Resource Mapping

This brief explains how teams can find and use community resources to help students with disabilities move from school to adult life. Resource mapping helps schools, families, and agencies work together so students can succeed after high school.

For worksheets and more detail, see the full Oklahoma Resource Mapping Guide under Guides and Guidance Briefs on the Plan Your Way OK Transition Planning page.

What Is Resource Mapping?

Resource mapping is a way to find out what services and supports are available in a community. These can include schools, job programs, training centers, and support agencies. The goal is to connect all these resources so students can get the help they need in a clear and organized way.

Resource mapping helps:

- Give students more choices
- Improve services
- Bring teams together
- Families find support more easily

Why Resource Mapping Is Important

Students with disabilities need support as they grow into adults. The support can include job training, education, and help with daily living. Research shows that having a paid job while in school is one of the best ways to prepare for future success. The goal is to help students with disabilities get real jobs, build skills, and live more independently after high school.

The Four Steps of Resource Mapping

The transition team should share a common goal, decide what they want to improve, and plan how to work together.

Step 1: Get Ready (Assessment)

First, bring together a team of partners. This may include:

- Schools
- Families
- Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS)
- CareerTech
- Workforce Development
- Developmental Disability Services (DDS)
- Centers for Independent Living (CILs)
- Community agencies
- Family support agencies
- Disability support groups

Step 2: Find and Organize Resources

Next, the team collects information about services in the community. The team will:

- List available programs and supports
- Look for patterns
- Find gaps where services are missing
- Organize services into a step-by-step plan for students

This step helps create a “flow of services,” which shows how students move from school to adult life supports.

Step 3: Put the Plan into Action

After mapping resources, the team starts using the plan. They share information with students and families, help staff understand their roles, and provide support to make sure services work well.

Step 4: Check and Improve

The team reviews the plan often to make sure it is working. They look at what is going well, fix problems, and make changes as needed. This keeps the system strong and helpful.

Best Practices for Teams

At the System Level

- Get support from leaders
- Communicate clearly
- Find and use existing resources
- Fix gaps and reduce overlap

At the Student Level

- Connect school plans with adult services
- Help students plan for jobs or college
- Include real work experiences
- Link students to adult services before they leave school

Common Challenges and Solutions

- **Challenge:** Families don't know what services are available. **Solution:** Resource mapping creates a list of agencies and contacts.
- **Challenge:** Referrals to adult services happen too late. **Solution:** Transition services must be in place before the start of 9th grade or by age 15, whichever comes first.
- **Challenge:** Agencies don't talk to each other. **Solution:** Participating in a transition team provides structured communication, goal alignment, and coordination of services.

Creating a Digital Resource Map with Google My Maps

Once your team has mapped its resources, consider building a digital version with Google My Maps. A digital map can be shared on a website or social media, making it easier for families, students, and partners to find the supports they need. Building the map is also a great transition activity for students!

The University of Montana Rural Institute created a free, step-by-step tutorial, Creating a Resource Map with Google My Maps. The tutorial has four sections:

- Section 1: Creating Your Data File

- Section 2: Making Your Map
- Section 3: Updating Your Community Living Resources
- Section 4: Functional Needs for Community Living List

The tutorial page also includes a resource list template with the column headers already filled in, an example resource list from Helena, Montana, and text-only and EPUB versions of the tutorial.

Next Steps

To get involved in resource mapping, schools, families, agencies, and community partners should join teams, share information about available services, and work together to identify supports that help students with disabilities prepare for adult life.

Use the worksheets in the Oklahoma Resource Mapping Guide to walk your team through each step.

For help with resource mapping, email planyourwayok@gmail.com.

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