

Appendix B
Project and Partner Staff Interview Guide

Pathways to Partnerships Project and Partner Staff Interview Guide

Thank you for meeting with me today. My name is [NAME], and I am from Mathematica, a firm working with the U.S. Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration to learn more about the Pathways to Partnerships project in [STATE] called the [STATE PROJECT NAME]. I'm joined by my colleague [NAME], who will be taking notes.

The purpose of our conversation today is to learn more about your experiences implementing services and partnerships that are part of the [STATE PROJECT NAME] and designed to help children and youth with disabilities successfully transition from school to higher education and employment. There are no right answers to anything we'll discuss today; we just want to understand what it is like to be a part of [STATE PROJECT NAME]. You can decide not to answer any particular question or to stop the interview at any time.

Let me review how we will protect your privacy. The personally identifiable information (PII) requested on this form is collected as authorized by Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022, P.L. 117-103 Rehabilitation Services, March 15, 2022. The researchers conducting this study follow the confidentiality and data protection requirements, as required by law. All your responses will be kept private and used only for research purposes. Your responses will be combined with the responses of other respondents and no individual names will be reported. While there are no direct benefits to participants and participation is voluntary, your participation will help us learn how states can better provide services to youth with disabilities. While your information will not be disclosed outside of the Department, there may be circumstances where information may be shared with a third party, such as a Freedom of Information Act request, court orders or subpoena, or if a breach or security incident would occur affecting the system, etc.

We will talk today for about an hour. Do you have any questions for me?

I would like to record our talk to make sure I don't miss anything you share. I will not share the recording with others outside of the study team. Is it okay with you if I record our talk today?

[If participant consents:] I will turn on the recording now but let me know if you would like me to stop at any time. [If interview is conducted virtually: You're welcome to turn your camera on or keep it off. It's up to you.]

[If participant does not consent:] If you aren't comfortable with the recording, that's fine. My colleague will take notes so we can remember our conversation. If you change your mind at any time and would like to turn on the recorder, please just let me know.

A. [YEAR 2 ONLY] Pre-project transition services

First, I would like to hear about transition services prior to the start of the Pathways to Partnerships program. By transition services, we mean services that support the transitions of youth with disabilities from school to adult life.

1. What transition services did your organization provide directly to children and youth with disabilities before the start of Pathways to Partnerships?
2. Did your organization collaborate with staff in other organizations to provide any of those

services before the Pathways to Partnerships project started?

- a. Probe: For which services and with which organizations?
- 3. What services did your organization provide referrals for to children and youth with disabilities before the start of Pathways to Partnerships?
- 4. Thinking back to when the Pathways to Partnership work began, what do you view as the key challenges in the transition service environment that you hope the project will address?
 - a. Probe: Which were the most significant challenges for staff?
 - b. Probe: Which were the most significant challenges for children, youth, and families?

B. Implementation of project services and partnerships

Next, I'm interested in learning about the Pathways to Partnership activities currently underway.

- 5. [IF PROJECT IS NOT STATEWIDE] How were the [areas/districts/sites/schools] for this project selected?
 - a. Probe: How many are currently participating? Did you experience any challenges in recruiting [areas/districts/sites/schools] to participate? What challenges?
 - b. Probe: Have there been any changes over time in the [areas/districts/sites/schools] participating in the project?
- 6. What services is the project offering directly to children, youth, and parents?
 - a. Probe: How are they different from the usual services offered to children, youth, and parents?
 - b. Probe: Do the services contribute to a more coordinated service system for children, youth, and parents? In what ways?
 - c. Probe: Have there been any changes over time in the services the project is offering to children, youth, and parents?
- 7. Probe: Which child, youth, and family services do you view as particularly impactful? Which are less needed or functioning less well?
 - a. Probe: Have you heard any feedback from children, youth, or families about the new services you provide? If so, what have they said?

Now, I'd like to ask about your collaboration with other transition service providers.

- 8. How are you currently collaborating with other transition service providers?
 - a. Probe: What is new or different from what has been done in the past?
 - b. Probe: How is it different for staff? For children, youth, and families?
 - c. Probe: Have there been any changes in your partners over time?
- 9. How is collaboration with your partner organizations addressing the key challenges in the transition service environment?
 - a. Probe: What specific goals do you have for the partnerships?

- b. Probe: What is or is not working about these partnership activities?
- c. Probe: Are your partners contributing as planned?

Let's talk about the training or professional development your project is offering to youth service professionals.

10. What kinds of training or professional development is the project offering to youth service professionals?
 - a. Probe: What is new or different from what has been done in the past? Have there been changes over time in the professional development the project offers?
 - b. Probe: How do you think it will affect service delivery to children, youth, and families?
 - c. Probe: How do you think it will affect the way staff collaborate across organizations?
 - d. Probe: Are there any specific tools, training, or professional development you think are working particularly well or poorly?
11. How are youth service professionals identified for and invited to the professional development activities?
 - a. Probe: What factors facilitate or hinder staff participation? Have your outreach methods changed over time?

C. Child, youth, and family recruitment, enrollment, and participation

I'd like to ask you about child, youth, and family recruitment, enrollment, and participation in your Pathways to Partnerships project activities.

12. What methods is your organization using to recruit and enroll children, youth, and parents to participate in Pathways to Partnerships activities?
 - a. Probe: Please describe how youth come to the project and the project enrollment process.
 - b. Probe: Does this differ from the way youth usually enroll in services with your organization?
 - c. Probe: Have the methods changed over time?
13. Do your recruitment efforts focus on any specific communities? Which ones?
 - a. Probe: Why are those communities a focus?
 - b. Probe: How is the project addressing barriers to transition services for those communities?
14. What factors facilitate or hinder enrollment and participation from all children, youth, and parents who are eligible for transition services?
 - a. Probe: Do these factors differ for people from different communities?

D. Perspectives on successes and challenges

Next, I'd like to hear about what has been successful and challenging about the project so far.

15. [YEAR 2 ONLY] What are the key challenges in the transition service environment that you hope will be addressed by this project?
16. [YEAR 4 ONLY] What are the key challenges in the transition service environment that the project successfully addressed?
17. What do you think has been most successful about your Pathways to Partnerships services **for children, youth, and families**?
 - a. Probe: Why do you think those things have been successful?
 - b. Probe: Has the project improved how staff deliver services and interact with youth and parents?
18. What do you think has been most challenging or least successful about your Pathways to Partnerships services **for children, youth, and families** so far?
 - a. Probe: Why do you think those things have presented challenges?
 - b. Probe: What is the project doing to address the challenges?
19. What do you think has been most successful about your Pathways to Partnerships **organizational partnerships**?
 - a. Probe: Why do you think those things have been successful?
20. What do you think has been most challenging or least successful about your Pathways to Partnerships **organizational partnerships** so far?
 - a. Probe: Why do you think those things have presented challenges?
 - b. Probe: What is the project doing to address the challenges?

E. Expectations for project services and partnerships

Thinking about the future, I want to ask about your expectations for the project.

21. What upcoming changes do you or your colleagues have planned for services or partnerships?
22. [YEAR 4 ONLY] Which innovations, partnerships, and practices do you think are likely to remain after the project ends and why?
 - a. Probe: Is there anything you would like to see continue that you don't think will remain? If so, why won't it continue?
 - b. Probe: Does your project need something to improve services for youth and families, or partnerships that it hasn't provided?

F. Wrap up

23. Is there anything else you'd like to share about your experiences with [STATE PROJECT]?

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today!