition services and transition services.

One way to complete this analysis is community resource mapping and developing a flow of services. The major goal of community resource mapping is to ensure all students and youth with disabilities 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. To find out more about community resource mapping and developing a flow of services as well as other mapping tools go to : https://www.transitionta.org/system/files/resource-mapping/ResourceMapping_FINAL_2018.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=1636

Other partners to consider when mapping community resources that could support students with disabilities in the transition process are listed below.

Community Rehabilitation Providers

Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) are organizations that provide employment services to enable individuals with disabilities to maximize their opportunities for employment and engagement in their community. CRPs have long delivered services that support the transition of students with disabilities from high school to competitive integrated employment. These services have been provided in a variety of settings (i.e., schools, community, and businesses) and supported by multiple sources of funding (i.e., school districts, VR, Medicaid Waivers). The passage of WIOA in July 2014 increased support for transition services through the inclusion of pre-employment transition services, with a focus on serving students earlier in their high school years. The focus on earlier engagement of students with VR while in high school as created increased opportunities for CRPs to serve students with disabilities in school and community settings.

As Education and VR agencies make plans on how to effectively coordinate their individual and joint services, when CRPs have been contracted by VR or Education agencies to provide pre-employment transition services or IDEA transition services, their service delivery should be incorporated into this process as well. At times a CRP may not be currently providing services within a particular high school, but as Education and VR agencies conduct their joint planning activities, gaps in services may be identified that could be potentially filled by contracting with a CRP for services. To learn more about how to most effectively partner with CRPs go to <http://www.wintac.org/topic-areas/pre-employment-transition-services/resources/crp-guidebook>



One of the things that we created was a set of transition services that are aligned with the pre-employment transition service categories. Since we've had that in place now, we've been disseminating it out to schools and the youth. It helps in our conversations at IEP team meetings talking about what the school is going to provide and how that fits with the pre-employment transition services and then what service may be helpful for that individual student.

– Transition Coordinator –

Developmental Disabilities Agency (DDA)

These agencies provide a comprehensive system of services responsive to the needs of individuals with intellectual disabilities. Persons served may also have other developmental disabilities such as autism, cerebral palsy, etc. The agencies typically provide a number of services to assist adults and children with developmental disabilities. Some of these services include; physical and occupational therapy, housing and living supports, employment support, environmental modifications, nursing services, respite care habilitative supports, family education, crisis intervention and in-school supports.

For students with developmental disabilities and their families it will be important to include the DDA in transition planning early to assist with the referral and application processes necessary to receive services. Some of the ways that the DDA may provide support for students in transition include;

- Participation in transition planning
- Collaboration with other transition partners to ensure that students have the needed documentation to qualify and access services
- Provide long term funding for eligible individuals upon school exit
- Provide case management to help coordinate services as student transition to adult services

Developmental Disabilities means a chronic disability of a person which appears before 22 years of age and:

- Is attributable to an impairment, such as an intellectual disability, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, autism or other condition found to be closely related to or similar to one of these impairments that requires similar treatment or services or is attributable to dyslexia resulting from such impairments.
- Results in substantial functional limitations in three or more of the following areas of major life activity; self-care, receptive and expressive language, learning, mobility, self-direction, capacity for independent living, or economic self-sufficiency.
- Reflects the needs for a combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary or generic care, treatment or other services which are of life-long or extended duration and individually planned and coordinated.

Mental Health Agency

Typically, the agency assures and provides access to services and supports to meet the mental health needs of individuals of all ages; enabling them to live, work and participate in their communities. The delivery of services varies by State making it important to learn about how your State and local services are structured. Populations of students that are

at high risk and who could benefit from services include those who are;

- struggling with substance abuse disorders
- are homeless or at-risk of homelessness
- aging out of the children's mental health, child welfare, or juvenile justice systems
- leaving long-term institutional care
- experiencing their first episode of major mental illness

Including Mental Health agencies in transition planning for students can help facilitate access to programs which youth are eligible and that support achievement of their identified post school goals. Services that are typically provided include;

- Case management services
- Supported employment
- Family support
- Supported housing
- Crises services
- Alcohol and drug rehabilitation
- Residential treatment
- Routine and intensive outpatient care

Independent Living Centers (CILs)

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) also had a series of amendments to Title VII of Rehabilitation Act which outlines the federally mandated services of CILs. Among these changes for CILs was the addition of a core service, Youth Transition. CILs are Federally mandated to serve people with disabilities of all ages and are required to be staffed and board governed by a 51 percent majority of people with disabilities Including the CIL in local partnerships provides the opportunity to increase the input into the design and delivery of transition services from adults with disabilities. The WIOA amendments have brought enthusiasm and catalyzed an increased interest for CILs to better support students with disabilities by:

- Providing one-on-one independent living (IL)-related skill building with students in addition to other programs and services that can directly impact IL skills.
- Provide mentors for students and their families
- CIL representatives can be invited to a transition IEP
- CIL staff can be members on States' interagency teaming efforts

Many VR agencies are also contracting with or authorizing services to CILs for the provision of one or more of the five required pre-employment transition services, including peer mentoring to students with disabilities.

To find the CIL near you go to: <https://www.ilru.org/projects/cil-net/cil-center-and-association-directory>

Businesses

Business partners are arguably one of the most essential partners needed at the table. If the overarching partnership purpose is to increase and improve post-school employment outcomes for students with disabilities, then it is logical that businesses are part of the equation. In other words, work experiences and jobs cannot happen without businesses as partners.

It is important to understand that there are three reasons employers will become involved in school-community-business partnerships, in this order: (1) to meet a specific company need, such as filling a job opening or address a production or service need (2) to meet an industry-wide need, such as preparing potential new workers in a specific industry such as technology, retail, medical services, manufacturing, etc.; and (3) to meet a community need, such as helping student with disabilities become more productive citizens, which in turn improves the business presence and engagement in the community (Luecking, 2004).

Some specific examples of how businesses can support students with disabilities and VR and Education partners:

- Provide paid work experience opportunities
- Provide employment and training opportunities in STEM occupations and other technical trades leading to industry-recognized credentials
- Network with other businesses/employers
- Provide work-related opportunities through job shadows, tours, mock interviews
- Meet current workforce needs
- Better prepared students for the future workforce

To learn more about how to build Community-Business Partnership: https://transitionta.org/sites/default/files/Partnership_Guide.pdf



Questions to consider:

- How will the current available services be determined and delivered?
- How will gaps in services be identified?
- How will the coordination of services be developed?
- How will roles and responsibilities in the delivery of services be determined?



- Resource Mapping Guide: https://www.transitionta.org/system/files/resourcemapping/ResourceMapping_FINAL_2018.pdf?file=1&-type=node&id=1636
- Pre-Employment Transition Services Mapping Tool: https://www.transitionta.org/system/files/resourcemapping/Pre-ETS_Mapping%20Worksheet_FINAL.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=1639
- Flow of Services https://www.transitionta.org/system/files/resourcemapping/FlowOfServicesMap_TransCen.pdf?file=1&-type=node&id=1637
- Mapping tool: https://www.transitionta.org/system/files/resourcemapping/Mapping%20Worksheet_NCSET.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=1638



Establishing Goals / Evaluating Progress

The steps outlined above, and the resources/tools provided throughout the Guide can serve as mechanisms to strengthen your local partnerships as well, as assist a LEA and VR agencies to identify areas of improvement. As you outline areas of improvement, it is recommended to focus on one or two improvement areas or goals each year using a Local Partnership Action Plan. This keeps the work manageable and provides opportunities for the local team to achieve success. Setting timeframes to achieve the goals as well as evaluate progress is recommended. Typically reviewing progress three times a year; at the start of the school year, mid-way through the school year and at the end of the school year, will provide the needed information on progress toward targets. Additionally, it is important to identify what data will be used to measure progress.

Examples to consider:

- Student participation in each of the pre-employment transition services activities
- Student progress in each of the pre-employment transition services activities

- Outcomes of student participation in pre-employment transition services, such as number in paid work and types of jobs
- IDEA Indicator 14
- Numbers of students in each grade and anticipated levels of need
- VR performance indicator data
- Graduation and Drop Out data
- Course enrollment (CTE, general education, transition specific course)

In the resource section you will find different types of action plans that teams use, and a team can also choose to use the Local Partnership Plan which has an action plan incorporated.



- What goals does the team want to focus on this year?
- How will progress towards meeting the goal be determined?
- When will the team meet to discuss progress toward goal?
- How will success in meeting goals be communicated to administration and other stakeholders?
- How will VR and education agencies use data to better serve students and families in transition planning and pre-employment transition services?
- What will you do differently now in terms of current and future programming as a result of what the data is telling you?
- How can you use the data to identify trends, support program and service expenditures, and enhance the provision of pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities Statewide?
 - Are students participating in summer programs finding more jobs, keeping jobs longer, etc.?
 - Are students receiving pre-employment transition services staying in school, more successful in post-secondary training, etc.?



- Transition Unlimited is an Alabama pre-employment transition services initiative designed to build capacity and connected services to appropriately implement pre-employment transition services through the State https://web.auburn.edu/institute/transition_unlimited_2018/login_info.aspx

- The Transition Alliance of South Carolina (TASC) supports local inter-agency transition teams to increase their capacity to effectively serve young adults transitioning from high school to adult life. <https://transitionalliancesc.org>
- Iowa Local School Plan template (Appendix II – D)
- Vermont Core Transition Team Collaborative Agreement. (Appendix II – E)
- Local Action Partnership Plan Template (Appendix II- L)



Scheduling Regular Times to Meet

From the outset, it is helpful to determine a regular day and time for school and VR partners to meet to plan, coordinate, and implement services for students. Identifying the purpose of the meeting and expected outcomes will help to ensure that both agency and student needs are met. Suggested meetings to include in the schedule are 1) An initial Meet and Greet with school staff in the beginning of the school year; 2) fall planning 3) the fall, winter, and spring school/community transition team gathers. Below is an example of a general schedule of team meetings for a school year.

Fall Meet and Greet

Who attends: VR counselor and other VR personnel working in the school, Special Education Director, special education teachers, school counselor, general education teachers, administrator(s)

[Note: School point of contact and VR counselor identify any additional attendees and determine if more than one meeting is needed to accommodate schedules.]

When: September

Timeframe: 30-45 minutes

Purpose: For the school point-of-contact and the VR counselor to share day-to-day logistics of VR and Education collaboration and discuss coordination of services for students with disabilities.

Topics to consider: Student population, the referral and application processes for VR services and scope of VR services available to students with disabilities, and identification of opportunities for collaboration of the implementation of pre-employment transition services and transition services. To model collaboration between the two entities it is suggested that the school point-of-contact and the VR counselor co-lead this meeting.

Fall Planning Meeting

Who attends: VR counselor and other VR personnel working in the school, Special Education Director, special education teachers, school counselor, general education teachers, administrator(s)

[Note: School point of contact and VR counselor identify any additional attendees]

When: September

Timeframe: 2- 3 hours

Purpose: To determine coordination of IDEA transition services and pre-employment transition services and other VR services, it is important to identify the strengths, duplication of, and gaps in services. By doing this at the local level, it allows staff to increase their capacity to leverage and align services for students with disabilities. This collaborative approach to providing services for students with disabilities not only assists professionals supporting the student, but also creates a more seamless process for students and their families.

Winter Check-In Meeting

Who attends: VR counselor and other VR personnel working in the school, Special Education Director, special education teachers, school counselor, general education teachers, administrator(s)

[Note: School point of contact and VR counselor identify any additional attendees]

When: January

Timeframe: 60 – 90 minutes

Purpose: To discuss progress, needed adjustments and next steps to continue to build and enhance collaboration between VR agencies and the local schools (LEAs).

Spring Evaluation and Planning Meeting

Who attends: VR counselor and other VR personnel working in the school, Special Education Director, special education teachers, school counselor, general education teachers, administrator(s)

[Note: School point of contact and VR counselor identify any additional attendees]

When: April

Timeframe: 2 – 3 hours

Purpose: The meeting should provide team members an opportunity to reflect on the work that has taken place over the school year. The team should evaluate their

joint progress by reviewing student and program data, identifying what worked well and areas the partners want to continue for next year and to make additions to the action plan. Setting a schedule for meetings that will occur in the next school year will ensure that's are in place and ready to go in August.

Scheduling and keeping regular times to meet helps maintain communication between the partners and keeps the momentum going in the joint work. Additionally, regularly scheduled meetings provide opportunities to bring new staff up-to-speed on collaborative efforts and the focus of the collaboration.



- What meetings does the team feel are important to schedule?
- When will the meetings be scheduled?
- Who will be invited to attend?



Meeting Agendas

- Collaboration Meeting Schedule (Appendix II – F)
- Fall Meet and Greet (Appendix II – G)
- Fall Planning Meeting (Appendix II – H)
- Winter Check-in Meeting (Appendix II – I)
- Spring Evaluation and Planning Meeting (Appendix II – J)

The provision of pre-employment transition services involves schools, vocational rehabilitation, and other community service providers, each bringing their own acronyms and language. It helps your understanding to have knowledge of some terms you will encounter in the course of your work. Some acronyms and terms are State- or local-specific. Do not be afraid to ask what a term means when you encounter a new one. Likewise, share with others the terms and acronyms commonly used by your agency.

Coordination and Collaboration for Individual Student Planning

To impact student outcomes, coordination of student services and effective collaboration of partners at the individual student level between Education and VR agencies, families, and students, needs to occur. Similar to system-level collaboration outlined in Section II; at the individual student level, collaboration needs to be focused on outcomes, and practices developed to organize joint work to effectively support the student. One of the key practices to coordinate services for students is effective communication between the student, VR and education agencies, and families to ensure everyone is on the “same page” to understand and support individual student goals. This ensures student services are aligned and leveraged to create a seamless transition process for the student.

This section highlights a number of practices and resources that can assist teams in building a seamless transition process for students and most importantly, outlines how the student’s voice can be incorporated into his/her transition planning process.

Student Involvement in Planning

Promoting student involvement in the transition planning process provides the opportunity for the student to make choices and decisions about their future, including identification of their strengths and needs; understanding their career interests and aptitudes; and guiding the development of their post-school goals. A student's involvement in transition planning and the ability to direct their individual plans are both evidence-based practices and required by IDEA and the Rehabilitation Act, as amended by WIOA. For students to be confident and effective in sharing personal information and have the ability to actively participate, they need access to skill development and necessary supports.

Using a person-centered planning process empowers students with disabilities and puts them in charge of defining the direction for their life. While there are different person-centered planning tools and resources, essential elements of the process should include:

- an opportunity for the student (and others) to share desired goals for their life;
- identification of what is important to the student - interests, preferences, and important relationships;
- identification of skills, personality attributes, and needs (e.g., supports to be safe and healthy); and
- provision of a safe environment to discuss and identify goals and a timeline for next steps (who, will do what, by when).

It is important to keep in mind that person-centered planning is not just a moment in time but rather a continuous process. Plan development takes into consideration that interests, preferences, and goals will change as the student has the opportunity for new experiences and identifies what's working and what's not working, as well as what they like and don't like.



- How will the student's voice be incorporated into their transition planning?
- What steps do we need to take to ensure students are prepared to lead and participate in their transition planning?



- The IRIS Center: Student Centered Transition Planning <https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/tran-scp/cresource/q1/p02/>

Student-Led Planning Meeting

There are many ways to ensure students are involved in their planning meetings (IEP, IPE, ISP). Involvement and leadership in meetings ultimately depend on how much the student has been involved in the past (which is why it is important for students to begin leading their meetings as early as elementary school). Once a student understands their disability and how it impacts them, their self-determination skills will improve leading to increased confidence.

In the beginning, students may simply invite and introduce attendees and their relationship to them (early elementary school); later, students can discuss their strengths and areas of need, as well as accommodations that work and don't work (elementary and middle school), with the ultimate goal of leading their meeting and creating their own goals and plans for the future (middle and high school).

Here are seven suggestions to provide support to students for any student-directed planning meetings:

1. **Discuss how the student's disability impacts him/her** – while knowledge of the disability "label" is okay, understanding how the disability impacts the student is more important (e.g., having difficulty processing written information versus having a learning disability).



I was pretty nervous but really proud of myself when it was over – I got to write my own IEP"

– Student with a Disability –



Usually it's a piece of paper and we are following along...instead of reading it, I could hear from (my son). I was very proud that he was able to articulate what his IEP was all about.

– Parent of a Student with a Disability –

2. **Explain self-advocacy** – some students may not be familiar with the idea of self-advocacy or how-to self-advocate. Let them know they can also bring an advocate to support them during the meeting.
3. **Clarify the purpose of the meeting** – informally discuss the purpose and process of the meeting. Who will be there, roles of attendees, outcome of the meeting, etc.

4. **Identify key concepts & benefits** – it is important that students understand terminology as well as their role in the outcome of the meeting. When discussing concepts such as pre-employment transition services, explain the different services and identify what is important to the student. Some students may have difficulty thinking about the benefits of leading the transition planning process. Discuss the outcome they would like at the end of the meeting.
5. **Discuss goals, dreams, and options** – support students as they set the direction of their future lives after high school. Discuss their goals and dreams – where do they see themselves in 2-5 years – where will they be working? Who will they be living with? Who will their friends be? Are they considering post-secondary education?
6. **Give students a key role planning the meeting** – identify areas where the student can take the lead, from scheduling and inviting participants to compiling a list of questions to ask during the meeting.
7. **Set students up for success** – advocating and speaking about future goals and supports in a meeting is intimidating for anyone. Be sure students have the information they need for the meeting. To help prepare, try the following:
 - Develop an outline they can refer to during the meeting
 - Role-play the meeting
 - Pre-record some of the presentation (video, audio, or PowerPoint)
 - Invite someone they trust to the meeting (friend, counselor, teacher, relative)
 - Make sure the meeting is at a time of day that doesn't conflict with a favorite class or activity

(Adapted from: Thomas, C.A., & Wehman, P. (2010). Getting the Most Out of IEPs: An Educator's Guide to the Student-Directed Approach. Baltimore: Brookes Publishing)



- How are students currently leading their IEP?
- What are ways that students led IEP meetings could be enhanced?



Student Information Tools

- PowerPoint templates for student-led IEP meetings <https://www.imdetermined.org/quick-links/student-involvement/>
- Toondoo (<http://www.toondoo.com/>) is a tool that allows students to create cartoons that can represent their strengths, interests, and goals for life after high school

- Voki (<https://www.voki.com/site/create>) is a tool that allows students to create their own talking character. Characters can be customized to look like historical figures, cartoons, animals, and the student.
- Opening Doors to Self-Determination <https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sped/pdf/tranopndrs-self-determination.pdf>
- Me! Curriculum – Lessons are arranged by unit and may be downloaded. Student and teacher materials, and additional resources can also be downloaded.
- Cantley, P., Little, K., & Martin, J. E. (2010). ME! Lessons for Teaching Self-Awareness and Self-Advocacy. Retrieved from <http://www.ou.edu/education/centers-and-partnerships/zarrow/transition-education-materials/me-lessons-for-teaching-self-awareness-and-self-advocacy>
- Student Directed Transition Planning (SDTP) – There are eight student-directed transition planning (SDTP) lessons designed to facilitate planning partnerships for students transitioning from school to adult life. The lessons teach students the knowledge needed to actively participate in their transition focused IEP meetings. <http://www.ou.edu/education/centers-and-partnerships/zarrow/transition-education-materials/student-directed-transition-planning>



I just think all across the board the communication is so important with everybody involved - the student, the parents, your Vocational Rehabilitation counselor, and any other agencies that might be involved in that student's planning

– Special Education Teacher in Arkansas –

Student Collaboration Meeting



I meet monthly with my VR counselor. I think that's really helpful. We have discussions about every student every month and we really look at their career goals and what they're wanting to do. We just bounce ideas off of each other. Then we take it back to the student to get their input. It might be that the counselor offers to do career inventories, job shadows, whatever is needed; we just start early during the freshman year and we have those conversations every month for three years, and then that fourth year really focuses on specifics and getting the student connected and a job or enrolled in postsecondary [program/course of study].

– Special Education Teacher –

As outlined in Section II, Scheduling Regular Times to Meet, to align and coordinate services for individual students, many teams find it beneficial to set-up quarterly meetings to foster collaboration, share data, and discuss transition programs and services. Additionally, it is helpful to set up a monthly meeting schedule to collaborate on student services. Monthly meetings provide an opportunity to share information about individual student progress, discuss specific needs, and figure out how to coordinate services to support the student to reach their goals.

Once VR begins providing pre-employment transition services and/or VR services to individual students, information about student progress can be communicated to education personnel. Additionally, as educators are conducting transition assessments, providing transition services, and developing the student's IEP, this information needs to be communicated to the VR counselor to help determine a student's next steps.

If a process to share information and coordinate services is not developed, there is a risk of duplication of efforts or services and, at times, education and VR agencies could be working on competing, or separate goals with the student. However, when communication occurs between the two agencies, the student benefits from the expertise and knowledge of both agencies and his/her services can be aligned.

Typically, teams feel they don't have time to participate in 'another meeting'; however, teams that adhere to regularly scheduled student collaboration meetings consistently share the long-term benefits to students, as well as the overall time that is actually saved,

based on everyone understanding their specific role and responsibility in supporting the student.

These meetings generally start in October and continue through May of each school year. The VR counselors, special education teachers and school counselor are generally in attendance, but others can be included as appropriate, depending on school context and culture. Most teams schedule 60- minutes for these meetings and allot time for a review of each student's progress in their transition plan.



In a larger school, with several hundred students, students could potentially be triaged based on priority of needs at the monthly meetings.



- When will Student Collaboration Meeting be scheduled?
- How will the team document and share individual student progress?
- How will next steps be identified and roles and responsibilities for service coordination be determined?



- Student Collaboration Meeting Agenda-(Appendix-III-A)
- Student Tracking Sheet (Appendix III-B)



Organize and Share Individual Student Information

Teams working with individual students often find it helpful to use a student planning tool. Having common student planning tools provide a way that information can easily be shared and used to align student services and activities. Three tools that students, families and teams have found helpful to organize and share information include the Positive Personal Profile (PPP), the Individual Student Flow of Services and the Transition Planning Organizer (TPO). The tools can be useful during the student collaboration meetings by providing a method to review and update student progress, share new information, and discuss changes needed to services or activities. They also provide an additional way to include the family and student voice in the ongoing transition process.

Positive Personal Profile (PPP): Provides an easy tool for teams to implement. Many teams use the PPP to collectively gather and document information, observations, interviews, and discussions with students. The PPP is intended to assist students in outlining their strengths, interests and dreams. When completed, the PPP can provide a clear picture of the student's positive attributes, as well as areas where the student may need support or accommodations.

Benefits of using the PPP include;

- It's designed to include information from multiple sources
- Is easily updated as new information is obtained
- Organizes information students can easily reference for job interviews and resume development
- Informs the student and team in the development of student's short- and long-term goals

Individual Student Flow of Service: In Section II of the Guide the Flow of Services is described as a tool that teams can use to outline the services available in that particular school as well as agency roles and responsibilities in providing those services. the local transition system. When working with an individual student, this system-level Flow of Services can then be used to inform and customize a student-level Flow of Services across years for a particular student based on the student's needs. The student level Flow of Services helps to share information across agencies and with families and students. It provides information that is useful in developing the student's IEP (course of study, transition activities), participation in pre-employment transition services, and can assist to identify VR services in the IPE.

Transition Planning Organizer (TPO) provides a way to organize information for transition component of the IEP development but could easily be adapted to include information used in both the development of the IEP and IPE. The TPO helps to align the elements of the entire IEP with the post-school goal.



- How will we gather information from the student and their family that includes their desires and goals for the future?
- How will we organize individual student information so it's easily accessed and can be shared with families, students and across agencies for planning?



- Positive Personal Profile (Appendix III-C)
- Positive Person Profile student example (Appendix-III-D)
- Tillson Article
- Individual Student Flow of Services (Appendix III-E)
- Individual Student Flow of Services student example (Appendix III-F)

Providing Individual Transition and Pre-Employment Transition Services

In Section II, there are examples of individual and group activities for each of the five required pre-employment transition services and well as an overview of transition services that can be provided by education. As teams are working with individual students, pre-employment transition services activities should be provided as an early exploration of careers based on the student’s interests. As the student gains more information about their preferences, services can continue to be customized to support their career growth. Using a student planning tool as described above assists the student and team to identify what pre-employment transition services and transition services would be most beneficial to the student.

The following chart provides examples of how individual pre-employment transition services and IDEA transition services could be provided to a student based on their particular area of interest.

Student Area of Interest: Construction		
	Pre-Employment Transition Services	IDEA Transition Services
Job Exploration	Attend local career fair in the construction industry (or work with local community college to create a construction career fair) with the focus on trades (to identify various types of careers from construction to electrician to architect).	Student will explore online career information with the school counselor.
Work-Based Learning	Obtain a paid work experience with construction company during the summer. Volunteer at Habitat for Humanity (as part of service learning).	Enroll in CTE Building Trades program grades 10-12 and participate in school and community-based work experiences.

Student Area of Interest: Construction (cont.)		
	Pre-Employment Transition Services	IDEA Transition Services
Counseling on Post-Secondary Education	<p>Research Building Trade Unions to identify potential apprenticeship programs</p> <p>Tour and meet instructors in the community college building trades program.</p>	Support for completion of FAFSA and application for community college.
Workplace Readiness	Participate in VR job seeking skills class.	Participate in building trades student organization as an IDEA transition service to develop leadership and teaming skills.
Self-Advocacy	Attend the Independent Living Center's self-advocacy training.	<p>Enroll in the Family and Consumer Science, Independent Living Class.</p> <p>Meet with teachers to request identified accommodations.</p>

Using the student's area of interest, job exploration, work-based learning, and counseling on postsecondary education can be tailored to help students identify the various career opportunities within that career area. For example, if a student is interested in gardening, there are many career opportunities beyond working in a greenhouse. Providing the student with a variety of experiences and activities will help them decide which area and type of job they are most interested in – from floral or landscape design, to greens keeper or grounds maintenance.



- What strategies and tools will be used to assist students in identifying the pre-employment transition services needed for their individual needs?



- Individual student planning tool (Appendix III-G)

Aligning the “I” s and “P”s

Aligning the IEP, Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) and other required student plans is critical to providing the level of service coordination necessary to provide a seamless transition that supports the student reach their identified post school goals (Test et al., 2009; Brookes, et al., 2009) Common areas of alignment are: assessment of students strengths and needs, post-school goals, activities and services to reach identified post school goals and measurement of progress toward reaching the post school goals. Although a student with a disability may receive pre-employment transition services regardless of whether he or she applies to the VR program, in order to receive individualized VR services, a student would need to apply and be determined eligible for VR services.

Individual Plan for Employment (IPE)

The IPE is a written plan outlining a student’s employment goal, and the services to be provided to reach the goal. An IPE must be developed in accordance with 34 C.F.R. § 361.45, and as early as possible during the transition planning process (34 C.F.R. § 361.22(a)(2)). When working with a student determined eligible for VR services, the VR counselor shall develop an IPE with the student and his or her family or representative, within 90 days from the date of application, and prior to a student’s exit from high school. If the VR agency is operating under an order of selection, the IPE is developed before each eligible student able to be served under the order of selection leaves the school setting.

The IPE may include the provision of employment-related services needed by the student that build upon services available through local educational agencies (e.g., community-based technical/occupational skill training

An IPE for a student with a disability found eligible for VR services must:

- Be based on an assessment carried out in the most individualized and integrated setting utilizing formal and informal approaches students to identify interest and preferences
- Identify either a specific post-school employment outcome or a more general, projected post-school employment outcome consistent with their unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities and capabilities
- State the specific services, including pre-employment transition services, transition services and other VR services, needed by the student for the achievement of the employment goal.
- Include the timelines for the achievement of the employment outcome;

- Describe who will provide the VR services and the methods to procure those services;
- Establish criteria to evaluate progress toward achievement of the employment outcome; and
- Include the responsibilities of the student and VR agency.

Transitional Components of the IEP

Information about the transitional components of the IEP and the process used in development, is provided in Section 1 of the Guide. The requirements laid out in IDEA are included here to help in the discussion of aligning the IEP and the IPE. The transitional components of the IEP must include:

- Present levels of academic and/or functional performance, a functional vocational evaluation when appropriate;
- Appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and, where appropriate, independent living skills; and
- Transition services needed to assist the child in reaching those goals;
- A course of study that enables the student to meet their post-secondary goals;
- Invitation to the student to attend the IEP team meeting. If they don't attend the IEP meeting, then other methods must be used to ensure the student's preferences and interests are considered;
- With prior parental consent, an invitation to any agency that currently, or may in the future provide transition services;
- Graduation requirements.

Partnering in IEP Development

When gathering the IEP team, and considering who to invite, it is important to remember that it is the school district's responsibility for obtaining consent for release of personally identifiable information before inviting outside agencies, including VR personnel, to IEP meetings, and discussing the needs of individual students. When an outside agency is invited to an IEP meeting, the school must obtain written parental consent (or student assent for a student at age of majority), prior to the meeting. It's important that the school district establish a process for obtaining the needed permissions ahead of time to maximize the VR counselor's participation in all aspects of Transition Plan development. States are encouraged to outline this process in their formal interagency agreement between the State Educational Agency and State Vocational Rehabilitation agency (34 C.F.R. § 361.22(b)).

For students currently receiving special education services or related services, as a part of their transition planning under IDEA, outside agency involvement should be considered every year after the student reaches the age of 16, or earlier if determined appropriate by the IEP team. The school must invite a representative of any participating agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services IDEA Sec. 300.321 (b) (3).

The VR counselor’s involvement and participation in developing the IEP is critical to ensuring that it aligns with the delivery of pre-employment transition services for potentially eligible students, and under an IPE for students found eligible for VR services. VR counselors will attend meetings for the development of an IEP when invited, with appropriate consent and depending upon availability. If VR counselors are unable to attend the IEP meeting, the LEA and VR agency will need to communicate regarding IEP and IPE goals, and necessary transition services, as early as possible during the transition planning process. It is important to note that, in accordance with 34 C.F.R. § 361.22(b)(1), VR agency staff may provide consultation and technical assistance to educational agencies through alternative means (e.g., conference calls and video conferences), in order to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including pre-employment transition services and other VR services.

The following Table helps to illustrate how alignment can occur between the IEP and IPE to improve coordination across school and agencies to support students achieve their post school goals.

	IEP	IPE	Aligned Plans
Student Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead meeting Participate in developing IEP Identify post school goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student assists in development of IPE Responsibilities of student written in plan Identifies employment outcome or projected post-school employment outcome 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student can explain how they will achieve their post-school goals Student advocates for their needs across environments

	IEP	IPE	Aligned Plans
Family Engagement	<p>Share student strengths/needs</p> <p>Participate in developing IEP</p> <p>Expectation of CIE</p>	<p>Provide information during assessment</p> <p>Holds expectation of competitive integrated employment (CIE)</p> <p>Completes necessary application for services</p>	<p>Better understanding of available supports</p> <p>Focused attention on students chosen career interests and goals</p>
Assessment	<p>Determine student's strengths, preferences, interests, and future goals</p> <p>Obtain information for planning in</p> <p>Education and Training</p> <p>Employment</p> <p>Independent Living</p> <p>Involve both student and parents</p> <p>Include information from other agencies</p>	<p>Carried out in integrated settings</p> <p>Uses formal and informal assessments</p> <p>Gathers information about student's interests and preferences</p> <p>Uses information obtained from student participation and performance in one of more of the five required pre-employment transition services activities</p>	<p>Information shared across agencies decreases duplication</p> <p>Utilize information from multiple sources and across environments</p> <p>One set of student strengths, interests, preferences shared</p>

<p>Plan Development</p>	<p>Driven by student preferences and interests</p> <p>Post-secondary Goals focused on employment</p> <p>Identify activities and services to achieve goals</p> <p>Develop Course of Study across years</p> <p>Annual goals support post-secondary goals</p> <p>Input from VR and other agencies</p>	<p>Based on student interests and preferences</p> <p>Includes services to meet employment outcome or guide career exploration and help define an employment goal</p> <p>Responsibilities of student and VR</p> <p>Evaluation of progress toward employment outcome or projected post-school employment outcome</p>	<p>One set of goals and outcomes focused on the same career area</p> <p>Identified needs are addressed by braiding and blending resources where possible</p> <p>Additional people increase the knowledge of and access to resources and services</p>
<p>Implementation</p>	<p>Coordinate services in school and with agencies</p> <p>Gather information of progress toward post school goal</p> <p>Student advocates for needs</p> <p>Review and adjust goals, activities and services</p>	<p>Coordinate with school, CRPs and other agencies</p> <p>Progress toward employment outcome or projected post-school employment outcome measured</p> <p>Work experiences are developed</p> <p>VR meets regularly with student</p>	<p>Evaluation of progress toward goal includes information from multiple sources and environments</p> <p>Coordination of resources increases opportunities for students to achieve their goals</p> <p>Communication among school, VR, student, family is focused</p>



To ensure there is alignment between the IEP and IPE, consider:

- Issuing timely invitations to planning meetings – have the student invite and request participation of VR counselors (teaching self-advocacy);
- Providing information at transition fairs, parent conferences, school open houses;
- Understanding schools and VR agencies have similar goals but use different language and acronyms; and
- Developing a glossary for all to use.



- What strategies will education and VR agencies use to align the IEP and IPE for students?

Partnering with Families: Reimagining the Possibilities

Education and VR agencies have been presented with a unique opportunity to reimagine the role families play in the employment and transition success of students with disabilities. As noted earlier, IDEA and the Rehabilitation Act, as amended by WIOA, have put an emphasis on serving transition-age students. This new emphasis has revealed the need to establish working partnerships with families. In short, you can't work with students without working with their families.

There is a compelling base of research and promising practices that suggest families who are informed and involved have sons/daughters who have better education and post-school outcomes. Research points to parent engagement as positively impacting school attendance, school behavior, homework completion, and overall school completion. For students with disabilities who have parental high expectations and whose parents attend IEP meetings tend to have better post-school employment and education participation.

Education and VR professionals who may have seen engaging families as an unwanted addition to an already packed set of job duties are encouraged to consider families as crucial to a student's education and employment success. The information and energy families bring to the table can help professionals feel better about their jobs and contribute to the outcomes all sides are seeking. The sections below are designed to help education and VR staff better understand families and provide concrete strategies for engaging families around student employment success.

The Starting Point: Empathy and Understanding



*If you have worked
with one family, you have
worked with one family.*

*– Chris Tiffany –
Executive Director,
Raising Special Kids
(Arizona Parent Training
and Information Center)*

The conversation around family engagement tends to feel adversarial at times with families complaining about what professionals aren't doing and professionals complaining about uninvolved or overly involved families. Tension between the sides has seemingly existed since schools were founded. But there is another way to look at the family school/services relationship. In this story there are no heroes or villains. It's more productive to assume all families want what is best for their son or daughter, and that all professionals want the best outcomes for their students. The trick becomes aligning the motivations and goals of the school or VR program with the motivations and goals of the families (all while giving youth a voice). A good

place for professionals to start is from a place of empathy and understanding.

In order to understand why a family makes certain decisions on behalf of their student it is important to understand the impact disability can have on a family. Having a child with a disability can bring with it a variety of emotions, from denial and anger to fear, strength or resolve. A disability can change the expectations for what having a child will mean in the long term, and this shift is very difficult. Having a child with a disability often leads to families leading complicated lives, with relationships, employment, and finances impacted. Many families adopt a hyper-vigilant stance, making safety and security the first priority for those with more significant disabilities. It is important to recognize that families may get bombarded with negative messages (subtle or overt) about what their child with a disability will be capable of as an adult. These messages can limit the view of what families see as possible and create, to the outside world, low expectations.

As the quote at the beginning of this section suggests, each family comes with their own unique skills, strengths, and challenges. Working with families should be seen as being

as individualized as working with students. It is important for professionals to be aware of their own practices and communication habits, practices and expectations of their organization, and ways those may or may not facilitate welcome and support for families from varied cultural or linguistic backgrounds. Seeking to understand what impacts a parent's vision for the future, and what causes them concern about transition and employment, can lead to stronger parent-professional partnerships.

Care vs. Support

Old models of providing services for people with disabilities were rooted in the idea of "care". People with disabilities needed to be taken care of, and goals like meaningful employment took a back seat to filling time and providing supervision. Our new understanding is that the role of professionals and families providing services is to "support" individuals with disabilities to reach their own goals and to live the lives they envision for themselves. Embracing a support model can also help professionals better conceptualize how to engage families. It is much easier to meet desired outcomes if all partners have high expectations and are invested in supporting the student to reach their goals. This also carries over to how professionals support families to play a role as partners and to access information and services needed to make informed decisions.

Defining Family Engagement: Focus on Outcomes

What is "family engagement"? Definitions tend to vary widely, even with the context of disability. The behavioral health world defines family engagement differently than the early childhood world. A good starting definition comes from the No Child Left Behind Act of 2010 and focuses on education, but can be generalized to VR work with students as well:

Parental involvement in education is the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving students' academic learning and other school activities. Parental involvement helps ensure that the following occur:

- Parents play an integral role in assisting their children's learning.
- Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their children's education at school.
- Parents are full partners in their children's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision-making and on advisory committees to assist in their children's education.

When engaging families in transition and the delivery of pre-employment transition services, it is crucial to include “partnership” in any definition. It’s important to avoid thinking about engaging families in terms of what service providers and educators are trying to get them to do. It is much more constructive to conceptualize family engagement as actively partnering with families on activities that lead to youth-centered goal setting, skill building, access to education and training after high school, and competitive employment. “Partnership” suggests that families are respected members of the team and they have a role to play in student success. Again, mindfulness regarding diverse cultural backgrounds of families engaged with professionals is important.

One reason why schools and VR agencies struggle with the concept of family engagement is that it tends to be ill-defined or defined in an abstract way that does not suggest actionable next steps. For example, a school transition team may be tasked with “improving family engagement”. But if goals are not set or partners identified that task becomes too broad, and relegated to a lower place on the priority list. One way to make family engagement easier to define is to focus on 1) the outcomes schools and VR agencies want to see as a result, and 2) the outcomes families express they want to see. Focusing on outcomes makes it much easier to map out roles and responsibilities and to evaluate effectiveness of efforts.

Here are some outcomes statements to consider as you identify local needs that can help to measure progress of local family engagement efforts:

- Increased parent participation in IEP or key VR meetings
- Timely completion of required paperwork
- Increase in parental expectations for competitive employment
- Improved understanding by families of their role in the transition process
- Increased engagement of students in the transition and employment process
- Increased dissemination of resource materials to families and students
- Increased partnerships with community-based agencies serving families
- Improved outreach to multicultural families (including translated materials)
- Increased community-based work experience opportunities
- Improved understanding by families of the impact of Social Security benefits on employment/increased financial literacy
- Increased number of staff trained on effective family engagement

Aligning Pre-Employment Transition Services and Family Engagement

Since family engagement activities are not explicitly mentioned in the list of the five required services under pre-employment transition services, many VR agencies may provide training and instruction in support of providing the five required activities, to VR counselors, school transition personnel, and other persons supporting students with disabilities, such as their parents or guardians. Engaging families in transition and employment services for their sons and daughters is essential to student success. Therefore, education and VR agencies collaborating to deliver pre-employment transition services may want to explore how to leverage partnerships with families.

In a Fall 2016 presentation at the Counsel of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) conference, representatives from the Rehabilitation Services Administration addressed how pre-employment transition services dollars can be used.

Based on the statement, involving families in outreach to students and required activities or trainings may have a positive impact on both improving student outcomes and supporting the arrangement and provision of required activities. Possible authorized activities that meet this standard may include:

- Parent training workshops that focus on building parent capacity to be a partner in the employment preparation and success for students with disabilities.
- Parent-student focused outreach and development of training resources such as podcasts, webcasts, videos, and printable handouts.



If funds reserved for the provision of pre-employment transition services remain after all necessary “required” activities have been provided, the VR agency may provide other “authorized” activities that 1) Improve the transition of students with disabilities from school to postsecondary education or an employment outcome, and 2) Support the arrangement or provision of the “required” activities. States must determine whether the funds reserved for the provision for pre-employment transition services are sufficient to meet the pre-employment transition needs for all students in need of such activities, prior to utilizing reserved funds for “authorized” activities.

- Training for employment providers in building effective partnerships with families.
- Training for cross-agency school teams on engaging families and facilitating their role as partners

It also should be mentioned that if Federal funds reserved for the provision of pre-employment transition services are available after providing required activities Statewide to all students in need of such services, VR agencies may engage in authorized activities, such as training and instruction to parents who are supporting the participation of students with disabilities in required activities. If reserved funds are not available for this specific training and instruction to VR, school personnel and families, non-reserved funds may be available. For example, a State Rehabilitation Council could recommend the VR agency use non-reserved funds to support an annual survey of families. The education side has been leveraging various funding streams for parent training and parent resource materials for decades. However, the investment seems to be inconsistent and not always focused on transition, employment, and supporting families as partners. VR and education agencies should re-evaluate their investment in family partnerships to make sure this critical aspect gets paid the proper attention.



Carol Pankow, Director for Minnesota State Services for the Blind (SSB), knew her agency was going to need some help. The passing of WIOA amendments and the requirement to deliver Pre-Employment Transition Services put a spotlight on providing services to transition-age students. “We knew our staff was really good at serving adults, but we had questions about our capacity to serve an increased number of students and families”, stated Pankow. She decided to bring in outside expertise in the form of the PACER Center, Minnesota’s Parent Training and Information Center. Carol knew that SSB had a low number of transition-age students Statewide and thought Pre-employment transition services funding could be used to improve outreach and resources to families under authorized activities. Minnesota State Services for the Blind.

SSB and PACER worked together to identify needs of students, families, and staff that could be addressed through the collaboration. “Our plan was to have designated pre-employment transition services counselors, so having resources they could use was a priority.” said Carol. The ambitious project saw the development of a parent survey, a pre-employment transition services toolkit for counselors, videos and podcasts, parent training sessions co-presented by PACER and SSB staff, focus groups, and specialized training for SSB staff.

Says Pankow, "This is a groundbreaking project. Minnesota is the first State to partner with a parent training center for pre-employment transition services. We have been able to tap into PACER's incredible resources and knowledge."

The impact of this collaboration has been wide ranging. Overall, SSB staff learned of the importance of the family voice and how it can be used to evaluate and improve programs. The targeted staff training on topics like special education, the family role in preparing youth for employment, and bullying has grown staff capacity. "Thanks to this training, my staff now speak up at IEP meetings and know what the process should look like. They are better advocates for families and students," reflects Carol.

The pre-employment transition services toolkit has also allowed new pre-employment transition services counselors to hit the ground running in terms of partnering with families and schools.

Carol offered this final thought, "I would strongly encourage any VR agency who is seeking to improve their ability to work with families to explore using pre-employment transition services dollars and to establish a working relationship with their State's parent center. It has been an extremely positive experience for SSB."

Strategies to Engage Families Around Employment



Build Trusting Relationships

A trusting, respectful, mutually beneficial relationship between professionals and families is the foundation for a lasting partnership. Unfortunately, this can be more difficult than it seems. Establishing trusting relationships with families is not a skill every professional has, nor is it always laid out as an explicit expectation of the job. On the flip side, families may be mistrustful of professionals or misunderstand what each person's roles and responsibilities are.

Building working relationships with families takes time, and should be rooted in three goals: 1) Clarifying expectations and the goal of preparing youth with success in competitive employment, 2) Conveying to families that you understand the student's unique talents, skills, and support needs, and make decisions based on a mutually agreed upon (including the student) vision for the future, and 3) Providing information and support to families so they can play a true partnership role in the process.

Consider these strategies for building trusting relationships with families:

- Use a person-centered planning approach to get to know the student better and to involve families in setting a vision for the future;
- Connect with families prior to important meetings to make sure they understand what the plan for preparing for employment is and are comfortable with steps and partners;
- Share successes frequently. Don't let families equate hearing from you with getting bad or discouraging news; and
- Make it a habit to ask the simple questions: How are you doing? Are you comfortable with the way things are going? Is there anything you don't understand?



Set the Expectation with Effective Communication



If you have not gotten a response, you have not communicated.

– Barb Ziemke –
PACER Center

It is essential that families are aware of and agree with the expectation of eventual paid competitive employment in the community and have been informed about the steps to reach that goal. In many cases families and professionals are not on the same page because base expectations and program components were not effectively communicated. Consider the ways you commonly communicate with families. Is it more passive, such as notes home or messages on an answering machine, or do you strive to make sure that you have an actual interaction, so your information is heard?

Here are some more ideas for establishing effective communication with families:

- Find which method of communication works best for each family. Some may respond better to notes home while others may need a text or an opportunity to visit in person.
- Provide families with copies of the IEP and/or IPE with the clear steps that are employment focused highlighted. Many families don't realize that there are employment related goals and objectives in the IEP, and therefore are unaware of how employment is being addressed.
- Communicate successes more often than challenges. A quick text saying a student did well during a work experience or made progress on a goal can go a long way towards building enthusiasm about a positive employment future.
- Use more direct communication such as phone calls, texts, or visits when getting a timely response is important.

- Remember to continually remind families about the goal of preparing for and securing competitive employment in the community. Make sure that everyone is working towards the same thing. Frequent reminders also open the door for families to ask questions along the way



Ask the Right Questions

Think about your typical communication with a family member regarding a student. What is the purpose of your conversation? Is it to detail progress or inform them about an issue? Is it to remind them of needed paperwork or about a scheduled meeting?

Chances are that the communications professionals have with families are aimed at helping get business done rather than to solicit ideas and check in to make sure they are understanding their role. This can lead to a one-sided relationship, which does not promote investment on the part of families.

One way to remedy this is to try a “parent interview” where families and students are asked a set of questions aimed at helping to set a vision for the future, to air concerns, and to tap into networks to help cultivate work experience and job opportunities. The interview can be conducted by a cross-agency team or one-on-one. Families should be told that the interview is not an assessment or a formal requirement, but rather an opportunity for the parents and students to speak openly about the future alongside the support staff that may help meet goals. Of course an interpreter should be used when meeting with a family for whom the professional’s language is not the same as the family’s. Information gathered from the interview should be used to populate assessment tools (such as the Positive Personal Profile) and to guide pre-employment transition services and transition activities. The real power of the parent interview comes in asking families questions they may have never been asked before, resulting in new insight for them as well as the professionals.

Here’s a sample set of questions that can be used for the parent interview:

Section 1: Hopes, Dreams, Expectations, and Challenges

- Please describe what a good life will look for your son or daughter once they leave high school.



The parent interview process has fundamentally changed the way we interact with the families of our students. Their interest in playing a role in preparing their youth for work has dramatically increased. They are coming to us with job ideas and potential contacts in the community. For once I feel we are all working towards the same goal.

– Michigan Seamless Transition Pilot participant –

2. What dreams do your son or daughter have for themselves when they get older?
3. What is your son or daughter's greatest skill or attribute?
4. What does your son or daughter look like on their roughest day?
5. When thinking about your son or daughter's future, what worries you the most?

Section 2: School and Adult Supports

1. Do you fully understand what the school is doing to help prepare your son or daughter for adult life?
2. What style of communication works best for you (phone, written, text or face-to-face)?
3. Do you feel like a respected and involved partner on your son or daughter's IEP team?
4. Have you been connected to any service agencies that might provide supports to your son or daughter when they are an adult?
5. Is your son or daughter currently receiving SSI or SSDI? If so, what questions or concerns do you have about those benefits as it relates to employment?

Section 3: Focusing on Employment

1. What are your expectations for your son or daughter's employment when they are an adult?
2. What do you need to feel more comfortable about your son or daughter's employment future?
3. Do you do anything at home that helps your son or daughter build responsibility?
4. In what community do you see your son or daughter living as an adult?
5. Based on what you know about your son or daughter's skills and interests, what types of jobs do you think they would enjoy?
6. In the community you live in now, are there any local businesses that you think your son or daughter would enjoy or be successful working at?
7. Do you know any business owners in your community that you could contact for a potential work experience for your son or daughter?



Help Families see Youth in a Different Way

How often have you as an education or VR professional thought, "If only the family could see the possibilities I see"?

Unfortunately, many families have lowered expectations for what they think their son or

daughter with a disability can achieve in terms of employment or education and training after high school. This may be especially true of families of youth with more significant disabilities. It's not that families don't want their children to live full lives. It's just that negative messages, real fears over disability and vulnerability, and a lack of positive examples have led them to the conclusion that their child's abilities and opportunities are limited.

It is the job of education and VR professionals to help families see their son or daughter in a new way. To help families see past the disability and to focus on the real talents and skills their student possesses. To help families see their youth as a person with dreams and the ability to reach those dreams. To show families that work is possible and that there is a path and available supports to make it happen.

Below are some ideas for helping families see a positive future for the child:

- Use tools like the Positive Personal Profile to identify strengths and talents. Have the family and all related professionals contribute to populating the Positive Profile and relate the findings back to the skills the student has that can lead to employment.
- Invite families to the work site so they can see firsthand how their youth does on the job.
- Record the student doing a job task the parents might be surprised they can do. For example, an employment professional in Indiana recorded a youth putting together pizza boxes after the family expressed doubt, they could.
- Consider tools like Charting the Life Course that help families focus on the big question (What does a good life look like for your son or daughter?) and plan for activities that lead to that goal.
- Consider holding a parent workshop where other families and youth with disabilities who are employed tell their stories.



Let the Student Take the Lead



We didn't realize how important employment was until our son showed us how important it was to him that he get a job in the community.

– Georgia Parent –

Families may be more open to exploring jobs in the community if their sons or daughters are the ones asking for the opportunity. Current models of employment policy place a greater emphasis on self-advocacy and preparing youth to set a vision for what they want adult life to look like. Related to this is the positive influence students with disabilities can have in convincing their families that exploring employment is worth the effort. In short, if the youth are excited and invested, it is more likely the families will be willing to partner to make employment in the community a reality. Here are some strategies to help youth lead the process:

- Use assistive technology or multimedia to give youth who have trouble communicating a voice.
- Have students lead IEP or IPE meetings to the greatest extent they are able. It is powerful for families to see their son or daughter take charge and discuss goals and progress towards meeting those goals.
- Help youth set a vision for their adult life, including employment, postsecondary education, and life in the community, and help them communicate their vision to their family.
- Partner with organizations like the Centers for Independent Living to provide students with self-advocacy training. Part of that training can include ways students can express their vision for adulthood to their families.



Respect and Navigate Apprehension

Educators and VR staff will no doubt encounter some families who don't believe their son or daughter with a disability need to work, or who are apprehensive about their youth exploring competitive employment. There are many reasons for this apprehension. Families may have never been exposed to stories of people with significant disabilities working, or they have concerns over their son or daughter being vulnerable. It is imperative that professionals respect the concerns and apprehensions families have and work to navigate the fears in a constructive way.

Strategies include:

- Avoid becoming defensive when families offer suggestions, or if challenges arise. Families want what is best for the children, even if the way they are expressing that does not match what you are trying to achieve.
- Be clear that the goal of your efforts is to prepare the student for employment in the community. Discuss with families how a job in the community leads to an increased sense of contribution, self-worth, and is in line with what is expected of all adults.
- Enlist the help of families to work on new skills or being comfortable in new situ-

ations. For example, ask families, “Can you practice at home what it looks like to pack a healthy lunch?” Be sure to celebrate the successes you see.

- Negotiate ways that a student can try new things without the families getting overwhelmed, being sure they are comfortable with each step. For example, break down into smaller steps how you will prepare a student to take public transportation: 1) Review route with family and student; 2) staff rides route with student; 3) student rides one leg of the journey alone with staff on each end; 4) student rides entire route independently with staff on either end; and 5) student rides route independently checking in with staff at beginning and when they arrive at work.



Utilize Partners

Engaging families effectively is not something education or VR agencies need to tackle alone. There are partners in the community that have networks of families and expertise in providing advocacy and training services. For example, every State has at least one Parent Training and Information Center, and most have active chapters of organizations like The Arc, Down Syndrome Society, or the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). The Centers for Independent Living can be tapped to provide self-advocacy training or parent support groups.

Ideas for creative ways to utilize community partners include:

- Work with your State’s Parent Training and Information Center to conduct workshops on the benefits of competitive employment.
- Partner with your State’s Developmental Disabilities Council to create professional capacity building training on working with families.
- Approach your State’s University Center on Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) about creating a survey to gather data about family expectations around transition and employment.
- Consider a relationship with culturally specific community-based agencies that allows you to provide translated information and a trusted intermediary when working with New Americans.



Provide Benefits Counseling

A common reason for families being skeptical about competitive employment is a fear of losing Social Security benefits. Some families may have worked very hard to get their youth on benefits or have been told that benefits, such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI), are the only support option for people with significant disabilities. Unfortunately, a lot of what families hear about the impact of employment on benefits is inaccurate. And families often realize too late that even the maximum SSI monthly benefit is far from enough to be able to live independently.

You never want a family to make important decisions about future employment possibilities for their youth based on bad information. Consider forming a partnership with the local Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) project or a Certified Work Incentive Counselor (CWIC) to provide families with benefits planning services and accurate information about benefits. In your conversations with families, stress that paid work in the community, either alone in concert with benefits, almost always results in more income than relying on benefits alone.



Build a Feedback Loop

Successful businesses know that they need to listen to their customers to access satisfaction with goods and services. The feedback they receive helps them modify practices and determine what is working and what isn't. Education and VR agencies should strongly consider a mechanism for listening to families and making changes to programs and practices based on what they hear. Conduct regular listening sessions so families can ask questions and share their experiences with the program, and more formal focus groups to gather data based on specific questions. It is suggested that such sessions be facilitated by a neutral party (another opportunity for partnering) and conducted on a regular basis. Remember, family engagement is not a "one and done" proposition.

Ideas to build a strong feedback loop include:

- Designate a staff person as the "family engagement lead" for your agency. Activities to gather feedback from families are more likely to happen consistently if it is part of a person's formal job duties.
- Offer childcare and food to attract families to listening sessions.
- Consider a "community conversation" model that brings together a broader scope of stakeholders to brainstorm ideas to better engage families around transition and employment. Use the best ideas to guide future activities.
- Be sure to create a summary of the remarks heard during a listening session of focus group and discuss during staff meetings. Holding the sessions will not have the intended impact unless staff process the feedback, share with administration, and use the information to guide future program planning.



Train Staff

It is not safe to assume that all educators and VR staff have the skills or experience to quickly build partnerships with families. Family engagement is not often the topic of staff capacity building or training opportunities. This is unfortunate since it is difficult to expect people to excel at something they have not been trained to do. Working with families takes knowledge of disability, empathy for the experiences of others, understanding of one's community, awareness of cultural nuances, and good communication

skills. School and VR agencies who work with youth should make it a priority to equip their staff with practices and resources to help in partnering with families.

Some strategies to address this need include:

- Make sure building effective partnerships with families is built into job descriptions and hold staff accountable to this expectation.
- Partner with advocacy organizations, national training organizations, or federally funded technical assistance centers to provide training and consultation on working with families. Consider a train-the-trainer model so internal capacity to provide training can be grown.
- Engage brokers within the community to facilitate relationships, access, and awareness, as needed.
- Designate funding, even if it is a small amount, to provide training. If there is no funding designated, the likelihood of such training remaining a priority decrease.

Recommendation: Build Capacity for Effective Family Engagement through Pre-Service Programs

Chances are that most special educators or vocational rehabilitation counselors received very little, if any information about the need for, and strategies to, effectively engage families in their pre-service (college) training. Ignoring this crucial aspect of working with people with disabilities, especially youth, may have resulted in staff who are ill-prepared to partner with families. The evidence is clear that partnering with families is not only an expectation of special educators and vocational rehabilitation staff, but it is a promising strategy to improve student employment and postsecondary education outcomes. Pre-service programs should explore adding coursework and applied practice on family engagement to their existing curriculum. States should work with educator and VR counselor preparation programs to advocate for the inclusion of family engagement capacity building. Doing so will result in new professionals who understand the powerful role families play and who are prepared to partner with families on behalf of students.



- What outcomes do your team want to accomplish by focusing on improved family partnerships?
- How does your team define family engagement?
- Do you have a staff person to lead family engagement activities and money in your budget to support outreach and training?
- Who are the community-based partners your team can engage with to help build better family partnerships?



Resources

- How can your team establish a consistent feedback loop so you can be responsive to making changes based on family experiences with your program?
- How will your team know if efforts to improve partnerships with families are successful?
- Center for Parent Information and Resources - Find your State's Parent Training and Information Center and search resources created for families by the centers. <https://www.parentcenterhub.org/>
- Charting the Life Course - Unique and intuitive person planning tools that focus on the whole person in the context of family and community. Tools can also be used to program strategic planning and problem solving. <https://www.lifecoursetools.com/>
- Family Employment Awareness Training- Created by the Beach Center on Disability, FEAT builds the capacity of individuals with disabilities, their families, and professionals to increase expectations around competitive employment and to increase knowledge about local, State, and federal resources that support employment. <https://beachcenter.lsi.ku.edu/beach-family-employment-awareness-training-feat>
- Open Doors for Multicultural Families - Excellent resource for information on meeting the needs of culturally and linguistically families who have loved ones with disabilities. <https://www.multiculturalfamilies.org/>
- Montana's Pre-Employment Transition Services Guide: Example of a State's guide to implement Pre-employment transition services <https://dphhs.mt.gov/Portals/85/detd/documents/Transitions/MVRBS%20Pre-Employment%20Transition%20Services%20Manual%20Master%206-26-19.pdf?ver=2019-07-16-143912-590>
- PACER's National Parent Center on Transition and Employment- Resources created for families on a wide variety of topics related to transition, employment, and postsecondary education for youth with disabilities. Includes videos and free downloadable handouts. <https://www.pacer.org/transition/>
- PACER-Minnesota State Services for the Blind Partnership Project- Website for innovative partnerships between Minnesota's Parent Training and Information center and Minnesota's VR blind agency. Contains resources, videos, and podcasts for students, families, and professionals. <https://www.pacer.org/about/programs/ssb/>

- Parent Interview Form - Created by TransCen, this form explains the purpose of the parent interview and provides questions in an easy to use format. This tool works best in conjunction with the Positive Personal Profile. (Appendix IV – A)
- Positive Personal Profile: <https://transcen.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Blank-Positive-Personal-Profile.docx>
- RAISE Center- Provides training and technical assistance to 7 RSA funded Parent Information and Training projects around the country. <https://www.raisecenter.org/>

section 5

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section 6

Appendices

Pre-Employment Transition Services Common Terms and Acronyms

Customized Employment

Customized employment is competitive integrated employment for an individual with a significant disability that is based on an individualized determination of the unique strengths, needs and interests of the individual with a significant disability. Customized employment is designed to meet the specific abilities of the individual with a significant disability and the business needs of the employer carried out through flexible strategies such as job exploration by the individual and working with an employer to facilitate placement (e.g., customizing a job description, developing a set of job duties, using a professional representative to facilitate placement).. (11) (ii) (2).

Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE)

CIE means work that is performed on a full-time or part-time basis (including self-employment), for which an individual is compensated at a rate that is not less than the higher of the rate specified in Section 6(a)(1) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 or the rate required under the applicable State or local minimum wage law. The rate cannot be less than the customary rate paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by other employees who are not individuals with disabilities, and who are similarly situated in similar occupations by the same employer, and who have similar training, experience and skills. In the case of an individual who is self-employed, the work yields an income that is comparable to the income received by other individuals who are not individuals with disabilities and who are self-employed in similar occupations or on similar tasks and who have similar training, experience, and skills through such work, individuals with disabilities are eligible for the level of benefits provided to other employees without disabilities. In addition, this work is in a location where the employee interacts with other employees who are not individuals with disabilities to the same extent individuals without disabilities in comparable positions interact with other employees and offers the same opportunities for advancement that are similar to those for other employees without disabilities in similar positions.

Community Rehabilitation Provider (CRP)

A CRP is a program that can directly provide or facilitate one or more vocational rehabilitation services. The purpose of these services is to enable those individuals to maximize their opportunities for employment, including career advancement.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

A form that can be prepared annually by current and prospective college students ([undergraduate](#) and [graduate](#)) in the [United States](#) to determine their eligibility for [student financial aid](#).

Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)

Establishes minimum wage, overtime pay, recordkeeping, and child labor standards affecting full-time and part-time workers in the private sector and in Federal, State, and local governments.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

Federal law that makes available a free appropriate public education to eligible children with disabilities throughout the nation and ensures special education and related services to those children.

Individual Education Program or Plan (IEP)

An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written statement of the educational program designed to meet a student's individual needs. Every child who receives special education services must have an IEP. The IEP has two general purposes: 1) to set reasonable learning goals for a student, and 2) to state the services that the school district will provide for the student.

Individual Plan for Employment

The Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) is a written plan outlining an individual's vocational goal, and the services to be provided to reach the goal. The IPE must be designed to achieve a specific employment outcome, as defined in § 361.5(c)(15), that is selected by the individual consistent with the individual's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

Informed Choice

§ 361.52: The VR portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan must assure that applicants and recipients of services or, as appropriate, their representatives are provided information and support services to assist applicants and recipients of services in exercising informed choice throughout the rehabilitation process consistent with the provisions of section 102(d) of the Act and the requirements of this section. The designated State unit, in consultation with its State Rehabilitation Council, if it has a Council, must develop and implement written policies and procedures that enable an applicant or recipient of services to exercise informed choice throughout the vocational rehabilitation process. These policies and procedures must provide for—

(1) Informing each applicant and recipient of services (including students with disabilities who are making the transition from programs under the responsibility of an educational agency to programs under the responsibility of the designated State unit and including youth with disabilities), through appropriate modes of communication, about the availability of and opportunities to exercise informed choice, including the availability of support services for individuals with cognitive or other disabilities who require assistance in exercising informed choice throughout the vocational rehabilitation process; (2) Assisting applicants and recipients of services in exercising informed choice in decisions related to the provision of assessment services; (3) Developing and implementing flexible procurement policies and methods that facilitate the provision of vocational rehabilitation services and that afford recipients of services

meaningful choices among the methods used to procure vocational rehabilitation services; (4) Assisting eligible individuals or, as appropriate, the individuals' representatives, in acquiring information that enables them to exercise informed choice in the development of their individualized plans for employment with respect to the selection of the: (i) Employment outcome; (ii) Specific vocational rehabilitation services needed to achieve the employment outcome; (iii) Entity that will provide the services; (iv) Employment setting and the settings in which the services will be provided; and (v) Methods available for procuring the services; and (5) Ensuring that the availability and scope of informed choice is consistent with the obligations of the designated

State agency under this part. (c) Information and assistance in the selection of vocational rehabilitation services and service providers. In assisting an applicant and eligible individual in exercising informed choice during the assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs and during development of the individualized plan for employment, the designated State unit must provide the individual or the individual's representative, or assist the individual or the individual's

representative in acquiring, information necessary to make an informed choice about the specific vocational rehabilitation services, including the providers of those services, that are needed to achieve the individual's employment outcome. This information

must include, at a minimum, information relating to the: (1) Cost, accessibility, and duration of potential services; (2) Consumer satisfaction with those services to the extent that information relating to consumer satisfaction is available; (3) Qualifications of potential service providers; (4) Types of services offered by the potential providers;

(5) Degree to which services are provided in integrated settings; and (6) Outcomes achieved by individuals working with service providers, to the extent that such information is available. (d) Methods or sources of information. In providing or assisting the individual or the individual's representative in acquiring the information required under paragraph (c) of this section, the State unit may use, but is not limited to, the following methods or sources of information: (1) Lists of services and service providers.

(2) Periodic consumer satisfaction surveys and reports. (3) Referrals to other consumers, consumer groups, or disability advisory councils qualified to discuss the

services or service providers. (4) Relevant accreditation, certification, or other information relating to the qualifications of service providers. (5) Opportunities for individuals to visit or experience various work and service provider settings.

Occupational Information Network (O*NET)

The O*NET system is maintained by a regularly updated database of occupational characteristics and worker requirements information across the U.S. economy. It describes occupations in terms of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required as well as how the work is performed in terms of tasks, work activities, and other descriptors.

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

Pre-employment transition services means the required activities and authorized activities specified in 34 C.F.R. § 361.48(a)(2) and (3). Each State must assure that the designated State unit, in collaboration with the local educational agencies involved, provide, or arrange for the provision of, pre-employment transition services for all students with disabilities, as defined in § 361.5(c)(51), in need of such services, without regard to the type of disability, from Federal funds reserved in accordance with § 361.65, and any funds made available from State, local, or private funding sources. Funds reserved and made available may be used for the required, authorized, and pre-employment transition coordination activities under § 361.4(a)(2), (3) and (4). The five required pre-employment transition services are:

1. job exploration counseling;
2. work-based learning experiences, which may include in-school or after school opportunities, or experience outside the traditional school setting (including internships), that is provided in an integrated environment to the maximum extent possible;
3. counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education;
4. workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living; and
5. instruction in self-advocacy, which may include peer mentoring.

Self -Determination (SD)

Self-determination is a concept reflecting the belief that all individuals have the right to direct their own lives. A self-determined person is one who sets goals, makes decisions, sees options, solves problems, speaks up for himself or herself, understands what supports are needed for success, and knows how to evaluate outcomes.

Pre-Employment Transition Services Planning Resources

1. Job exploration counseling

- [Career One Stop](#) sponsored by US Department of Labor provides career profiles, self-assessments, and tools for planning careers.
- [My Next Move](#) is a career exploration tool designed for use by students to learn about careers and match their interests to career options.
- Occupational Outlook Handbook, US Department of Labor, [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) helps individuals find career information on duties, education and training, pay, and outlook for hundreds of occupations.
- [O*Net Career Exploration Tools](#) . The O*NET Program is the nation's primary source of occupational information. It provides set of self-directed career exploration/assessment tools to help students who are exploring school-to-work transition in planning career options.
- [Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center \(WINTAC\)](#) provides guidance on Job Exploration Counseling.

2. Work based learning experiences

- [CEO Internship Manual](#) a how to guide for developing and monitoring quality work experiences and collecting data. Includes tools and forms to use.
- [New Ways to Work](#) is a how to guide for creating quality work experiences.
- [Working with Employers, Workplace Success Quick Reference Guide](#) provides a quick reference guide to Workplace Success.
- [Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center \(WINTAC\)](#) a offers guidance on work-based learning experiences.

3. Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or post-secondary educational programs at institutions of higher education

- [ACT - Services for Students with Disabilities](#) ACT has established policies regarding documentation of an applicant's disability and the process for requesting accommodations.
- [Opening Doors to Post-Secondary Education & Training](#) this handbook was created to assist students, parents, special educators, guidance counselors and others to assist students in transitioning to postsecondary education and training opportunities.
- [Think College](#) () provides resources and training on post-secondary options.
- [Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center \(WINTAC\)](#) provides an overview of Post-Secondary Counseling activities.

4. Workplace readiness training

- [Life Centered Education \(LCE\)](#) is an online curriculum that provides a complete framework of objectives, lesson plans, fact sheets and worksheets that cover three domains of adult living in the 21st century – daily living skills, self-determination and interpersonal skills, and employment skills.
- [Skills to Pay the Bills](#) is a curriculum developed by ODEP focused on teaching "soft" or workforce readiness skills to youth, including youth with disabilities. Contains 6 lessons and additional materials.
- [Social Security Red Book - Work Incentives and Planning Assistance](#) updated annually, the Red Book serves as a general reference source about the employment-related provisions of Social Security Disability Insurance and the Supplemental Security Income Programs for educators, advocates, rehabilitation professionals, and counselors who serve people with disabilities.
- [Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance \(WINTAC\)](#) provides an overview of workplace readiness training and related activities.

5. Self-awareness and self-advocacy

- [I'm Determined](#) provides resource and videos for educators, parents and students.
- [Job Accommodation Network](#) provides information about accommodations in the workplace.
- [Me! Lessons for Teaching](#) provides lessons and resources on self- advocacy.
- [Paving the Way to Work: A Guide to Career-Focused Mentoring](#) focuses on issues relevant to mentoring older youth who are transitioning into adulthood. The Guide identifies the Guideposts for Success for successful transition.
- [The 411 on Disability Disclosure: A Workbook for Youth with Disabilities](#) is a workbook for youth and adults working with them, designed to assist in making informed decisions about whether or not to disclose their disability and how that decision can impact their education, employment, and social lives.
- [Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center \(WINTAC\)](#) provides an overview of Instruction in Self Advocacy.

Administrator Meeting Agenda Example

Who attends: Principal, VR Regional Manager, VR Counselor, School Point of Contact

When: August

Timeframe: 1 hour

Purpose: To assist in setting the vision and outlining the support necessary for effective collaboration between VR and Education in a local school.

Meeting Agenda:

- Define purpose of meeting
- Introductions if necessary
- Identify common student outcomes
- Individual and joint roles and responsibilities
- Discuss how collaboration between VR and LEA can leverage these roles and responsibilities – the value of the partnership
- identify points-of-contact for VR and the school if not already established
- Identify other VR and education personnel who support the delivery of Pre-ETS and transition services
- Identify a space in the school where VR personnel can meet with students
- Discuss VR personnel schedule, including determining date for Fall Meet and Greet
- Determine a process /date for how local education staff and VR personnel will plan, implement, and evaluate their joint work, i.e. mapping resources, coordination of individual student planning

Start of School Checklist

School or District:

Principal:

School Point of Contact (name/phone/email – best way to connect):

Special Education Director (name/phone/email):

Nurse (name/phone/email):

School Counselor (name/phone/email):

School Psychologist (name/phone/email):

Other School Staff (name/phone/email):

VR Counselor Point of Contact (name/phone/email):

Other VR staff working in school (name/phone/email):

Specific check-in requirements (background check, badge, sign-in, etc.):

VR schedule (frequency, day and time):

VR assigned space to meet with students:

Internet access (yes or no):

How will school records be obtained?

VR mailbox at school:

Meetings scheduled and communicated to appropriate staff

- Administrator Meeting
- Fall Meet and Greet
- Fall Planning Meeting

Student Tracking Form for VR Referral *(will be in Excel with dropdown options)*

This form can be completed by VR and shared with teachers working with individual students. It can quickly tell a team which students are connected to VR and what their present involvement with VR is as well as what paperwork or information may currently be needed.

Student Name	Parent Name(s)	VR information provided to student and family	Next Steps	Paperwork completed for Pre-ETS	Next Steps	Paperwork completed for eligibility determination	Next Steps	Student eligibility status	Next Steps
<i>(break this up with last and first)</i>	<i>(last, first, contact information)</i>	<i>Dropdown of potential ways – do we want date</i>		<i>Dropdown with required elements</i>		<i>Dropdown with required elements</i>		<i>Dropdown with possible status</i>	

LEA/IVRS Service Delivery Plan

School District: _____ Contact: _____

IVRS Office: _____ Contact: _____

School Year: _____

The following plan describes how the partners listed above will collaborate and implement the Memorandum of Agreement developed between the Iowa Department of Education and Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS); as well as our respective responsibilities as dictated by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA):

LEA/IVRS Service Delivery Plan	
LEA Responsibilities	IVRS Responsibilities
Provide access to student records or documentation that students participating in IVRS services who do not have an open record are served by the LEA as a student with a disability (i.e. IEP or 504).	Follow-up with the LEA to either obtain access to student records or documentation that the students referred for participation in IVRS delivered pre-employment transition services have a disability (i.e. IEP or 504).
Provide for students who are the most significantly disabled and for whom the LEA typically referred to community rehabilitation programs for adult services, documentation of the LEA provided assessments, work experiences, community experiences, and related pre-employment transition services once completed as required under WIOA. (LEAs that provide IVRS access to student records and have provided to IVRS the name of the student need not provide written documentation).	Compile the documentation from the LEA and IVRS and present the information to the student, and/or parent/legal guardian, when the student/parent/legal guardian are requesting to pursue subminimum wage employment. (LEAs that provide access to student records, and who have referred the student to IVRS, do not need to provide written documentation but instead the IVRS staff person will print the documentation from the record and follow IVRS WIOA requirements).

LEA Responsibilities	IVRS Responsibilities
Refer students to IVRS for assistance with transition service needs and assist in coordination with the parents.	Follow-up on referrals and provide information to the school on student progress and services for inclusion in the IEP, etc. Participate in IEP meetings as requested either in-person or via technology.
Provide information to IVRS as needed to coordinate and serve the student in transition.	Provide information to the LEA as needed to coordinate and serve the student in transition.

Service Delivery <i>Below details the agreed upon delivery of Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)</i>			
Pre-Employment Transition Services	Provided by LEA	Provided by IVRS	Provided by: _____
Job Exploration Counseling			
Counseling on Opportunities			
Work-Based Learning Experiences			
Workplace Readiness Training			
Self-Advocacy Instruction			

Pre-Employment Transition Services	Provided by LEA	Provided by IVRS	Provided by: _____
Instructional Training	LEA will provide the instructional training when it is for the student to learn job skills, learn about the world of work, and explore occupations to make an informed decision about a future work goal.	None.	
Job Coaching	Provide and/or pay for job coaching, when needed as part of the instructional component of the IEP.	IVRS will provide job coaching when it is for the student's final career that is the student's work goal and at which the student will work upon graduation. IVRS will issue an authorization to a Community Rehabilitation Provider to provide the job coaching that is needed.	

LEA Administrator Signature

Date

IVRS Signature

Date

Sample Core Transition Team Collaborative Agreement

Purpose:

This ***Core Transition Team Collaborative Agreement*** will be used to define the roles and responsibilities of parties committed to sustaining and improving the high school to adult transition process for students in the _____ area/region. The _____ Core Transition Team focuses on students with disabilities who are potentially eligible or eligible for vocational rehabilitation; and students with disabilities who may also be 'at risk' and eligible for mental health and other area agency services. VR Transition Counselors or other agreed upon community partner will convene the Team. Core Transition Teams should include key members listed below from the schools, adult agencies and the community who are involved/concerned with the transition of students from school to adult life. Team members share the responsibilities of setting up meetings, keeping and typing up minutes, planning events, and any other activities to maintain communication among the members.

School Representation	Adult/Community Representation
Special & Regular Education teachers	Vocational Rehabilitation
Special Education Coordinator/case managers	VABIR
Special Education Director	Mental Health Services
School Counselor	Developmental Disabilities Services
Principal	Department of Labor
Work-Based Learning Coordinator	Department for Children and Families
Students	Supported Employment
Family Members	Post-Secondary Education Programs
	Adult Education and Literacy Programs
	Economics Services
	Health Services
	Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired
	Career Technical Centers
	Vermont Family Network
	Youth in Transition Program

Background:

Core Transition Teams increase capacity at the local level to develop, provide, and manage an effective transition process for students. Core Transition Teams exist in 12 regions of Vermont; they function as interagency memberships that work cooperatively to increase effective transitions for high school age students who have disabilities or are at risk. The primary goal is to assure that students graduate high school with access to employment, independent living options, post-secondary and training opportunities, and all other necessary services, supports, and opportunities from which to develop a meaningful and smooth transition from school to adulthood. Core Transition Teams are effective when they: engage structured planning processes, schedule regular meetings, have a long-term commitment from each member organization, have a willingness to work together on behalf of each student, and give attention to process improvements for *both the students and for the Core Team itself*.

Core Team Role:

- Ensure a mechanism for consent and confidentiality of student information to support shared advocacy of students
- Clarify and ascertain the role and contribution of each member
- Work with school staff to identify students with disabilities who are age 14 or older who will need pre-employment transition services and/or transition services that involve inter-agency partners (VR, DDS, VTDOL, etc.)
- Identify and facilitate available resources and supports for students' needs and desires for life after high school
- Arrange referrals to services and supports that will increase successful transitions
- Identify students and their projected needs prior to final year in school
- Share resources and information and make connections with providers
- Provide training to encourage the use of best practices
- Provide input and information to local and regional school and policy boards regarding broader transition issues, especially when there are local obstacles (policy, practice, procedure) that stand in the way of successful transition.
- Liaison with the other transition initiatives

Signing this agreement represents my organization's commitment to participate in and contribute to the cooperative work of the _____ Core Transition Team by working together to improve outcomes for transition age youth in our regions.

PARTNER CORE TEAM AGENCIES AND POINTS OF CONTACT:**School Representatives**

School Representative / Title	Date
School Representative / Title	Date
School Representative / Title	Date

Vocational Rehabilitation

Vocational Rehabilitation / Title	Date
Vocational Rehabilitation / Title	Date

Developmental Disabilities Services

Developmental Disabilities Services / Title	Date
Developmental Disabilities Services / Title	Date
Developmental Disabilities Services / Title	Date

Department of Labor

Department of Labor / Title	Date
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Creative Workforce Solutions

Creative Workforce Solutions / Title	Date
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Other

Other / Title	Date
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Collaboration Meetings Schedule

Principal Meeting

- **Who attends:** Principal, VR Regional Manager, VR Counselor, School Point of Contact
- **When:** August
- **Timeframe:** 1 hour
- **Purpose:** To assist in setting the vision and outlining the support necessary for effective collaboration between VR and Education in a local school.

Fall Meeting and Greet

- **Who attends:** VR Counselor and other VR personnel working in the school, Special Education Director, Special Education Teachers, School Counselor, General Education Teachers, Principal (Discussion with point of contact from the school to determine who should be at the meeting, and if there needs to be multiple meetings to accommodate schedules).
- **When:** September
- **Timeframe:** 30-45 minutes
- **Purpose:** For the School Point-of-Contact and the VR counselor to share day-to-day logistics of VR and Education collaboration and discuss coordination of services for students with disabilities. Topics to consider: student population, the referral process for VR services, and identification of opportunities for collaboration of the implementation of Pre-ETS and IDEA transition services. To model collaboration between the two entities it is suggested that the School Point-of-Contact and the VR counselor co-lead this meeting.

Fall Planning Meeting

- **Who attends:** VR Counselor and other VR personnel working in the school, Special Education Director, Special Education Teachers, School Counselor, General Education Teachers, (Discussion with point of contact from the school to determine who should be at the meeting).
- **When:** September
- **Timeframe:** 2-3 hours
- **Purpose:** To determine coordination of IDEA transition services and Pre-ETS it is important to identify the strengths, duplication and gaps in services. By doing this at the local level it allows staff to. Increase their capacity to leverage and align services for students with disabilities. This collaborative approach to providing services for students with disabilities not only assists professionals supporting the student but also creates a more seamless process for students and their families.

Student Collaboration Meeting

- **Who attends:** VR Counselors, School Counselor and Special Education Teachers
- **When:** October
- **Timeframe:** 60-90 minutes
- **Purpose:** These meetings provide a time for cross agency discussions about specific student needs around transition and career development, including employment experiences.

Scheduled Meetings with Families/Students

- **Who attends:** Parents/Family members, Student, VR Counselor, Special Education Teachers, others as appropriate
- **When:** November
- **Timeframe:** 60-90 minutes
- **Purpose:** These meetings are meant as a time to have conversations the family and student about expectations of employment and their vision for life after high school. A set of questions has been created to help guide these conversations. Information gathered will help with development of student plans and inform employment experiences.

Student Collaboration Meeting

- **Who attends:** VR Counselors, School Counselor and Special Education Teachers
- **When:** December
- **Timeframe:** 60-90 minutes
- **Purpose:** These meetings provide a time for cross agency discussions about specific student needs around transition and career development, including employment experiences.

Winter Check-In Meeting

- **Who attends:** VR Counselor and other VR personnel working in the school, Special Education Director, Special Education Teachers, School Counselor, General Education Teachers, (Discussion with point of contact from the school to determine who should be at the meeting)
- **When:** January
- **Timeframe:** 60-90 minutes
- **Purpose:** To discuss progress, needed adjustments and next steps to continue to build and enhance collaboration between VR and the local school.

Student Collaboration Meeting

- **Who attends:** VR Counselors, School Counselor and Special Education Teachers
- **When:** February
- **Timeframe:** 60-90 minutes
- **Purpose:** These meetings provide a time for cross agency discussions about specific student needs around transition and career development, including employment experiences.

Spring Evaluation and Planning Meeting

- **Who attends:** VR Counselor and other VR personnel working in the school, Special Education Director, Special Education Teachers, School Counselor, General Education Teachers, (Discussion with point of contact from the school to determine who should be at the meeting).
- **When:** April
- **Timeframe:** 2-3 hours
- **Purpose:** The meeting should reflect on the work that has taken place over the school year. The team should evaluate their joint progress by reviewing student and program data, identifying what worked well and areas the partners want to continue for next year and to make additions to the action plan. Setting a schedule for meetings that will occur in the next school year will ensure that's are in place and ready to go in August.

Student Collaboration Meeting

- **Who attends:** VR Counselors, School Counselor and Special Education Teachers
- **When:** May
- **Timeframe:** 60-90 minutes
- **Purpose:** These meetings provide a time for cross agency discussions about specific student needs around transition and career development, including employment experiences.

Fall Meet and Greet

- Who attends:** VR Counselor and other VR personnel working in the school, Special Education Director, Special Education Teachers, School Counselor, General Education Teachers, Principal (Discussion with point of contact from the school to determine who should be at the meeting, and if there needs to be multiple meetings to accommodate schedules)
- When:** September
- Timeframe:** 30-45 minutes
- Purpose:** For the School Point-of-Contact and the VR counselor to share day-to-day logistics of VR and Education collaboration and discuss coordination of services for students with disabilities. Topics to consider: student population, the referral process for VR services, and identification of opportunities for collaboration of the implementation of Pre-ETS and IDEA transition services. To model collaboration between the two entities it is suggested that the School Point-of-Contact and the VR counselor co-lead this meeting.

Meeting Agenda

- Introductions
- Provide overviews of:
 - VR Services and Pre-ETS
 - IDEA transition services
- Role of VR Counselor and any other VR personnel working in the school
- Role of Point-of-Contact for the school
- Discuss previous school year experience: What worked and what didn't?
- Discuss schedule for upcoming school year well as "office" space in the school where VR personnel will meet students
- Referral process to VR:
 - Review who to refer and when
 - Discuss how to refer – what is the process that will be used?
 - Determine process to secure needed paperwork – e.g. will teachers assist in securing paperwork back? Will VR have mailbox at school, etc.
 - Determine communication process between school and VR regarding referrals and follow-up
- Share date for Transition Leadership Team

Fall Planning Meeting

- Who attends:** VR Counselor and other VR personnel working in the school, Special Education Director, Special Education Teachers, School Counselor, General Education Teachers, (Discussion with point of contact from the school to determine who should be at the meeting)
- When:** September
- Timeframe:** 2-3 hours
- Purpose:** To determine coordination of IDEA transition services and Pre-ETS it is important to identify the strengths, duplication and gaps in services. By doing this at the local level it allows staff to. Increase their capacity to leverage and align services for students with disabilities. This collaborative approach to providing services for students with disabilities not only assists professionals supporting the student but also creates a more seamless process for students and their families.
- Note:** The agenda for the meeting is very robust, consequently a local team may need to have a discussion on how best to accomplish the resource mapping process. Teams could do prep work for the meeting decreasing the time that would be needed for group discussion. This Guide provides a number of resources and information on how to do this process that can be found in the resource section.

Meeting Agenda

- Introductions
- Review purpose of meeting
- Review data that will help inform your work
- Conduct Resource Mapping
 - Identify strengths in programs and services
 - Identify gaps in programs and services
 - Identify possible resources that could fill any gaps
- Complete action plan
- Identify next steps and date for Winter Check-In Meeting

Winter Check-In Meeting

- Who attends:** VR Counselor and other VR personnel working in the school, Special Education Director, Special Education Teachers, School Counselor, General Education Teachers, (Discussion with point of contact from the school to determine who should be at the meeting)
- When:** January
- Timeframe:** 2-3 hours
- Purpose:** To discuss progress, needed adjustments and next steps to continue to build and enhance collaboration between VR and the local school.

Meeting Agenda

- Introductions
- Day-to-day logistics
 - What is going well?
 - Any needed changes?
- Review action plan
 - Update
 - Identify next steps
- Set date for Spring Evaluation and Planning Meeting

Spring Evaluation and Planning Meeting

- Who attends:** VR Counselor and other VR personnel working in the school, Special Education Director, Special Education Teachers, School Counselor, General Education Teachers, (Discussion with point of contact from the school to determine who should be at the meeting).
- When:** April
- Timeframe:** 2-3 hours
- Purpose:** The meeting should reflect on the work that has taken place over the school year. The team should evaluate their joint progress by reviewing student and program data, identifying what worked well and areas the partners want to continue for next year and to make additions to the action plan. Setting a schedule for meetings that will occur in the next school year will ensure that's are in place and ready to go in August.

Meeting Agenda

- Welcome/Introductions
- Share agency updates and celebrations
- Review data and progress towards benchmarks
 - Identify areas of growth
 - Identify areas of need
- Review achievement of annual goals and activity evaluations
 - What worked?
 - What should be continued?
 - What needs to be changed or adjusted?
- Generate information for annual report to School and VR Administration
 - Progress in meeting annual goals
 - Impact of activities – successes/challenges
 - Data information/analysis
 - Needs for next year
- Identify information to share with students, families and communities
 - Upcoming events
 - Successes
 - Agency resources

Local Partnership Planning Guide

State Interagency Agreements

- What are the responsibilities of each agency in the State interagency agreement (e.g., VR agency, SEA, LEA, if applicable)?
- Does the SEA agreement include consultation and technical assistance, transition Planning, Outreach, and section 511 requirements?
- Are responsibilities for local schools included in the State interagency agreement? If so, what are they?
- Is there an agreement in place between VR and the local school district for delivery of pre-employment transition services and transition services? If so, what is included?

Local Interagency Agreement

- How will transition and pre-employment transition services be implemented locally?
- How will planning for individual students take place?
- How and when will agencies share student information?
- Are other service providers delivering pre-employment transition services? How are these coordinated?
- How does VR and the LEA work together to coordinate outreach to students and families regarding VR services?

Administrative Engagement

- Who has been identified as the point(s)-of-contact for SEA and LEAs?
- Who is the assigned VR contact for the schools?
- What common student outcomes were identified?
- Where will VR personnel meet with students?
- Will VR personnel have internet access? If yes, any limitations?
- When will VR personnel have access to students?
- When can a larger group of VR and educators meet to complete the Local Partnership Plan?

Scheduling VR Counselor School Time

- What will be the VR counselor's individual schedule at the school?
- Are there other VR personnel coming to the school? If so, what will be their schedule?
- How will the schedule be communicated to staff and students?
- How will the schedule be adjusted if student caseloads increase or decrease?
- How will changes in the VR counselor's schedule be communicated to impacted school staff and students?
- What are the building check-in procedures the VR counselor needs to follow?

- Where will the VR counselor meet with students?
- What internet access will be available?
- How will student release time be handled?

Student Referral for Pre-ETS and VR Services

- How will the student be referred to the VR agency for pre-employment transition services or other VR services?
- What is the referral process for students who want to apply for VR services?
- How will parents/guardians and students be made aware of pre-employment transition services and VR services?
- What are the processes to gain parental consent?
- What will be the process to secure required documentation and paperwork?
- How will education and VR agencies work together to track receipt of paperwork, student connections to the VR program and eligibility decisions?

Coordination of Transition Services/Pre-ETS

- How will the current available services be determined and delivered?
- How will gaps in services be identified?
- How will the coordination of services be developed?
- How will roles and responsibilities in the delivery of services be determined?

Establishing Goals/Evaluate Progress

- What goals does the team want to focus on this year?
- How will progress towards meeting the goal be determined?
- When will the team meet to discuss progress toward goal?
- How will success in meeting goals be communicated to administration and other stakeholders?
- How will VR and education agencies use data to better serve students and families in transition planning and pre-employment transition services?
- What will you do differently now in terms of current and future programming as a result of what the data is telling you?
- How can you use the data to identify trends, support program and service expenditures, and enhance the provision of pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities Statewide?
 - Are students participating in summer programs finding more jobs, keeping jobs longer, etc.?
 - Are students receiving pre-employment transition services staying in school, more successful in post-secondary training, etc.?

Scheduling Regular Times to Meet

- What meetings does the team feel are important to schedule?
- When will the meetings be scheduled?
- Who will be invited to attend?

Student Involvement in Planning

- How will the student's voice be incorporated into their transition planning?
- What steps need to be taken to ensure students are prepared to lead and participate in their transition planning?

Student Led Planning Meeting

- How are students currently leading their IEP?
- What are ways that students led IEP meetings could be enhanced?

Student Collaboration Meeting

- When will Student Collaboration Meetings be scheduled?
- How will the team document and share individual student progress?
- How will next steps be identified and roles and responsibilities for service coordination be determined?

Organize and Share Individual Student Information

- How will information be gathered from the student and their family that include their desires and goals for the future?
- How will individual student information be organized so it is easily accessed and can be shared with families, students and across agencies for planning?

Providing Individual Transition and Pre-employment Transition Services

- What strategies and tools will be used to assist students in identifying the pre-employment transition services needed for their individual needs?

Aligning the "I's an "P"s

- What strategies will education and VR use to align the IEP and IPE for students?

Partnering with Families

- What outcomes do your team want to accomplish by focusing on improved family partnerships?
- How does your team define family engagement?
- Do you have a staff person to lead family engagement activities and money in your budget to support outreach and training?
- Who are the community-based partners your team can engage with to help build better family partnerships?
- How can your team establish a consistent feedback loop so you can be responsive to making changes based on family experiences with your program?
- How will your team know if efforts to improve partnerships with families are successful?

Local Partnership Action Plan

School District: _____

School Point of Contact: _____

VR Point of Contact: _____

For each goal, develop 2 to 5 action steps. List the lead agency and critical partners for each action. Then identify the timeline, technical assistance/training needs, and performance measure for each action.

Goal 1						
Action Step	Lead Agency	Critical Partners	Start Date	End Date	Technical Assistance/Training	Performance Measure(s)
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						

Goal 2						
Action Step	Lead Agency	Critical Partners	Start Date	End Date	Technical Assistance/Training	Performance Measure(s)
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						

Student Collaboration Meeting Agenda

- Who attends:** VR Counselors, School Counselor and Special Education Teachers
- When:** October, December, February and May
- Timeframe:** 60-90 minutes
- Purpose:** These meetings provide a time for cross agency discussions about specific student needs around transition and career development, including employment experiences. This meeting can be co-lead by the VR Counselor and School Point of Contact. Individuals coming to the meeting should be able to provide updates on students they are supporting.

Meeting Agenda

- Review designated students' progress
- Identify next steps for each students
- Identify roles and responsibilities of individual staff in supporting and coordinating next steps
- Identify date for next Student Collaboration Meeting

Example: Student Tracking Sheet

The table below is an example of a tool used to collect data and information/activities completed for each student at a local level. Information collected is reviewed at least annually by the local interagency Transition Team to identify areas of need and next steps for individual students or gaps in service provision across students. The table can be modified to reflect local Transition practices and services, including pre-employment transition services.

Student Name	Anticipated Graduation Date	Positive Personal Profile	Parent Interview	Workplace Tour	Job Shadow	Unpaid Work Experience	Paid Work Experience	Agency Contacts	Comments

Positive Personal Profile

Staff Name: _____

Date Completed: _____

Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Dreams and Goals	Talents
Skills and Knowledge	Learning Styles
Interests	Positive Personality Traits
Temperament	Values
Environmental Preferences	Dislikes/Quirks/Idiosyncrasies
Work Experiences	Support System
Specific Challenges	Solutions and Accommodations
Possibilities and Ideas	

Example Positive Personal Profile

Staff Name: _____

Date Completed: _____

Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Dreams and Goals	Talents
Work in electronics, art, baseball, retail clothing	Artistic, creative, dexterity – intricate paper designs
Skills and Knowledge	Learning Styles
Math – good, art, video games, baseball, research skills	Spatial / linguistic
Interests	Positive Personality Traits
Video games – play and design, art, movies, baseball	Creative, focused, adaptive, humorous, dexterity
Temperament	Values
Polite, reserved, strong memory, impatient and mischievous with mother	Learning, responsibility
Environmental Preferences	Dislikes/Quirks/Idiosyncrasies
Indoors, relatively quiet and moderate pace, afternoon or evenings, lots of people	Chores, outside, being pushed to do things
Work Experiences	Support System
Unpaid – Navy JROTC events and drills Worksite tours and sampling at Giant Food, Michaels, Harris Teeter, Old Navy Outlet, Nike Helped with community event – breakfast with Santa	Mother, school, MD PROMISE
Specific Challenges	Solutions and Accommodations
Autism, hearing impairment, reading, counting money, analog clocks, complicated questions	Speak loudly and clearly, written instructions, initial and periodic job coach
Possibilities and Ideas	
Retail – computers/video games, baseball. Electronics – repair, handy work, shadowing/electrician helper. Baseball – camp mentor or program helper. Computers – repair troubleshoot, evaluation, screen repair.	

Flow of Services: Individual Student Level

	Age 14-16	Age 17-18	Age 19-24	Age 24-26
Student Outcomes				
Agency/Community Connections				
Vocational Rehabilitation				
Education				
Community Mental Health				
Community Rehabilitation Program				
Family				
Include Others as Needed				

Example Flow of Services: Individual Student Level

	Age 14-16	Age 17-18	Age 19-24	Age 24-26
Student Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of career readiness activities. • Connected to appropriate agencies • Enrolled in CTE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paid work-based experience • Complete CTE series (3 classes) in same pathway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CIE in chosen career with needed supports • Community living option selected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CIE in chosen career with needed supports • Plan for job advancement
Agency/Community Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VR referral for Pre-ETS age 14 • Complete application for VR • Develop IPE • Complete application for CMH • Receive benefits counseling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review benefits • Application for adult services are completed including Medicaid • Ensure VR application has been completed • Services provided by Independent Living Center identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider any additional supports that will be needed upon leaving school supports
Roles & Responsibilities of:				
Vocational Rehabilitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up industry tours in areas of interest (horticulture/landscaping) • Select job shadows in career and environment with highest interest (landscaping, Habitat for Humanity with youth group) • Participate in summer work experience in Dept. of Natural Resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop paid employment based on past two years experiences • Identify CIE support needs • Gather information about job performance and share with IEP team members, including student and family • Provide AT evaluations for workplace supports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to provide supports for CIE • Explore CTE opportunities beyond high school program, visit to community college 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to provide CIE supports, explore job advancement opportunities • Plan for supports after school exit

<p>Education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with Guidance Counselor to identify classes to meet HS requirements and interests • Shadow CTE classes in horticulture, building traders and manufacturing and select a pathway to enroll in with supports as needed • Enroll in Family/ Consumer Science Independent Living I & II • Assist in getting state ID card 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make adjustments to classes as needed • Continue enrollment in chose CTE pathway with supports as needed • Enroll in transition course • Provide mobility skill development, including transportation • Complete Health Literacy class • Develop a service-learning project spending time with animals or children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete financial literacy class • Complete civil literacy class • Continue mobility skill development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a summary of performance reflective of accomplishments and recommendations for future needs
<p>Community Mental Health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop person directed plan (Charting Your Life Course) • Provide information about CRP services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide student/family information about community living options • Participate in supported decision making training • Provide employment services through use of CRP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support family and student to explore community living options • Facilitate person directed planning focused on after school exit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure person directed plan includes supports that school provided
<p>Community Rehabilitation Program</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide employment support services as developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide employment support services as developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide employment support services as developed
<p>Family</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in employment interview with cross agency team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore community living options • Participate in supported decision making class • Needed applications are completed for adult services including Medicaid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community living situation developed 	
<p>Include Others as Needed</p>				

Individual Student Planning Tool

Student Name: _____ Graduation Date: _____

Form Start Date: _____ Source of Referral: _____

Date form completed and reviewed with YAC-YAEC: _____

Important contact person for client: _____

Transportation:

- Permit
- License (has use of a vehicle or owns one? Yes No)
- Public transportation (what type: _____)
- Other: _____

Pre-Employment Transition Services

1. Job Exploration

Career Exploration activities:

- Company tours (include date and career focus)
 - _____
- Informational interviews (include date and career focus)
 - _____
- Job shadows (include date and career focus)
 - _____
- Work experience (include date and career focus)
 - _____
- School groups (dates and include curriculum copy)
 - _____
- Summer groups (dates and include curriculum copy)
 - _____
- Career interest/value inventories (name and date)
 - _____
- Other:
 - _____

2. Work-Based Learning

Paid and unpaid internships/service learning in collaboration with school

- _____
- _____

Competitive work opportunities

- Name of site and status (include date started working if appropriate)
 - _____
- Name of site and status (include date started working if appropriate)
 - _____

3. Work Readiness Training

Portfolio

- Resume – status; where saved
 - _____
- Cover letter – status; where saved
 - _____
- References – status; where saved
 - _____
- Certifications/trainings (type, when completed and if we provided/funded)
 - _____
- Awards (type, when earned)
 - _____
- Results of any career inventories
 - _____
- Learning style summary (include statement to share with employer if needed)
 - _____
- List of accommodations (when completed, any updates?)
 - _____
- 30 second interview/response to typical interview questions
 - _____
- Resources/contact information list from region student lives
 - _____
- Email address to use post high school
 - _____
- Summary of performance from Special Educator
 - _____
- Copy of most recent IE/504
 - _____
- Access tools – AT consult summary
 - _____
- Other:
 - _____

Career readiness skills training groups (dates and identify topics addressed) =

- _____
- _____

AT

- Group activity with AT focus (include date)
 - _____
- Individual referral to AT tryout center (include date and purpose)
 - _____
- Other:
 - _____

Benefits counseling information

- Date referred and status
 - _____
- Receiving SSI as student
 - _____
- Receiving SSI as an adult
 - _____
- Other (i.e. benefits counseling group activity)
 - _____

4. Counseling Opportunities for Postsecondary Education

Post-secondary activities

- Tour of post-secondary program (include date and name of program)
 - _____
- Group activity with post-secondary focus (include date and name(s) of programs)
 - _____
- Connection to post-secondary support services
 - _____
- VSAC (counselor name)
 - _____
- Other:
 - _____

5. Self-Advocacy

Trainings provided by TC/YES around independent living skills (type of training, date)

- Financial empowerment
 - _____
- ADA / workplace rights
 - _____
- Social skills / workplace boundaries
 - _____

- Community / resource awareness
 - _____
- Self-advocacy
 - _____
- Other:
 - _____

Senior transition group

- _____
- Other (i.e. orientation in VR Office)
 - _____

Connections to outside agencies / independent living skills training:

- Introduction to outside services (name of service, referral and status)
 - JOBS/DS
 - _____
 - DOL, housing, financial support, case management, mental health services:
 - _____
- Trainings provided by outside agencies (name of agency, type of training, and date)
 - _____
- Identification (birth certificate, SS card, photo ID)
 - _____
- Other:
 - _____

Additional Information

Additional information important to share:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Next steps / transition summary (include date to begin and name of site/school)

- College
 - _____
- Vocational training
 - _____
- Work
 - _____

TransCen Seamless Transition Parent Interview

Date:

Parent Name:

Student's Name:

School District:

Remember to take notes, either directly or indirectly onto the Positive Personal Profile (or another assessment tool), or to include into existing assessment information.

Section 1: Hopes, Dreams, Expectations and Challenges

Please describe what a good life will look for your son or daughter once they leave high school.

What dreams do your son or daughter have for themselves when they get older?

What is your son or daughter's greatest skill or attribute?

What does your son or daughter look like on their roughest day?

When thinking about your son or daughter's future, what worries you the most?

Section 2: School and Adult Supports

Do you fully understand what the school is doing to help prepare your son or daughter for adult life?

What style of communication works best for you (phone, written, text or face-to-face)?

Do you feel like a respected and involved partner on your son or daughter's IEP team?

Have you been connected to any service agencies that might provide supports to your son or daughter when they are an adult?

Is your son or daughter currently receiving SSI or SSDI? If so, what questions or concerns do you have about those benefits as it relates to employment?

Section 3: Focusing on Employment

What are your expectations for your son or daughter's employment when they are an adult?

What do you need to feel more comfortable about your son or daughter's employment future?

Do you do anything at home that helps your son or daughter build responsibility?

In what community do you see your son or daughter living as an adult?

Based on what you know about your son or daughter's skills and interests, what types of jobs do you think they would enjoy?

In the community you live in now, are there any local businesses that you think your son or daughter would enjoy or be successful working at?

Do you know any business owners in your community that you could contact for a potential work experience for your son or daughter?