
SNIPPET

Supporting Buy-in from Community Decision-Makers

Youth Council: Verdugo School-to-Career Coalition

Element: Comprehensive Approach

Function: Convening Local Leadership to Take Action

Subject: Convening Local Leadership to Take Action

The Challenge: The Verdugo School-to-Career Coalition is committed to “Preparing tomorrow's workforce.” Their mission is to “foster community collaborations among Verdugo area schools, youth service organizations and business as partners for planning policy, programs and support services that respond to changing workforce needs.” Coalition members established that it is important to convene the right people in order to create a solid foundation for the Coalition’s future. Their ability to function effectively as a clearinghouse, Coordinating services, and maneuver through WIA regulations depends on buy-in and support from a diverse group of community decision-makers. The challenge was how to best engage the most effective partners.

The Practice and Evidence: The Coalition conducted an initial Youth Summit, an important, focused, televised panel designed to gain the attention of the highest level representatives in their community: business leaders, city council members, community college trustees, government agency officials, district administrators, and so forth, as well as the larger community. A key method was to produce a program on the local cable television network in which youth explained the benefits they gained through participation in jobs programs; also, the Coalition Chairman introduced the organization and local youth jobs programs.

This strategy is not yet fully implemented; however, it responds directly to the identified youth-serving system needs of the region. Information and feedback collected through the Youth Summit process are discussed at Coalition meetings. The strategic plan, programs, and priorities of the Coalition have been influenced as a result of the initial Summit. Follow-up with the local leaders continues to be important, as has been developing strategies to keep leaders engaged in an ongoing way.

What’s Next for this YCidea? Related future goals include discussion of how key youth organizations might coordinate services, address gaps in services and resources, and how the Coalition can maximize impact. By opening the pathways of communication between the Coalition and powerful community representatives, the Coalition hopes to broaden the knowledge of its work as well as enhance its potential to influence community policy and to stimulate more local job opportunities for youth.

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Where to Go for More Information

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