



College of Education
Department of Special Education
The Transition Center
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Project CONNECT

February 27, 2007

TO: INTERESTED PERSONS

FROM: JOYCE H. LUBBERS, COORDINATOR
Project CONNECT

SUBJECT: *Project CONNECT* REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Transition Center's Career Development and Transition Project at the University of Florida, a special project funded by the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEES) of the Florida Department of Education, invites interested groups to submit proposals for minigrants. The purpose of the minigrants will be to initiate, support or enhance interagency collaboration for transition to:

- increase agencies' meaningful participation in students' Transition Individual Educational Plan (Transition IEP) meetings;
- form or expand community transition teams;
- develop an interagency agreement or memorandum of understanding;
- develop a Work Plan for ongoing implementation of the interagency agreement;
- identify and incorporate information about barriers and potential solutions to interagency collaboration generated by focus groups;
- expand implementation of recommended transition practices and the range of transition services (such as self-determination, on-the-job training, community-based instruction, supported employment, independent living, community access including transportation, etc.); and
- enhance student success in achieving their desired post-school outcomes, including independent living, employment, postsecondary education or training, leisure and recreational pursuits, and community access.

In many communities, the resources and support for this collaborative effort are minimal or nonexistent. Along with state initiatives in the areas of self-determination and self-directed Transition IEPs, a concerted effort in the area of interagency collaboration is needed to build comprehensive transition programs for individuals with disabilities.

Over the past seven years, 42 project sites comprised of 51 school districts have participated in *Project CONNECT* including the following counties: Alachua, Baker, Brevard, Broward, Charlotte, Citrus, Clay, Columbia, Miami/Dade, Duval, Escambia, Gadsden, Gilchrist, Glades/Hendry, Hamilton, Hernando, Hillsborough, Indian River, Lake, Lee, Leon, Levy, Marion, Martin, Monroe,

Nassau, Okaloosa, Orange, Osceola, PAEC (Calhoun, Franklin, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Liberty, Walton, and Washington), Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, Putnam, St. Johns, St. Lucie, Santa Rosa, Sarasota/Manatee, Taylor, Volusia/Flagler, and Wakulla. Through *Project CONNECT* these sites used interagency teams to address community transition needs. The next round will continue this practice. Districts, especially small or rural districts, may wish to consider working jointly within agency service districts to develop a proposal. A maximum of seven (7) sites will be selected.

PLEASE NOTE: Funding for *Project CONNECT* is contingent upon continued allocation of IDEA Part B funds.

Persons or groups wishing to submit a proposal must complete an application using the supplied format. The application has been revised to streamline the process. Please send two copies (one copy-ready original and one additional copy) to The Transition Center. Applications must be received by **May 31, 2007**. Send applications to:

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Enclosures

Cc: Area Technical Center Directors
Career and Technical Education Directors
Community College Deans
Community College Disabled Student Services Contact Persons
Exceptional Student Education Directors
Exceptional Student Education Transition Contact Persons
Florida Department of Education Identified Staff Members
Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources Systems (FDLRS) Managers
Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources Systems (FDLRS) Transition Contact Persons
Partners in Transition Workgroup Members
Project CONNECT Site Coordinators
State Advisory Committee Transition Workgroup Members
State Agency Partners
Transition Center Task Force Members
Transition to Independence Process (TIP) Project Demonstration Site Coordinators
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Area Directors

***Project CONNECT* Mission Statement**

The mission of *Project CONNECT* is to identify promising practices for providing comprehensive and continuous services from school to post-school adult life for students with disabilities by enhancing community partnerships.