

# Ideas for Hosting a Transition Night

**What is a Transition Night?** A Transition Night is an event designed to provide students with disabilities and their families with a comprehensive set of information about the steps and agencies involved in the process of planning for employment and life after high school.

**Why should we host a Transition Night?** There are several good reasons to consider hosting a transition night:

- ⊙ Making a coordinated effort to gather information and resources for a Transition Night can assist teachers and school staff to learn about the multiple agencies and types of services that their students will be transitioning to – and that is beneficial for teachers and students alike.
- ⊙ Beyond increased understanding about the transition process, a Transition Night offers an opportunity for a variety of partners (teachers, school administrators, students, parents, adult service providers, county or state representatives) to meet face to face and develop more personal relationships that can result in better collaboration on behalf of students.
- ⊙ Bringing students and their family members together to learn about resources, services, people, and places available to them can help everyone feel more comfortable planning for, starting, or continuing the transition process.
- ⊙ Students and their families can also engage in honest conversations about their fears while encouraging and inspiring each other to see the vast possibilities that lie ahead.
- ⊙ A Transition Night is a great way to ensure that your school provides students and families with much needed information!

## Who will come to our Transition Night?

People who typically attend Transition Nights are:

Students with disabilities	Family members	Teachers
Vocational support providers	Home support providers	Transportation providers
Staff from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)	Staff from colleges and postsecondary education institutions	Staff from the local area Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)
Staff from the county and/or managed care organization and IRIS program	Staff from the independent living center serving the area	Staff from Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN) regional centers
Local work incentives benefits specialists		

You might not get someone from each of the groups above at your Transition Night, but inviting all of them is recommended. There might be additional transition partners specific to your area not on the list that you will want to invite. Some or all transition partners might want to have a table to share information, such as brochures and services provided, and talk with people after the presentations.

## Who should we ask to present at our Transition Night? People who typically present at a Transition Night include:

- ⊙ Students who have recently gone through the process and transitioned to successful employment, sometimes along with a family member and/or their employer, to share their stories
- ⊙ Students in the process of transitioning who are already working at community jobs or gaining work experience that they enjoy – can also be with a family member and/or employer
- ⊙ Teachers supporting current and former students through the transition process to talk about the benefits of employment and ways school is helping facilitate paid jobs
- ⊙ Staff from colleges and postsecondary education to inform students and family members about options available to students with disabilities
- ⊙ Staff from vocational support agencies to talk about the services they can provide
- ⊙ Staff from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to share information about the services provided and the application process
- ⊙ Staff from the county and/or Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) to discuss the process of determining eligibility for adult long-term supports
- ⊙ A work incentives benefits specialist who can provide basic information about Social Security and other benefits and how to access their services before starting a job



**How do we organize a Transition Night?** Although your process might look a little different, and this list is not detailed, the general steps might look something like this:

1. Decide if it makes sense for your school to work with other schools nearby or through the Transition Action Council (TAC)/County Community on Transition (CCoT) group to expand the invitation circle.
2. Form a committee to plan and execute your Transition Night.
3. Determine a place, date, and time that you believe will work reasonably well for students, family members, and presenters (evenings & weekends generally work best).
4. Make contacts to key presenters to confirm a date and time and arrange for interpreters, if needed.
5. Reserve the space, then create and distribute an invitation.
6. Develop an agenda for the evening to ensure organization and flow.
7. Secure audio-visual equipment as needed.
8. Figure out if there is a small budget to provide dinner or snacks (always a nice touch).
9. Have someone maintain a the list of people who rsvp to attend.
10. Before the day of the event, coordinate: making copies, food pick-up or delivery, setting up, greeting attendees, keeping track of time, assisting presenters, and cleaning-up.

