Leveraging Rural Strengths and Developing Community Partnerships: Strategies for Supporting Effective Coordinated Transition Services

Josh Taylor, PhD
Holly Whittenburg, PhD

College of
Education
WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

Session Overview

- **Barriers** faced by transition-aged students with disabilities in rural communities
- **Assets** specific to rural communities
- **Strategies and Solutions**
- Discussion

Barriers

Transportation

Limited Work Experiences

Less Services/Supports

Isolation

People's Perceptions

Why do families and students choose to live and work in rural parts of the Northwest?

Rural Asset: The Rural Mindset

- Asset-based approach

- Collaborative, hands-on, problem-solving

- Deep connections to their natural surroundings

- The original tinkerers, reduce/reuse/recyclers, fixers and networkers

Social Capital

- What is social capital?
- What does it mean to belong to a rural community?
- Importance of social networks within rural communities

Let's Try It!

- Who would you go to when you need advice?
- Who would you go to when you want to have fun?
- Who would you go to learn more about _____?
- Who would you go to when you have a problem?

Rural Asset: Small Businesses
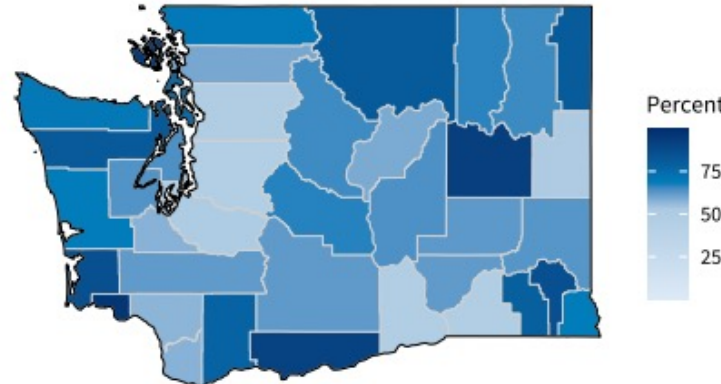
2022 Small Business Profile

U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
OFFICE OF ADVOCACY
REGULATION • RESEARCH • OUTREACH

Washington

657,529 small businesses
99.5 percent of Washington businesses

1.4 million small business employees
49.8 percent of Washington employees

Percent
75
50
25

Share of employees working at small businesses by county
Source of data: Statistics of US Businesses (Census)

https://advocacy.sba.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Small-Business-Economic-Profile-WA.pdf

Rural Asset: Local, Small, Flexible

Locally/family-owned businesses

- Greater flexibility
- **Local** decision-making powers
- Less overarching corporate policies/procedures

Nation's major drivers of job growth

High demand **for** employees

- Greater flexibility in required amount of hours, schedule, and conformity
- More willing to hire previously overlooked candidates
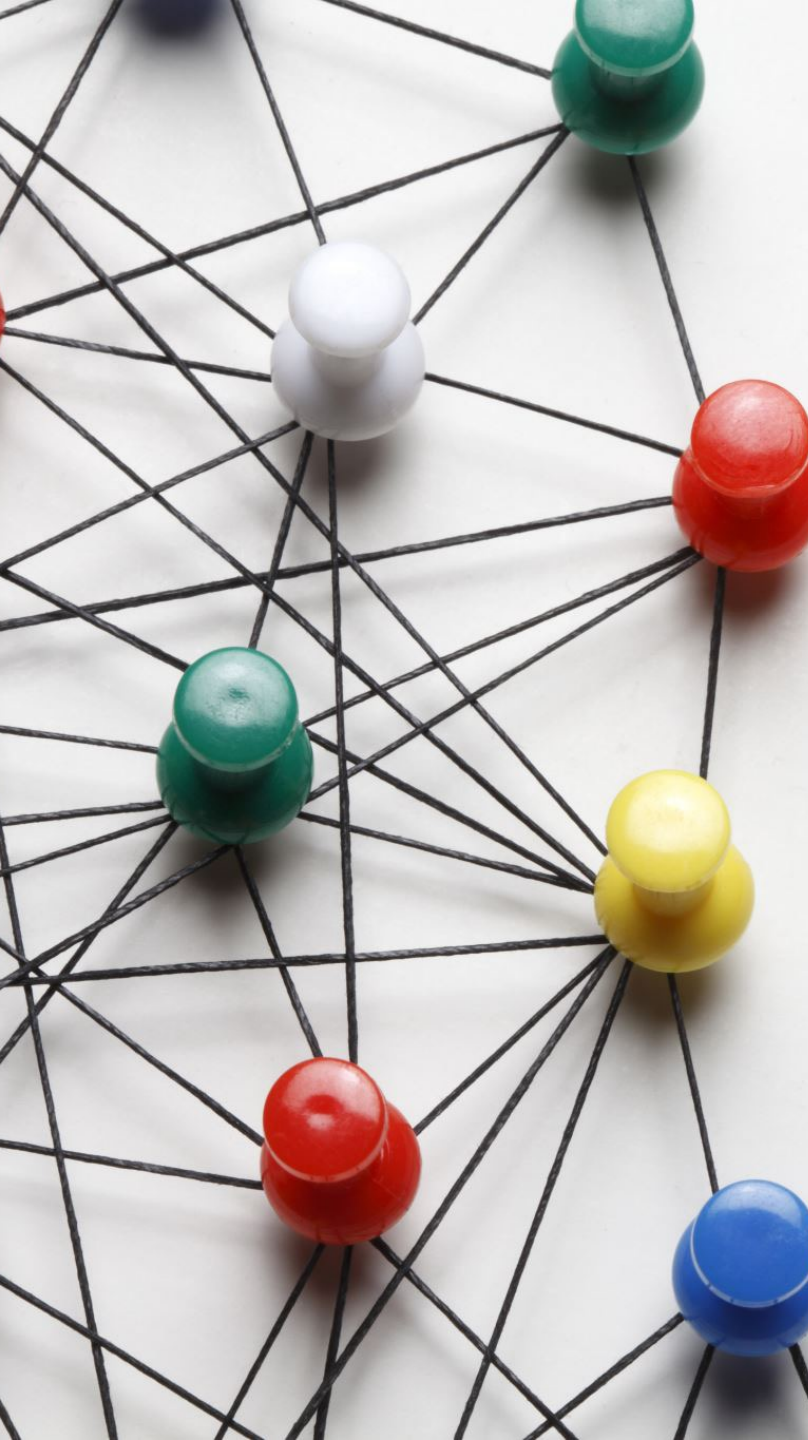
Rural Asset: Unique Industries

How can we leverage assets of rural communities to improve transition services for students with disabilities?

Student-Centered Planning

- Student preferences, interests, needs, and strengths (PINS)

- Collaborative planning

- Career development

- Match between student goals, different plans, and services and training

Developing Community Partnerships

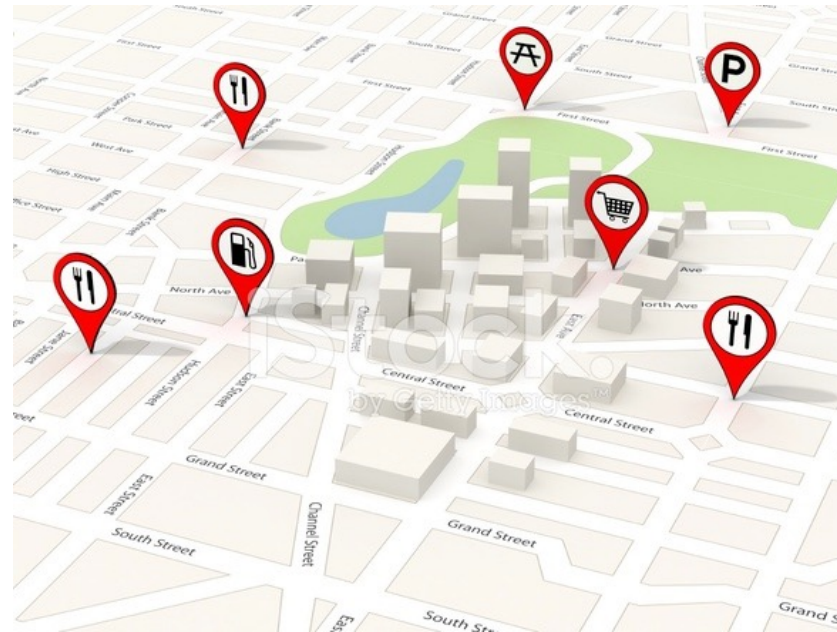| Connecting	Connecting with other agencies/organizations
Building	Building relationships with employers
Fostering	Fostering connections between students and families and their communities

Community Resource Mapping

- What is it?
- How to do it
- Benefits

Let's Try It!

- Community resource mapping

Connecting Students with Businesses

Worksite Tours

Informational Interviews

Job Shadowing

Work-Based Learning

Connecting Students with Businesses

Worksite Tours

- Low stakes opportunity to explore
- Provides opportunities for students to observe workplace models
- Consider barriers to accessibility

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Connecting Students with Businesses

Informational Interviews

- Students have pre-written questions to ask employers
- Learn about business, employment expectations, needed skills

Connecting Students with Businesses

Job Shadowing

- Students observe for an extended period of time
- Begin to learn daily operations
- Develop connections with employees

Connecting Students with Businesses

Work-Based Learning

- Internships/work experiences
- Designed for learning job skills
- Utilize natural supports
- Learn how to maintain schedule and fulfill job duties

Changing the Narrative

- Demonstrating the potential of students with disabilities
    - Work portfolios
    - Video resumes
    - Job trials/working interviews
    - Disability awareness training
    - Success stories

Self-Employment

What is it?

How can it be helpful?

Process for becoming self-employed

What might student entrepreneurs with disabilities need to be successfully self-employed?

Washington Entrepreneurship Resources

https://wsbdc.org/

https://www.commerce.wa.gov/growing-the-economy/business-services/

https://www.cie-nw.org/

https://www.arc-Spokane.org/boss

https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/dvr/DSHS%20DVR%20Program%20Opportunities.pdf

Technology

- How can technology support rural work experiences?
  - Remote work
  - Tele-services

Let's Brainstorm!

How could we address barriers related to

- Transportation
- Limited Work Experiences
- Less Available Supports/Services
- Isolation
- People's Perceptions

Considerations for Rural Transition

Networking

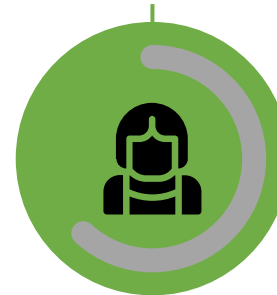Consider family connections and nontraditional community sites

Consider funds, grants, remote options, and natural supports

Transportation

Grow your own

Seek out non-traditional partners and approaches to service provision

School-based options

Think outside the coffee cart!

Questions and Comments?
THANK YOU!

Holly Whittenburg –holly.whittenburg@wsu.edu

Josh Taylor – josh.taylor@wsu.edu