



Transition Navigators

Transition Navigators Job Description/Roles and Responsibilities

“There is no exercise better for the heart than reaching down and lifting people up.”
— [John Holmes](#)

The Challenge

Foster youth come with unique challenges that oftentimes interfere with achieving goals, such as high school completion, post-secondary attainment, and gainful employment. They lead unstable lives with frequent periods of homelessness and lack of financial resources for basic necessities such as food and transportation. They frequently experience fear and frustration without a support system to rely on to balance the good with the bad and to formulate sound decision making them easily become overwhelmed when presented with new, different challenges. They oftentimes leave the foster care system with an inadequate education and no work skills.

Navigating the educational and employment options available in LA is far more complex than in the past and daunting when faced alone. Evidence shows that when supportive services are wrapped around a foster youth, they are more likely to achieve and develop self-sufficiency and successful independence. The Opportunity Youth Collaborative will partner with Transition Navigators to provide the vital support. Develop connections with community resources, and lift foster youth up from the cycle of poverty through achievement of educational and employment goals.

Transition Navigator - Definitions

A Transition Navigator is a staff person, peer advocate, committed volunteer, foster parent or an organization with primary responsible for guiding and supporting Transition Age Youth (TAY) along an education and career pathway.

The Opportunity Youth Collaborative (OYC) envisions three broad categories of Transition Navigators:

1. Dedicated Transition Navigators – whose responsibilities described below, will be referred “OYC” cases and will fully support and track youth in setting and achieving education and employment related goals, and commit to direct and regular communication and coordination with OYC referral Hub and OYC partners.
2. Community Provider Navigators – will identify “OYC” cases from their own case load, will incorporate education and employment goals in their case management and will agree to report progress and outcomes to the OYC referral Hub and engage with OYC partners.

3. Foster Parent/Caregiver, Mentor and Volunteer Navigators – support the youth in their care with achieving education and employment goals, learning about the resources available and will have training and support available to aid them in their efforts. Reporting progress to OYC referral Hub is recommended but optional.

This Job Description and the Roles and Responsibilities below primarily describe the category of Dedicated Transition Navigators, although many of the components could apply to the Community Provider and Foster Parent Navigators. Training and resources will be available and customized to support all Navigators in their efforts.

Job Description – Dedicated Transition Navigator

The Dedicated Transition Navigator agrees to help plan, guide, and support “OYC” youth through the maze of programs and resources related to education, employment or stabilization services. They will work compassionately to help overcome the youth’s fears and remove barriers that normally stop a foster youth in his/her tracks. A Dedicated Transition Navigator is also responsible for maintaining a timely record of the TAY’s goals and progress towards them and reporting case management details to the OYC referral hub to allow for tracking of an initial cohort of youth in target geography, leverage successful programs and services, and identify needed systems change.

Each Dedicated Navigator will focus on a limited set of TAY (a caseload of approximately xx) and will be the primary source for helping set goals, identify resources, answer youth questions, and coordinate with the youth on every step along the education and employment pathway. Responsibilities will range from helping the youth make informed decisions about their education and employment goals to setting up and accompanying youth to appointments and running interference when barriers arise. They will be trained in case coordination, identification and understanding of resources, motivational interviewing skills, and cultural sensitivity.

Roles and Responsibilities - Dedicated Transition Navigator

A Dedicated Transition Navigator is responsible to:

- Serve a full caseload of TAY clients on an on-going basis, provide planning, guidance, facilitate access and connections to services and opportunities, and support as needed,
- Maintain positive connections to each TAY client until outcomes are achieved or as modified and achieved.
- Maintain up-to date knowledge of resources and programs available to facilitate TAY access to education, employment and stabilizing opportunities.
- Develop relationships with service providers and troubleshoot solutions with other OYC partners.
- Participate in initial and on-going training regarding case coordination procedures, available resources, working with TAY, etc.
- Use the OYC Hub co-case management tools to identify and track each case, including outcomes, on a timely basis.
- Participate in collaborative case coordination reviews as needed.
- Provide feedback to identify issues, opportunities and points for systems change to create a best practice model that can be deployed throughout Los Angeles County.

Example

Below is an example of how a Dedicated Transition Navigator (Mikisha) supports and guides a TAY to support services and achieve a goal:

Intake: Mikisha is appointed to be the Transition Navigator for a 19 year old youth who is identified at Court. She walks the youth through an intake process designed to identify needs and goals, answering questions throughout the process, and discussing a range of options available to support a youth to their goals. Together the youth and Mikisha develop a case plan that the youth understands and agrees to.

Identify Resources: Mikisha will be given tools to make sense of the wide range of resources and programs focused on supporting TAY to education and employment goals. She will rely on a central database of services in the S and E LA area as well as on her own knowledge and relationships with providers and agencies. From this research, she will identify those OYC partners or others most appropriate for the youth and their goals.

Warm Hand-offs: Upon agreement with the youth, Mikisha reaches out to OYC partners to introduce the youth and arrange enrollment in appropriate services and programs that will help the youth achieve their goals. With the youth, she sets up appointments that work with his/her job or school schedule. She stays in contact with the youth to remind them of appointments, to address questions/fears that come up, and to arrange transportation. She accompanies the youth to initial appointments to help the youth become comfortable in the new environment, to assist with issues as they arise and to lend emotional support.

Support: Once the youth is connected to the appropriate OYC partner, Mikisha frequently checks in to support the youth, keep him/her on track, identify new needs, and monitor progress towards goals.

Case Coordination: When assigned, Mikisha is given secured access to case management documents on which to track her on-going contact, progress, and outcomes for each youth client. Case documents are reviewed monthly by the OYC Hub Coordinator and periodic team reviews are scheduled to ensure each youth client is progressing, issues are address, barriers are removed, and outcomes are achieved.