



Starting A Successful Interagency Transition Team: Tips from Massachusetts Interagency Teams

By *Oliver Lyons & Cindy Thomas*

Interagency transition teams consist of members united behind the mission of creating smooth, successful, post-school outcomes for youth with disabilities. Interagency transition teams help develop and share information and strategies for successful interagency collaborations. These teams vary in size and scope. Members of interagency transition teams often include transition coordinators; school personnel; representatives from state agencies such as Department of Developmental Services, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, and Massachusetts Commission for the Blind; adult service providers; family members and youth with disabilities; and others. The National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET) created a [comprehensive guide](#) about how to form an interagency transition team.

To learn more about interagency transition teams in Massachusetts, members of the Massachusetts Partnership for Transition to Employment (MPTE) Cross-Systems Collaboration Workgroup interviewed several long-standing interagency teams. Based on these interviews, we identified the following five steps to establishing a successful interagency transition team:

1. Establish clear goals and priorities for your team.

What is your team's scope? Would a regional information-sharing collaborative be best, or do you need to address specific issues in your school district? Do you have long-term goals you want your team to accomplish, or is your goal to simply facilitate access to information about transition? How does your team offer "win/win" solutions to attract members and retain membership?

2. Build on existing connections to attract members.

If you recognize service gaps when providing transition services, it is likely others do as well. Who have you discussed these service issues with? Who else do you know in your area committed to successful transition? Who do they know? This is how most interagency transition teams get started. Even if your team starts small, with the right membership and focus, it can grow to the size you need.

3. Set clear roles for the team.

Many of the teams we interviewed had one leader who was also the team's founder. This individual was responsible for scheduling meetings, sending out notifications, booking speakers, taking notes, managing the email list of members, and keeping track of progress on goals. Team members we interviewed found the sole leader to be a source of strength. They shared that having one main point of contact for the team made communication easier. However, one of these team leaders wished they had distributed the responsibilities more so that other members felt a stronger sense of ownership and commitment to the team. Another team had established a leadership team of three, with each person having distinct leadership roles on the team. There is no set model of interagency team leadership, so it is up to you and your partners to decide what will meet the needs of your team.

4. Hold consistent team meetings.

Members have an easier time planning their schedules around regularly scheduled team meetings. Quarterly, monthly, and bi-monthly were the most popular scheduled meeting times. Regardless of meeting frequency, interviewees unanimously agreed that knowing meetings would be consistently at the same time and place helped maintain active membership. Every team interviewed had a listserv or email list they used to send out meeting schedules, documents, and team updates. One team had a Google Docs page available to all members where they kept agendas, notes, and documents. Another interagency team has its own dedicated website hosted by the regional Arc.

5. Conduct yearly evaluations of your team.

Is your team making progress on its goals? Are membership numbers sufficient? Do team roles need to change? A yearly evaluation of your interagency transition team is essential to its longevity. You can conduct these evaluations at a meeting, or by sending out an anonymous survey to all members. Teams that naturally grow with the changing needs of their members and districts consistently prove themselves useful over time.



MASSACHUSETTS INTERAGENCY TRANSITION TEAMS

For more information on existing Massachusetts Interagency Transition Teams, please visit: <https://mitt.employmentfirstma.org/>

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