

County Community on Transition (CCoT) Essentials



Essentials = “those which are absolutely necessary”; “extremely important”. The purpose of this tool is to provide information on the “essentials” or necessary, characteristics and activities of an effective interagency transition team, known widely as County Community on Transition, or CCoT, but also having individual team names.

Interagency Collaboration is a process by which representatives from various agencies come together to identify and work toward common goals that are mutually beneficial, with problems and solutions shared across agencies. It is a well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations; in this case, this relationship is called the CCoT. The focus is to achieve the jointly developed goals and activities guided by the CCoT Mission and Vision Statements. Members and potential members may ask themselves:

- “Are there other organizations and agencies that desire similar results with whom my organization can coordinate to achieve better results?”
- “Is the result I want to achieve beyond my organization’s ability to achieve on its own (or less efficiently)?”

CCoTs encourage a comprehensive approach to serving individuals with disabilities at the county level. Community transition teams identify common directions, develop action plans, solve problems, and encourage interagency collaboration by creating community training, creating employment opportunities for students, and seeking additional sources of support (financial, policy, etc.). Community transition teams should be made up of a representative membership, that is, members who represent the inhabitants of the area they serve in terms of ethnicity, culture, socioeconomic level, occupation, gender, age, and disability (Halpern, Benz, & Lindstrom, 1992).

Team Purpose. CCoTs link community resources within an agreed upon mission, vision, goals and expected outcomes to:

- Improve services and outcomes for youth and families
- Share resources and agency updates
- Build capacity that leads to change
- Collect and analyze data to inform action planning
- Make informed decisions and sustain practice



Interagency Collaboration Why it Matters

All families need support at some times—support that transcends any single agency’s mission. . . . Collaboration among child and family-serving agencies offers an important mechanism to meet the multiple needs of parents and children. (Bruner 1991, 26)

- Students who received assistance from **3 to 6 different community-based agencies** (as compared to students with assistance from 0 to 2 agencies) were more likely to be engaged in post-school employment or education (Bullis et al., 1995).
- **Transition interagency collaboration and activities** such as interagency agreements, interagency councils, local business advisory boards, agency directories, and parent networks indicate post school youth were more likely to be engaged in postsecondary education (Repetto et al., 2002).
- **Transition support services** such as agency referral, case management, community services, employment specialist, equipment, family services, financial, guardianship, guidance/counseling, living arrangements, medical, parent information, referral, social/leisure, support service, teacher resources, transition specialist, and transportation indicate post school youth were more likely to be engaged in postsecondary education (Repetto et al., 2002).

There have been many articles written on the best way to organize and run interagency collaborations, and many agree that there are four main activities in which successful teams engage to help them run efficiently and achieve the results that each agency desires. Successful CCoTs share the following essential characteristics:

1. **Organization and Leadership.** Strong leadership from one or more members; a coordinating leader/team; set meeting times, agenda, and location; consistent participation from team members.
2. **Mission and Vision.** Agreed upon statements that provide a clear purpose and goal for meeting; describes the mutual benefit for all members, youth and families.
3. **CCoT Data.** Relevant district and/or county PSO and agency-relevant data is reviewed and used in planning and to track effect of efforts.
4. **Action Plan.** Clear goals and activities that provide a structure for looking for deeper ways to impact the services and outcomes of youth and families.



ORGANIZATION AND LEADERSHIP

Communication and coordination are essential to all collaboration. Having a good mix of members is essential to the success on a CCoT. If your CCoT is just beginning or is seeking to expand, the following will highlight team membership. Each organization needs to know that they have something to gain from the process. Collaborative planning takes time and resources, and through common interests and goals and established trust with one another, improvement of services and outcomes for youth and families is realized.

Team Membership. Members are active participants in the CCoT meetings and/or activities. The CCoT should include a good mix of community and agency members.

Suggested members –Anyone can be a member of a CCoT! Identify individuals that come together around a common issue: Transition. Here are members to consider:

- School District/CESA Staff (one member to represent each school in your county) – transition specialists/coordinators, special education teachers, Directors of Special Education, dropout prevention
- DVR Counselor (from your county)
- ADRC Staff (from your county)
- Adult Long-Term Care Organization (Family Care/IRIS, Independent Living Center)
- Agencies/Organizations that provide services to individuals with disabilities (e.g. consider mental health, correctional facilities)
- Children’s Long Term Support Staff (mental health, wrap-around services from county Human Services)
- Institutions of Higher Education (university and/or technical college staff in your area)
- Youth/Parents/Family Members/Guardians
- Business Members (Chamber of Commerce/Lions/Rotary Club/Businesses/Other community-based organizations)



Our CCoT has a good mix of members.

Yes/No: _____

Suggestions for additional members: _____

There is an **Interagency Agreement** signed by the Department of Public Instruction, Department of Health Services and the Department of Workforce Development. This agreement commits agency resources and team participation in collaborative work groups, such as a CCoT. A copy of this agreement can be found at http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/pdf_files/dpi_interagency_agreement.pdf. A document called the **Transition Action Guide** (TAG) has been created to assist districts, agencies, students and families understand the roles and services that each agency provides as part of transition planning. This document can be found at http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/pdf_files/tag.pdf.

There is also a collaborative team that meets regularly called the Wisconsin Community on Transition (**WiCoT**). The WiCoT team works on a state level similarly to the way a CCoT works on a county level.

How to find, interest, and involve potential members. After a review of current team membership, some CCoTs may want to expand their membership or participation of the suggested members. The more specifically a team can state what it is looking for in a team member and what roles it needs filled, the more likely it is to find the most helpful candidates.

Build on current and past relationships. Consider having current members contact potential members. This could be done through a phone call, e-mail, or actual meeting. Be enthusiastic in welcoming new members to the team, while being honest about what is expected. As you invite new members, remember that participation may need to be approved by employment supervisors. Sharing the CCoT Essentials Worksheet will enable employment supervisors to understand the importance of membership and participation.

Organization of the CCoT, before, during and after meetings/events, is essential. Early CCoT team meetings should be devoted to discussing the CCoT organizational structure. CCoTs share participation and leadership. The following activities are essential to a CCoT:

There is consistent leadership, e.g. someone/some persons take responsibility to send out meeting agenda, meeting minutes.
Who: _____

Meetings occur consistently, e.g. monthly, quarterly, semi-annually.
When: _____

Meetings occur in a determined location, e.g. consistent location, rotating location.
Where: _____

There is a meaningful agenda with relevant topics, and the previous agenda is reviewed.
Suggestions to improve agenda: _____

All members are involved and participate and provide updates.
Suggestions to improve participation: _____



MISSION AND VISION

Mutual goals and shared missions should guide the behavior and priorities of collaborators. Creating Mission and Vision statements for your CCoT can set the stage for meaningful conversations and collaborative work. There must be a shared vision of improved services and outcomes for children, youth and families. The CCoT establishes a communication process that explains your organization’s foundation:

- Breaks traditional thinking
- Provides continuity of purpose and direction
- Prioritizes issues and concerns
- Promotes interest and commitment to action
- Creates ownership of success

Mission is written so CCoT members never lose sight of their greater purpose for existing in the first place, and can be “power-packed drivers” of the work, or mantras for the desired level of performance. It should be short and state what business you’re in and who your customer is.

Example of a Mission Statement: *The CCoT will support coordinated efforts by all members and provide quality transition services to promote positive post school outcomes for students with disabilities.*

- We have had discussions on the Mission Statement. Yes/No: _____
- We have a CCoT Mission Statement. Yes/No: _____

Vision focuses on future outcomes of the CCoT; states why the CCoT is meeting; what is the purpose of the coming together as a group.

- We have had discussions our Vision Statement. Yes/No: _____
- We have a CCoT Vision Statement. Yes/No: _____

Example of a Vision Statement: *To ensure all youth successfully exit high school and participate in activities of adult living based on their postsecondary goals related to training or education, employment and independent living.*

- There is a “buy-in” to the mission and vision by members: Yes/No: _____



CCoT DATA

Improved outcomes are the goals of effective CCoTs. Reviewing County PSO and other agency data can be used in many ways:

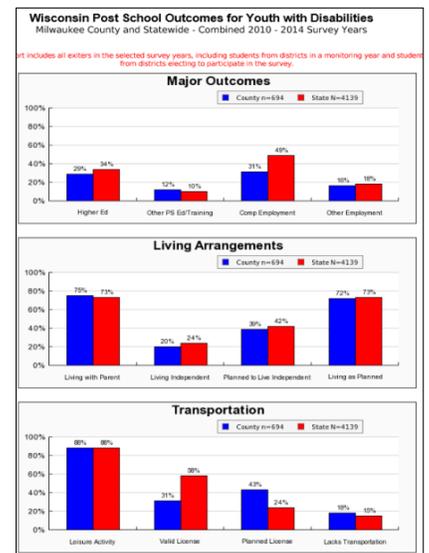
- Track how exiters are doing over time or in response to CCoT activities.
- Analyze outcome data to measure effectiveness of realigning resources.
- Provide more than one point of data to review, e.g. District PSO, County PSO, Statewide PSO, and DVR Successful Closure.
- Determine what data to collect and evaluate – vision and goals will drive data collection decisions
- Use a variety of evaluation strategies (on-line surveys, interviews, observations, focus groups, public forums)
- Hear the perspective/ideas of all CCoT members

Evaluate County Post School Outcomes (PSO)

- All districts participate in the Indicator 14 PSO data collection once within a 5-year period.
- Review combined county PSO data for a 5-year period to ensure all districts are represented at least once.
- Review either a text view or graph view.
- Look at the differences between the county and the state percentages.

Use PSO Results for Improvement Planning

- What are the areas of strength for the county compared to the state? _____
- What are the areas of need for the county compared to the state? _____
- What areas could be positively impacted through the development and implementation of a CCoT Action Plan? _____
- What additional data is available to be reviewed e.g. other agency data or reports, district PSO data, etc. _____
- Does your CCoT plan to review PSO data annually and note changes that may have been positively influenced by CCoT activities? _____





ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan is made up of Goals and Activities that are often a function of a CCoT. Once membership has been established, the team has had time to develop mission and vision statements, and the team has reviewed relevant data, the CCoT can explore ways to deepen the impact of this collaborative partnership. CCoTs should set attainable goals, especially in the beginning, to create momentum and a sense of accomplishment. The Action Plan documents what will be accomplished, who will do what, when it will be done, and how the outcomes will be measured.

Goals and Activities

CCoT goals and activities should reflect the needs of partner agencies and of youth and families. Choose strategies that reflect the priorities of the service providers and the availability of resources. Listen to and understand the needs of youth and family. Have participants brainstorm ideas based on such questions as the following: What do you think is the most important work we can do together as an interagency team? The team should work together to list all responses to this question, then determine the top priorities of the CCoT over the next one or two years.

Our CCoT has developed Goals and Activities for our “Action Plan”.

Yes/No: _____
Future Plans: _____

Suggested CCoT Team Activities to Guide Goal Development

To help identify common and relevant goals, CCoT members may want to participate in the following activities.

1. Review the *TIG Guide for CCoTs* at http://witig.org/wstidata/resources/CCoT_Guide_03_2014b.pdf
2. **“Community Resource Mapping”** is a *system-building process* that provides the BIG PICTURE and a strategic direction. Mapping is a methodology used to link community resources with an agreed upon vision, organizational goals, strategies, or expected outcomes. Visit <http://www.ncset.org/publications/essentialtools/mapping/default.asp> for more examples and ideas.
 - Results provide the BIG PICTURE and strategic direction
 - Coordinates resources that results in more efficient and effective delivery of services to youth and families
 - Shares, or “maps” information that benefits all stakeholders
 - Identifies resources and barriers to building a system and builds collaborative partnerships
 - Strategizes optimal use of current resources and explores new resources
 - Identifies limitations and gaps in resource coordination

Our CCoT has engaged in “Community Resource Mapping”.

Yes/No: _____
Future Plans: _____

3. **“Community Conversations”** help CCoT members connect with each other to identify topics that would be beneficial to tackle for your students/clients, school, and community. Visit www.witig.org and search Resources & Services to find examples of specific types of Community Conversations.

Our CCoT has engaged in a “Community Conversation”.

Yes/No: _____
Future Plans: _____

“No one can do it alone. Improving the quality of life and the education of children with disabilities and their families requires the collective knowledge, skills, experience and expertise of all family members and professionals. It requires that the community and all service systems work together to achieve the goals of the child and family.” - Brunner, 1992

Networking Resources and Citations

- Bruner, C., Kunesh, L.G., & Knuth, R.A. (1992). *What does research say about interagency collaboration?* [Online]. Available: http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/stw_esys/8agcycol.htm.
- Crane, Kelli, & Lueking, Debra M. “Community Services: Mapping Your Resources” (ppt) <http://tinyurl.com/mqxt09q>.
- De Fur, Sharon. (No Date). *Transition Planning: A Team Effort*. www.education.com. Retrieved from the internet 10/28/2012.
- Harrison, Beth. “Effective Strategies for Interagency Collaboration.” (ppt) Retrieved from the internet March 23, 2015.
- Martin, J. (2009, Updated 2012). *Students Get Involved!* This article provides information on the basics of student involvement, person-centered planning, and materials for students. NICHY. Retrieved from the internet 10/28/2012.
- Mattessich, P. W., & Monsey, B. R. (1992). *Collaboration: What makes it work. A review of research literature on factors influencing successful collaboration*. St Paul, MN: Amherst H. Wilder Foundation
- NCSET. How to Build Effective Interagency Transition Team. Retrieved from the internet 3/19/2015. <http://www.ncset.org/publications/essentialtools/teams/tool1.asp>
- NICHY. (Sept 2010). *Transition to Adulthood*. Transition planning summary and what to include. Retrieved from the internet 10/28/2012.
- PACER website. Interagency Collaboration and Transition page. <http://www.pacer.org/tatra/resources/inter.asp>



ACTION PLAN

Sample Goal 1: View and use post school outcomes data (Indicator 14) to begin creating a county transition improvement plan to improve transition outcomes for students with disabilities.

Sample Activity 1:

- We will review post high school outcomes data for our county.
- After viewing the data, we will create a transition plan for our county to improve the outcomes of students with disabilities in our communities.

Sample Goal 2: It is the goal of the “Best County” CCoT to host one Agency Awareness Night and invite students, families, caregivers and other interested persons to attend

Sample Activity 1:

- The CCoT will invite a member of County Adult Service Providers, along with representatives from ADRC, DVR, Social Security Administration, etc... to participate.
 - We will select site, collect door prizes, create advertising and public invitations to the event
 - We will provide food for attendees through donations from county-based businesses and individuals.

_____ CCoT ACTION PLAN		From:	To:
Goal 1:			
Activity	Person(s)/Agency Responsible	Anticipated Completion Date	
Activity 1:			
Activity 2:			
Activity 3:			
Goal 2:			
Activity	Person(s)/Agency Responsible	Anticipated Completion Date	
Activity 1:			
Activity 2:			
Activity 3:			