Community Investment in Transition Youth with Disabilities

An Agency Self-Assessment Tool to Develop Community Capacity to Support Employment Outcomes for Youth

EMPLOYMENT FIRST

Realizing Employment First for Youth

EmploymentFirst@dodd.ohio.gov

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Employment First sets the expectation that youth with developmental disabilities will exit high school to meaningful community employment. This means that schools and agencies will be working to help with ALL youth, regardless of the complexity of their needs, achieve community employment. Schools, County Boards of Developmental Disabilities, Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Agency, Job and Family Services, Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, and providers will need better, more descriptive, and complete data, and strategies for gathering and analyzing data. This will include systematically assessing progress of skills and effectiveness of supports; collaborating to provide for ongoing supports across agency timelines; provision of ongoing services; and adjusting services to meet changing conditions or youth needs. Achieving these outcomes will require many to do business in a different way than they are accustomed to doing using a collaborative, multi-agency, person-centered approach.

What is the Community Investment in Transition Youth with Disabilities Tool?

The Community Investment in Transition Youth with Disabilities Tool was developed to assist agencies (including schools) and organizations that teach and support transition age youth with disabilities to prepare for adulthood. The tool is a self-assessment process that will guide the agency to examine their readiness and capacity to serve the transition needs of youth in community employment. The tool assists in the identification of areas for improvement and supports the development of a plan for improvement.

What is capacity and investment and why is it important?

Capacity in this tool refers to an organization's knowledge, skills, resources, and foundational readiness to participate in preparing youth with disabilities for adulthood. Capacity is necessary because the transition process for youth requires wide-ranging knowledge about multiple aspects of both educational preparation and ongoing adult service and support. Necessary resources are equally as broad-based and require partnerships throughout, and outside of, an organization.

Investment refers to the level at which an organization has dedicated resources and the importance placed on developing and maintaining the necessary capacity. Investment implies more than a monetary commitment. Investment also includes the value that an organization places on the future success of the youth. Investment requires organizations to make the commitment central to the daily operations and vision of the agency. The commitment to the outcome of employment requires determination, regardless of the barriers that may be encountered.

What does the Community Investment in Transition Youth with Disabilities (CITYD) include?
The sections of the tool include:

- **Investment Indicators:** Areas that should be addressed to build capacity and investment are identified. The tool has seven indicator areas that include:

  1. Mission Statement
  2. Professional Development
  3. Policies and Procedures
  4. Practices and Programs
  5. Communication and Collaboration
  6. Ongoing Support
  7. Perceived Barriers to Employment

- **Indicator Statements and Evidence:** Each section includes statements that describe activities, priorities, or ways of functioning that create investment with an agency. Groups discuss how they view their agency's capacity related to each of these indicator statements. Examples of what the agency has done to operationalize each statement can be documented in the area of the document labeled "evidence".

- **Indicator Statement Implementation Rating:** After discussion, the group determines a rating for the statement. A 1 – 4 rating scale allows the group to identify where the agency currently functions. The rating may reflect that the item is not in place at this time, is in place but minimally effective, in place but needs review or in place and effective. The total rating of all statements in a section is calculated and documented in that section.

- **Priority for Change Rating:** In addition to the rating of implementation, the team will also decide if this statement is a high, medium, or low priority for action or intervention. Some low rated items are also low priority as there may be other actions that need to be in place before addressing this target. Some high rated item may become a high priority as well because they can be addressed quickly and create momentum for further change.

- **Resources/Needs:** During and after completing each of the indicator discussions, the team can record the resources or assets that currently exist within the agency that address each global indicator. These may be people, practices, collaborations, materials, etc. In addition, the team can identify needs that would allow the agency to improve the investment in the corresponding indicator.

- **Score Table:** The scores are graphed in order to quickly view where the global strengths and needs exist. Teams may identify patterns that cause them to re-examine the items or may validate the general discussions of the group.

- **Action Plan:** Finally, the action plan template allows the team to select several indicator statements that require action.

How was the CITYD developed?
The CITYD emerged as a tool developed by a multi-agency group of transition and employment leaders that helped identify and develop the content and format of the tool. The target areas in the CITYD were identified when leaders in transition and employment across Ohio identified the need for agency collaboration, cooperation, communication, expertise in Evidence Based Practices and resources as essential to successful transition to employment. The absence of these components was also reflected in other work groups as barriers to community employment. Experts in the field of transition recognize the need for regional or local community investment in order to implement individual transition programs.

The resulting tool addresses these important needs and offers guidance in creating action steps to improve the commitment and investment in an agency's ability to support transition youth with disabilities to reach successful adult community employment.

How is the CITYD completed?
This tool is most effective when completed collaboratively by a group of people from a single school/agency. Discussion with resulting consensus of how the school/agency is performing related to each indicator guides the group to identify both strengths and areas needing improvement. The team can also use the information from the tool to prioritize the most critical areas to address and to develop an action plan for improvement.

Guidance/Technical Assistance. A guidance document will accompany the tool that provides additional resources (ex: web based tools), including examples from effective programs and people in Ohio and examples of evidence for each Indicator.

Directions for Use

1. TEAM. Identify a team from the agency that includes people of different roles, different viewpoints and different experiences in order that agency assessment will be complete and comprehensive. The "final" completed document is intended to represent consensus of the agency. Team members may choose to complete the tool individually from their own perspective and then meet as a group and come to consensus on one response. Or the team could meet as a group and complete together. In either situation, the tool is NOT intended to be a numerical average of multiple responses.

2. EACH AGENCY COMPLETES. In use by multiple agency teams, each agency should first complete the tool as a single agency. After each agency completes the tool and identifies individual strengths and areas of improvement, multiple agency representatives may come together to review common strengths to build from, common needs to work on together. This information can allow the multiple agency team to come to consensus of the focus of an action plan for a particular catchment area or community

3. TIME TO COMPLETE. This will be affected by size of team, method for completing, amount of discussion needed to come to consensus. Overall, all 7 areas are designed to be reviewed in one hour (less than 10 minutes per Indicator area) with discussion and consensus building this may increase the process to several hours.

4. RECORDER. Identify a recorder that will be able to document the discussion and the collective decisions on ratings and evidence

5. FACILITATOR. It is recommended that one person be identified as the facilitator to the process. This person introduces the process and helps move the process along. In some cases, especially if it is a large group, a person with experience facilitating may be necessary in order that the group does not get stuck on one particular issue or item. The facilitator can help the group move through the items in a way that encourages participation and prevents fatigue with the process.

6. REVIEW. Review the general profile at the end. After the tool is complete, the team should review the profile. Identify areas that stand out as strong and can be used as foundational to a transition action plan. Identify areas of challenge or weakness that will require strategic development. Gain consensus from the group that the profile is reasonably accurate

7. CREATE A PLANNING PROCESS. Finally, discuss how the group will move forward on making a plan of action. Who will be included? How and when will the group meet to plan? Where will this occur?

Before beginning the Self-Assessment process, as a team discuss the following questions and develop statements that clearly articulate the mission/vision. If there is no agreed upon answer to these questions, an action plan should include the development of mission and vision statements.

What is the Agency's Mission, Vision and Focus for transition youth with developmental disabilities related to community employment? kkj;lkj
Is there a regional transition network, council or other collaborative entity? If so, what is this group's Mission / Vision and shared purpose for the transition youth with developmental disabilities related to community employment?

Rating Scale: (circle one) 1 = not in place 2 = in place minimally effective 3 = in place, needs review 4 = in place, effective				**Indicator** Mission Statement, Vision, Philosophy that Guides Agency Commitment to Community Employment	**Evidence** Include descriptions or location of evidence to support the Indicator Statement	**Priority for Change**
1	2 ✓	3	4	1. The school/agency has a mission statement that communicates a value for community employment.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
1	2	3 ✓	4	2. Staff at all levels can articulate the mission statement and describe how it supports community employment.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
1	2 ✓	3	4	3. The mission statement is evident in the daily work of the school/agency.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
1	2	3	4 ✓	4. The school/agency mission statement is supported by the prioritization of resources (i.e., funding, staff) allocation.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
1	2	3	4	5. The school/agency's mission statement communicates intent to work collaboratively with other agencies/systems to achieve community employment.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
1	2	3	4	6. The school/agency's mission specifically includes working with transition youth to achieve community employment.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
1	2	3	4	7. The school/agency has a process to include youth and family input in developing or revising the mission statement.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
				Grand Total Mission Statement	**Team Consensus of Priority Rating**	☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High

Rating Scale: (circle one) 1 = not in place 2 = in place minimally effective 3 = in place, needs review 4 = in place, effective				**Indicator** Staff Competencies for Supporting Community Employment Embedded In Professional Development/ Training Plans	**Evidence** Include descriptions or location of evidence to support the Indicator Statement	**Priority for Change**
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	1. The school/agency views the ongoing development/ training of staff skills as an essential function of the agency.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	2. The school/agency has a plan for engaging all staff in professional development/training that furthers the mission of community employment as it is related to their professional role.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	3. Evidence based practices for transition is the core of the school/agency's professional development /training related to transition youth and includes a focus on skills/ experiences youth need for community employment.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	4. The school/agency's professional development/ training includes skills to facilitate person-centered planning approaches with youth.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5. The school/agency's professional development/ training includes approaches for understanding and implementing meaningful transition assessment,		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	6. The school/agency's professional development / training includes knowledge and skill development of individual data collection systems and analysis of data for ongoing improvement of the youth's programs, supports, and services.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	7. The school/agency's professional development/ training makes use of high quality strategies such as inter agency training and professional learning communities.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
				Grand Total Professional Development	**Team Consensus of Priority Rating**	☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High

Rating Scale: (circle one) 1 = not in place 2 = in place minimally effective 3 = in place, needs review 4 = in place, effective				**Indicator** Established Agency Policies and Procedures that Facilitate Community Employment	**Evidence** Include descriptions or location of evidence to support the Indicator Statement	**Priority for Change**
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	1. The school/agency has policies that promote the culture of Employment First (community employment as the preferred outcome) for transition youth.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	2. The procedures of the school/agency promote the culture of Employment First (community employment as the preferred outcome) for transition youth.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	3. The school/agency policies support braiding and blending of funds from other sources to provide transition services for youth to achieve community employment.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	4. The school/agency procedures promote flexibility and individualization in service delivery or planning to meet short-term and ongoing support needs for community employment.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5. The school/agency procedures promote community employment outcomes based on the youth's preferences, interests, needs and skills.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	6. The school/agency procedures encourage collaborative relationships with other partners in serving transition youth.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	7. The school/agency policies set an expectation for staff to engage in ongoing high quality professional development.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
				Grand Total for Policies and Procedures	**Team Consensus of Priority Rating**	☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High

Rating Scale: (circle one) 1 = not in place 2 = in place minimally effective 3 = in place, needs review 4 = in place, effective				**Indicator** Staff Practices and Agency Programs that Positively Influence and Encourage Community Employment	**Evidence** Include descriptions or location of evidence to support the Indicator Statement	**Priority for Change**
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	1. The school/agency practices include interagency partnerships to guide the processes of transition to achieve community employment.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	2. The school/agency gathers and analyzes youth post school outcome data annually to review and revise practices and programs to ensure they are effective for youth to achieve community employment.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	3. The school/agency's transition assessment practices include collaboration with partners to jointly conduct and interpret student information within the context of a plan for community employment.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	4. The school/agency practices incorporate consistent use of instructional practices and transition programs that have evidence of being effective (EBP).		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5. The school/agency practices make time for planning with youth and families for community employment a priority.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	6. The school/agency practices prioritize and value collaborative relationships between staff in other regional agencies.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	7. The school/agency practices include a process for using data about youth and family satisfaction with planning and service provision for continuous improvement.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
				Grand Total Practices and Programs	**Team Consensus of Priority Rating**	☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High

Rating Scale: (circle one) 1 = not in place 2 = in place minimally effective 3 = in place, needs review 4 = in place, effective				**Indicator** Internal and External Communication and Collaboration to Support the Transition Process	**Evidence** Include descriptions or location of evidence to support the Indicator Statement	**Priority for Change**
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	1. The school/agency has an established process to communicate in a timely and ongoing manner to the members of a youth's transition team (internal and external partners).		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	2. The school/agency staff has sufficient knowledge about the transition practices of other partners to inform youth and families.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	3. The school/agency staff knowledge of partner agency's policies/ procedures is sufficient to make appropriate and timely referrals/ connections.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	4. The school/agency has a process to ensure that website, print resources, documents and all information designed for general use is jargon - free and understandable to all transition partners, especially youth and family.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5. The school/agency has an internal process to communicate information that affects agency policies, practices and priorities.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	6. The school/agency has a process to provide orientation to new employees regarding policies, practices and priorities to ensure consistency over time.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	7. The school/agency has a process for regular communication with external partners to share data and information about agency policies, practices and priorities.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
				Grand Total Communication and Collaboration	**Team Consensus of Priority Rating**	☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High

Rating Scale: (circle one) 1 = not in place 2 = in place minimally effective 3 = in place, needs review 4 = in place, effective				**Indicator** Provision of Ongoing Supports and Services that Promote and Sustain Successful Community Employment	**Evidence** Include descriptions or location of evidence to support the Indicator Statement	**Priority for Change**
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	1. The school/agency collects and analyzes data to monitor the effectiveness of ongoing supports provided to youth by the agency to youth employed in the community.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	2. The school/agency has a process that guides a team to make data based decisions regarding the duration and intensity of ongoing supports.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	3. The school/agency promotes mobile technology as a means to extend/enhance support provided for community employment.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	4. The school/agency explores/considers multiple and individualized options for ongoing support, using monitoring data to determine the effectiveness.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5. The school/agency facilitates connection and coordination of services with other agencies for youth beginning at age 14 to ensure supports are continued following exit/graduation from secondary school.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	6. The school/agency participates in blending and braiding of resources with other partners to make available and extend supports for youth.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	7. The agency participates in the identification/ development of natural supports and the use of work incentives to extend needed supports.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
				Grand Total Ongoing Support	**Team Consensus of Priority Rating**	☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High

Rating Scale: (circle one) 1 = not in place 2 = in place minimally effective 3 = in place, needs review 4 = in place, effective				**Indicator** Proactively Addressing Family and Youth's Perceived Barriers to Employment	**Evidence** Include descriptions or location of evidence to support the Indicator Statement	**Priority for Change**
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	1. The school/agency utilizes a benefits analysis as part of the data and information considered in planning for community employment.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	2. The school/agency networks with or provides families of young children with information that promotes community employment as the first and priority outcome for all individuals with disabilities.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	3. The school/agency staff has a working knowledge of benefits and work incentives to discuss with for youth and family their concerns about loss or inadequacy of benefits due to employment.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	4. The school/agency staff proactively addresses concerns about the youth's safety or vulnerability to physical or attitudinal harm in the community and develops plans to support youth in these areas.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5. The school/agency prepares youth with skills and/ or supports needed to make informed choices.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	6. The school/agency works with youth and families to develop self-determination and independence skills needed for community employment.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	7. The school/agency encourages families to share concerns about safety or vulnerability on an ongoing basis.		☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
				Grand Total Concerns of Employment	**Team Consensus of Priority Rating**	☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High

Indicator Area	Currently Available Resources/Assets to Assist in Improving this Indicator	Resource Needs Related to Improving this Indicator
1. Mission		
2. Professional Development		
3. Policies and Procedures		
4. Practices and Programs		
5. Communication and Collaboration		
6. Ongoing Support		
7. Perceived Barriers to Employment		

Sample Score Table

Enter Grand Total for each Indicator.

A. 15 Mission Statement

B. 18 Professional Development

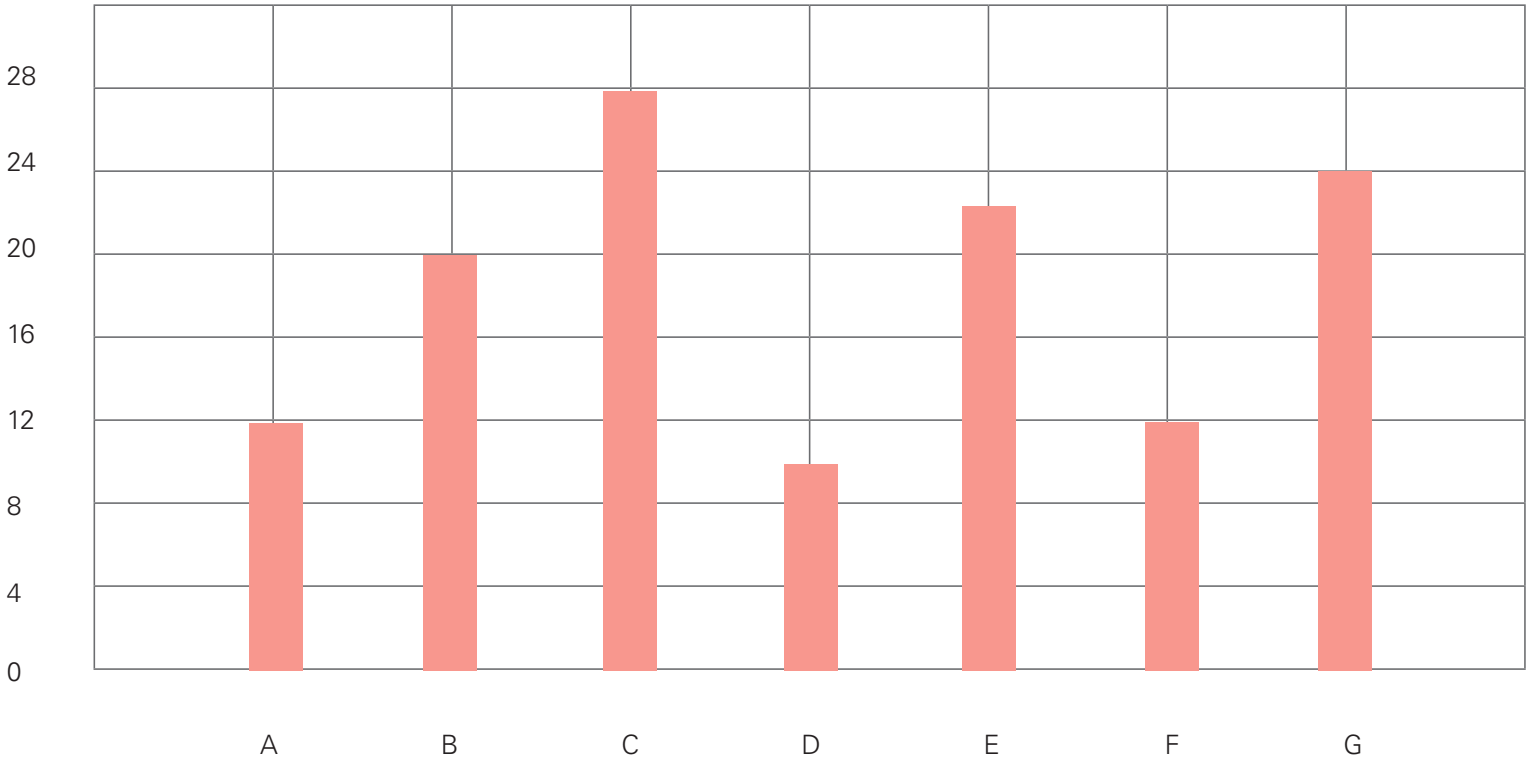
C. 28 Policies and Procedures

D. 10 Practices and Programs

E. 23 Communication and Collaboration

F. 12 Ongoing Support

G. 24 Barriers to Employment



Score Table

Enter Grand Total for each Indicator.

A._____Mission Statement

B._____Professional Development

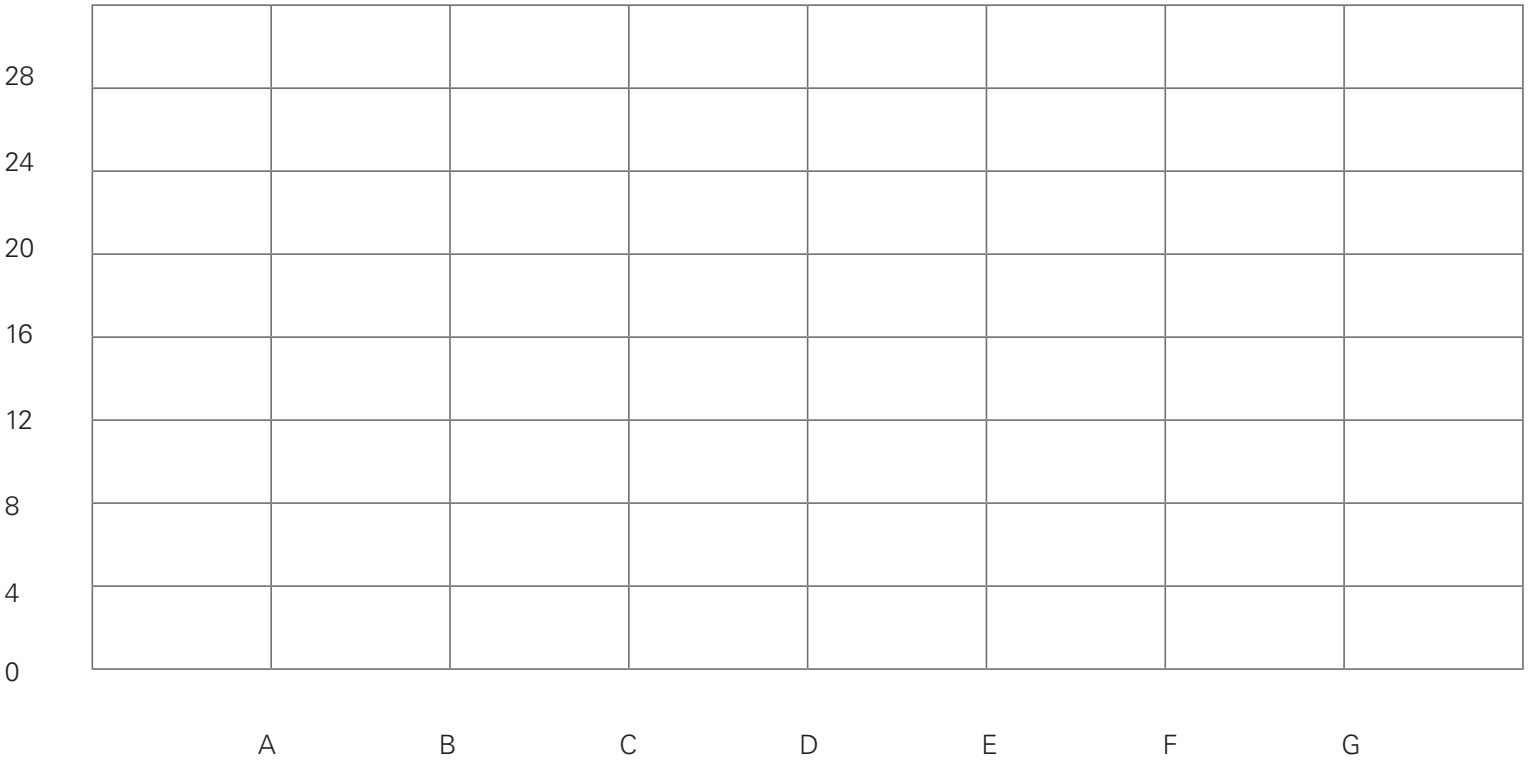
C._____Policies and Procedures

D._____Practices and Programs

E._____Communication and Collaboration

F._____Ongoing Support

G._____Barriers to Employment



Indicator/ Indicator Statement Including Current Rating and Evidence	**Desired Rating/Change** How will the status of the indicator change after action plan?	**Objective** What do we want to achieve? Example: What will be developed or how will current practices, policies, knowledge, skills change?	**Action Steps** What specific activities need to occur to achieve the outcome?	**Timeline/Person Responsible** Who and When
			1.	
			2.	
			3.	
			4.	
			1.	
			2.	
			3.	
			4.	
			1.	
			2.	
			3.	
			4.	
			1.	
			2.	
			3.	
			4.	