Kansas Community Team Guide: Youth, Families, & Interagency Collaboration for the Transition to Adulthood

KU CENTER ON DISABILITIES

MY TRANSITION MY CAREER

About The My Transition My Career Projects

In 2021, the Kansas University Center on Disabilities (KUCD) received two grants from the Administration for Community Living. Both projects, known as the My Transition My Career projects, have a mission to build the capacity of communities across the state of Kansas to improve transition outcomes of youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Through ongoing technical assistance, KUCDD has been supporting nine community partnerships (Transition Councils and Community Teams) across Kansas to establish the policies, practices, and relationships needed to sustain their efforts and ensure the voices of transition-aged youth with disabilities and their families are reflected in local transition systems and services. The information in this guide is informed by the work of the My Transition My Career projects.

Acknowledgements

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MY TRANSITION
MY CAREER

What is a Community Team?

The purpose of a Community Team is to create sustainable community partnerships between families, schools, local agencies, service providers, and employers focused on identifying local solutions that enhance a positive transition from high school for youth with disabilities. The Teams' work centers on issues identified by youth and families based on their experiences with the transition and employment processes. Thus, the voices and experiences of youth and families are essential to the Team's work.

Community Teams focus on building relationships among service organizations, family, youth, and self-advocates and identify innovative ways organizations can partner to meet the needs of youth and families. The Community Team process offers a way for schools to meet their federal requirements for partnering with community organizations. Teams also provide a way for other organizations that serve youth with disabilities to develop partnerships to advance their mission. Family members, youth, and self-advocates who participate in the Community Team can build leadership experience, learn about available services and supports, and influence transition and employment practices in their community.

How Might Communities Use this Guide?

This guide is designed to provide practical guidance to communities on how to use the Community Team process to start or enhance community partnerships. We will describe the steps used to form a Community Team, including setting goals, creating and implementing plans, and building for sustainability. Throughout the guide, we highlight best practices and tips learned from existing Community Teams.

Effective Community Teams Engage in the Following Actions

- Give voice to youth with disabilities, self-advocates, and family members who might not typically have a "seat at the table”.
- Build trust and partnerships across school systems, service systems, and community members.
- Document the strengths and resources that exist within the local community.
- Identify and work to address transition barriers at the local- and state-level.
- Educate community team members and community members on transition and employment policy and practices.
- Develop new practices, policies, and programs to address pressing local transition and employment needs.
- Create systems to document and measure progress on post-school outcomes.
- Improve the post-school outcomes of young people with disabilities in employment, continuing education, and community participation.

What Makes a Successful Community Team?

“I think what makes a successful Community Team is that you bring different viewpoints from different people in the community or places where services are provided for people with all kinds of disabilities. The more input you can have from many different points of view, the better.

We must change the mindset that dominates a lot of school and service systems related to disability – we're not here just to be taken care of. We need the opportunity to use our own voice and to stand up for ourselves. Nobody's perfect and there will be bumps in the road, but that's just a fact of life. Community Teams can lift the voices of people with disabilities to transform the entire system and we are ready to make that change!”

-Brad Linnenkamp, KUCDD researcher and self-advocate

The Community Teams Process

The Community Team process is a four-step process that supports communities to (1) come together with necessary voices and perspectives to identify barriers and solutions, (2) set meaningful goals based on issues identified by youth and families, (3) develop plans to meet the goals, and (4) build for sustainability. While we describe these as distinct steps, it is important to remember that it may be necessary to revisit certain steps throughout the process. For example, the Team may learn of a new organization that needs to be at the table, so engaging the community can be an ongoing process. Further, new challenges may emerge that the Team needs to address, so frequently revisiting goals and plans is crucial. Also, building for sustainability is always important because there will be turnover among team members.

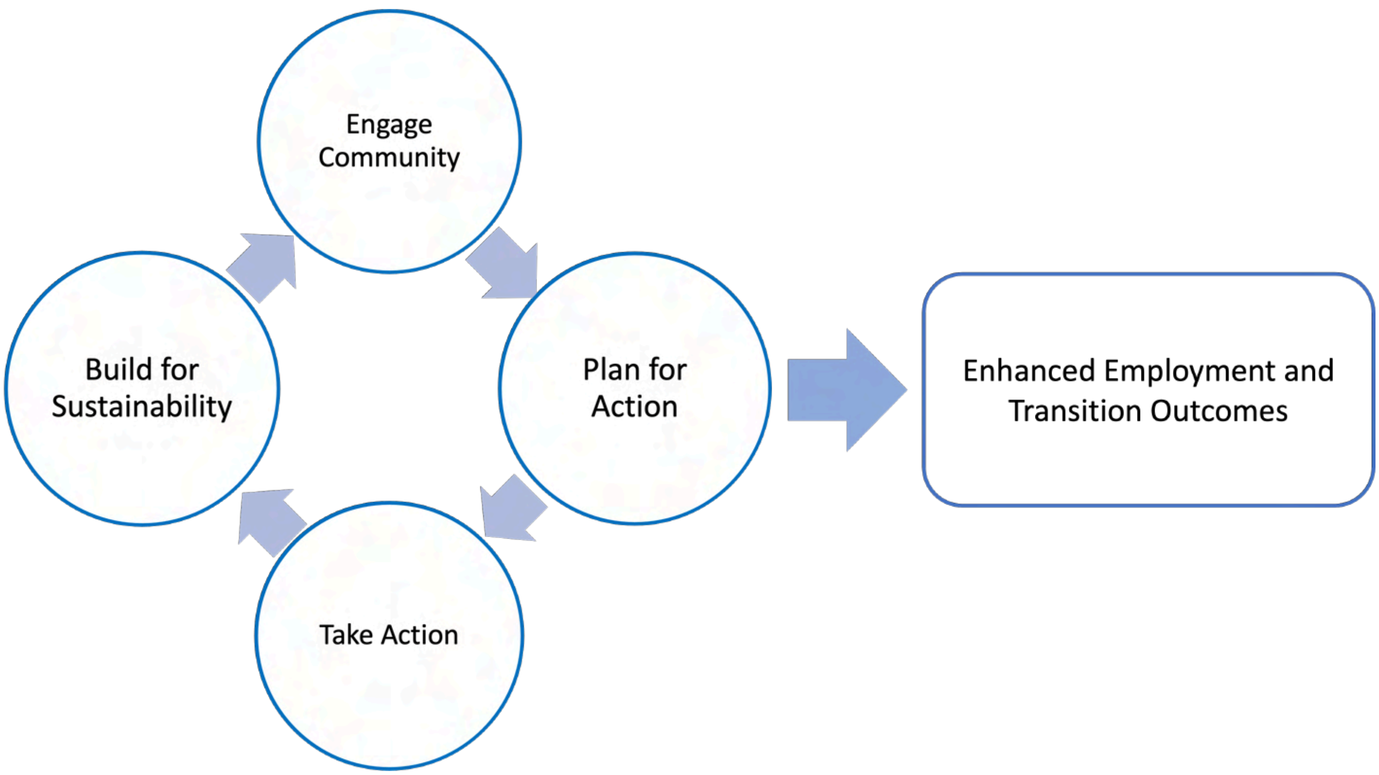


Figure 1.1 Community Teams Process

Community Team Building for Transition Support Checklist		
Step 1: Engage Community		
☐	**1.1** Identify a coordinating organization	
☐	**1.2** Recruit key partners	
☐	**1.3** Set logistical and organizational structures	
	☐	**1.3.1** Schedule and carry out monthly meetings
	☐	**1.3.2** Plan for operating costs
	☐	**1.3.3** Team membership roles
☐	**1.4** Conduct community resource mapping	
☐	**1.5** Recruit other community partners identified during resource mapping	
☐	**1.6** Recruiting all voices	
Step 2: Plan for Action		
☐	**2.1** Listening to the community	
☐	**2.2** Set short-term and long-term goals	
Step 3: Take Action		
☐	**3.1** Team members innovate	
☐	**3.2** Create work groups or sub-committees to take action on goals	
☐	**3.3** Use cognitively and culturally responsive practices to engage with youth with disabilities, families, and community groups on the transition process	
☐	**3.4** Reflect and adjust action based on progress toward goals	
Step 4: Plan for Sustainability		
☐	**4.1** Look for emerging leaders and rotate leadership	
☐	**4.2** Review logistical and organizational structures regularly	
☐	**4.3** Funding	

1

Engage Community

The first, and most important, step toward establishing a Community Team is engaging the community. A Community Team is a group of people focusing on issues in their local community. This means the group is committed to working with and for their own community to enact change that impacts their own lives and others. To achieve goals based on local needs, the Community Team must include local partners (including youth with disabilities, self-advocates, and family members) and seek out engagement and input from other local community members (including schools, local agencies, service providers, and employers). The steps below outline how to begin bringing various community members together for this work and how to set a strong foundation to move the Team forward.

1.1 Identify a Coordinating Organization

In the beginning, it is important to identify a coordinating organization to support scheduling meetings, reaching out to partners, and structuring the Team's work. When identifying a coordinating organization, ask these questions:

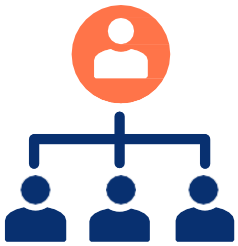
1. **Does the organization have leadership who recognizes the importance of the Team?**
2. **Does the organization have a person or position whose job responsibilities fit with coordinating the Team?**
3. **Does the organization have a network of partners to initially form the Team?**

1.2 Recruit Key Partners

The next step in the Community Team process is to bring together community members interested in transition and employment. To assemble an initial Team, a good place to start is identifying organizations that work to fulfill state and federal requirements, such as the school district, Vocational Rehabilitation, Local Workforce Development Boards, and Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waiver service providers. These organizations are critical because they provide direct services to transition-aged youth, however they are not sufficient for an effective Team. Families and youth voices are also critical for guiding the work of the Team. The figure on the next page offers suggestions on key individuals and organizations to reach out to when forming an initial Team. Section 1.5 also highlights other community organizations that may be good team members depending on their work in the community. Appendix A includes a sample recruitment flyer that Teams can use as a template when beginning recruitment.

Figure 1.2 Potential Community Team Members

1.3 Set Logistical and Organizational Structures



Once the Team is engaged, it is critical to determine how the Team will operate by defining logistical and organizational structures. This section provides steps for a Community Team to set a strong foundation of working procedures for the Team to operate smoothly and efficiently.

1.3.1 Schedule and Carry-out Monthly Meetings

One initial consideration for the Team is to determine when and where the Team will meet. In our experience, effective Teams meet at least monthly at a regularly scheduled time (e.g. the fourth Monday of the month). When selecting a meeting time, take into consideration the preferences and prior commitments of team members. For example, family members may have difficulty taking time off from work during the regular business day, but representatives from service organizations may have difficulty meeting in the evenings. In this case, the beginning or ending of the working day may be a good option.

A great starting point to a time that works for the group is to send out an online poll to find a meeting time that works for the majority of the group. Then, at the first initial meeting, the Team can discuss additional times that work for the group going forward and determine if in-person, virtual, or hybrid meetings work best. In our experience, in-person and hybrid meetings offer many advantages over virtual meetings. Meeting in-person can create more opportunities for relationship building through side conversations that foster deeper collaborations between partners. See the information on the next page for recommendations on how to create an accessible meeting space whether the meeting is virtual, hybrid, or in-person.

Another consideration as the Team begins their work is to create and send out an agenda for each monthly meeting. Agendas are an invaluable planning tool used to keep members informed on the date and location of the meeting, define what topics will be discussed, and help keep the group focused as they tackle each item on the agenda. We recommend sending the agenda out at least a week prior to each meeting to give each member plenty of time to prepare. At the meeting, consider a timekeeper to be sure the Team stays on schedule. Appendix B includes a sample agenda Teams can adapt to fit their needs.

Accessible Meeting Tips

Creating an Inclusive Meeting Space

Each member on the Team must embrace respectful language when talking about individuals and groups, particularly when talking about people with disabilities and other marginalized groups. As language evolves, during the Team's first meeting, it may be helpful to set the foundation by talking about what should be adopted. We encourage groups to consult self-advocates or self-advocacy groups to identify the best language to use when referring to people with disabilities.

Accessible Meetings

- When planning for Community Team meetings, there are several factors to take into consideration regarding accessibility for all attendees. Depending on the meeting format (virtual, hybrid, or in-person), there are different factors that the Team will want to consider.
    - For virtual meetings, the Team will want to make sure that all participants have access to the technology needed to join the meeting. Some participants might not have access to the internet or a device to join the virtual meeting, so having virtual only meetings could be a barrier for some.
    - Another consideration for the Team if they are thinking about having virtual meetings is whether all members know how to navigate the meeting platform (e.g. Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet) the Team chooses to use. It is important to remember that while some individuals use these platforms on an everyday basis, there will be some individuals who might be unfamiliar with how to navigate and use the software. If the Team decides to hold virtual monthly meetings, it could be worth setting up a separate time with individuals who might not be familiar with virtual meeting platforms to give an overview of virtual meeting etiquette and how to use the software.
    - If the Team decides to have in-person meetings, they will need to consider the accessibility of the meeting location. Some factors to consider include:
        - Does the venue have accessible parking?
        - Is there public transportation close by and available during the meeting time?
        - Does the venue have an accessible bathroom?
        - Are there clear signs and maps directing attendees to the meeting location?
        - Does the meeting location provide ample room for individuals who use wheelchairs or scooters?
    - For hybrid meetings, the Team will want to consider all recommendations under both virtual and in-person meetings listed above.

Accessible Meeting Tips

Accommodations

- When the Community Team first starts meeting, they should encourage team members to share if they need any type of accommodation to fully participate in the meetings. If people are uncomfortable sharing their needed accommodations in front of the whole Team, the organizer could encourage people to contact them with needed accommodations. Some accommodations may include:
    - Providing materials in alternative formats (e.g., large print, Braille, audio format, languages other than English).
    - Providing captioning services for virtual meetings.
    - Providing qualified interpreters (e.g. sign language interpreter, Spanish interpreter, etc.).

Accessible Materials and Information

- All materials and information shared with the Team should be in an accessible format.
    - An accessibility check should be conducted on each item (e.g., PDFs, Word documents, PowerPoints, etc.) being shared with the Team. This ensures that individuals who use screen readers can access the information.
    - All information should be written in plain language. To help the Team familiarize themselves with plain language guidelines, visit https://www.plainlanguage.gov/.

1.3.2 Plan for Operating Costs

As the Team conducts its business, there will likely be a need for funding. For example, Teams may need funding to host events, pay self-advocates or family members for their time, provide snacks at meetings, among other things. During the mapping process discussed later in section 1.4, it is important for the Team to think through organizations that could support the work of the Team. For example, are there local organizations that fund educational activities or health-related activities? Are there organizations (including Team members) whose mission is to enhance employment outcomes? Keep in mind that different events may attract different funders, so it is important to think broadly about possible funders in the beginning. As part of this planning, also think about who is best positioned to receive, track, and spend funds.

1.3.3 Team Membership Roles

Defining and understanding roles and responsibilities among team members leads to an efficient Team, promotes the full participation of all members, and builds for sustainability. The Community Team should work together to identify and define the roles and responsibilities of each community team member, and members should be encouraged to identify roles based on their personal strengths. For example, team members who thrive on ensuring an orderly agenda is followed could develop the agenda and be the timekeeper. A person with a big-picture focus could also be involved with creating the agenda and may also take on the role of coordinating the group to ensure the big picture is kept in focus. Someone who values prompt communication could schedule the monthly meetings and communicate with team members. Each team member should feel empowered to share their strengths, support needs, and preferences when deciding what role they are going to take on. It is important to remember that members can take on shared roles or rotate roles on a regular basis to provide support or promote skill development. The information on the next page offers examples of different types of roles community members can take on to support the Team.

Taking on a role on the Community Team can be a great way to engage youth with disabilities and support them to build leadership skills. For example, a young person could start as a co-facilitator and help set the agenda each month, and then move into the facilitator role.

The Importance of Self-Advocate Leadership

"The biggest reason it is important to have self-advocates as leaders on each Community Team is that they bring a perspective of what it is like to live with a disability. As youth work on and develop their leadership skills, they become more and more a part of the community. That is one way that self-advocates can become stronger members of the community and contribute to the best of their ability."

-Brad Linnenkamp, KUCDD researcher and self-advocate

Example Team Member Roles

Meeting Facilitator

The facilitator is often the leader of the group. They clarify the Team's objectives, make sure every member understands their role and assign tasks to members so they can help the Team achieve their goals. Facilitators lead group meetings and set deadlines to keep members on task. The facilitator is often the one who schedules the meetings and creates the agendas and PowerPoints for each meeting.

Scheduling Meetings (e.g. sending calendar invitations) or reserving in-person space

This role supports scheduling meetings and reserving in-person meeting spaces as needed. They send calendar invitations and emails out to notify the Team of upcoming meetings. This task is often done by the meeting facilitator but can also be taken on by other members of the Team who work closely with the facilitator. This role is responsible for creating an agenda and PowerPoint for each monthly meeting, but other members of the Team can support this role by working closely with the facilitator. Lastly, this role would support conducting accessibility checks of all materials distributed to the Team.

Notetaker

Notetakers have the critical role of recording Team meetings and maintaining documentation of group activities. They record important points team members make, data, updates, changes, and other important ideas and decisions. Then, they organize the meeting minutes and distribute them to team members. Their notes help keep the Team working toward the same goal and ensure everyone has the information they need to complete their tasks. Often times, notes are taken directly on the agenda.

Project Leader

This role would measure the Team’s progress in working toward the group’s objectives and goals. Multiple team members could take on this role to support different activities the Team is working on. For example, one team member could manage family outreach and another team member could manage planning a reverse job fair. The person in this role would communicate with individual members and the entire Team to validate completion of tasks for the activity they are leading. In addition, the person would monitor the Team’s progress in action taken to active the Team’s goal by checking that action steps are being completed between each Community Team meeting.

Recruitment/Outreach Coordinator

The recruitment/outreach coordinator is responsible for outreach efforts related to:

- Recruiting new community team members.
- Distributing surveys to learn from members of the community.
- Connecting with individuals and/or organizations around community events (e.g. contacting the school to set up a booth for parent/teacher conferences).
- Developing outreach materials (e.g. flyers, social media posts).

Treasurer

The primary role of the treasurer is to manage the Team’s budget and finances. The treasurer will work with the Team to determine team-specific expenses incurred by the Team each semester (e.g. meeting space costs, participant incentives, community events). If additional funds are needed, the treasurer will work with the Team to brainstorm additional ways to raise funds (e.g. fundraising).

1.4 Conduct Community Resource Mapping

Once the initial Team has been developed, an important first activity is to map the community resources that support families and youth during the transition years. Community Mapping is an important first step to identify other possible team members, but also to identify community assets who may support specific team activities and enable the Team to navigate around barriers to successful transition outcomes. Community Mapping can be an informal or formal process. Teams can invest different amounts of time for community mapping processes and different processes can result in creating different types of resources. So, Teams should choose a process that works best for the goals and needs of their Team.

One informal way to conduct community mapping is to gather people involved in transition and employment services, both as providers and as consumers, to discuss important community assets. It is critical to have families, youth, and self-advocates as part of these conversations. During these conversations, the Team can discuss:

A. What transition resources and services exist in our community?

B. Who provides services to youth in our community?

C. Who would be willing to fund the Team's work?

D. What marginalized communities exist in our community? How can we reach them? Who has deep connections in these communities?

E. Who focuses on employment? Be sure to include organizations who broadly service youth or focus on employment, and include organizations that may not only serve people with disabilities. Some organizations to consider may include the Chamber of Commerce, American Job Centers, community leaders, businesses, faith communities, and Centers for Independent Living.

For additional support in conducting community resource mapping, view the Community Planning Discussion Form in Appendix C. The form provides discussion questions that can guide Teams in identifying community assets and needs. Figure 1.3 also shows an example of a Digital Asset Map developed by a local Transition Council.

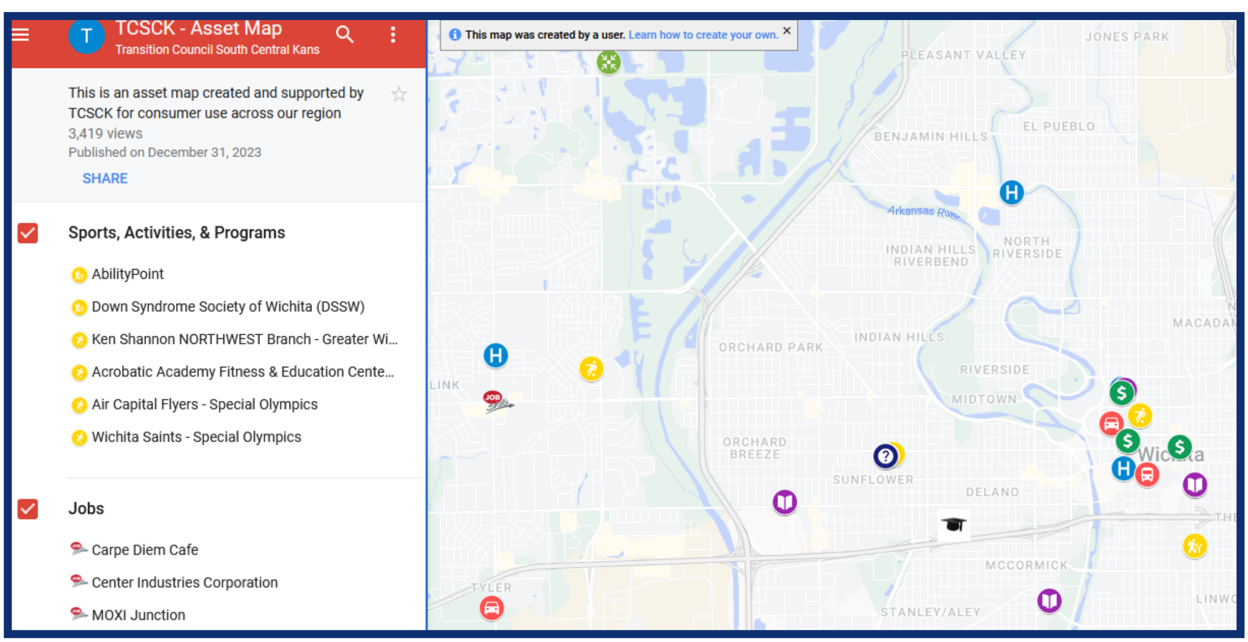


Figure 1.3 Sample Digital Asset Map

1.5 Recruit Other Community Partners Identified During Resource Mapping

Using the community resource map, the Team can then identify organizations that support families and youth during the transition process and need to be recruited to the Community Team. Some organizations, like the Chamber of Commerce and transportation providers, may offer specific contributions based on the Team's goals and may not attend every meeting. It is still important to keep them informed of the Team's activities and to engage them when their mission aligns with Team activities. The box below offers suggestions on additional partners that could support specific Team activities.

Other Community Team Members

- Policymakers or civic leaders
- Faith community leaders
- Employment providers
- Employers
- Post-Secondary Education Institutions (trade schools, community colleges, colleges, inclusive post-secondary education programs)
- Transportation providers
- Disability organizations (e.g. The Arc, Self-Advocate Coalition of Kansas)
- Community group representatives (e.g. civic or service clubs, nonprofits)
- Adult/disability providers
- Chamber of Commerce

1.6 Recruiting All Voices

An important step for guiding the work of the Team is to ensure the Team is engaging individuals, particularly those from communities who have been marginalized because of culture, race, gender, or other identities, and who often do not have a "seat at the table". It is critical for families and especially **youth and adults with lived experience of disability** to be involved in every step of the process to ensure the Team's efforts align with their priorities, needs, and values.

There are several ways the Team can engage the voices of those in the community most affected by issues related to youth transitioning from high school to adult life. Although the Team might already have families and youth and adults with lived experience of disability on the Team, it is important for the Team to hear from all groups in the community who often may not be offered opportunities to share their voice. Some examples of these groups include:

- Communities of color
- Communities whose first language is not English
- Communities with limited access to technology, services, and other resources
- Youth with complex support needs and/or their family members

The Importance of Hearing All Voices

"It is important for all voices to be heard because different parts of the community have different needs. Even though members want to address the same issue they have different perspectives. For example, two students may have different goals and different support needs. One may want to go straight to work after school, and another may want to go to college or technical school when they graduate. These students will need different supports to meet their goals. If the students have other support needs, like using an Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) device, additional supports may also be needed to achieve their goals.

Having all voices at the table creates buy-in and develops trust between team members. With everyone at the table we can establish trust by listening to one another. People who feel like they are being heard will continue to contribute."

-Ski Adams, self-advocate and AAC user

Plan for Action

After the Community Team is established, it is time for the Team to start **planning for action.** It is essential for the Community Team to work together in making goals that are based on the needs of youth and families from all backgrounds to turn the Team's vision into reality. This section provides suggestions on how to engage voices that might not always have a seat at the table and examples of short- and long-term goals that Community Teams could set.

2.1 Listening to the Community

Recruitment is an ongoing process for each Community Team, and it is imperative that the Team continuously thinks about new ways to hear from families, youth, and populations whose voices are often not sought after. Also, recognize that while not all youth and families will have the time or interest to engage in the Team, their voices can still drive its work. For example, some families do not have the bandwidth to be members of the Community Team but could attend a listening session or complete a survey. Additional outreach efforts are needed to ensure that planning efforts are focused on youth and family needs. Additionally, standard recruitment processes (sending out emails, flyers, etc.) are not always effective in reaching marginalized populations, so new methods for reaching out may be needed. Below are strategies that Community Teams have used as part of the My Transition My Career projects to ensure all voices are being engaged.

A. Survey or interview the community – See Appendix D for an example survey.
B. Work with a Cultural Broker to engage marginalized communities.
   - A cultural broker is someone who advocates with or on behalf of an individual or group. A broker is often someone from the community and has the trust and respect of the community. A broker can support the Team to learn more about marginalized communities, identify ways to engage communities respectfully, explore areas of mutual interest, and foster relationships built on mutual trust, reciprocity, and respect (Goode, 2001). Additionally, they have knowledge of:
     - Historical and current experience within marginalized communities.
     - Culturally defined values and belief systems related to people with disabilities.
     - Methods of networking within marginalized communities (National Center for Cultural Competence, 2005).
C. Meet Families Where They Are – Participate in cultural or faith-based events. Remember, the Team may need to build trust with the community and ensure that the work of the Team is mutually beneficial to the community, so the Team may need to begin by learning more about the needs of the community and working to build trust.

Remember, community needs can change, so think about regular events that the Team can hold to continue to engage and learn from families and youth.

2.2 Set Short-Term and Long-Term Goals

While the Community Team learns about the needs of the community, together they can begin to prioritize needs and set goals! At this point, the Community Team has gathered information about supports and services available in the community through community mapping and has also heard from youth and families about their experiences with transition and employment services. The Team, in partnership with community members, can now set short and long-term goals to support youth and families. We recommend first setting long-term goals that the Team will work toward for a year or longer. Then, set short-term goals that lead to the longer-term goals. Short term goals are goals that can be accomplished in weeks or months, maybe even between each meeting. The goals of each Team should be based on the needs identified by those most affected by disability issues in the community. View the table on the next page to see examples of long-term and short-term goals set by communities that are part of the My Transition My Career project.

Long-Term Goals	Short-Term Goals
Connecting Families to Resources	• Engaging Middle and High Schools to meet with families to hear what their needs are and share resources that can help them with transition. • Connecting the school and Local Workforce Development Boards or Pre-ETS providers to provide work-based learning opportunities for students.
Increasing Employment Opportunities for Youth with Disabilities	• Holding employment events (e.g., mock interview workshop, reverse job fair, etc.). • Networking with local employers and partnering with them to build their capacity to hire youth with disabilities.
Building Youth Leadership and Self-Determination	• Providing peer mentorship to youth members on the Community Team by meeting individually with the youth each month. Peer mentorship typically occurs outside of the monthly Community Team meetings. Often times, it is helpful to have an adult with a disability mentor youth with a disability as they can connect and provide guidance based on their personal lived experience with disability. • Training transition educators in evidence-based practices for transition such as the Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction or Circles. ‣ SDLMI: https://selfdetermination.ku.edu/homepage/intervention/#sdlmi ‣ Circles: https://circles.charlotte.edu/
Increasing the Supports and Services for Youth with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities	• Holding monthly informational sessions where different service providers share information about the services they provide. • Providing information about resources in all the languages spoken by local community members.

Table 1.1 Example Goals Taken by Real Community Teams

Setting goals is critical to guiding the work of the Community Team. Remember, just like our personal goals, as we work toward goals, we learn more about ourselves and the community. So, Team's goals may shift over time. We recommend discussing activities focused on each of the Team's goals at each meeting. Additionally, the Team should dedicate time to reviewing progress and potential adjustments to long-term goals at least quarterly. Teams may find, as they continue to partner with community members, that new or different goals should be targeted.

3

Take Action!

Once the Community Team has set initial goals, **it is time to act!** The actions that a Community Team takes will be guided by and tailored to their local area's needs. There are several key questions that Community Teams should consider when beginning to take action:

A. What types of activities, events, or materials will be the most impactful in our community?

B. Who will take the lead on the proposed action, and how can other team members contribute to the effort?

C. Are our actions and materials accessible to our intended audience?

D. How will we track and monitor our progress toward our goals?

Section 3 describes the steps of taking action that will address those key questions

3.1 Team Members Innovate

In order to meet the short and long-term goals set by the Team in Step 2.2, the Team must begin innovating. Large group brainstorming sessions are a great way to start. This can be a meeting agenda item in which specific outreach, events, materials, surveys, trainings, or other actions can be discussed by the Team. If team members need further inspiration, networking and researching online may aid action plan development. Team members can reach out to and learn from people in other regions including colleagues from their broader professional organizations, families in special-interest groups on social media, and other Community Teams in your state.

Example Actions Taken by Real Community Teams

Survey the Community

Create a short survey to gather information on the needs and priorities in your area.

Reverse Job Fair

Connect youth with disabilities with employers to identify matches between youth skills and interests and employer needs. Along the way, students will build self-determination and resume writing and interview skills. Employers will also learn about the benefits of hiring people with disabilities.

Small School Resource Events

Hold monthly informational get-togethers in which various school transition staff and postschool service providers (VR, HCBS providers) answer questions and support parents in beginning the processes of applying for services. Consider hosting these events for middle school classrooms so youth and families start thinking about transition early.

Information Booth at Back-to-School Night or Parent-Teacher Conferences

Service providers from several agencies host a table together at Back-to-School Night to talk to parents about services and needs.

Educate Employers

Host an educational breakfast or lunch with the local Chamber of Commerce to reach employers. During this event, educate employers on the benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities. Vocational Rehabilitation and Workforce Development Boards can give presentations to familiarize employers on the services available that can support individuals with disabilities in the workforce.

Reverse Job Fair Tips

A reverse job fair is a great way for employers to get a sense of the incredible workers people with disabilities can be -- focusing on the students' strengths and interests. It flips the traditional job fair script, so job seekers sell themselves -- their interests and experiences -- as employers seek to fit job seekers to job opportunities. Job seekers can display boards or other materials that highlight their qualifications and demonstrate their skills to potential employers. Holding a reverse job fair is a great way for schools to collaborate and build connections with Vocational Rehabilitation, local area workforce boards, the Chamber of Commerce, and others. These partners can help support students in building skills and preparing for the fair by conducting mock interviews, supporting resume development, etc.

3.2 Create Work Groups or Sub-Committees to Take Action On Goals

Divide and conquer! The Team can create work groups or sub-committees to break a large action plan into manageable chunks. For example, for a reverse job fair hosted by one existing Community Team, school staff oversaw instructing the youth and skill-building in preparation for the fair. Meanwhile, another working group comprised of VR, Local Workforce Development Board, Chamber of Commerce, and family members led the outreach and recruitment of employers. Finally, another working group secured the venue and organized refreshments, set-up, and clean-up for the event.

This work group system made the distribution of tasks equitable, and it allowed for individual team members to contribute based on their strengths, preferences, and availability. Team members should be able to determine the best activities to engage in based on their organizations' mission and their specific skills and expertise.

3.3 Use Cognitively and Culturally Responsive Practices to Engage Youth with Disabilities, Families, and Community Groups on the Transition Process

When interacting within the Community Team and when communicating with the broader community, it is important to use processes, create materials, and plan events that are both cognitively and culturally responsive. To be cognitively responsive:

- Review and revise all written materials for plain language (please see the box on the next page).
- Use accessible text fonts (e.g., Calibri or Times New Roman)
- Use clear and concise instructions for any surveys or action items
- Provide transcripts of any multimedia presentations

To be culturally responsive:

- Work with a cultural broker, family member, or community leader from each community.
- Translate materials into languages spoken by the members of your community, using best practices.
- Engage families by visiting their preferred locations (e.g., various faith-based venues or social gathering spots).
- Identify and make use of families' strengths.
- Seek to learn from families within the context of their culture.

By being intentional with your outreach and materials creation, you can make a broader impact.

Plain Language Tips

To ensure materials are accessible to community members, be sure to use plain language. Plain language is clear, straightforward, and only uses necessary words to make the message understandable. Here are some plain language tips:

- Use active voice (e.g., "We are hosting an event" NOT "An event will be hosted").
- Limit use of acronyms and abbreviations.
- Repeat the same terms instead of synonyms.
- Avoid using too many descriptive words or modifiers.
- Avoid using prepositions (e.g., At this point in time = Now).
- Use bulleted lists instead of long lists separated by commas.
- Use fewer than 20 words per sentence.
- Keep paragraphs short (3-8 sentences) with all sentences on the same page.
- Use explanatory section headings.
- Use words that are 3 syllables or less.
- Use a positive tone!
- Do not be overly simplistic or talk down to the reader.

3.4 Reflect and Adjust Action Based on Progress Toward Goals

While your Team is taking action, be sure to track progress toward your goals. A goal sheet like the example in Table 1.2 on the next page can be included as a section on each meeting agenda and updated during the meetings. The Team can allot agenda time to review the goals and any actions taken toward those goals. The Team can also reflect on barriers toward meeting those goals. After a goal is met, like hosting a back-to-school night booth, we recommend that at the next Team meeting, the Team discuss what went well, what could have been improved, the cost/benefit of doing a similar activity in the future, and then restart the goal setting process based on those discussions. A relatively quick tracking and reflecting process like this will help keep the Team organized and focused on their goals.

Community Team Goals
Goal:

Actions to Achieve Goal			
Date	Actions Taken	Team Members	Notes

Reflection on Goal			
Completion Date	Describe Outcome of Goal. What Happened?	What Went Well?	What Could Be Improved?

Will the Team set the same goal again, adjust the goal, or set a new goal?

Table 1.2 Tracking Community Team Goals

4

Plan for Sustainability

Much like the goal-setting process, thinking about the membership and roles of the Team as well as funding for team activities should be focused both on the short-term and the long-term. As team members are likely to be volunteering for this work, it is important to plan for shared responsibility and contingencies when team members are unavailable. Some team members may also move out of the area or take different jobs, so having more than one team member engaged in each role can provide continuity. Team members may also have to think creatively to secure funding for events and materials. There are several ways to plan for and to buffer against these issues.

4.1 Look for Emerging Leaders and Rotate Leadership

One way to plan for the continued health of the Community Team is to rotate leadership on a predictable cycle (e.g., yearly). By rotating leadership team members can concentrate their efforts and work diligently knowing that they will pass the leadership baton to another capable team member at a designated time. As the Team plans for and takes action, certain team members may emerge as potential leaders. These people are often enthusiastic about the Team's mission, have shown their willingness to prioritize team activities, and can take charge of certain tasks (e.g. drafting meeting agendas, communicating schedules and logistics with other team members, etc.). Another way to support team leadership is to identify organizations that can include team leadership in the job description and duties. For example, school personnel can often assist with leadership of the Team because it is a great way for the school to meet their federal requirements for supporting transition planning. By looking for emerging leaders, rotating leadership, and building leadership activities into existing job duties, the mission of the Community Team will continue to be driven forward.

4.2 Review Logistical and Organizational Structures Regularly

There are many ways that the Community Team can operate including frequency of meetings, time of day of meetings, meetings held in-person or via remote communication platform (e.g., Zoom, Teams), format of meetings (i.e., What is on the agenda?), and leadership or committee selection and rotation. The needs and schedules of the Team may shift overtime, particularly if recruitment brings new members to the table. With this in mind, the Team should review its logistical and organizational structures as a group at regular intervals (e.g., annually) to see if the current structures are facilitating members' engagement. This could be an agenda item once per year when these issues are discussed. However, if attendance has been an issue, the Team should consider sending a short email survey to all active and inactive members to gain insight into how members would be able to participate moving forward. Being flexible and making adjustments to the Team's procedures as the Team evolves will support the continued success of the Team.

4.3 Funding

The Community Team should regularly monitor their current funds and think of new ways to secure additional funding so the Team can continue their mission and goals. It is important for the Team to track both their short-term funding needs and long-term funding needs to ensure there is enough money available to support all goals. Some examples of how Community Teams utilize funding include securing venues for events, purchasing refreshments for monthly meetings, providing incentives to participants for taking surveys or participating in interviews, and material development (e.g. translation of materials, printing). As mentioned in section 1.3.3, it is helpful for each Team to have a Treasurer to manage the Team's budget and finances and work with the Team to brainstorm additional ways to raise funds. The box below offers examples of how Community Teams can raise additional funding.

Funding Sources

Donations

Raising money through donations is a great way for the Team to secure additional funding. There are several ways the Team can go about asking for donations such as through email or through a website if the Team has one.

Fundraising

Teams can get creative by organizing different types of fundraising events to raise money. There are many different types of fundraising events the Team can take on, but some examples include raffles, bake sales, car washes, silent auctions, etc.

Partnerships and Collaborations

Some organizations that are members of the Community Team might have funds from their organization built in to help cover the costs of certain expenses (e.g., venues, meals, translation of materials).

Grants

There may be grants that the Community Team could apply for to receive additional funds. These grants may be available through local, state, or federal government agencies or through non-profit groups.

The above outlined steps can guide community partners in your area to form and sustain a youth, family, and interagency group to enhance transition outcomes for youth with disabilities. These steps have been successfully implemented by communities all over the state of Kansas and can be adapted and implemented for the needs and systems in place in your area. Collaboration between various groups may promote more integrated processes, better information flow to families, and more accessible supports and services.

Appendices

Appendix A: My Transition, My Career Recruitment Flyer

MY TRANSITION
MY CAREER

Families and Youth Making Transition and Employment Work for Them

The ***include organization name*** is forming a team of people who want to enhance employment outcomes for people with disabilities in ***include City, State***.

We are looking for community members, family members, and youth with disabilities to join the team because we recognize the important role families play in supporting employment outcomes.

We are looking for people who can:

- Share their experiences with transition and employment
- Generate ideas for enhancing services
- Attend monthly meetings, if possible

Join us for our first Community Team meeting on **Monday, August 1st from 4:00p - 6:00p!**

Location: *Include Zoom information or in-person meeting location address*

Interested?
Please contact ***include name*** at ***include email address*.**

Appendix B: Community Team Meeting Agenda Template

Time	Discussion Topics
6:00PM-6:15PM	**Welcome** • Welcome attendees to the meeting • Introduction • Review Agenda
6:15PM-6:20PM	**Review Team Goals** • Remind the group of the goals the team set
6:15PM-6:20PM	**Planning for Goal 1**
6:35PM-7:05PM	**Community Mapping** • Identify barriers or problems in the community that need to be solved
7:05PM-7:10PM	**Break**
7:10PM-7:40PM	**Planning for Goal 2** • Identify possible solutions to the problems you are trying to solve • Are there any action items team members can take to help solve the problem?
7:40PM-7:50PM	**Team Membership** • Review team membership: does the team have everyone that needs to be there to accomplish their mission?
7:50PM-8:00PM	**Next Steps** • Recap action items discussed during the meeting • Discuss topics and goals for the next meeting • Wrap Up

Appendix C: Community Planning Discussion Form

What is your communities action plan for 2024-25?
Review the following considerations to either develop or further strengthen your plan.

Critical Considerations	Local Strengths/Needs What is working? What do we need to improve?
1. Do we have our critical partners working with us? Are we missing an agency or stakeholder from the conversation?	
2. How do we describe a 'successful' transition for students with disabilities? How do we collaborate within the school and across agencies to support this outcome for students?	
2. How do we describe a 'successful' transition for students with disabilities? How do we collaborate within the school and across agencies to support this outcome for students?	
3. How are we currently working together to support students with disabilities participation in: • Pre-Employment Transition Services • Career Technical Education • Completing graduation requirements • Postsecondary Education • Competitive Integrated Employment	
4. How are we developing student self-determination and self-advocacy? How are we supporting student engagement in their IEP/ Transition Planning?	
5. How are we defining family engagement to align with our expected student outcomes for transition? How are we helping to raise family expectations of competitive integrated employment and participation in postsecondary education/training?	
What needs to be included in your Cross-Agency Action Plan? What are your next steps to address identified needs?	
Developed by the Kansas Transition Coordinating Council with the assistance of the National Assistance Center on Transition: the Collaborative (NTACT:C).	

Appendix D: Example Survey

Community Teams Survey Fall/Winter 2023-2024

The Community Team is a group of self-advocates, parents, and professionals who support youth with disabilities transitioning to adult life. The Community Team would like to learn more about your experiences as a person with a disability, a parent or caregiver, or a professional. Thank you for helping us improve transition for young adults with disabilities in your area!

1. **Which role best describes you?**
   - ◯ Parent
   - ◯ Caregiver
   - ◯ Youth with a disability
   - ◯ Adult with a disability
   - ◯ Other ______________________

2. **What people or resources best support you and your child with a disability?**

   ____

3. **What are things that you need more support with?**

   ____

4. **When thinking about your child's transition from high school, what do you need the most help with right now?**

   ____

5. **What information or services would help you and your child as they prepare to transition from high school?**

   ____

6. **Would you be interested in attending our monthly community team meetings?**
   - ◯ Yes, please send me more information
   - ◯ No

7. **If you would like more information, please provide your name.** ______________

8. **If you would like more information, please provide your email.** ______________

9. **If you would like more information, please provide your phone number.** __________

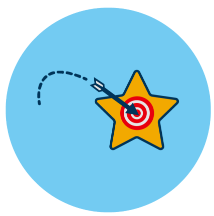
10. **How would you like to be contacted?**
    - ◯ Email
    - ◯ Text
    - ◯ Other (please specify): __________

About KU Center on Disabilities (KUCD)

KUCD's mission is to strengthen communities so that everyone can learn, work, feel included, and thrive. We do this by leading research, providing education and training, and building partnerships with people with disabilities, their families, educators, other support providers, and the community. Our approach is built on teamwork, creative ideas, and innovation.

KUCD staff and affiliates have identified five principles which motivate our work toward the Core Functions. These are our core values:

Doing High Quality Work



Knowing Your Purpose

Seeking Diversity

Including Others

Respecting Others

For more information about KUCD, please visit https://kucd.ku.edu/.

Contact Information

For questions about this guide or for more information, please contact the My Transition My Career Team at **kucddcommunity@ku.edu**.