Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs)

Helping youth with disabilities find employment
Overview

These slides are created for job seekers with disabilities and their parents, guardians, or caregivers. Read on to learn what an IRT is and how to create one.

Part One: What is an IRT?

Part Two: How to Create an IRT?

Part Three: What Makes an IRT Successful?
Part One: What is an IRT?
An Integrated Resource Team (IRT) is a group of people who help a job seeker with disabilities make progress along their career journey. The goal of an IRT is to help this person create an employment goal, earn a living wage and develop a long-term career.

An IRT can also help a job seeker with disabilities overcome any challenge identified by the youth or the team. They do this by helping the job seeker connect with resources that government and community-based organizations provide. IRTs greatly improve career outcomes for youth with disabilities.
When to Create an IRT?

- When a job seeker with disabilities has a career goal.
- When the job seeker with a disability agrees and gives permission to share personal and professional information between partners.
- When the job seeker sees the value of additional support.
Part Two: How to Create an IRT
Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs)

- Job seekers can create an IRT by inviting other members to join them (such as family members or school professionals).
- Other times, a Disability Resource Coordinator (DRC) or career counselor will help the job seeker to identify who else should join.
- Job seekers can create an IRT during any stage of the career journey.
- Keep in mind that members of the IRT may change throughout the journey.
First Intake Meeting

Job seekers meet with a Disability Resource Coordinator (DRC) or career counselor at a Career Center to explore whether they are ready to create an IRT.

1. Share work history and career goals.
2. Decide whether future career exploration or assessments are required.
3. Fill out required paperwork and create an action plan. A DRC or career counselor can help.
4. Discuss the job seeker’s strongest skills and areas they would like grow.
5. Identify who will be invited to the first IRT meeting.
Who is Part of an IRT?

Key Members

- **Youth with Disabilities** - Motivated job seeker with a desire to create a long-term career goal.

- **Team Helper** - This can be a Disability Resource Coordinator (DRC), case manager, career counselor, school guidance counselor, or disability advocate. It should be someone that the job seeker trusts.
Who is Part of an IRT?

Additional Members

- **Personal** – Family, friends, community
- **School Representatives** – School counselor, special education teacher, etc.
- **Work Representatives** – Employment specialist, work supervisor
- **Financial Representative** – Benefits Counselor
- **Health Representatives** – Case manager, rehabilitation sponsor, etc.
- **Skill Building Representatives** – DRC, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, etc.
First IRT Meeting

Use an agenda to guide the meeting. A counselor can provide support as needed.

Discuss how each member of the IRT will be able to help. Include notes on an action plan.

Create a communication plan so everyone knows how to send updates and when they meet next.
Planning Checklist

- Confidential meeting space
- Binder to save all paperwork and notes
- *Meeting Agenda*
- Contacts sheet and *communication plan*
- Facilitator – someone who leads the conversation
- Follow up email with IRT members
What Makes an IRT Successful?
What Makes an IRT Successful?

Person-Centered Approach

IRTs focus on the needs and goals of the job seeker. Person-Centered Planning is an ongoing problem-solving process used to help people with disabilities plan for their future.

In person-centered planning, groups of people focus on an individual and that person's vision of what they would like to do in the future.
What Makes an IRT Successful?

Trust: To rely or place confidence in

The job seeker has to have a strong relationship with their Team Helper, feel understood, share their challenges, and know their ideas are represented. This helps their Team Helper figure out who the right people are to invite to be members of the team.
What Makes an IRT Successful?

Honesty: Truthfulness

All IRT members agree to share any concerns and challenges openly and constructively.
What Makes an IRT Successful?

Collaboration: Working together

When organizations come together and fully participate, they are able to improve career outcomes for job seekers.
What Makes an IRT Successful?

Accountability: Being Responsible for Actions

The IRT helps hold many partners responsible for doing what they say they will do. Response times improve, collaboration gets better, and everyone works together to help the job seeker reach their goals.
What Makes an IRT Successful?

Frequent communication

Regular communication and updates between all IRT members for about three to six months will help ensure they meet the job seeker’s needs.
What Makes an IRT Successful?

Outcome Orientation

There is no one-size-fits-all approach because every job seeker comes with a unique set of goals and challenges. It’s important to create solutions based on the specific needs of the youth.
“Team work makes the dream work!”