



Creating a Community-Based Activity

- Determine the objectives of the community-based experience.
These objectives might include:
 - o Building an understanding of how the topic applies to a community workplace or postsecondary education program
 - o Increasing content knowledge from a first-hand experience
 - o Developing communication and self-advocacy skills
 - o Increasing opportunities to practice practical life skills that foster independence
 - o Creating networking opportunities

- Support students with identifying and connecting with contacts in their communities.
Example Activities:
 - o Students can develop a list or spreadsheet of contacts from their community.
 - o Students can create a personalized community resource map to identify resources in their community and keep track of contact information.
 - o Share a letter with prospective contacts to inform them on the objectives of the experience and how they can support students' learning.
 - [Community-Based Activity Introduction Letter](#)

- Engage students in lesson content to provide them with background knowledge to enhance their experience.
A suggested plan if you are using the Transition TN Website for Students would be:
 - o Review relevant vocabulary with students
 - o Students complete Role-Play Scenario for the topic
 - o Students complete the School-Based Activity
 - o Supplement your instruction with other resources from the Resource List for each lesson or incorporate other curriculum materials

- Prepare students for the community-based experience by practicing and discussing the upcoming activity.
 - o Guide students to develop questions.
 - If the activity will be conducted as a group, have students determine who will ask which questions.
 - o Facilitate a rehearsal time for students to gain comfort in leading conversations and asking questions.
 - o Support students with preparing a short introduction or elevator pitch.
 - [Connecting With Employers: Elevator Pitches](#)



- Share informational and activity-specific resources with the community members who are participating in the experience with students.
 - [Myths: Hiring Individuals with Disabilities](#)

- Plan for providing accommodations or supports.
 - o Review students' accommodations to ensure they will be in place prior to confirming the activity with the community member.
 - o Collaborate with the participating community member to ensure the student will receive accommodations during the activity.
 - o Explain the accommodations and provide specific details or examples of how the accommodations will be implemented.
 - o Send an email outlining the expectations for the experience.
 - [Community-Based Activity Expectations Letter Template](#)

- Explore ways you can use one experience to address multiple topics during a community-based activity.
 - o For example: If you have already arranged for a speaker from a local college to talk to your students, you may want to plan for students to ask questions about both disability disclosure and preparing for college.

Examples of Community-Based Activities

Informational Interview - A conversation with someone that works at a business, organization, or postsecondary education program

Tips:

- When choosing someone to interview, consider all roles and staff members.
 - o Examples: student, employee, supervisor, HR representative, admissions counselor
- Keep in mind that students are seeking information, not looking for a job or acceptance to a program.
- For more information on how to prepare, check out [Student Preparation for Informational Interviews](#).

Work example:

Tori has completed the activities and lesson on disability disclosure in the workplace. Her instructor connects her with a supervisor at a local bookstore. Tori sets up an informational interview with the supervisor. She downloads the Interview Recording sheet provided on Transition Tennessee's website and uses it when asking questions during the conversation. Afterwards, she has more information that will help her to decide if and when she might want to disclose her disability in the workplace.

College example:

Veronica wants to learn more about how she can communicate her needs when she goes to college. She reaches out to a friend who is currently enrolled in a community college. She downloads the Interview Recording sheet provided on Transition Tennessee for Students and uses it when asking questions during the conversation. She asks her friend questions about the process and ways that she communicates with her professors when she needs accommodations and extra support.



Job or Campus Shadow - Following an employee or student to learn about a day in their life

Tips:

- Ensure there is time for a question-and-answer session at the conclusion of the experience.
- Check out [Tips for Hosting a Job Shadow](#) for information to share with employers.

Work example:

Matt has a job shadow scheduled at a local veterinarian clinic. He plans to use this time to also gather information about how to best communicate in the workplace. He observes how employees communicate with their supervisor and sets aside time to ask the employee questions about professional communication at the clinic.

College example:

Arielle is interested in attending an Inclusive Higher Education Program, so she shadows a student for a day to learn more about the program's classes and internships. During the shadow, Arielle also takes some time to ask questions about the differences between high school and college.

Guest Speaker - Someone from a workplace or a postsecondary education program who is invited to speak and share information with students

Tips:

- Inform the speaker of any specific topics or information you would like them to discuss ahead of time.
- This activity could be done virtually, over the phone, or in-person.
- Check out [Making the Most of a Guest Speaker](#) for more information.

Work example:

A Pre-ETS provider has arranged for an IT Technician to come speak to a group of students about his job. Chase and his classmates plan to ask her information about the labor market for the IT career and employment options available in that career cluster.

College example:

A student who recently received an associate degree from a Community College is coming to speak to Rachael's class. Since Rachael recently learned about the types of postsecondary education, she plans to ask questions about the program, the degree she received, and her current job.

College Campus or Workplace Tour - Someone from a workplace or a postsecondary education program who is invited to speak and share information with students

Tips:

- A tour can take place virtually or in-person.
- Prepare your students to ask questions and have a plan on how to follow up on any unanswered questions.
- See [Planning a Worksite Tour](#) for additional information.

Work example:

Sara's class is going on a workplace tour at a department store. Since there are lots of different positions available, she and her classmates plan to ask questions about the different types of employment available and the differences between them. They learn about the demand for jobs and that there is an opportunity to be promoted within the company.

College example:

Manuel's class is going on a tour at the local college of applied technology. He plans to ask questions about the labor market and how the different programs at the college prepare students for jobs in high demand.



College or Career Fair - An event that provides students with exposure to a variety of employers or postsecondary education programs

Tips:

- Prepare for the event by developing a plan for what types of employers or postsecondary education programs students want to learn more about, so they are prepared for the event.
- Since many pamphlets or brochures may be handed out, encourage students to keep a notebook or folder of all of the information they gather.
- Students may also take pictures or notes on phones or tablets to digitally store the information.
- Encourage student participation and interaction with employers or college representatives by incorporating an interactive activity during the fair such as a bingo board or scavenger hunt.

Work example:

Damian visits a career fair to gain information about places hiring for positions in his community. At the career fair, he learns that industries such as IT and Construction are in high demand in his area. When he stops by the tables for local IT companies, he asks recruiters questions about entry-level positions, the training or skills needed, and how those jobs are predicted to grow. He gained lots of relevant information about the demand for IT careers and will use it to begin his job search.

College example:

Nala is interested in attending a college of applied technology. At a college fair, she learns more about some of the program offerings at TCATs in her local area and the types of careers that people get after attending those programs. She also talked with the recruiter and took home several pamphlets with instructions on how to apply to the programs she is interested in.

After a Community-Based Activity

Reflect

- Help students to process the information they have learned and how it will help them as they transition from high school into a workplace or postsecondary education program.
- Consider what additional information they want or need to know. Reflecting on the experience can help them to pinpoint what other information they may need to gather.
- Examples of how to guide student reflection:
 - o Class discussion
 - o Individual or group presentations
 - o Building portfolios with information that is collected from the experience
 - o Create summaries of the experience connecting information gathered to student interests and goals

Organize Information and Follow-Up

- Save the information gathered from the activity. Some options are:
 - o Adding new contacts or information to a spreadsheet
 - o Keeping contacts in an address book
 - o Keeping a contact or information log in their transition portfolio
- Have students send a thank you message to the person they met.
 - o Sending a thank you message will help them to gain valuable contacts and connections they may want to use in the future
 - o Thank the person for volunteering their time and highlight how it was helpful