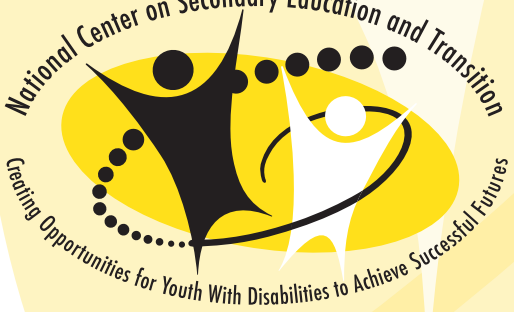
ESSENTIAL TOOLS

Improving Secondary Education and Transition for Youth With Disabilities

Community Resource Mapping



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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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ESSENTIAL TOOLS

Improving Secondary Education and Transition for Youth With Disabilities

Community Resource Mapping

May 2005

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NCSET was established *to create opportunities for youth with disabilities to achieve successful futures*. Headquartered at the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, NCSET provides technical assistance and disseminates information focused on four major areas of national significance for youth with disabilities and their families:

- Providing students with disabilities with improved access to and success in the secondary education curriculum.
- Ensuring that students achieve positive postschool results in accessing postsecondary education, meaningful employment, independent living, and participation in all aspects of community life.
- Supporting student and family participation in educational and postschool decision-making and planning.
- Improving collaboration and system linkages at all levels through the development of broad-based partnerships and networks at the national, state, and local levels.

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SETTING THE STAGE

Community resource mapping is a strategy for promoting interagency collaboration by better aligning programs and services for youth and families. The major goal of community resource mapping is to ensure that all youth have access to a broad, comprehensive, and integrated system of services essential in achieving desired school and postschool outcomes. Community resource mapping can be used to improve education, workforce development, and economic development in a community by aligning available services and resources, streamlining those services and resources, and identifying areas of need. The idea of resource mapping builds on the community's strengths by increasing the frequency, duration, intensity, and quality of services and supports in the community. It is a way to organize information and give direction to meet a common community goal. As a result of resource mapping, families and youth have more flexibility and choice in navigating the system.

Community resource mapping is particularly important as a strategy for improving school and postschool outcomes for youth with complex and varied needs, such as disenfranchised youth or youth with disabilities. When collectively pooled, resources for these youth can create a synergy that produces services well beyond the scope of what any single system can hope to mobilize (National GAINS Center, 1999, revised 2001). The alignment of resources, streamlining of resources, and identification of service gaps within the community enables educators and service providers to (a) understand the full range of services available to youth within a community, (b) more efficiently provide the specific supports needed by each youth, and (c) develop new services and supports targeted to fill existing gaps.

Federal Context for Aligning Resources

The need for the strategic alignment of resources within a community has been part of the federal agenda for many years. Since the mid-1980s, federal initiatives in both education and workforce development have stressed the need for coordinated planning and functional linkages among stakeholders to meet the school and postschool needs of youth. By integrating and aligning services and supports with other legislated requirements, all youth experience greater access to emerging general education and workforce development systems. These initiatives promote comprehensive strategies for improving programs for all youth (including youth with disabilities), calling for broad-based partnerships between schools, employers, postsecondary institutions, community service agencies, families, youth, and others. Effective youth programming and services depend heavily on functional linkages and partnerships among numerous stakeholders that promote and support the sharing of information and resources, as well as engagement in joint planning and commitment to securing positive youth outcomes. Collaborative strategies that effectively link systems also align organizational missions, policies, funds, actions, and day-to-day management so that youth have access to the full array of services they need (Johnson, Stodden, Emanuel, Luecking, & Mack, 2002; National Center on Secondary Education and Transition, 2004).

State-Level Context for Collaborating

As individual states work to improve, expand, or complement their capacity-building efforts to improve school and postschool outcomes for youth, the conversation around collaborative planning and provision of coordinated services and supports routinely comes to the forefront. There is continued emphasis on the importance of "working better together" for improved youth outcomes at the state level. Increasingly, states are seeking ways to: (a) build and sustain state and local interagency collaboration and systems linkages; (b) examine interagency collaborative funding and cost-sharing avenues; (c) build understanding among stakeholders about existing and potential services, resources, and supports; (d) improve capacities of co-existing systems to streamline or realign resources to serve all youth; and (e) reduce the fragmentation, duplication, and gaps in services, supports, and resources commonly occurring across youth-serving entities.

Implications for Mapping Resources at the Community Level

In most local communities there are a myriad of agency programs and services designed to meet the educational, employment, and developmental needs of youth. Most of these programs are targeted toward specific populations that typically must meet agency eligibility requirements to receive services and assistance. This phenomenon far too often results in fragmented and disconnected programs and services at the community level. In addition, many communities lack a shared knowledge and vision of the resources necessary to support youths' needs and interests in school and beyond (Benz, Johnson, Mikkelsen, & Lindstrom, 1995; Hasazi, Furney, & DeStefano, 1999; Johnson et al., 2002). In determining ways to plan and deliver a well-organized menu of services for youth, local communities must first identify and understand their available resources and needs. Key to this process is the idea that resources refer not only to fiscal capacity but also include people's knowledge, skills, and personal and professional relationships.

Community resource mapping is a process that can be and should be tailored to respond to the specific challenges, strengths, and context of any community, whether that community is at the federal, state, or local level. This tailoring helps involved stakeholders remain committed to the mapping process for an extended time.

How to Use This Issue of Essential Tools

In response to numerous requests from states and local communities for community resource mapping facilitation and materials, the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET), under the auspices of the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, has developed this guide. This community resource mapping guide offers information for stakeholders (e.g., educators, community agencies and organizations, families, workforce development specialists, and others) who are making efforts to create better aligned and coordinated community systems that support improved school and postschool outcomes for young people. This manual helps stakeholders take action to make sustained change in their communities through the use of a resource mapping process. Information is presented in a straightforward step-by-step fashion that allows stakeholders to facilitate and participate in the mapping process.

This publication is organized around four distinct steps:

- Step 1: Pre-Mapping;
- Step 2: Mapping;
- Step 3: Taking Action; and
- Step 4: Maintaining, Sustaining, and Evaluating Mapping Efforts.

The content of the guide is derived from the experiences of communities across the nation that are achieving success in bringing about positive change. In order for stakeholders to achieve successful outcomes they need to have a clear understanding, from the very beginning, on where they are now and what they want to achieve (Kerka, 1997).

OVERVIEW

What is Resource Mapping?

Community resource mapping is not a new strategy or process. It has been in use for many years in varying forms. Community resource mapping is sometimes referred to as asset mapping or environmental scanning. Community resource mapping is best noted as a system-building process used by many different groups at many different stages in order to align resources and policies in relation to specific system goals, strategies, and expected outcomes.

Mapping of youth services, supports, and programs within a community can have essentially three outcomes: 1) the identification of resources available to individual youth in a particular community—often referred to as "youth mapping," 2) the identification of new or additional resources to sustain existing specific youth activities or initiatives within a community, and/or 3) the identification of resources to assist in creating and building capacity to support a more comprehensive community system for serving youth. The first outcome typically occurs at the local level while the second and third outcome can happen at any level—local, state, or federal.

This guide focuses on strategies for building the capacity of communities to better serve youth with disabilities and their families.

How Resource Mapping Can Help Transform Your Community

> "No one agency can meet the needs of all youth all of the time."
> —*State policy maker*

The community resource mapping process acknowledges that individuals, organizations, and local institutions all have the capacity to create real change in their communities, but that no agency can do it alone. With increased accountability, tight budgets, resource shortages, and fragmented services, it is a sound decision for communities to encourage cross-agency and cross-systems coordination. Insight into a community's existing partnerships and programs, resource allocations and policies, and priorities and assets can contribute to its ability to evaluate its overall effectiveness in serving its youth with disabilities. It can also support the creation of a strategic plan to improve the alignment, coordination, and, ultimately, delivery of services. When combined with this community information, resource maps can provide a comprehensive picture of a community's vision, goals, projects, and infrastructure.

In short, community resource mapping can help communities to accomplish a number of goals, including:

- Identifying new resources;
- Insuring that all youth have access to the resources they need;
- Avoiding duplication of services and resources;
- Cultivating new partnerships and relationships;
- Providing information across agencies that work with youth; and
- Encouraging collaboration.

> Recently, the Transition Center at the University of Florida assembled a number of school districts to begin the mapping process. Specifically, this community sought to identify current resources in surrounding communities to improve secondary education services and transition for youth with disabilities.

The Mapping Process

There are four steps to the community resource mapping process: 1) pre-mapping; 2) mapping; 3) taking action; and 4) maintaining, sustaining, and evaluating mapping efforts. The *pre-mapping* step allows stakeholders to lay the foundation for productive collaboration and to establish a clear vision and goals for building a system. The second step, *mapping,* determines which resources to map and how to best map them. The collection and analysis of data at this time helps stakeholders to identify strengths and challenges. The next step, *taking action*, allows stakeholders to determine the most useful plan of action for effectively addressing the data findings

and established goals. Communicating and disseminating information are key throughout the implementation step. The final step involves *maintaining, sustaining, and evaluating the efforts* outlined in the map by continuously evaluating progress, making necessary changes to the plan, and learning from experiences.

STEP 1: PRE-MAPPING

"Critical to the mapping process is participation."
—*Community partner*

The pre-mapping step allows the necessary partners to come together and establish a purpose and overall direction for the mapping activity. This step in the mapping process should not be overlooked or rushed. Specifically, during the pre-mapping step, you will identify and secure key stakeholders and define the vision and goals for aligning community resources. Establishing clear communication in the beginning will make it easier to achieve your long-term goal of aligning and streamlining community resources. This section will highlight strategies to establish a task force for your mapping efforts and how to set a realistic vision and goals.

Establishing a Task Force to Guide the Process

To move forward with a new agenda, first determine which stakeholder groups and individuals need to be part of the mapping effort. A task force comprised of relevant stakeholders (see Potential Task Force Members box below) can be established to start the pre-mapping process. During the planning stages, this task force draws from the expertise of those individuals who work across the numerous community systems such as education, workforce development, and government. It may make sense to use an existing community group (such as an interagency transition council, parent/teacher organization, or a Workforce Investment Board) in the planning stages, but it will most likely become necessary to add partners as the mapping process evolves. It also may be advantageous to meet with key stakeholders individually to gain their support prior to bringing them into a larger meeting. The make-up of the task force membership will be dependent on the community issues being addressed. For example, when addressing the issue of improving high school graduation rates, task force members may want to include middle and secondary school educators and administrators, dropout prevention organizations, high school youth and their families, juvenile justice representatives and disability supports personnel, among others.

"Your stakeholders are those individuals in the community who have something to gain by the outcome of your mapping process."
—*Workforce development executive director*

Potential Task Force Members

- Parents/family representatives
- Youth representatives
- Secondary educators (general, special, and career/technical)
- Representatives from postsecondary institutions
- School administrators
- School counselors
- Workforce development officials
- Human services agencies representatives
- Government officials
- Representatives from community-based organizations
- Community development representatives
- Representatives from faith-based organizations
- Large and small employers and leaders from local businesses and industry
- Law enforcement representatives
- Disability support services providers
- Representatives from the juvenile justice system
- Vocational rehabilitation representatives

Involving the right stakeholders is critical to achieving your goals. The choice of stakeholders to recruit depends on the intent of the mapping process, as well as stakeholders' history or promise of positive interrelationships within your community. When considering task force membership, look beyond traditional organizations and involve a range of individuals with significant

ties to the community as well as those who represent the diversity of your community's people and organizations. Core membership should be able to create links between the parts of the system. As more stakeholders enter the process, they bring new ideas, skills, and resources that can provide new approaches to old problems. Be careful to keep the core membership at a workable number for greatest effectiveness (approximately seven to nine members).

Building and sustaining newly formed partnerships takes commitment. Stakeholders will remain committed to those activities that allow them to share ownership in both the process and its results (Stasz, 1998). When considering task force membership, you need to think about the self-interest of individual stakeholders and how each stakeholder may benefit from participation in the mapping process. In other words, determine what would give them an incentive to become involved and stay involved. Consider how the mapping process could help to meet their own organization's mission and goals. Stakeholders need to be made aware of these potential positive outcomes prior to their involvement on the task force. Also, consider how their self-interest in participating interplays with that of other members of the task force.

- In **Maryland**, the Interagency Transition Council is serving as the task force to kick off and manage the state's mapping process for improved secondary education and transition services.
- The Workforce Investment Board in a **Texas** community emerged as the natural lead for undertaking its community's mapping activity for aligning youth services.
- A community in **South Carolina** brought together key stakeholders and decision-makers from a four-county region to determine existing and potential resources to improve postschool employment outcomes specifically for youth with disabilities.

Once stakeholders agree to participate on the task force, strategies are put in place to keep them engaged. Individuals are more likely to stay involved if they feel the purpose of the mapping process is compelling and that their participation is both valuable and valued. One strategy to make stakeholders feel valued is to rotate task force meetings so that different members can host meetings at their locations. It is important to identify someone from the task force to facilitate or perhaps co-facilitate each meeting and take notes. These responsibilities, too, may rotate from meeting to meeting. However, keep in mind that your facilitator should be a person who is not only respected by the other task force members but also someone who can keep members engaged in this process.

Recruiting, Operating, and Sustaining Effective Partnerships: A Critical Step in Community Resource Mapping

Recruiting Partners (Task Force Members)

1. Prepare yourself.
    a. Develop a list of desirable characteristics in potential partners.
    b. Look for diversity among your partners.
2. Develop a common vision.
    a. Be clear on what you are trying to accomplish within the community (i.e., develop healthy youth equipped with the skills necessary to contribute to the community).
    b. Understand the needs and goals of the organizations with which you wish to partner.
    c. Find ways to shape how a partnership will help meet your needs and goals.
    d. Remind partners that their involvement may give them more visibility within a community.
3. Be clear on the role you want the partner to play.
    a. Clarity from the beginning will allow you to find the right partners.
    b. Try to involve decision-makers and top management.

Operating the Partnership

The partnership will be comprised of multiple agencies from diverse backgrounds. All partners should feel a sense of ownership and commitment.

1. Involve top-level people.
    a. Keep in mind what an organization hopes to achieve through involvement in the partnership. Show them how their involvement is working for them.
2. Involve the community.
    a. Inform the community of your vision. Communicate this vision to parents, civic and youth groups, churches, and others who may share your vision.
    b. Involve the community in your work.
3. Get organized.
    a. Make sure your goals are established and that they are obtainable.
    b. Establish policy-making procedures that will frame the work of the partnership (e.g., lines of communication, reporting, etc.).
    c. Hold regular leadership and work group meetings with concise, well-planned agendas.
    d. Assign a lead person in each organization to facilitate the work.

Sustaining the Partnership

It is important to make the partners feel that they are part of something important to the community. Also, it is critical that they see the return on their investment.

1. Support all partners.
    a. Establish committees and workgroups.
    b. Orient and support all new partners.
    c. Mentor any new partners.
2. Make work meaningful.
3. Rotate leadership.
4. Recognize contributions.
    a. Create opportunities for partners to celebrate success and develop mutual trust.

Community Resource Mapping Tool 1: Identify Task Force Partners

Task: Identify key partners and what they bring to the community mapping process.

Process:
Step 1: Brainstorm potential partners (e.g., individuals, organizations, initiatives, etc.) to include in your mapping process.
Step 2: Identify what each partner brings to the table: their self-interest, what will keep them involved, and their role in the process.

Partnership-Building Worksheet

Potential stakeholder/partner	What do they bring?	What is their self-interest?	Steps to elicit involvement	Role in the process

Setting a Vision

> "It is useless to engage in the mapping process without a clear vision of what you hope to gain."
> —*Mapping task force lead*

Before embarking on the community resource mapping activity, determine the current status of your community and what it is you want your community to accomplish. A well-defined vision statement is the cornerstone of any well-planned endeavor. It should be challenging, innovative, and forward-thinking. Writing a vision statement requires synthesizing, concentrating, and/or summarizing many ideas into a concise statement or statements. The purpose of a vision statement is to develop a shared image of the future. A clear vision statement guides each step of the mapping process and sets the standard against which policies, practices, and efforts will eventually be evaluated. In addition, a well-crafted vision statement can help to gain the interest and involvement of new stakeholders. Use your task force members to generate information and ideas for the vision statement. Brainstorming key words or short statements is usually a good starting point. Ideally, the goal is to reach consensus around what you want, how to get what you want, and how to measure and use what you've gotten.

- When a rural community in **Kentucky** decided to engage in the community resource mapping process, it had a very specific vision: to provide a reliable transportation system that allowed youth with disabilities to participate in workplace experiences.
- A **Minnesota** community developed the broad vision to establish a community network of youth-serving partners to help identify and provide resources that support healthy youth development.
- The mapping vision for a **Texas** community was to develop a comprehensive youth system to prepare all youth for adult life.

Community Resource Mapping Tool 2: Developing a Vision Statement

Task: Create or reaffirm your task force's collective vision.

Process:
Step 1: Create or draw your vision for developing an ideal system. (Consider what your future comprehensive youth development system or comprehensive secondary education and transition system will look like.)
Step 2: Translate your creation or drawing into key words or themes.
Step 3: Using your key words and creation/drawing, write your collective vision statement.
Note: The vision statement may be further clarified and refined at subsequent meetings.

Sample Goals:
- Increase graduation rate of all youth by 10% for academic year 2007-08.
- Increase work experiences for youth in special education by 30% by 2006.
- All seniors will have an identified mentor by 2008.

Setting Goals

After reaching consensus about a vision statement, careful attention should be placed on formulating clear and accurate goals. The goals need to be specific, measurable, action-oriented, realistic, and time-constrained. The way in which a goal is stated strongly affects its effectiveness. It is important to be positive, precise, and practical when stating goals and setting priorities. Goals set the expectations for overall performance over time. Therefore, be sure to set goals at a level slightly out of your immediate grasp, but not so distant that there is no hope for achievement. Determining benchmarks or short-term goals allow for the goals to be more manageable. When thinking about setting realistic yet meaningful goals, ask yourself the following questions:

- What skills, information, and knowledge will be needed to achieve each goal?
- What assistance or collaboration is required to achieve each goal?
- What resources will be needed to achieve each goal?
- What factors may inhibit meeting each goal?
- How will we know when we have met each goal?
- Are there other goals we should be pursuing?

Goal-setting is an ongoing and ever-changing process that is accomplished over time. Keep in mind, you will need to periodically review your goals and modify them to reflect any changes in priorities.

Community Resource Mapping Tool 3: Setting Goals

Task: Developing goals for the mapping process.

Process:
Step 1: Review vision statement.
Step 2: List areas you would change to move toward the vision.
Step 3: Prioritize the areas listed in Step 2.
Step 4: Write priority areas into goal statements.

Communicating Continuously

Communication is essential throughout the community resource mapping process. It is important to make sure all stakeholders are aware of how the process is developing and to actively seek their input. All ideas need to be considered, even those that seem unworkable at first. Do not rule out anything until each proposal is carefully considered. Communicating continuously with stakeholders allows you to readjust goals if needed or pursue new ideas.

Stakeholders need to talk about their successes and areas where things are not going as well as expected; after all, you never know when someone will jump in with a good idea to solve a problem or offer some missing support. The use of e-mail or a listserv allows important information to be shared and encourages continuous discussion. Perhaps, more importantly, you need to recognize stakeholder contributions throughout the mapping process. A good way to gain involvement and support among your stakeholders is to routinely acknowledge their contributions and accomplishments. These actions help motivate and engage stakeholders and ultimately sustain momentum.

Acknowledge stakeholder contributions by:

- Sending thank-you notes;
- Awarding certificates of appreciation;
- Publishing newsletters;
- Sponsoring public events (e.g., luncheon or breakfast);
- Creating "good news" reports; and
- Sharing success stories.

This section outlined the first step in the mapping process. The pre-mapping step is critical as it establishes the task force which will manage the community resource mapping process and ensure that the vision and goals are met. As with every step along the mapping continuum, communication is critical to move forward and maintain momentum.

Reflection Questions

- Have you selected stakeholders who can and will offer the resources and commitment needed to be successful?
- Have you identified the strengths of specific stakeholders?
- How do the stakeholders selected complement each other?
- Have you considered other federal, state, local, and nongovernmental resources that can support your goals and objectives?
- Does your task force support the vision and goals?
- Do you have a clear direction?
- Have you translated your vision into constructive action?
- Are your goals realistic?
- Have you stated your goals in measurable terms?
- Do you have a plan to communicate regularly with your task force and the community?

STEP 2: MAPPING

> "Your map is only as good as the information that goes into it."
> —*Community mapping lead*

At this point, you will have identified the key stakeholders to engage in the mapping process and created a common vision and set of goals. During the next stage—the mapping stage—vision statements and goals are used to identify and evaluate the usefulness of current and potential resources. The mapping process begins by selecting one goal or high priority to map. The usefulness of resources is determined by evaluating the extent to which they assist in meeting strategic goals and objectives. This stage involves selecting a focus, identifying and collecting data or resources, and analyzing the data or resources collected. While the mapping step can be time-consuming, efficient organization can make it one of the simplest steps.

Identifying Resources

The first step in the mapping phase is to determine what resources need to be collected in order to provide the information necessary for making informed decisions about change. You can collect outcomes data, process data, or both. The type of information you choose to collect depends largely on the goal you select to map. Sources of information extend far beyond those traditionally assessed. There is a tendency to view resource mapping as a way to find more money to meet an organization's goals and objectives. Resource identification should not be limited to dollars; the identification of resources needs to be expanded to include human resources, technical assistance, in-kind resources, academic and technical standards, organizations that share similar goals and objectives, youth and adult services, and supportive policies. Not only are new resources identified during the mapping process, but utilization of current resources is examined. The primary question is whether current resources can be used differently to help meet your goal or whether new resources are critically needed.

- The state mapping taskforce in **Massachusetts** conducted an environmental scan to determine the employment resources available to youth across the state. A survey tool was sent to key state agencies via e-mail to collect the relevant data.
- A project in **Washington, DC** has youth complete the mapping process. Youth are sent into the community to identify existing resources that meet their needs and to determine where resource gaps exist.
- In **Kentucky**, a series of meetings were held by the community resource mapping task force to identify and define the resources needed to meet its goals.

Mapping Steps

1. Reach consensus on the parameters of the map—select a goal to map.
2. Select the data to be collected based on these parameters—determine what types of resources you would like to collect.
3. Develop tools to collect your data.
4. Collect data with help from stakeholders.
5. Conduct a community (or environmental) scan.
6. Synthesize, analyze, and interpret your data.
7. Communicate your findings.
8. Set priorities.
9. Develop related products.

The amount of data collected during the mapping process can often be overwhelming. It is essential to select only what is needed to get the reporting job done. Prioritize your resource mapping goals based on your overall vision, and then map around each of the goals. Strive to organize the information in a manner that is comprehensive, responsive, and meaningful to stakeholders.

Consider the following questions when selecting a focus for collecting data:

- What do you want to map—fiscal resources, services, personnel?
- How will certain resources help meet your goal?
- How easy will certain data be to collect? Consider that certain data can be collected at any time with ease, while other data are time-specific and more difficult to obtain.
- How often does certain data need to be collected or updated in order for decisions based on this information to be timely and accurate?
- Which specific audiences or stakeholders may use this data?

Keep in mind that resources vary across systems—public and private programs, grant-funded programs, school-based resources, faith-based organizations, etc.

Developing Mapping Tools and Strategies

Depending on the focus of your resource mapping efforts, you need to obtain or develop appropriate data collection tools. Uniform tools for collecting data will help make sense of information from different sources. The task force can select standard instruments, develop its own, or tailor standard instruments to meet its unique needs. Tools should be selected or developed that allow you to report your findings with clarity, reliability, timeliness, and impact. When deciding to use an existing or standardized tool or instrument, first assess the adequacy and appropriateness of this tool for your unique purpose(s).

Community Resource Mapping Tool 4: Scanning the Resources

Task: To produce a comprehensive list of the various resources in the community.

Process:
Step 1: Across the top of the chart, identify your domains for improved outcomes (e.g., secondary education and graduation; postsecondary education and training; career preparation and employment; youth development and leadership; and supportive and adult services).
Step 2: In the left-hand column, list the community resources including organizations, funded projects, initiatives, etc., that support your domains (e.g., workforce-development funded programs, Boys & Girls Clubs, faith-based organizations, school initiatives, etc).
Step 3: In the columns to the right, indicate the services or supports provided by each community resource under the appropriate domains.

Targeting Community Resources to Improve Postschool Outcomes for Youth

COMMUNITY RESOURCES [List organizations and funded projects, programs, and initiatives.]	Secondary education and graduation Access to high standards Educational assessment Vocational assessment Graduation standards Diploma options Staff training and professional development Alternative education	Postsecondary education and training GED preparation Career and technical programs Two- and four-year degree & certificate programs Adult education	Career preparation and employment Career awareness Vocational assessment Work experience (paid and unpaid) Supported employment Competitive employment Job development Service learning	Youth development and leadership Person-centered transition planning Self-advocacy Self-determination Social, civic, and leadership skills Leadership opportunities Mentoring	Supportive and adult services Housing Transportation Recreation Mental health Physical wellness Adult service programs Assistive technology Day rehabilitation Family involvement Benefits planning Child care Case management

Gathering Information

Different methods can be used to gather information. The information collection methods you select depend on the type of information you want and the stakeholders who are sharing the information. Possible methods include questionnaires, surveys, interviews (both telephone and personal interviews), focus groups, roundtable discussions, and written or oral public testimony, to name a few. Look beyond traditional sources when collecting information about resources, including those sources that serve all youth, including youth with disabilities. No single collection method can provide all the necessary information to support good decisions. Remember, much data already exists within your community and is available for your use, such as state plans and priorities, state and local outcomes data, local university studies, and school-level surveys.

A significant first step in the resource mapping data collection process is to scan your community for existing and potential resources. An environmental scan includes an analysis of both the external and internal issues that are likely to affect resources for your organization, agency, or program. Specifically, you need to determine what your community has to offer that will assist you in meeting your goals. For example, a community issue may be insufficient resources to effectively address technology and training needs, or perhaps, not maximizing your community resources due to lack of interagency cooperation. The scan is not meant to be all-inclusive, but rather to stimulate thought on emerging issues and trends and, in turn, to stimulate discussion about future strategic directions and planning concerning resource provision, use, alignment, and maintenance.

Environmental scans can:

- Enrich the strategic planning process with provocative ideas;
- Energize people to take action;
- Encourage public and frank discussion of organizational issues;
- Contribute to regular, ongoing monitoring efforts;
- Identify new resources and potential threats to existing resources; and
- Help organizations to avoid unwanted surprises.

The information collected through community scanning can encourage the development of new partnerships within the community in an effort to reduce duplication of services and resource use, minimize gaps in services and resources, and expand a community's services/resources to meet the needs of more of its members. The findings from the community scan can help to determine next steps in the collection process as well as focus the analysis of the collected information. Remember, focusing the analysis plan is most often a progressive process that needs to accommodate changes in vision, goals, programming, funding, and personnel.

Community Resource Mapping Tool 5: Defining Resources

Task: Identify and define each resource.

Process:
Step 1: Pick one of your identified goals to map.
Step 2: Identify the key investors for this goal.
Step 3: Use the table to further define/detail each of the key investors. Refer to the definitions below for clarification.

Definitions:
Purpose: Identify the purpose of the organization, project, program, or initiative. How is it defined by legislation?
Funding source: Identify who sponsors or funds the organization, project, program, or initiative.
Service delivery: Indicate how funds are distributed within the state and identify who actually delivers the services.
Target population/number served: Identify population of youth served, and for the most recent period available, provide information on the number of youth served. (This also can be expressed as a percentage of the population.)
Activities and services: List the activities or services provided by this organization, project, program, or initiative (e.g., work experiences, mentoring, leadership training, counseling, transportation, etc.).
Partnering agencies: Identify other agencies and organizations with which this organization, project, program, or initiative currently partners. If possible, state the purpose of the partnership.
Expected outcomes: Indicate what this organization, project, program, or initiative hopes to achieve; identify its strengths in meeting the needs of youth.
Other: Identify other relevant information about each organization, project, program, or initiative (e.g., funding sources, planning cycles, number of youth with disabilities served, names of decision-makers, etc.).

Identifying Resources

Organization, project, program, or initiative				
Purpose				
Funding source				
Service delivery				
Target population served/number served				
Activities/services				
Partnering agencies				
Expected outcomes				
Other				

It is also important, as part of the information collection process, to engage your task force members both as sources of information and researchers in the resource identification task. These individuals are integrally involved in the community and will be rich with ideas. Also involve individuals or groups (e.g., families, youth, and educators) who use or may potentially use the resources being mapped. These stakeholders are invaluable in so many ways because of their commitment to and desire for an improved system. Stakeholders can help to identify other partners in the process, provide a unique perspective about the mapping process and product(s), generate questions for collection purposes, serve as sources of information, and participate in the actual data collection process.

Ways to Collect Information

Keep in mind that there are many suitable ways to collect information. No single collection process is perfect. Some, but not all, options for collecting useful information are listed below.

- Environmental or community scans;
- Interviews, surveys, or public hearings with key audiences (e.g., formal/informal leaders, program advocates, service providers to targeted audiences, and end-users);
- Interviews with specialists (e.g., legislators, administrative consultants, and internal/external evaluators);
- Site visits or observation of a setting (e.g., climate, attitudes of specific personnel, professional practices, resources and support services, facilities, and budget allocations);
- Analysis of written and online documents (e.g., organizational charts, management plans, budgets, proposals, training materials and curricula, and minutes of meetings);
- Interaction with existing groups (e.g., policy makers, advisors, clients, management teams, and staff);
- Case studies and success stories;
- Training evaluations; and
- Questionnaires, rating scales, and inventories.

It is very helpful to assign task force members specific responsibilities for each component of the data collection process. These individuals may not necessarily collect the information themselves but are responsible for overseeing the process by setting timelines, training staff when needed, and developing additional procedures to govern data collection for their area. Procedures to guide "collectors" should be developed to address some common problems such as re-contacting individuals/organizations for missing information or approaching organizations that choose not to provide information.

Consider the following questions when developing the information collection plan:

- What kinds of information should be collected?
- How much relevant information already exists, and how can you access it?
- How will information be collected?
- Will you select or develop collection instruments?
- What is your timeline for collection?
- How much should collection cost?
- How will collection responsibilities be determined?
- How will the information be organized and analyzed?
- How will you handle missing information?
- How will the information be shared with stakeholders?
- What kinds of problems can be expected?

In order to choose one collection method or design over another, you must consider your goals. What do you want to learn, and from whom do you want to learn it? It is recommended that you use multiple methods to collect information. Very often the most informative method is not the most sophisticated—simple and direct methods are the best. Set solid timelines for data collection as the process can be time-consuming. Be prepared for

the data collection process to take longer than expected.

There are a number of considerations when selecting information to collect and study. It is up to you to determine the criteria that your collection method must meet. To help with those decisions, some criteria for selecting the most appropriate data are listed below.

- Credibility—information that is accurate and relevant to your audiences;
- Practicality—information collected without too much disruption;
- Timeliness—information produced in time to meet stakeholder needs;
- Accuracy—information that is relevant and trustworthy;
- Ease—information that is easily analyzed;
- Objectivity—information collected by objective personnel;
- Clarity—information that is clear and understandable to numerous audiences;
- Scope—information that provides answers without unnecessary detail;
- Availability—information that is easily accessible (i.e., existing data);
- Usefulness—information that addresses current stakeholder concerns;
- Balance —information that represents a multitude of perspectives and values; and
- Cost effectiveness—information worth the expense to collect.

Determining the Meaning of the Information

Once the collection process is completed, information must be analyzed, synthesized, and interpreted for stakeholders. Analysis is the process of finding out what the information collected means. It is often the most difficult and time-consuming step in the mapping process. Analysis typically occurs in stages. First, information is organized based on your vision statement and identified goals. In other words, those resources and policies that are most supportive of your organizational or programmatic goals are identified.

Then the search for meaning begins. You will need to follow a four-step process in examining your information: 1) review the original purposes for information collection; 2) describe the information in a narrative or using tables; 3) examine your information for trends or patterns (e.g., gaps and overlaps in resources) that may point to untapped resources or new ways to align current resources for improved outcomes; and 4) assess the comprehensiveness of the information in light of your goals. You may recognize a gap in your collection process and need to repeat the process for more targeted information.

Community Resource Mapping Tool 6: Analyzing Resources

Task: Identify gaps and overlaps in the resources identified.

Process:
Step 1: Continue with the goal (anticipated outcome) selected in Mapping Tool 2. List the goal.
Step 2: Review the map for the targeted goal and identify services that overlap, are duplicated, and/or are missing.
Step 3: List the implications of these overlaps, duplications, and gaps for your community's service delivery system (e.g., a long waiting list for a specific service).

Goal:

Overlaps	Gaps	Implications

Finally, organizations should consider developing a process for verifying and validating the accuracy of their information. Find ways to lend credibility to your findings by verifying them with stakeholders and target audiences. Look for confirmation and consistency of information across multiple sources. Often, single-data sources can sway the analysis of the "big picture." Seek out the interpretations of different audiences, since they can often shed some light on what your findings mean to them. Your organization should set deadlines for when it expects to receive comments on the accuracy of the information reported.

Be prepared for both good and bad news. The resource mapping process will highlight things that your organization does very well. It will also illuminate areas for improvement. Be ready to communicate both types of news to your stakeholders.

Consider the following questions when preparing your findings for review:

- How detailed does the analysis need to be?
- To what extent are your goals being realized?
- To what extent are your community resources being identified, aligned, and used effectively?
- How can these findings inform program policies and procedures?
- How can these findings inform decision-makers, service providers, and staff?
- How can you help the audiences interpret these findings?
- How can the findings be communicated most effectively?

Communicating and Using the Mapping Results

It is important to engage stakeholders in the results of your mapping. The information gained from the mapping process can be used to help stakeholders make decisions on whether to improve, develop, and/or continue new and existing practices or programs. It also can be used to increase awareness, conduct public relations, and motivate individuals and organizations to improve their performance. Throughout the analysis of the map, keep your goals in mind, and think about how you want to present your findings to meet the needs of diverse audiences and ultimately improve your performance outcomes.

You may choose to prepare detailed reports for partners and stakeholders, as well as summary sheets that highlight key findings. In addition, the task force could develop reports, press releases, and fact sheets for the media and other community organizations that might reinforce the mission of the resource mapping exercise, effectively communicate findings, and bring new partners to the effort. Regardless of the communication method, it is imperative that products contain any content necessary for audiences to place the findings in a proper context and perspective. Simple, user-friendly reports briefly review and highlight the major aspects of the study, its conclusions, and its significance to the audience.

Reflection Questions

- Have you identified the goals to be mapped?
- Have you set priorities in mapping your goals?
- Have you determined how to collect the information?
- What collection process will be used?
- How do the resources collected relate to your goals/outcomes?
- Are existing resources effectively targeted and used to meet the goals of the community?
- Are your findings reliable and credible?
- Are the products developed responsive to the needs of the critical stakeholders in the community?

STEP 3: TAKING ACTION

"We have invited new enthusiastic partners to the table to help develop our action plan. These new members have reinvigorated our team."
—*Community service provider*

Once the data have been collected and analyzed, the challenging part begins. Acting on the information from the mapping process is an important step. What are you going to do with the information now? The misconception exists that once resources are identified and mapped, the work is completed. It is not. The greatest challenge in community resource mapping often exists in developing a plan of action for implementing the map. This step in the process allows the community to take action in planning and building its system.

Developing an Action Plan

Developing a written plan detailing the action you will take to build your system is critical in the community resource mapping process. Action planning allows you to determine how to strategically act on the information revealed in the information analysis step. The action plan aligns your resources with the goals outlined in the pre-mapping stage. For example, you may identify new resources to support your goal. If this is the case, the action plan would focus on pursuing those resources. You also may discover that existing resources could better meet your goals if they were realigned. This action plan would outline a course for redirecting these resources to support the goals as outlined earlier in the pre-mapping step. Other possible actions, in light of the information analysis, are aligning services to fill gaps or eliminate duplication, sharing staff across state agencies, and sponsoring joint legislation or issuing joint requests for proposals (RFPs) across organizations/agencies.

- In **Minnesota** and **Massachusetts**, the data collected during the mapping process will be captured in an electronic database and used as a tool to communicate with stakeholders the resources available to reach their goals.
- A **Michigan** community found gaps in services while analyzing its map. New policies and practices as outlined in its action plan were instrumental in filling these gaps.
- When determining its organizational structure to implement its action plan, a rural community in **South Carolina** realized it needed a stronger leadership function and therefore brought additional community partners to implement the plan.

All stakeholders must have a voice in developing the action plan. While the entire task force may not be in agreement with every decision, it is critical that each member feels that his or her concerns have been heard and discussed. The action plan should be organized around the goals identified in the pre-mapping step. Document the person(s) or organization(s) accountable for a particular action, the targeted date for completion of the action, and how you will measure success.

Achieving Consensus

Consensus is based on cooperation among the group members, not competition; the decision is supposed to respond to the interests of everyone in the group. It does not mean that everyone should be completely happy with the decision, but that all group members are willing to implement it. In order for consensus to work, an atmosphere of trust and appreciation of different opinions should be created. There should be willingness to work through differences.

In addition, for each major action identified, try to anticipate any potential challenges to proceeding with the plan and document methods for overcoming these challenges. If this action is done at the beginning, there will be fewer surprises, stalls, and delays as you implement the action plan. A good action plan has a reasonable timeline, well-coordinated strategies, assigned roles and responsibilities, and clear benchmarks for success.

What Helps People Reach Consensus

- Express your ideas as well as the logic behind them. Often agreement is more easily reached at the logic level—the group agrees with the logic, if not the proposed action, and an alternative option can be found.
- Listen to and be open to the logic of others.
- Explore ideas rather than debate them; actively seek agreement; and look for common ground. This is not a competitive process—an effort to see whose ideas can win; it is a search for what ideas the whole group can support.
- Ask yourself, "Can I support this?" If you find that you see a decision differently from others in the group, ask yourself, "Did the group listen to my points? Have I listened to them? Even if I wouldn't have put this idea on the list, I can understand why others want it there."

Community Resource Mapping Tool 7: Formulating Action Steps

Task: Translate information into action steps.

Process:
Step 1: Identify actions that need to take place to align resources and needs more effectively.
Step 2: Work across the action plan. For each action, identify the person(s) responsible for the action, target date for completion, and steps to measure success.
Step 3 (optional): You may consider adding additional information to the action plan. For example, consider adding a column on potential challenges and solutions to each challenge.

Action steps/strategies	Lead organization	Target dates	Milestones/measures	Potential challenges	How to respond

Implementing the Action Plan

Many people have taken part in developing an action plan. And many people have experienced the frustration when completed action plans collect dust on someone's shelf. Establishing an organizational structure up front allows for ease of implementation and follow-through of your action plan as well as the entire mapping process. There are three critical roles that task force members play to facilitate the implementation of an action plan:

- The **leadership** role is typically filled by an individual with decision-making power in their organization and clout in the community. Leaders in the mapping process can bring on new partners by communicating the vision. These individuals also can implement change in policies or practices if need be.
- Another key function is that of **planning**. Individuals on your task force responsible for planning manage the day-to-day implementation of the action plan. Planners advocate for change and secure additional resources to make change happen.
- Finally, the **implementation** role focuses on designing and implementing strategies to help carry out the action plan.

These responsibilities are not mutually exclusive. It is possible for one person or organization to work across more than one of these functions. Make sure when assigning roles that you include all stakeholders. As a result, you will be able to implement your map with more ease and, perhaps, cultivate the skills of your partners.

Sharing the Action Plan

The task force must now determine the best method to communicate and share the content of the action plan. New knowledge gained from the mapping process needs to be shared with the community in a comprehensible and meaningful way. Communicating and disseminating new information are both complex tasks that require the development of a strategy.

What do you need to consider when planning a strategy for sharing the action plan you have developed? Decisions about the appropriate communication pathways should be informed by what is known about the target audiences, the content, and its possible applications. The timing of any dissemination activity should be carefully planned to maximize its impact. Remember, the goal of your communication and dissemination efforts is the utilization of your findings/product(s).

First, consider the intended target audiences when communicating your community resource map. You will need to communicate to these audiences how the goals and information gained from the mapping process are compatible with their individual or organizational needs, beliefs, and circumstances.

Ask yourself the following questions when determining how best to communicate and disseminate your community resource mapping plan to your targeted audiences:

- What are their dissemination-related characteristics (e.g., average reading/comprehension level, dominant language, level/extent of desired information, and accessibility requirements)?
- What information do they need to better serve their local customers?
- Do they have the resources to receive and use the information?
- What is the most appropriate and effective product format or medium?
- Will you need to provide technical assistance to facilitate understanding and use of the product(s) by the targeted audiences?

Next, evaluate the information content—the message to be communicated and disseminated. Think about what aspects of the mapping information may motivate particular target audiences to change in an effort to improve their outcomes. Information use requires a willingness to change on the part of the user. It is important, then, to know what motivates your audiences and tailor your communication and dissemination efforts to those motivations.

Then think about the way in which your findings are designed, described, packaged, and transmitted to your target audiences. A general principle is that optimum dissemination is achieved through using a wide variety of pathways, from traditional to innovative and from print to electronic media. It is important to ensure both the physical availability and accessibility of the materials to as much of your target audiences as possible. For each information

medium, consider the following factors (National Center for the Dissemination of Disability Research, 1996):

- User-friendliness;
- Accessibility;
- Cost-effectiveness;
- Clarity and attractiveness;
- Intended uses;
- User preferences; and
- Need for technical assistance and training.

Consider mapping the dissemination mechanisms in your local community as well as at your regional, state, and national levels. This task may inform you as to the most productive or feasible avenues for your dissemination efforts, as well as help identify individuals or organizations that can support your efforts.

Finally, the communication and dissemination plan must have both a leadership component and an evaluation component. Decide which individual or organization will oversee the plan; what the timeline for dissemination will be; what time constraints may interfere with your progress; and how these challenges will be addressed. Team members must also evaluate whether there is adequate funding for dissemination to be carried out effectively now and in the future.

Community Resource Mapping Tool 8: Identifying Technical Assistance (TA) Needs and Next Steps

Task: To identify next steps to sustain your mapping efforts.

Process:
Step 1: For each goal and action step, identify your technical assistance needs. (TA needs may fall under one of these categories: research; training/technical assistance; public relations/outreach; policy; funding; development and dissemination of products and information).
Step 2: Identify who can provide technical assistance. Consider TA providers at the local, regional, state, and national levels.
Step 3: Under Sustaining the Effort, list next steps to sustain planning efforts, such as follow-up meetings and reports. Consider short-term goals.

Goal/action step	**Brainstorm TA needs** *What help does your team need?*	**Brainstorm who can help** *Who can provide the TA (e.g., local, state, federal)?*

Sustaining the Effort

1.

2.

3.

It is critical to evaluate the effectiveness of your work. Responsibility for monitoring and measuring the impact of your products must be assigned to task force members. Remember to evaluate your efforts to communicate new information and disseminate this knowledge, as well as the efforts of the target audiences to use each technical assistance service to improve their performance outcomes.

Reflection Questions

- Do you have a plan for "next steps?"
- Can you redirect efforts and focus on fewer priorities?
- Do you have an understanding of the time and resource commitment needed to move forward?
- Do you have benchmarks established to measure growth and improvement?
- Have you established a plan for communicating new information?
- Does your communication plan outline a timeline and persons responsible for each task?

STEP 4: MAINTAINING, SUSTAINING, AND EVALUATING MAPPING EFFORTS

> "Throughout the resource mapping process, you're going to hit small bumps, big bumps, and occasionally see a few mountains. Stay flexible. Adjust to changes. Embrace new opportunities."
>
> *—Mapping facilitator*

The final step in the community resource mapping process—maintaining, sustaining, and evaluating your mapping efforts—allows you to step back and take a critical look at the process, the achievement toward your goals, and the impact of your efforts to date. Each step in this process leads to the sustainability of your efforts. While this step in the process is presented last, decisions are made in each step that determine the maintenance and sustainability of your work. Measuring success in meeting your goals is a constant throughout the mapping process.

Community Resource Mapping Tool 9: Identifying Dissemination Infrastructure and Resources

Task: To identify the mechanisms available for communicating and disseminating your action plan and developed technical assistance strategies.

Process:
Step 1: For each product (including your action plan), identify the mechanisms available at the national, state, county/regional, and local levels for sharing information.
Step 2: Consider the feasibility of each available mechanism as it pertains to the larger plan, and select a variety of mechanisms that meet your needs and the needs of your target audiences.

Mechanism	National level	State level	County/ regional level	Local level
Internet strategies Web sites E-mail alerts Online forums Electronic publications Listservs				
Outreach opportunities Networking events Conferences Workshops Meetings Training events Coursework				
Media vehicles Newsletters Reports Training manuals Brochures Press releases Advertisements Public service announcements Videos, audiotapes, and CDs				

A note on developing products: *Products, like policies and practices, should directly respond to the needs of your community. Some of these needs will be clearly stated while others will be simply implied. It is to your advantage to pilot your products with targeted audiences, and pay close attention to feedback. The more you know about the impact of your product(s), the better advised you will be when modifying these materials to make them more effective. It is important to communicate to stakeholders how each product is compatible with their needs, beliefs, and circumstances. Examine the feedback across audiences, identify trends in needs and wants, and produce products that are useful for more than one stakeholder group.*

Evaluating Progress

Your task force may find its original vision evolving or expanding due to unanticipated changes in legislation, policy, practice, and/or funding. Change your vision statement, goals, or action plan as necessary to include new perspectives. In addition, reorganize your membership if necessary. For instance, you may need to add stakeholders or reassign responsibilities based on redirected efforts and emerging talents. Mid-course corrections are fine as they are a sign of progress. Revisiting and revising the action plan as needed can prevent costly missteps down the road.

Evaluation must be an ongoing process that facilitates change as needed. Formative evaluation is one method of focusing on the process and judging the worth of the action plan as it is happening. By continually measuring progress against goals, the group can gauge whether the resource mapping effort is accomplishing what was intended. This method allows the group to take advantage of new opportunities and resources that may come up while mapping your resources. Moreover, it will enable organizations to maintain the flexibility needed to handle unexpected changes.

Formative evaluation allows the group to keep all stakeholders and partners up-to-date on their progress, results, and challenges. Using periodic progress reports, the group can make informed decisions on the future direction of their effort.

Collecting and Analyzing Community Resources

- Take a critical look at your work;
- Keep the evaluation ongoing;
- Use the evaluation to build capacity to self-assess;
- Share the results with stakeholders (including funders);
- Use your vision and goals to define needed resources;
- Examine the process (e.g., how the group works together), the products, and the impact of your work (e.g., changes in outcomes, achievements);
- Use a variety of evaluation strategies;
- Collect baseline data for comparative purposes; and
- Look at progress toward long-term goals and interim measures of success.

Maintaining Momentum

Throughout the community resource mapping process, the organization must continually nurture and expand partnerships. Consider your vision, goals, and outcomes of your community resource mapping and recruit new stakeholders who can help you achieve them. Diverse stakeholders can play a key role in helping the organization meet its goals and sustain its vision. This requires regular communication to maintain an awareness of stakeholders' needs and expectations. When stakeholders are well-informed about an organization's progress, they are better prepared to accept modifications to the original plan when something is not working.

- After the initial mapping process was completed, a community in **Texas** realized that its vision needed to be broadened to include all youth ages 14-25. The task force took a mid-course correction step, revised its vision and goals, and went back into the community to do more extensive mapping of existing and new resources.
- Anticipating funding problems that would potentially eliminate programs and services, a **New York** community used the mapping process to align and sustain the good things it was already doing.
- In **Florida**, trained leaders from communities around the state were involved in the resource mapping process. This allowed several communities to retain momentum during the mapping process.

Unexpected challenges are bound to emerge when tackling a large project that emphasizes fresh approaches and new methods. You need to be flexible enough to meet the challenges as they arise and modify plans accordingly with input from stakeholders.

Sustaining the Effort

Sustaining your efforts is critical. Community resource mapping is not an easy process nor is it ever really finished.

However, if done thoughtfully, community resource mapping can lead to long-term systems change. Therefore, your task force needs to demonstrate a long-term commitment to change and have a plan for "re-mapping" to meet new or changing goals. Regular communication allows momentum to be maintained and efforts sustained.

Intermediaries play a key role in the community by brokering relationships and aligning resources. These neutral organizations can help sustain community resource mapping efforts by overseeing the implementation of mapping activities and the action plan. Key to this sustainability is the task of coordinating various community resources without creating turf battles. This task requires intermediaries to moderate conversations among stakeholders in order to discover issues of common concern and identify the opportunities and mechanisms for aligning and coordinating resources (Miller, 2001; Mooney & Crane, 2002).

During this final step and throughout the mapping process, continue to demonstrate the importance of looking beyond the usual resources to meet your intended vision and goals. Look for nontraditional means of funding and support to find new resources, combine current resources in creative ways, or use current resources in a way that best matches the organization's goals.

Role Intermediaries Play in the Mapping Process

- Brokering and/or providing services to workplace partners, educational institutions, young people, and youth-serving systems;
- Ensuring the quality and impact of local efforts; and
- Promoting policies to sustain effective practices.

Reflection Questions

- How do you monitor progress and gauge results?
- Have you widely shared the information gathered?
- How do you promote the results of your efforts?
- How do you continually improve your efforts?
- How do you effectively apply the "lessons learned"?
- Are you satisfied with your progress toward interim and long-term goals?
- Are you building system-wide capacity to ensure long-term effect and sustainability?
- Do you have the funds to sustain your efforts?
- Are you building capacity within your organization/agency?
- Have you considered alternative courses of action that may prove more promising?

SUMMARY

In summary, the community resource mapping process addresses the continued emphasis placed on the importance of collaborative planning and provision of coordinated services and supports at national, state, and local levels. Meeting the school and postschool needs of youth ultimately depends on the identification, integration, and alignment of services and supports within communities, as well as the development of meaningful linkages across systems and partnerships among various stakeholders. By building on a community's assets and shared goals, this community resource mapping tool assists stakeholders in their work to achieve and sustain positive outcomes for youth with disabilities.

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RESOURCES

All links retrieved May 18, 2005

The Asset-Based Community Development Institute
Institute for Policy Research, Northwestern University
http://www.northwestern.edu/ipr/abcd.html

Community Resource Mapping:
A Strategy for Promoting Successful Transition for Youth with Disabilities
National Center on Secondary Education and Transition
http://www.ncset.org/publications/viewdesc.asp?id=939

Community Resource Mapping:
Knowing Your Youth Services Landscape
Texas Workforce Commission Youth Program Initiative
http://www.twc.state.tx.us/svcs/youthinit/materials/mapping1203.pdf (539 KB, 39 pp)

Community YouthMapping
Center for Youth Development and Policy Research, Academy for Educational Development
http://cyd.aed.org/cym/cym.html

Community YouthMapping: Are You on the Map?
National Center on Secondary Education and Transition
http://www.ncset.org/teleconferences/transcripts/2004_02.asp

Equitable Development Toolkit:
Beyond Gentrification, Development Tools: Community Mapping
PolicyLink
http://www.policylink.org/EDTK/Mapping/

Forging Community Links:
A Resource Mapping Guide
Community Technology Centers' Network
http://www.ctcnet.org/resources/reports/mapping.htm

Holding Schools Accountable Toolkit:
A Guide for People Working in Neighborhoods
Annie E. Casey Foundation
http://www.aecf.org/publications/accountable.pdf (714 KB, 78 pp)

Improving Adult Outcomes for Youth with Disabilities: Mapping and Aligning Resources
National Center on Secondary Education and Transition
http://www.ncset.org/teleconferences/transcripts/2003_01.asp

Integrating Service Systems at the Point of Transition for Youth with Significant Disabilities:
A Model that Works
National Center on Secondary Education and Transition
http://www.ncset.org/publications/viewdesc.asp?id=705

Mapping Community Assets Workbook
Northwest Regional Education Laboratory
http://www.nwrel.org/ruraled/publications/com_mapping.pdf (505 KB, 20 pp)

Mapping Community Capacity
Institute for Policy Research, Northwestern University
http://www.northwestern.edu/ipr/publications/community/mcc.html

Mapping Community Resources
Community Technology Centers' Network
http://www.ctcnet.org/resources/review/r981cor2.htm

Mapping the Assets of Your Community:
A Key Component for Building Local Capacity
Southern Rural Development Center
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GLOSSARY

Capacity building: Capacity building is the strengthening of people, organizations, and communities.

Community resource mapping: Community Resource Mapping is a system-building tool or process for aligning resources and policies with system goals, strategies, and expected outcomes.

Environmental scan: An environmental scan involves an analysis of both the external and internal issues that are likely to affect resources for an organization, agency, or program.

Goal: A goal is the final purpose or aim toward which a group or person strives.

Interagency team: A group of people who collaborate and coordinate service delivery among participating agencies in an effort to maximize team member benefit and contribution and identify and respond in an organized manner to barriers and gaps in service.

Partner: Partners include all stakeholders or anyone who may impact a project and agree to a set of project goals.

Policy or practice alignment mapping: Policy alignment mapping determines whether current resources support state or local policies, practices, and goals.

Postschool outcomes: Postschool outcomes are the life circumstances of youth after high school including participation in higher education, employment, independent living, and community involvement.

Resource: Resources for community mapping resources include available financial support, human resources, technical assistance, in-kind resources, academic and technical standards, organizations that share similar goals and objectives, youth and adult services, and supportive policies.

Resource mapping: Resource mapping focuses on identifying, aligning, and leveraging community assets and resources that can be used for building stronger communities.

Stakeholders: Stakeholders are those organizations and individuals who have an interest or "stake" in an issue. Community resource mapping stakeholders include, but are not limited to: youth, parents, business leaders, community service providers, educators, workforce professionals, and local and federal government agencies.

Strategic action plan: A strategic action plan helps to provide direction and focus for a group or organization. It points to specific results that are to be achieved and establishes a course of action for achieving them. It also helps the various work units within an organization to align themselves with common goals.

Vision: A vision is the direction or dream a group aspires to achieve in any given time span.

Workforce development: Workforce development coordinates education, business, and government programs and policies to promote satisfactory and sustained employment opportunities for individuals as well as achieving organizational goal-oriented success.

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