

The Integrated Resource Team and WIOA

The Strategy and Its Relevance



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The History of the IRT



Historical Background

- Born from the Disability Program Navigator (DPN) Initiative and its successor, the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI), the Integrated Resource Team (IRT) model was developed in response to the challenge of developing a coordinated approach to service delivery across multiple services systems based on the needs of an individual consumer.
- Both the DPN and DEI projects identified that consumers often did not access all of the resources for which they were potentially eligible and/or were in receipt of duplicative services as a result of uncoordinated and only cursory collaboration.
- Throughout the development of the IRT model, VR agencies played an active role by participating in a majority of IRTs developed, often taking the leadership role in the implementation of individual IRTs.

Historical Background (continued)

- The need to address resource gaps based on an individual consumer's needs, to ensure the consumer could achieve their employment goal -- the basis for a grass-roots, bottom-up approach to improving systemic collaboration.
- How does the use of a model that is based on individual need create systemic change?
 - Improves communication and collaboration, resulting in enhanced coordination of services and supports for an individual by creating an environment where multiple service providers come together (face-to-face or virtually) in support of an individual and learn -- through the process of service delivery -- what other agencies provide and how they deliver services. **In other words, it creates an opportunity for organic knowledge translation and tangible braiding and leveraging of resources.**

WIOA and the IRT



IRT in WIOA Guidance

“Program coordination standards might also include operational standards such as: **integrated resource teams** such as those piloted in the **Disability Employment Initiative** or other methods are used to jointly fund services to meet the specific needs of individuals; resource rooms include high-quality up-to-date information about the services and supportive services available to individuals ...”

Excerpt on IRT and DEI is from pages 20608 and 20609 of the following NPRM Federal Register Notice: [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act; Joint Rule for Unified and Combined State Plans, Performance Accountability, and the One-Stop System Joint Provisions; Notice of Proposed Rulemaking](#) Pages 20573-20687 [FR DOC# 2015-05528] (Joint Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) with the Departments of Education and Labor).

WIOA and the IRT

WIOA ...

- Calls for streamlining of core programs, including the development of a Combined or Unified State Plan and cross-system/program common measures; and
- Calls for focusing services on targeted populations that have barriers to employment and for providing more wraparound services.

The IRT ...

- Streamlines services through a cross-agency team approach; and
- Offers a tangible model for providing wraparound services based on the individual need of the job seeker to help the job seeker meet their employment goal (WIOA Common Performance).

WIOA and the IRT (continued)

The IRT has many qualities that may make it an important and effective strategy for emerging WIOA service delivery models as it is a method of coordinating resources that is ...

- Consumer focused
- Outcome driven
- Informal
- Applicable through multiple outcomes

Defining the IRT



What is an IRT?

- An IRT is initiated on behalf of an individual consumer who is experiencing multiple challenges to employment in order to address that individual's specific needs.
- It brings together a team of diverse service providers, including community and partner agencies and other core partners, who work together with the individual consumer to strategize on how services can be coordinated to reach and maintain an employment goal.
- The consumer and the team of service providers come together to establish three main components:
 - Consumer-identified, mutually agreed upon, employment goal
 - Lines of Communication
 - Sequence of Services

What is an IRT? (continued)

- The Integrated Resource Team is an informal agreement between a consumer and the systems providing services to that consumer, allowing the members to coordinate services at the individual consumer level around a shared employment goal.
- This team approach promotes greater systems collaboration and increases cross-agency education and accountability of all parties involved in the IRT, including the consumer.
- Additionally, all IRT members may collectively gain credit for the consumer's employment outcome.

Goals of the IRT

- Enhance cross-agency, cross-system collaboration and communication to better leverage available resources in a seamless way for an individual consumer.
- Help Vocational Rehabilitation agencies and partner agencies see the benefit of collaboration, which, in turn, makes everyone's job easier.
- Promotes informal collaboration and relationship building by bringing together public and private sector representatives from the community to work together to assist an individual in meeting their employment goal.
- Allows the members to coordinate resources, both financial and non-financial, at a consumer level around a shared employment goal.

Goals of the IRT (continued)

- Promotes core rehabilitation values. The IRT is a consumer driven approach where the consumer participates in the IRT as an integral member of the team, as the consumer determines their personal work goal. Members of the team are based on the consumer's unique needs; thus, it aligns with and promotes Self-Determination and Informed Choice.
- The IRT, through its collaborative and coordinated approach to service delivery with its shared customers, shared resources and shared outcomes, creates a mechanism for shared accountability.
- Additionally, by sharing consumers, agencies can share resources and ultimately are able to address the needs of more consumers.

Who Participates on an IRT?

An IRT may consist of members from a wide variety of community programs and service providers, including the following:

- The Workforce system
- Mental Health
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Independent Living Center
- Programs for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing
- Commission for the Blind
- Community Work Incentives Coordinator
- Supported Employment Specialist
- Housing Provider
- School or Post Secondary
- Employer
- TANF
- Advocates/Friends of Job Seeker
- Others?

What an IRT IS and What it IS NOT ...

An IRT is an approach used for an **INDIVIDUAL** consumer.

- An IRT is **NOT** an interagency committee consisting of various disability/community agencies that focus on systems collaboration.

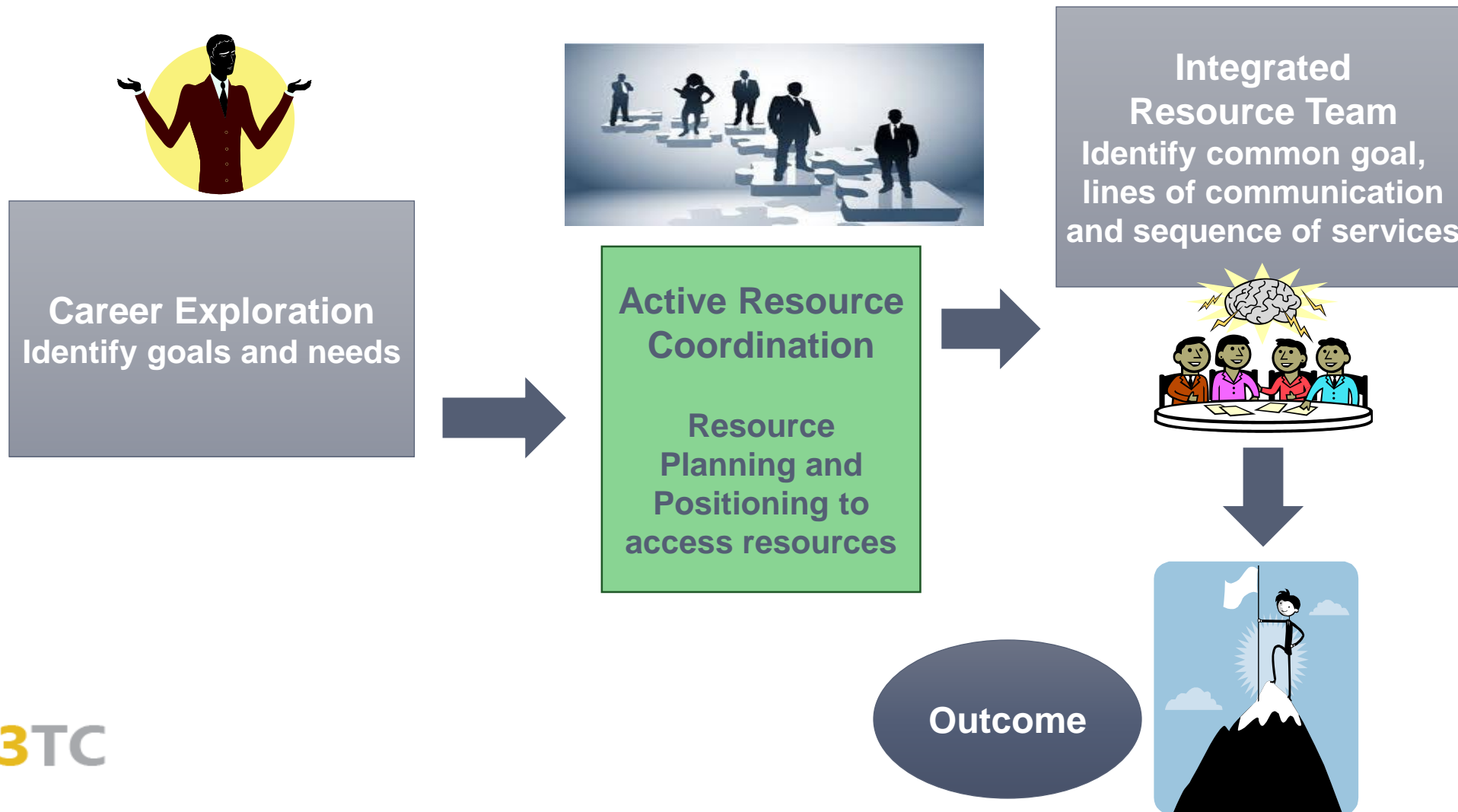
The main purpose of an IRT is **EMPLOYMENT**.

- The main purpose of an IRT is **NOT** resource mapping or to assist an individual to learn about various agency resources.

Coordinating an IRT



IRT Flow of Services



Step 1: Career Exploration

As was noted in the previous section, the purpose of an IRT is to help the consumer attain their specific employment goal.

Career Exploration serves as the first step in developing an IRT. The career exploration should result in a **proposed** employment goal that is ...

- Self-determined;
- Strength-based;
- Concrete enough to build a plan around; and
- Meets the required outcomes of the systems accessed.

Step 1: Career Exploration and Need (continued)

Once the employment goal has been identified, consider the following:

Employment Goal

- Are there resources **and/or expertise** beyond what is available from your own system that are critical to your consumer's success in attaining **the proposed** employment goal?

The Consumer

- What other systems is your customer currently accessing?
- Are there other systems that can help your consumer attain and retain the **proposed** employment goal?

Step 2: Active Resource Coordination

Active Resource Coordination (ARC) is the process of identifying needed resources and appropriate and prioritized action steps to address specific, targeted barriers to employment experienced by an individual consumer. ARC is likely something you are already doing during the process of intake and plan development. Compared with the current service delivery model, this may just be an enhanced and more intentional step under the IRT approach.

- ARC is more than just a referral to multiple service providers.
- ARC is the process of helping the consumer create a goal-specific (*hint: employment goal*) resource plan.

Step 2: ARC (continued)

ARC is directly assisting a consumer to convene and negotiate with multiple service providers to create an employment plan that accesses needed resources from multiple systems.

Considerations when determining if your agency does active resource coordination include the following:

- Are referrals given before or after the development of an employment goal?
- Is communication between service providers solely the responsibility of the consumer?

Step 2: ARC vs. Simple Referral

- Active Resource Coordination is more than simple referral. As noted on the previous slide, it includes helping the consumer to engage and approach partners around the potential for partnering with your agency.
- Many agencies will provide information and referral for consumers, but the consumer may not understand the relevance of a referral or the steps that need to be taken. Active resource coordination helps the consumer to identify, engage and coordinate resources around their needs relevant to achieving their employment goal.

Step 3: Approaching the Partners

Before approaching partners, a consumer should be engaged by your system and positioned to access your system's resources.

For example ...

- Consumer should be eligible or presumed eligible for your system's services.
- Consumer should have determined an employment goal that allows for the application of your system's resources.
- Consumer should be consulted and agree to all contacts, and have a clear understanding of the IRT approach and its benefits.

Step 3: Approaching the Partners Pre-Eligibility

When approaching a partner about your consumer prior to an eligibility determination for the potential partner's program, consider the following:

- **Introduction:** Explain that the consumer is currently engaged with your program.
- **Eligibility:** Ask if there is anything you can do to help your consumer to complete the partner's eligibility process.
- **Partnership approach:** Let the decision-maker know that you are interested in discussing the possibility of partnering with them if the consumer is determined eligible for their services.
- **Track progress:** Be willing to assist in communicating any issues or barriers your consumer might be experiencing during this process to the providers themselves.

Step 3: Approaching the Partners Post-Eligibility

When approaching partners when your consumer's eligibility has already been determined and is involved in the partner agency's program, consider the following:

- **Ask questions** concerning the specific services that are being delivered.
- **Emphasize the benefits** of partnering with your program that might be of great value to the consumer.
- **Try to uncover areas** where you or the partner have some flexibility within the established plans.

Step 3: Approaching the Partners to Plan a Meeting

- Once the consumer is determined eligible by another service provider, and these service providers are agreeable to partnering, discuss with your consumer their role as the driving member of the Integrated Resource Team.
- After establishing the consumer's role, a face-to-face meeting should be convened -- whenever possible -- with the partners and the consumer. If a face-to-face meeting is not possible, virtual meetings are adequate.
- The purpose of the meeting is to reach consensus around the following three key parameters:
 - A common employment goal
 - Lines of Communication
 - A Sequence of Services

Facilitating an IRT Meeting and Negotiating a Multi-Partner Strategy



Step 1: Introductions, Purpose, Concerns

- **Provide an introduction** of programs and connections with the consumer to get all members of the IRT up to speed on the programs and services. (Whenever possible, this portion should be facilitated by the consumer.)
- **Present information** gathered about consumer's goal choices, needs and YOUR program's resource commitments.
- **Listen to the concerns** of partners in relation to identified needs concerning their field of expertise.

Step 2: Reaching Consensus

After introductions have been made, and purpose and concerns have been discussed, the group should set out to reach consensus around the following three key elements:

- A common employment goal (as identified by the consumer)
- Lines of communication
- A sequence of services

Step 2: Reaching Consensus on Employment Goal

A Common Employment Goal

- Most service providers will have some sort of employment goal as an outcome to services.
- Each provider will have specific parameters as to HOW an employment outcome is defined.
- Discuss what outcomes are linked to resources accessed.

Step 2: Reaching Consensus on Lines of Communication

Lines of Communication

- The consumer agrees to communication between partners.
- Identify what information will be communicated.
- Identify how partners will be informed of progress or needs.

Who is the point of contact?

Step 2: Reaching Consensus on Sequence of Services

Sequence of Services

- Determine which services are necessary at each point in a plan.
- Link services to milestones within a plan.
- Find out when services stop for each provider.

Step 3: A Multi-Partner Strategy

- After reaching consensus around the employment goal and the lines of communication, agencies agree to provide specific supports and resources based on what is available through their programs in support of the consumer obtaining their employment goal.
- Each agency completes their own specific plan/required documentation and either indicates support provided by other agencies in their Manage Information System (MIS) -- if the MIS has that functionality -- or case notes regarding partner involvement.
- Agreement around a timeline or need for further IRT Meetings should also be discussed.

Examples of Integrated Resource Teams

Sample Resource Plan Employment Goal: To attain certification as a automotive mechanic through a Career Pathways training. To find full-time employment relevant to that certification at \$14-\$18 an hour. To access additional resources and complete further training to attain additional certifications in this field leading to a significant wage increase.

Vocational Rehabilitation

- Possible OJT for full-time position
- Possible tools needed for full-time position
- Possible consultation and expertise around disability and accommodation

Title I Program

- Access to funding for Career Pathways automotive mechanics training
- Money for tools needed for the training
- Possible OJT funding
- Access to vocational Case Management

TPI/housing

- Possible housing Case Management
- Possible placement in transition apartment for duration of training and placement
- Possible access to treatment/transition counseling

Criminal Justice

- Possible continuing and documentable drug screening
- Possible advice and guidance around how employment plans and goals can be set and attained without compromising obligations around the terms of probation
- Possible access to mental health provider and treatment plan

HVRP/veterans

- Possible assistance and advocacy around child support obligations as they relate to maintaining housing through the whole of the plan
- Possible assistance around accessing additional resources for continued Certifications post-placement.

Examples of Integrated Resource Teams (continued)

Sample Resource Plan #2 00/00/19

Employment Goal: Completion of a Career Pathways certificated machinists training and placement in full-time machining position at \$12-\$15/hour with the possibility of advancement and significant wage increases.

Vocational Rehabilitation

- Possible OJT for full-time position
- Possible consultation and expertise around disability and accommodation (specifically coordinating with CC interpreters, readers and instructors around communicating with Consumer)
- Possible funding for placement interpreting services
- Possible funding for tools associated with placement
- Possible coordination of and possible funding for tutoring services for duration of the training.
- Possible job development and/or coaching for placement

Title I Provider

- Resume Workshop
- Access to cell phone
- Internet access
- Access to Labor Exchange
- Possible funding for Career Pathways Machinist Program

- Interpreting for planning meetings
- Possible funding for tools associated with training
- Access to Vocational Case Management (specifically coordinating with CC interpreters, readers, and instructors around communicating with customer)

Community College Office of Disability Services

- Possible interpreting services for duration of training and/or internship
- Possible coordination with VR concerning communication strategies and student progress.
- Possible coordination with placement interpreting team

Community College Career Pathways Program

- Possible coordination with instructors, interpreters, VR and Title I Case Manager around student progress and communication strategies
- Possible coordination with team around internship/placement strategies

Resources

- *Ingram, B., & Kennedy, M. (May 2012). Introduction to the Integrated Resource Team (IRT) Model. Archived Webinar. Retrieved August, 2018.*
- *Ingram, B., & Ralston D. (April 2014). Comprehensive Breakdown of the Integrated Resource Team (IRT) Model. Archived Webinar. Retrieved August, 2018.*
- *Ingram, B., & Ralston D. (October 2015). Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) Lessons Learned for WIOA: The Integrated Resource Team Approach for Populations with Multiple Challenges to Employment. Archived Webinar. Retrieved August, 2018.*
- *Powis, N. (2017). CT Integrated Resource Team Presentation. Live Training PowerPoint. Retrieved July 2018.*
- Under “**Related Content**”, the link below contains links to information and resources to assist with the understanding and implementation of the Integrated Resource Team approach. The IRT approach involves diversified service systems coordinating services and leveraging funding in order to meet the needs of an individual job seeker with a disability.

https://dei.workforcegps.org/resources/2016/10/25/13/18/Integrated_Resource_Team_Information_and_Resources

IRT Videos

Integrated Resource Team – South Dakota

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QSsashBfqRE>

Integrated Resource Team – Portland, Oregon

<https://vimeo.com/260033830>