

# Disability Inclusion, Intersectionality, and Knowledge Translation

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Center on  
**KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION FOR  
DISABILITY & REHABILITATION RESEARCH**



# Lawrence Partnership for Transition to Employment (LPTE)

**Rowan DeAza,**  
The Arc of  
Greater Haverhill-  
Newburyport

**Allison B. Taylor,**  
Institute for  
Community Inclusion,  
UMass Boston



# About the LPTE

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The Lawrence Partnership for Transition to Employment (LPTE) was established in 2021 under a 5-year grant from the Administration for Community Living (ACL) as a National Center of Excellence on Community Collaborations for Employment.

The project aims to improve the transition process for youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities (ID/DD) in Lawrence, Massachusetts.



# Lawrence, Massachusetts. Ciudad Latina

“Latinos were responsible for reversing the city’s population decline: for filling its abandoned homes and buildings; for bringing life to its streets, churches, restaurants, and parks; and for anchoring its tax base. There can be no doubt that Latino migration was good for the city of Lawrence.” (Barber, 2017, p. 217)



Barber, L. (2017). *Latino City: Immigration and Urban Crisis in Lawrence, Massachusetts, 1945–2000*. University of North Carolina Press.

Map source: Alexrk2, CC BY 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons

[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/79/USA\\_Massachusetts\\_location\\_map.svg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/79/USA_Massachusetts_location_map.svg)

Photo of Ayer Mill source: Marchela (Marc N. Belanger), Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons,

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ayer\\_Mill\\_View.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ayer_Mill_View.jpg)

# Goals of the LPTE



# LPTE Structure

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- Consortium (90 members, 40+ active)
  - Meets monthly
  - Guides overall work of the project
- Steering (12 members)
  - Meets monthly
  - Established the CLA process
  - Consults on logistical details
  - Discusses emerging themes
- Core Team (4 members)
  - Meets weekly



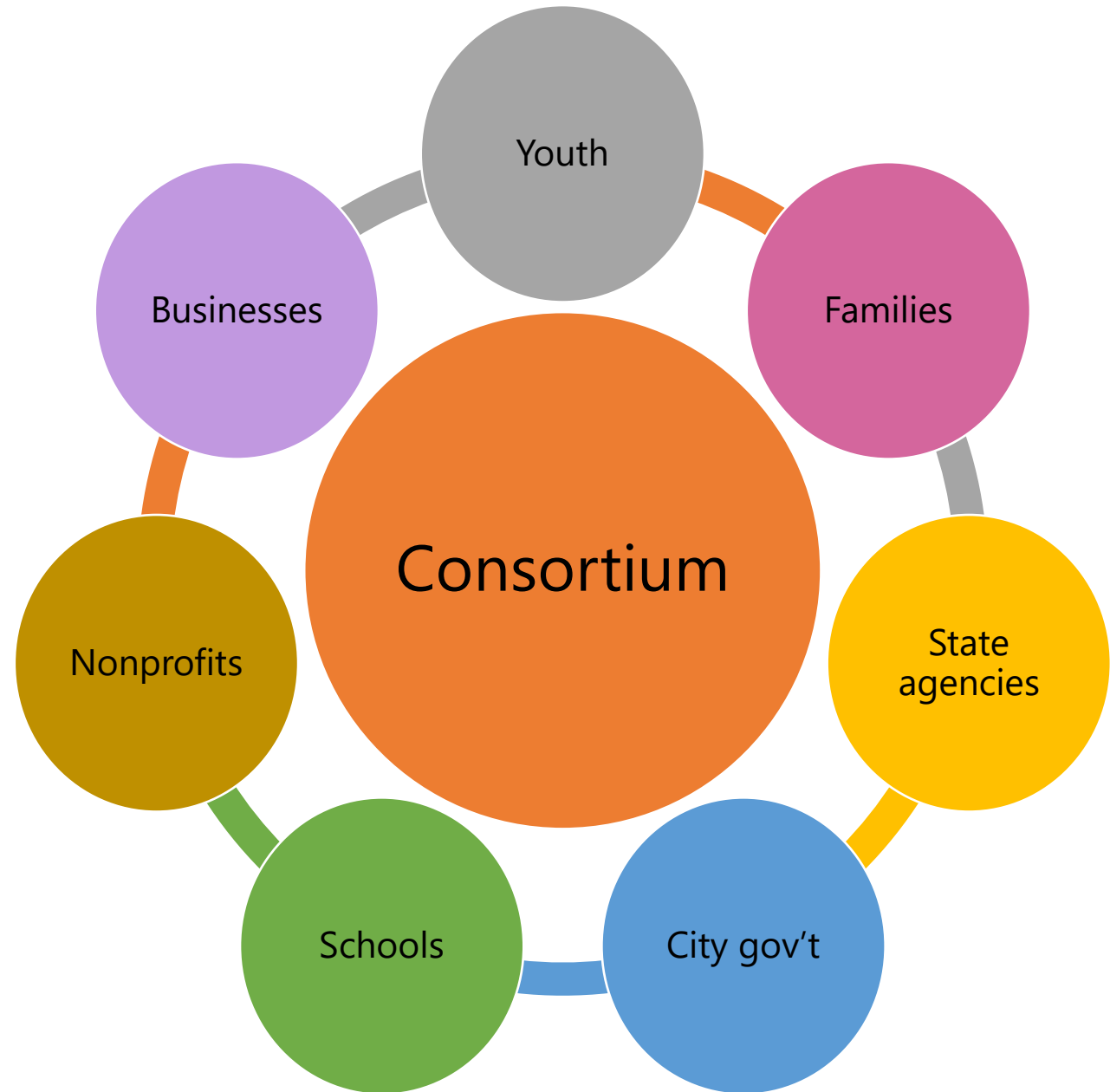
# Who are the members of the LPTE Consortium?

## Local:

- Self-advocates and parents/families
- Mayor's office, ADA coordinator
- Public schools, community college
- Family advocacy groups
- Employment collaboratives
- Independent Living Center
- Local nonprofits

## State and regional:

- Workforce Center
- Social Security
- Department of Developmental Services
- State VR agency
- Regional transportation authority
- Children's advocacy center



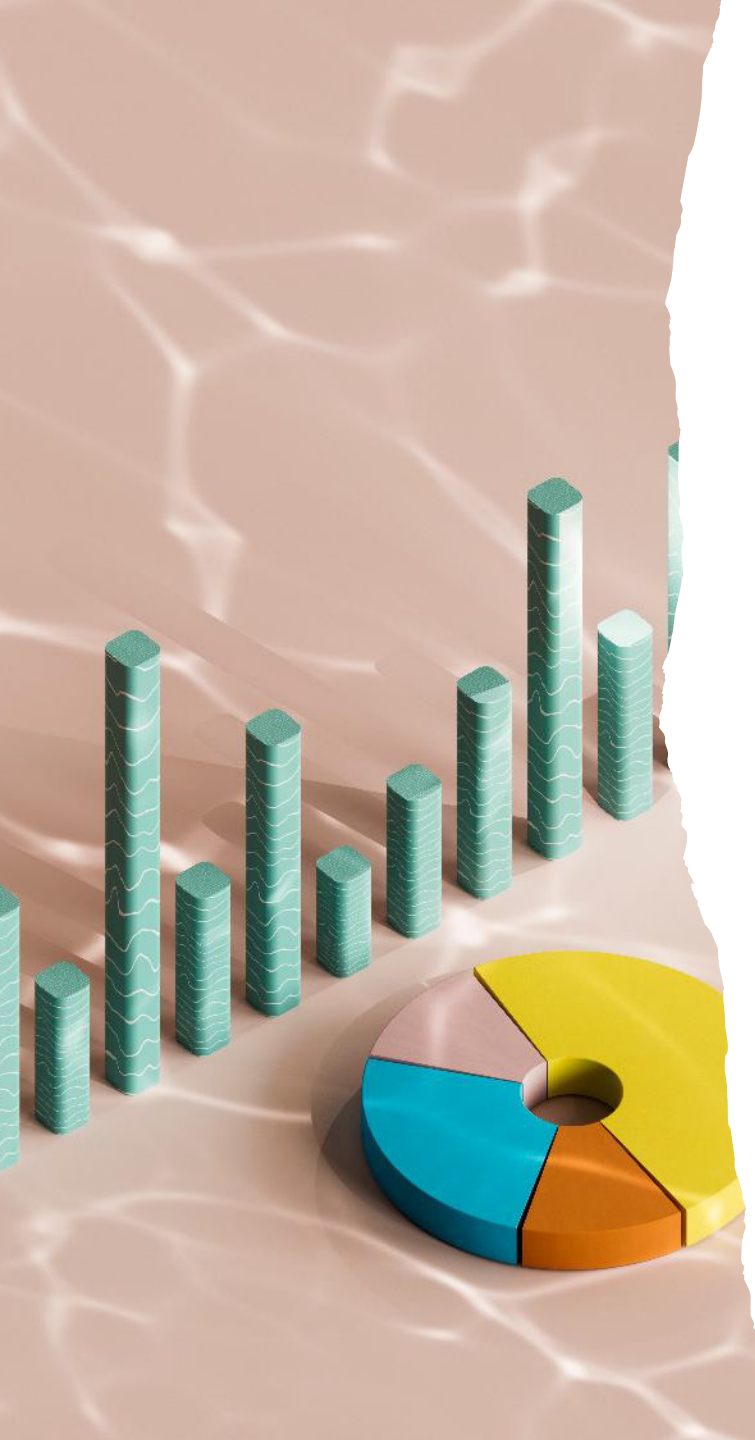
# Collaborating for Equity and Justice Principles

## The six principles are:

## LPTE will:

<b>1. Directly address race, ethnicity, and social class.</b>	Talk openly about these things, starting with this meeting.
<b>2. Give equal power to community members in deciding what's important to work on.</b>	Listen to parents, students, and other people in Lawrence when deciding what to put in our strategic plan.
<b>3. Work to build leadership and power among community members.</b>	Include parents and students as paid team members in all project work.
<b>4. Focus on changing whole systems, not just local programs.</b>	Learn from people in Lawrence how state and national policies can be better for families.
<b>5. Look to research on what works.</b>	Use existing tools to measure how we are doing.
<b>6. Support the group members to lead the work.</b>	Use ICI and Arc staff to support what the Consortium wants to do.

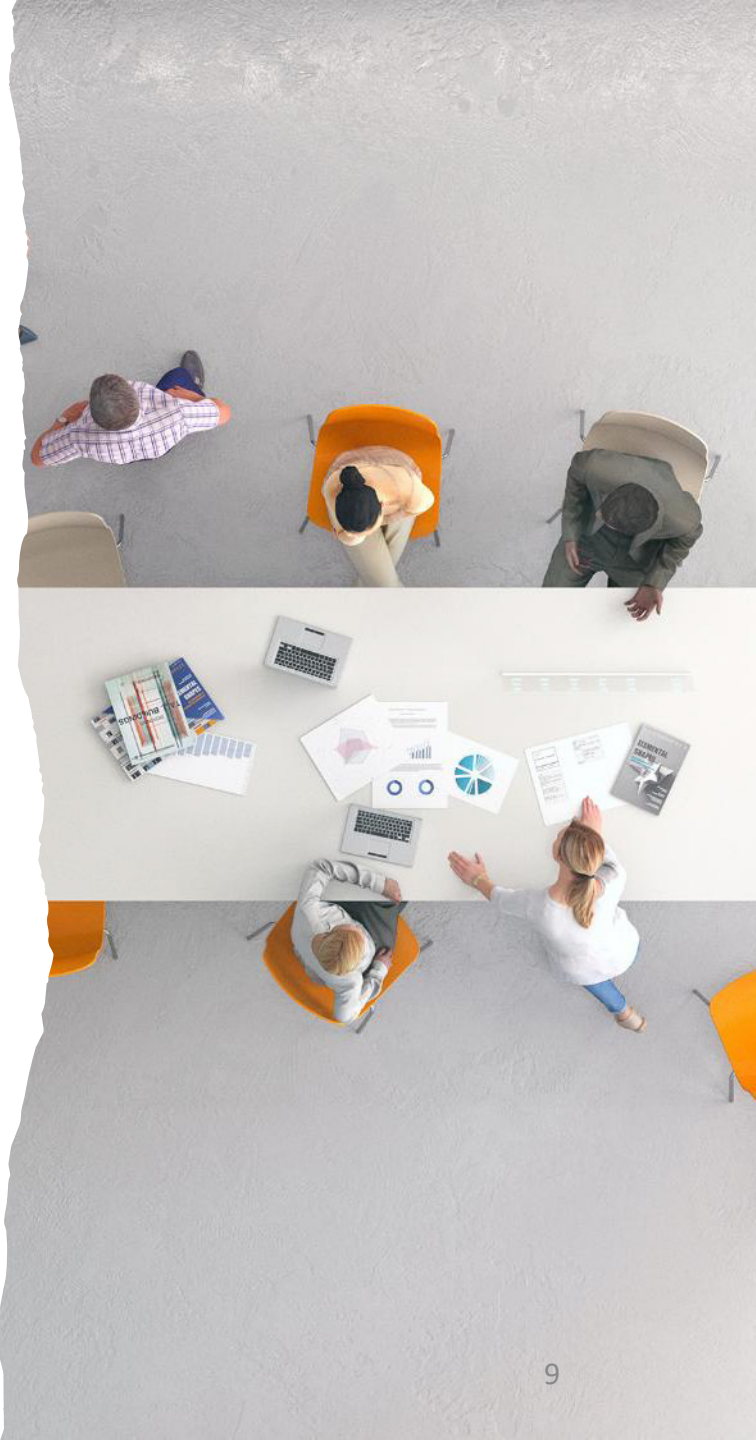


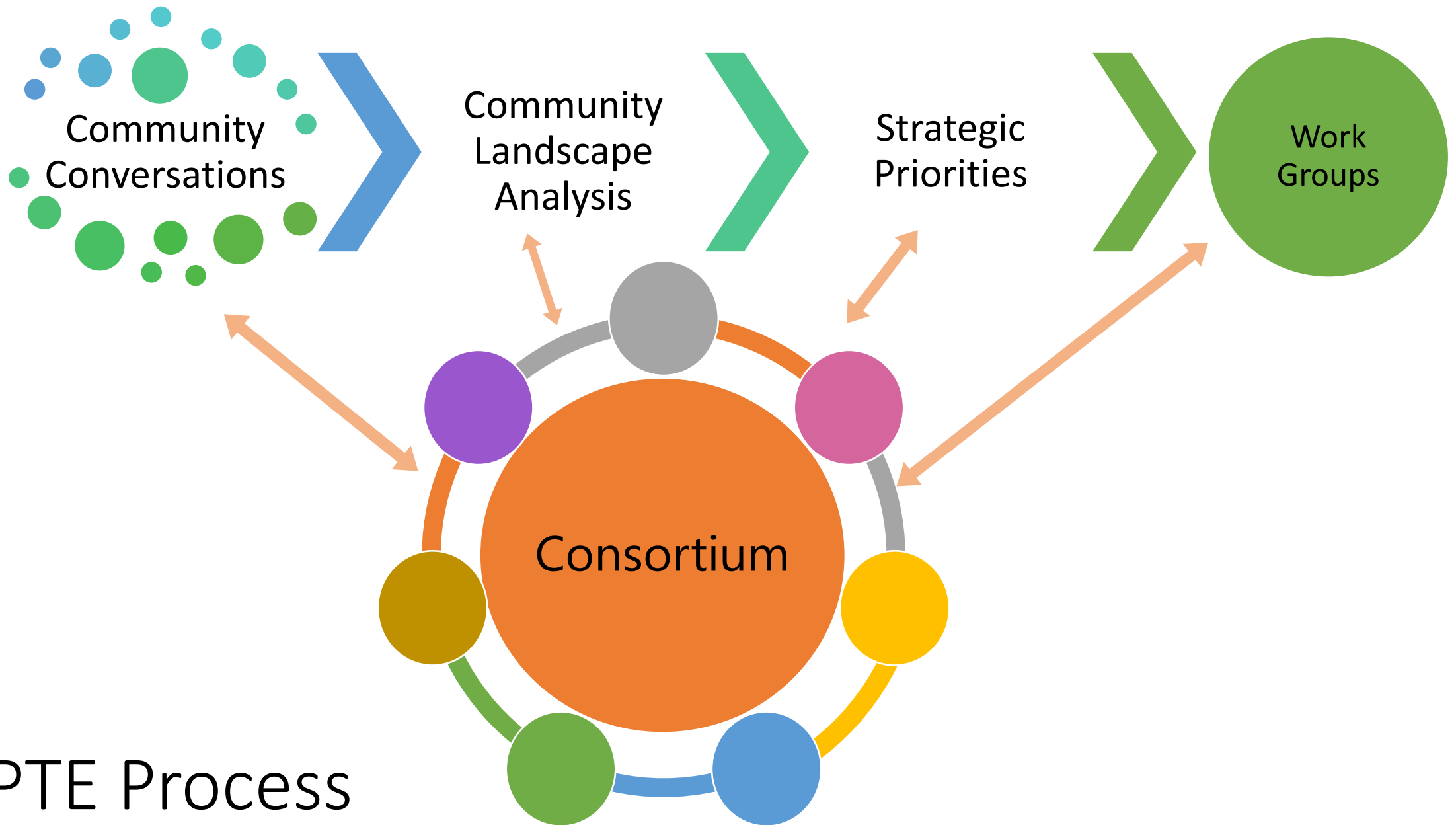


In preparing to apply for the grant funding for this project, the team held discussions with Lawrence youth with ID/DD and family members. They identified barriers including:

- cultural and language barriers,
- low participation in disability advocacy, and
- lack of awareness of service options and limited to no transition services.

Community members noted that immigrant communities rarely question authority, as a part of their cultural upbringing and/or fear of legal status repercussions. Therefore, families and students with ID/DD are not advocating for necessary systems change or even for their basic rights.





LPTE Process

# Community Conversations

Community conversations were held to gather perspectives of community members. Each conversation was guided by four questions:

1. What outcomes do you think are important for youth with disabilities in Lawrence when they leave school?
2. What are one or two things that would help youth with disabilities find employment when they leave school?
3. What are one or two strengths within the Lawrence community that could help youth with disabilities find employment?
4. In four years, what services, supports, and opportunities for work would you like to see for youth with disabilities in your community?





# Community Landscape Analysis (CLA): Summary of Findings

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Feedback obtained through community conversations and other information gathering sessions centered on three major themes:

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1. the most important outcomes for youth with disabilities in Lawrence.
  2. the strengths of the community that can be an asset to transitioning youth.
  3. recommended strategies for the LPTE.
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# CLA Findings: Important Outcomes for Youth



Each community conversation opened with the question, “What outcomes do you think are important for youth with disabilities in Lawrence when they leave school?” The following themes emerged from those discussions.

- **Identifying and working toward their own goals**
- **Competitive integrated employment**
- **Community engagement and relationships**
- **Gaining skills**
- **Ongoing supports**
- **The idea of having “a team like they did in school for post-school life”**
- **Having a champion, coach, or mentor, whether that person was a professional support worker or someone in an informal role**



# CLA Findings: Strengths of the Community

Conversation participants were also asked to name “one or two strengths within the Lawrence community that could help youth with disabilities find employment.” Identified strengths included:

- **Community values and culture**
- **Disability services**
- **Community resources**
- **Local businesses**
- **Engaged parents and family members**
- **Personal strengths of youth with disabilities**



# Strategic Priorities

Discussed 9  
priorities at a  
Consortium  
meeting

## Strategic Priorities Summary

1. Improve the handoff from school to adult services.
  2. Foster better cross-agency connections.
  3. Offer more work experiences while in school.
  4. Prepare students for employment in other ways.
  5. Prepare students for other aspects of adult life.
  6. Partner with families.
  7. Hire more bilingual/multilingual staff at local service provider agencies.
  8. Engage local businesses.
  9. Provide more after-school and weekend options.
- **Use DOTS to vote for your top 5 priorities.**
  - **Use STICKY NOTES for the top 2–3 you want to work on.**



# LPTE Work Groups

- Develop and implement detailed plans for the next 3 years
- Be led by Consortium members (including a chair or co-chairs)
- Be supported by a staff facilitator
- Meet once a month
- Report out at each quarterly consortium meeting

**Improve the handoff and foster better cross-agency connections**

**Offer more work experiences while in school**

**Prepare students for other aspects of adult life**

**Partner with families**





# Next Steps

Through the collaboration of the work groups, the consortium was able to develop a plan to gather resources and create an online resource tool for families and professionals alike. The work groups will be reconvening to continue developing and adding resources to the tool.

# Contact

## **Rowan DeAza**

The Arc of Greater Haverhill-Newburyport

[Rowan.DeAza@thearcofghn.org](mailto:Rowan.DeAza@thearcofghn.org)

## **Allison B. Taylor**

Institute for Community Inclusion, UMass  
Boston

[allison.taylor@umb.edu](mailto:allison.taylor@umb.edu)

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# Q&A



[www.ktdrr.org](http://www.ktdrr.org)



[ktdrr@air.org](mailto:ktdrr@air.org)



800.266.1832

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