

Training: Workforce & Transition

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GUIDEPOSTS for SUCCESS

National Collaboration on Workforce and
Disability for Youth

The Institute for Educational Leadership
U.S. Department of Labor
Office of Disability Employment

Challenges Facing Youth with Disabilities in the Workplace

- Little or no expectation of success
- Low educational attainment
- Limited vocational goals
- Confusing government programs with conflicting eligibility criteria

“Special education students are more than twice as likely as their peers in general education to drop out of high school. Current special education students can expect to face much higher adult unemployment rates than their peers without disabilities”



Challenges Facing Youth with Disabilities in the Workplace

- Poor education and employment outcomes
- High unemployment
- Insufficient opportunities to obtain competitive employment with career growth potential
- Accessing the workforce development system

"Young adults with disabilities are three times likelier to live in poverty as adults than their peers without disabilities"

National Collaboration on Workforce and Disability

The GUIDEPOSTS for SUCCESS provide:

- A statement of principles;
- A direction that will lead to better outcomes for all young people;
- A way to organize policy and practice.

(based on research that tells us what ALL youth need to transition to adulthood successfully)



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Assumptions...

- 1) High expectations for ALL youth, including youth with disabilities;
- 2) Equality of opportunity for everyone (nondiscrimination, individualization, inclusion & integration);
- 3) Full participation through self-determination, informed choice, and participation in decision-making;



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Assumptions...

- 4) Independent living, including skills development & long-term supports and services;
- 5) Competitive employment and self sufficiency (with/without supports);
- 6) Individualized, person-driven, and culturally and linguistically appropriate transition planning



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ALL youth need the following:

- Access to high quality standards-based education regardless of the setting;
- Career options information and exposure to the world of work, including structured internships;
- Opportunities to develop social, civic, and leadership skills;
- Strong positive connections to caring adults;
- Access to safe places to interact with their peers;
- Support services that foster becoming an independent adult.



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Who should use them and how?

- **Youth and families** – development of any Individualized Plan
- **State level policy makers** – strategic organizational framework for creating a more coordinated transition system focusing on successful outcomes for ALL youth
- **Administrators and policy makers at the local level** - decisions regarding funding, establishing priorities, and evaluating agencies.

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GUIDEPOST 1 School-Based Preparatory Experiences :

- Academic programs based on clear state standards;
- Career and technical education programs based on professional and industry standards;
- Curriculum and program options based on universal design of school, work and community-based learning;
- Learning environments that are small and safe, including extra supports (tutoring as necessary);
- Supports from and by highly qualified staff;
- Access to an assessment system that includes multiple measures;
- Graduation standards that include options.

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GUIDEPOST 2 Career Preparation and Work-Based Learning Experiences:

- ✓ Career assessments to identify student's school & post-school preferences and interest;
- ✓ Structured exposure to postsecondary education & life-long learning opportunities;
- ✓ Exposure to career opportunities that lead to economic self sufficiency, benefits and asset accumulation;
- ✓ Training designed to improve job-seeking skills and work-place basic skills ("soft skills").

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GUIDEPOST 2 Career Preparation and Work-Based Learning Experiences:

- ✓ Explore/exposure to a range of work-based activities (site visits and job shadowing);
- ✓ Multiple on-the-job training experiences including community service (paid or unpaid) that are linked to program of study and school credit content;
- ✓ Opportunities to learn and practice work skills in real work environments;
- ✓ Opportunities to learn specific occupational skills related to a career pathway.



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GUIDEPOST 3 Youth Development and Leadership:

- Mentoring activities (formal/informal) designed to establish strong, positive relationships with adults;
- Peer-to-peer mentoring opportunities;
- Exposure to positive role models in a variety of contexts;
- Self-advocacy and conflict resolution skills training;
- Exposure to personal leadership and youth development activities, including community service;
- Opportunities to exercise leadership and build self-esteem.

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GUIDEPOST 4 Connecting Activities:

- Mental and physical health services;
- Transportation;
- Tutoring;
- Financial planning and management;
- Post-program supports through structured arrangements in postsecondary institutions and adult service agencies;
- Connection to other services and opportunities (recreation).

“Young people need to be connected to programs, services, activities and supports that help them gain access to chosen post-school option.”

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GUIDEPOST 5 Family Involvement and Supports:

- High expectations that build upon the youth's strengths, interests and needs;
- Foster each youth's ability to achieve independence and self sufficiency;
- Involvement that contributes toward positive adulthood development;
- Provide access to information regarding employment, further education, and community resources;
- Take an active role in transition planning with schools & community partners;
- Provide access to medical, professional and peer support networks.



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Collaborative Partners:

- Center for Workforce Development, the Institute for Educational Leadership
- Disability Studies & Services Center, the Academy for Educational Development
- National Conference of State Legislators
- National Youth Employment Coalition
- National Association of Workforce Boards
- National Center on Secondary Education & Transition, University of Minnesota
- TransCen, Inc.



GUIDEPOSTS for SUCCESS: Employers & Workforce Systems Obligations

Employer Needs:

- Awareness of their particular industry's standard;
- Quality skills development programs & documentation of competencies;
- Convenient access to programs;
- Coordinated customer support;
- Access to disability specific information & resources;
- Awareness of recruitment resources; Convenient access to applicants;
- Effective applicant screening based on technical, academic, and work readiness skills;
- Disability specific supports;
- Return on investment of time and resources.



GUIDEPOSTS for SUCCESS: Employers & Workforce Systems Obligations

Workforce Systems Obligations:

- Develop employer profiles;
- Identify & track LMI;
- Develop & promote skills training (specific & generic);
- Provide documentation/credentials to employers and job seekers;
- Develop work-based learning tools and assessments;
- Streamline employer and program referrals;
- Promote the use of One-Stop Career Centers;
- Serve as employer liaisons in regional education/training programs;
- Promote the participation of workforce development professionals in business/industry educational activities;



GUIDEPOSTS for SUCCESS: Employers & Workforce Systems Obligations

Workforce Systems Obligations:

- Promote universal design of education & training programs;
- Identify needed accommodations & workplace resources;
- Develop and provide cross disability awareness training for staff;
- Connect existing business/employer networks with job referral & placement organizations; Market services via existing community forums;
- Join business organizations;
- Contact new employers and maintain contact with existing businesses;
- Coordinate employer outreach with other professionals;
- Provide resources to employers to support job shadowing & short-term internships.



GUIDEPOSTS for SUCCESS: Employers & Workforce Systems Obligations

Workforce Systems Obligations:

- Know each applicant's skills, interests & aptitudes;
- Match applicant to employer's position, needs & circumstances;
- Ensure that applicants are qualified;
- Identify and address barriers to accessing training programs;
- Prepare and support applicant in "soft skills";
- Ensure applicants have documentation of academic, technical, and work readiness skills;
- Provide on-going post-placement follow up with employer and employee;
- Respect employers' time.



National Collaboration on Workforce and Disability

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