Identifying Transferable Skills & Career Pathways

What Are Transferable Skills?

Transferable skills are abilities you've gained through various life experiences—such as work, volunteering, caregiving, hobbies, school, or home responsibilities—that can be applied across different jobs or fields, regardless of whether you hold a specific degree or job title.

Common Transferable Skills Examples

Communication

Listening, explaining, giving feedback, writing clearly, dealing with conflict
Example: Talking with participants, answering phones, or writing emails

Organization & Time Management

Scheduling, multitasking, meeting deadlines, prioritizing tasks
Example: Balancing paperwork with participant support or running a food demo on time

Problem Solving & Critical Thinking

Identifying issues, coming up with solutions, thinking on your feet
Example: Adjusting a plan when materials aren't available or someone needs something different

Adaptability

Handling change, learning new tools or processes, staying calm under pressure
Example: Switching to virtual meetings or changing locations at the last minute

Teamwork & Collaboration

Working well with coworkers, helping others succeed, being reliable
Example: Sharing responsibilities at events, jumping in to help when someone's out

Leadership (even without a formal title)

Taking initiative, guiding others, offering support
Example: Training team members, leading a group activity, or setting up systems that others use

Technology

Using email, entering data, scheduling systems, Zoom/Teams, and learning new platforms quickly
Example: Entering data, completing reports, submitting timesheets

Transferable Skills from Illinois Extension Roles

You might be surprised by how many transferable skills you already possess—skills developed through familiar roles you've held or know about. Now that we've explored what transferable skills are—let's think about specific roles within Illinois Extension and how those skills might be transferable to different job fields, other workplace environments, or roles.

Community Outreach Worker

a. Skills: communication, outreach, empathy, data tracking
b. Transferable to: health education, office support, outreach, coordinator roles
c. Other Examples?

Program Delivery/Field Roles

a. Skills: group facilitation, time management, logistics coordination
b. Transferable to: training, education assistant, community programming roles
c. Other Examples?

Administrative/Clerical Support

a. Skills: managing schedules, data entry, organizing files, handling calls
b. Transferable to: office administration, records specialist, customer service
c. Other Examples?

Food Service/Support Roles

a. Skills: multitasking, working under pressure, teamwork, attention to detail
b. Transferable to: logistics, customer support, hospitality coordination
c. Other Examples?