INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION

Way2Work Maryland: A Collaborative Partnership Supporting Careers for Transitioning Youth

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Presented by: Jill Pierce, Kelli Crane, Malorie Marti, and Meredith Gramlich
The Purpose of Today’s Discussion:

To share:
• the Way2Work approach to inter-agency service collaboration to improve employment outcomes
• common barriers for partners to effectively collaborate
• lessons learned to improve collaboration among partners leading to improved employment outcomes for students
What We Know About Impact of Interagency Collaboration

• Key component and best practice in secondary transition
• Predictor of positive post-school outcomes for student with disabilities
• Requires communication across agencies and programs
• Must focus on a common purpose and outcomes (don’t meet just to meet)
Transition Work-Based Learning Model Demonstrations

• Identify and demonstrate practices, which are supported by evidence, in providing work-based learning experiences in integrated settings under the vocational rehabilitation (VR) program, in collaboration with State educational agencies (SEAs), local school systems (LSS), and other key partners within the local community, to improve post-school outcomes for students with disabilities.

• Key components of the Way2Work Model:
  1. Early engagement in Pre-ETS DORS services
  2. Career planning and goal development
  3. Work Experiences
  4. Strategic and active collaboration and coordination of services

Way2Work is operating in 8 counties:

  Anne Arundel, Carroll, Cecil, Charles, Frederick, Harford, Washington, & Worcester Counties
Way2Work Preliminary Outcomes

Total Way2Work Enhanced Services Students: 200 (Cohort 1: 94, Cohort 2: 106)

• Work Experiences Cohort 1 and 2 totals to date:
  • 166/200 (83%) have had at least 1 WBLE
  • 100/200 (50%) have had 2 or more WBLEs

• School Exit:
  • Cohort 1: 92/94 (97.9%) Exited Successfully
    • 8/94 (8.5%) exited with a Certificate of Completion
    • 84/94 (89.4%) exited with a Diploma

• Employment Outcomes
  • Cohort 1: 41/94 (44%) had Competitive Employment at School Exit
Way2Work Key Component

Maryland Interagency Team (MIAT)

Primary Partners:
• Education (special and general educators, school counselors)
• Vocational Rehabilitation (counselors, supervisors)
• Community Rehabilitation Providers (employment specialists, supervisors)

Secondary Partners:
• DDA, Mental Health, Social Service Agencies
• Postsecondary education
• Families
MIAT Approach

- Regular meetings
- Coordinated by LSS
- Match students/report progress on individual students
  - Use data reports – measure student outcomes
  - Share “needs and leads”
- Problem solve and action plan
- Report/record new information
Maintaining Collaboration: Way2Work

1. Self-report on levels of collaboration
   • Complete bi-annually
   • Share data with teams
2. Progress Reports
   • System & student outcomes
3. Community of Practice
   • Secure web portal
   • Bi-weekly phone meetings of LEA leads
4. Semi-annual meeting
Barriers to Effective Collaboration

• Time
  • Scheduling meetings
  • Prioritizing agenda items
• Time & effort to build team
• Staff/Team membership turnover
• Ongoing communication (between meetings)
• Partner history
How to Be a Valued Partner

- Demonstrate value: determine how services complement existing services
- Build trust: follow through
- Be consistent/set a schedule
- Communicate regularly
- Keep all parties informed
- Individualize services
Tips to Improve Collaboration

1. Identify partner contacts
2. Determine best way to access and work with youth
3. Determine communication process
4. Determine school schedule for meetings, availability
5. Determine process for reviewing individual progress
6. Identify work-based learning opportunities
7. Identify support needs and delivery
8. Determine next steps for each partner
Tips to Improve Collaboration

• Conduct a needs assessment to identify current capacity, services needed to build CRP capacity and infrastructure

• Establish a Collaborative Culture
  o MIAT meeting-- opportunity for joint student planning for quality WBLEs

• Update student assessments and plans throughout the process

• Identify and collect data from the beginning

• Connect with both the special education and school counseling department
Lessons Learned

• Data-driven team decision-making.
• Individualized and coordinated action planning to help students achieve work-based learning and other transition goals
• Needs and leads discussion to promote collaborative brainstorming and problem solving.
• Clear roles and responsibilities allow for a better functioning team.
• Identify agency or person to lead the team
• Buy-in from the regional and state level partners
Lessons Learned

• Follow-up with transition linkages
• LSS and agencies assist with students applying for VR services
• All partners follow up with students and provide transitioning services to support transition
Discussion

• What are your barriers to collaboration?

• Do you have an interagency team/ transition council?? What is the structure of the team?

• Who should be part of the interagency team?
  • What is in it for them?
Consider

• How you will track student activities/progress?

• Do you have a defined flow of services?
  • How are you avoiding duplication of services? Do you recognize service gaps?

• How are you connecting students to needed services?
  • Who connects the students?
Resources

Competitive Integrated Employment Toolkit
https://www.transitionta.org/cietoolkit

Interagency Collaboration: Working Together for Better Outcomes
Questions
&
Discussion