



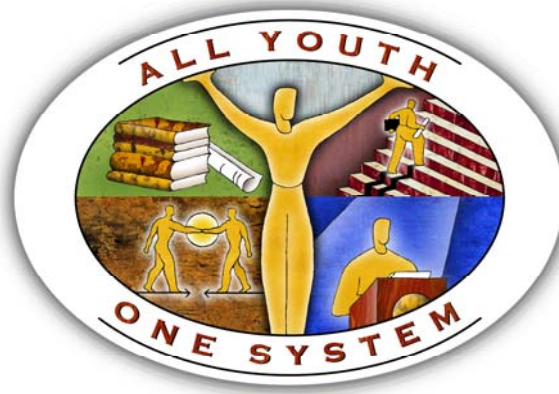
YCIDEAS

*A Compilation of Promising Practices from Youth Councils throughout California
2001-2005*

Youth Council Institute

Chapter Two

Coordinating Youth Services



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Establishing a Centralized Case Management System

Youth Council: Imperial County Youth Council

Element: Comprehensive Approach

Function: Coordinating Youth Services

Subject: Coordinating Youth Services

The Challenge: Imperial County is located in the southeast corner of California and is a rural, desert community. The county consistently has one of the highest unemployment rates in the nation, ranging from 22 percent in winter to 35 percent in the summer months. The population is about 150,000 (70 percent Hispanic) and has been identified by EDD as having one of the highest concentrations of WIA - eligible youth in the state (33 percent). Imperial County struggled with efficiently connecting youth with services due to a shortage of resources that strained their system, and a lack of connectivity between providers and leadership in other social service systems. Because of these inefficiencies and concerns with loss of services, the local Youth Council and Workforce Investment Board worked to identify systemic challenges and develop strategies and solutions.

The Practice and the Evidence: In October 2003, the Workforce Investment Board of Imperial County made two changes to improve their efficiency when connecting youth with work. First, they transitioned to a centralized case management system in order to maximize resources. Second, they created controls for the new system to prevent loss of services. By centralizing case management, they were able to better coordinate with other service providers and more fully serve the comprehensive needs of youth. Helen Palomino, Program Analyst for the WIB, says, “By merging each other’s strengths and allowing organizations to focus on what they did best, local providers were able to support youth through their services while one body focused on the administrative case management function.”

Since they transitioned to centralized case management, their overall performance has increased despite budget reductions of 60 percent. In fact, performance is 34 percent above their benchmark. In addition, they’ve seen minimal changes in the number of youth served. In 1999, they were serving an average of 570 youth with a budget of 2.5 million dollars. By 2004, their funding had declined to 1 million dollars for youth, yet they were able to serve 550 youth and exceed their performance agreements. Palomino says of the transition to centralized case management, “The timing could not have been better because of the reduction.... By centralizing case management, we were able to stay afloat and increase our performance.”

Recently their local One-Stop system underwent an efficiency study that evaluated the effectiveness and process of the whole system and found that Youth Services was given much credit. The study also favorably assessed the local Youth Services system and the partnerships

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that exist among the WIB, Youth Council, the County, and youth contractors for implementing an exceptional program in such early stages.

The Details: The Imperial County WIB was inspired by the Daisy Wheel model presented at a YCi workshop. Since the WIB and Youth Council had adopted the All Youth-One System approach and had participated actively in YCi, they were able to access information and resources to assist them in their transition. Palomino says that they used “YCi as a credible base for trying something new.”

Several factors contributed to the successful merging of the centralized case management system. Youth Council members actively lobbied for a new implementation system and supported the transition. As a result, the WIB recognized that the Youth Council was a resource for implementing change. Members and WIB leadership also made it a priority to network with other individuals/organizations that were doing similar work. Developing relationships with key decision makers led to a new conversation about what was possible, culminating in agreements among the Youth Council, WIB, and Interagency Administrators.

After spending time exploring procurement strategies, Imperial County decided to implement a service model that was a hybrid. They integrated the Daisy Wheel model in which their local youth programs centralize case management services with services delivered via a network of youth service providers. Their model featured a combination of cost reimbursement contracts and fee for service contracts. They also established a Youth Service Provider Network made up of fee for service and cost reimbursement contractors as well as non-WIA services.

The centralized case management approach entails certain contractual requirements for their service providers. First, they must identify leveraged in-kind contributions with other youth service agencies. Second, youth contracts require an MOU-type agreement between service partners. As a result, strong collaborative and cooperative relationships with schools, social services, behavioral health, employers, and One-Stops have led to an abundance of complementary services and great fiscal savings.

Imperial County found networking critical to meeting their goals. Palomino reflects that the “key is really building relationships so it is a win-win situation for all involved. Everyone has their own perspective about what problems are [affecting youth]. The secret to our success has been to build relationships with people who are willing to stretch beyond their personal perspective.” She added that “partnerships must emphasize mutual benefit, non-duplicative effort, and commitment to excellence.” Creative collaborations with the community college, CBOs, San Diego Labor Council, Literacy Volunteers of America, and other local organizations have led to leveraged funding and services. Palomino reflects that the key to her success with the networking has been to “really put myself on the line and build relationships with people working at all levels and connect them to others” who she knows can serve their needs.

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Palomino and her project partner, Terry Swing, Program Compliance Coordinator for Imperial County Office of Employment Training, have worked together to establish strong protocols for improving the system. They started out by creating a safe space for the exchange of ideas and feedback among front line contractors, management, and monitors. “It really paid off,” says Palomino. “We were able to create a system where everyone was able to standardize and monitor the service providers” and front line staff felt as though their concerns were heard and implemented into the system. Based on feedback from all partners, Swing created several new protocols and worksheets that clarified “who gets what when and where. We established a new system that involves all players—fee for service and contractors—and the documentation allows everyone to track where they are at a certain place in time so that they know what needs to be submitted. Documentation comes in at the front end and the back end.”

Imperial County has found many advantages to having a centralized case management system. Most notably, they’ve had great program performance, an overall savings in program costs, improved quality services, as well as improvement to existing and establishment of new program controls. The new model has also afforded them an opportunity to promote and establish several new effective practices including exit committee reviews and a system-wide standardization. They have also seen an increase in understanding of performance, new focus on quality vs. quantity, a maximized use of EDD Capacity Building Unit’s trainings, and a centralized brokering role for framework services.

Breakthrough Moment: Assuring players on all sides that their needs were being met was a challenge during the initiative. The breakthrough occurred when Swing and Palomino saw the results of creating a safe forum where contractor managers, compliance staff, and case managers could all discuss needs and opinions. Palomino says that during the course of the meetings, they were able to “just listen and get an idea about the problems and weakness, and build and create a strengthened process from it... We were able to create ease in an environment that was previously very territorial.” What this afforded for leadership, Swing states, was for a clear “establishment of protocols. By agreeing to a give and take on all sides, a smooth and regulated process was structured.” Front line staff felt heard, and saw their ideas implemented into system change. They approached these meetings with “win-win as the message,” which Palomino says allowed participants to “experience the willingness of other players. It really just comes down to having dialogue, knowing where the challenges are, and responding accordingly.”

What’s Next for this YCidea? Imperial County is transitioning into another stage of youth services. System challenges and continuous funding reductions have forced everyone to work more creatively and resourcefully. They are moving forward with open communication, improved coordination of resources, and strong commitment to goals. They are actively seeking connection with agencies and organizations willing to merge activities and systems. Currently they are piloting cross-system activities with the Department of Social Services, Department of Rehabilitation, and WIA adult services.

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In May 2005, the Imperial County WIB established a pilot project to leverage resources to help meet the needs of foster youth. Building on the success of centralized case management, this pilot was made possible due in large part to strong relationships between the WIB and the Department of Social Services. They have developed a work agreement to support foster youth connecting them with the right people from DSS and WIA Case Management providers. This agreement supports all existing MOUs and expands upon them. As a result, partners are able to establish cooperative work relationships with all parties. As Palomino says, they are “tapping in from both sides to support the comprehensive needs of all youth.”

In June of 2005, the Imperial County WIB is exploring the development of similar relationships between the County Office of Education and the Department of Rehabilitation with an eye towards merging services within their systems. For the first time, a representative serving youth with special needs has sought membership on the Youth Council. They are also planning to work with WIA Adult programs by looking at providing services to 18- to 21-year olds.

Palomino says, “Centralized case management is a transition system for us. We have not yet arrived at the optimal system, and there’s a lot more room for even better collaboration and coordination among systems and services.” She adds that this project is in “continuous improvement. That’s what most people fail to understand - you never arrive, you never really get there, you just continue to work on your process and find weak areas and strengthen them.”

Where to Go for More Information

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Tool

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Supporting Collaboration among Youth Service Providers

Youth Council: San Benito County Youth Council

Element: Comprehensive Approach

Function: Coordinating Youth Services

Subject: Coordinating Youth Services, Staff Development

The Challenge: The San Benito County Youth Council was facing a lack of funding. The WIA can only accommodate a certain number of youth, yet there are more youth in the county who need services. If they cannot be assisted, they are referred to a partner agency. They use the One-Stops as the place where they refer to a partner agency. The challenge was that not all of the agencies were aware of each others' services.

The Practice and Evidence: The Youth Council organized regular meetings for agencies to meet. During the school year, they have a quarterly meeting with all the agencies that provide youth services in the community. "At the meetings we share information," said Maria Fehl of the One-Stops Career Center/CSWD. "We iron out the bugs."

In the year prior to setting up the meetings, forty youth were served. Once the system of meetings was in place, over a hundred youth were served.

The Details: According to Fehl, every agency is short staffed. There may be some concern that joining together with other agencies will create more work, or people may be unclear about how partnering with other agencies will help them accomplish their mission. Fehl notes that they make a point of addressing these issues. "At the first meeting, we identify what's in it for each agency. We also talk about how it is going to benefit the youth they serve," she said. Fehl also recommends that the organizers talk to the partners involved, "so they get an idea of what was their initial reaction, feeling, when you approached them."

Once the agencies have made contacts with one another, they begin to work together to serve particular youth. Fehl gave an example: "We can work with Probation and have two individuals [one from their office and one from ours] who are constantly counseling the youth. It results in a better rate of success for the partnering agencies." The collaborations that emerge support a shared sense of purpose. Fehl said that partnering service providers tend to work from the perspective of "they are our youth."

Breakthrough Moment: For Fehl, the breakthrough came "When the referrals started coming in and we started sharing names of the youth, and the [youth] actually started coming in and we shared information with the service providers. You have other agencies, including the courts.

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That is a great feeling when you know the program is successful. The judge wants to have the agency come in for minor offences, using a Deferral program approach. Our view is the youth is still salvageable and maybe if we keep the youth busy, he or she will focus on the future, on career preparation. We refer to ROP or to ILP, depending on the youth. We might send them to Gavilan College.”

What’s Next for this YCidea? Adding the Superior Court; the Youth Alliance, a gang prevention program; and having Juvenile Hall juveniles being released to their agency. They are also talking with the YMCA about financial arrangements.

Where to Go for More Information

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Streamlining Services to Deliver WIA's Ten Program Elements

Youth Council: Santa Ana Youth Council

Element: Comprehensive Approach

Function: Coordinating Youth Services

Subject: Coordinating Youth Services

The Challenge: When the City of Santa Ana received WIA funding in 2000, there was particular emphasis in the legislation to provide comprehensive services within one system. Santa Ana Youth Council sought a service system able to cooperatively deliver the required ten program elements, believing that streamlined services would greatly benefit the city's young people.

The Practice and Evidence: The City of Santa Ana Workforce Investment Board and Youth Council have structured their service delivery around the daisy wheel model. They have created a comprehensive system by contracting with a service navigator as the center of the "daisy" and five youth serving organization "petals" that cooperatively provide WIA's ten program elements. By leveraging marketing and administrative work, the model allows youth programs to focus on their strength of serving youth.

Santa Ana requires their contracting providers to join their Network of Youth Providers (NYP), a group of WIA- and non-WIA- funded youth organizations. The group shares best practices, information, and training in order to build partnerships, avoid fragmentation, and stretch limited resources. The network brings in new partners, facilitates cross references, and works on common projects, which enhances overall performance and brings the city closer to their All Youth-One System goal.

Within the daisy wheel model, services are delivered in a cohesive manner. The system allows providers to focus on their area of expertise rather than requiring one program to provide all ten elements. Instead, the model encourages that the system rather than individual programs exceeds performance outcomes.

The Details: It is the responsibility of the service navigator, which has been contracted to the Santa W/O/R/K Center (One-Stops), to determine eligibility, oversee enrollments, review and correct MIS forms, analyze performance, report, and ensure accuracy. The navigator also Coordinates the NYP and announces updates and youth development trends that are having an impact on the city's youth.

The NYP supports WIA- and non-WIA- funded programs to provide comprehensive services to youth. The NYP participates in the Youth Council as well so that there is an ongoing alignment of youth development initiatives. The NYP/YC partnership continually identifies new partners,

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based on gaps in service delivered by current providers. For example, La Familia, a drug and substance abuse program, was invited to join the NYP because there were no providers specifically addressing drug and alcohol issues. The result is a constantly evolving service system able to be flexible with the changing needs of youth.

Another benefit to implementing the daisy wheel model is youth have multiple entry points into the system. Providers refer youth to NYP partners, especially if youth do not meet program criteria. The providers are in continual communication, so cross-referral is easy and information is shared. Any program will connect youth to more providers and to the service navigator.

Breakthrough Moment: “We began to grow when the Youth Council understood that every provider in the network is valuable, that we all succeed together or all fail together,” comments Frances Cadenas, Santa Ana Youth Council Coordinator. The NYP supports common projects and the identification of additional funding that can be leveraged to serve more of the city’s youth.

What’s Next for this YCidea? Recently the county’s three WIBs (Santa Ana, Orange County, and Anaheim) partnered with Department of Social Services (DSS) and Department of Probation to request permission from the Superior Court of California to share information with each other. The Judicial Order issued now allows agencies to share pertinent information which expedites referrals and reduces duplication of intake and assessment services.

Where to Go for More Information

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Youth Service Provider Networking Supports Awareness of County Services

Youth Council: Santa Cruz County Youth Council

Element: Comprehensive Approach

Function: Coordinating Youth Services

Subject: Coordinating Youth Services, Staff Development

The Challenge: According to Paul Demarest, Youth Council Senior Analyst, the youth of Santa Cruz County were not being adequately served. Despite perceptions to the contrary, the WIA Youth Program in Santa Cruz County can serve only about 4 percent of the youth who are eligible with the level of federal funding, according to their estimates. Youth Council members knew of many other nongovernmental programs that might help additional youth throughout the County. However, they also saw that these programs were often operating in relative isolation rather than aligning with other complementary efforts. Furthermore, the WIA Youth Program staff did not have complete information about their services.

Youth Council members saw that youth could be better supported if there were greater cooperation among local service providers. They viewed their own role as being central to fostering connections. “We need to be the force for change,” said Demarest. In order to move Santa Cruz County forward, they had to make sure that “all the providers were aware of each other,” Demarest noted. “In a larger view [we] hoped . . . that some of these agencies might consider cooperation, that they might acquire resources together, and go after a project together.”

The Practice and Evidence: The Youth Council developed a two-part strategy to increase connections and cooperation: create a service provider directory and host a service provider poster fair.

The Council staff created a directory that included over 50 youth-serving organizations and offered information on locations of sites, hours of operation, demographics of youth, range of services, and sources of funding. Two hundred directories were printed and distributed not only to the providers listed, but also to middle and high schools as well as other organizations that serve both adults and youth or families. Council staff also shared the directory on a CD with Together for Youth, the regional United Way agency focused on young people. The first edition was created in 2003, and an updated version was made available in 2004.

Two service provider poster fairs were also held, one in 2003 and another the following year. The primary focus was to get the providers aware of one another and to give the WIA Youth Program staff an opportunity to meet them. Each of the 50-plus providers that participated was supplied with table space for displaying a poster and presenting literature. Almost every agency

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had at least 2 people, so they were able to engage with all those who visited their area.

On the evaluations, everyone indicated that the most valuable part of the 2004 fair was the opportunity to ask questions and meet people. “At that second fair, everyone commented about how excited everyone was to have an opportunity to sit down and talk about the challenges they were facing and also to form some alliances and do things they couldn’t do alone,” Demarest stated. “We feel that we have accomplished making all the providers aware of one another, and we have put the idea out as a County entity that they need to be leaders for youth services.”

The Details: The Youth Council members used some creative strategies to locate resources for the 2004 fair and directory. First they asked one of their own, Rock Pfothenauer, Dean of Career Education and Economic Development of Cabrillo College, to arrange for the school to provide a meeting room free of charge. In addition, members were aware that two local agencies, the Housing Authority and County Mental Health’s Drug & Alcohol Division, had grants that were coming to a close that had some funds left. The Housing Authority and Mental Health used these funds to pay for the directory publication costs and for the fair’s refreshments. Council members formed a partnership with the philanthropic arm of a local business, the Sea Odyssey Program of O’Neil and Company, to handle the refreshments.

The Council staff did a mailing that included both a request to fill out a [provider information](#) sheet for the directory and an invitation to participate in the fair. The cover letter explained that it was not necessary to attend the fair in order to be included in the directory. Nevertheless, of the 50+ providers who completed the information sheet, only two did not attend.

Breakthrough Moment: Demarest reports he knew the fair was working when “the Chair of our Youth Council picked up the portable microphone to welcome everyone and still could not get people’s attention because everyone was talking so loud. You could barely hear yourself think . . . because there was a din in the room. And when she was done speaking, people were calling back to her, saying, “Thank you for giving us this opportunity to get together!”

What’s Next for this YCidea? The Santa Cruz Youth Council is “hoping there will be more cooperation and another agency will pick up the gauntlet, do an annual update [of the directory], . . . and keep it updated so that people can use it for a real resource,” said Demarest. Meanwhile, the Youth Council is pursuing its mission to be the force behind change in the delivery of services for youth in their county. Their next initiative entails identifying and marketing soft job skills curricula to meet employers’ needs for employees who are “socially well adjusted and trainable.”

Where to Go for More Information

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Service Providers Connect to Improve Placement Rates

Youth Council: Tulare County Workforce Investment Board Youth Council

Element: Comprehensive Approach

Function: Coordinating Youth Services

Subject: Staff Development, Coordinating Youth Services

The Challenge: Tulare County has three WIA-funded youth agencies, with staff spread out across a rural county the size of Connecticut. County youth job developers were accustomed to meeting for administrative purposes or trainings every few months, but had no ongoing way to connect and share information. Consequently, the county-wide job placement process — both for youth and for employers — was less efficient than it might have been.

The Practice and the Evidence: Youth service providers played a key role in solving this challenge. “One of our premises in the Youth Program is that although some competition among providers is natural, we need to work together to ensure quality services,” says Eldonna Caudill, Senior Analyst with the Tulare County Workforce Investment Department (TCWID). So she was supportive when these service providers approached the Youth Council office with a request: they wanted to meet on a regular basis with all their fellow front-line practitioners in order to share resources, best practices, and job orders. Caudill’s response was, “OK, tell us how you want it to work, what you want to call it, and what you want from us.”

The result was the establishment of monthly meetings called Youth Force, which are built into the calendar and hosted by each of the provider agencies and the TCWID on a rotating basis. Participants readily pass along job orders and recruitment strategies, and the positive response was immediate. “If you walked in, you’d never know that input was coming from different agencies. They were sharing without boundaries because they understand the ‘All Youth-One System’ concept,” comments Caudill. Soon the material shared at the meetings expanded to include information gained at trainings and conferences, strategies, and news about resources and events like job fairs.

At a recent meeting Caudill brought up county performance rates “because our county performance is on target to meet or exceed all measures as a result of the good work they’re doing. It even looks as though we’ll meet the older youth credential rate, which had been lagging like that of many areas nationwide.” Caudill also wanted to reinforce the idea that meeting performance is a collective effort. She readily acknowledges that this success can’t be attributed to the meetings alone, but that’s where she can strategize with practitioners about making performance rates, discuss problem areas, and brainstorm solutions.

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“I have tremendous respect for these folks,” she says. “They’re completely responsible for these Youth Force meetings, and they’re a great idea.”

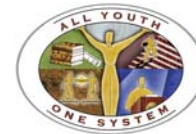
The Details: Youth Force meetings have been taking place since 2002. Each of the Provider agencies and the TCWID hosts monthly meetings, deciding internally which local office will host. Food is always provided, keeping the tone informal. The meetings are open to all provider staff, but typically only front-line staff attend, and they feel free to ask questions or speak openly if they need help or have a very troubling client. Case workers and job developers share job orders, providing the details and offering to set up the interview for anyone with a qualified candidate.

Over the last couple years, TCWID and Youth Council staff have focused on connecting with other non-WIA partners. Caudill says, “We’ve been working really hard at connecting with foster care youth, and, as a strategy, have invited Independent Living Program (ILP) staff to the Youth Force meeting to share additional information about the ILP program.” Bringing partners and potential partners into to these informal meetings has allowed for more open communication about how to better work together. A focus of their conversations has been about how to best link WIA and foster care. Caudill explains that Youth Force meetings provide an opportunity for participants to discuss “their vision of how we all fit into the big picture [of child welfare services] and how to link services, without duplicating.” In addition, the informal atmosphere has supported youth engagement. Foster youth who are involved in both programs (WIA and ILP) were recently invited to a Youth Force meeting to share their thoughts and experiences of both systems.

Caudill points out that this makes the process more efficient for employers as well, and “opens up the whole landscape beyond the scope of a single agency — which is very different than it was several years ago.” These meetings have helped create a shift in perspective, from viewing youth as the only customer, to understanding that employers are also customers. The county reaps internal benefits as well, because the Youth Force meetings turn the agencies into a single group. For example, knowledgeable staff members take less experienced staff under their wing and essentially provide guidance and advice, whether or not they work at the same agency. “It’s incredible because technically they could be considered competitors, and it grows out of the Youth Force interaction. It opens doors on a personal level in building relationships between service providers - WIA and non-WIA” says Caudill. Another benefit is that direct contact with front-line staff informs administrators about what works and what doesn’t. This allows administration to be more realistic in aligning policy and practice.

Another best practice was created when one agency explored a different format for orientations in order to connect better with disenfranchised, older, out-of-school youth. Instead of starting with an important but slightly boring list of services, staff engage youth in a discussion of what stands between them and what they want, along with possible options for addressing these obstacles. “During the discussion we can slip in the list of services. It has a more natural flow, and it seems to be working because youth are returning to enroll in programs,” Caudill explains.

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The group has shared this effective practice with the other agencies, thus implementing the guiding principle of the Youth Council Institute. Comments Caudill, “There are incredibly talented people out there. The Youth Force meetings allow the practitioners, and we administrators as well, to tap into each other’s ideas efficiently.”

Breakthrough Moment: It only took two Youth Force meetings for Caudill to know that they were going to make a real difference because everyone came in the door with the same goal. Set by practitioners, the agenda focused primarily on sharing job orders, secondarily on sharing resources and best practices, and thirdly on problem-solving across areas. “I knew it was going to work early on,” says Caudill, “because I could see this collective energy focused on ‘how do we best serve our kids?’” The efficacy of the program also struck staff from New Ways to Work in Spring, 2004 when they came to Tulare County to host an Engaging Workplace Partners workshop. When New Ways’ staff wondered why that inevitable sense of interoffice competition was absent, provider staff explained, “We don’t need it. We have Youth Force meetings.”

What’s Next for this YCidea? The Tulare County Youth Council has been sharing Youth Force meetings concept with partner counties at YCi meetings. The program is also evolving to include front-line workers from other agencies that are not WIA funded but want to be connected to it. “You can talk about ‘All Youth-One System’ forever, but you have to build it from the ground up, one piece at a time,” Caudill points out. “These meetings create trust and build relationships, and that’s especially important in bureaucracies. I believe the Youth Force is helping build a more connected youth system and that is an essential component in realizing our vision of “All Youth–One System.”

Tulare County is currently focused on building and leveraging relationships to better connect with child welfare services and support foster youth. They have invited ILP staff to Youth Force meetings to share additional information about the ILP program and provide an introduction for WIA staff about their system and discuss linkages. Again, the informal nature of the Youth Workforce meetings has allowed for better relationship building. In addition, a best practice that came out of these meetings was to create a special orientation monthly after hours for foster youth. As a result of the relationship building, the TCWID has secured an information sharing agreement with DSS to support services for emancipated, out-of-school foster youth.

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SNIPPET

Effective Partnership Strategies to Maximize Resources

Youth Council: City of Los Angeles Youth Council

Element: Comprehensive Approach

Function: Convening Local Leadership to Take Action, Coordinating Youth Services

Subject: Coordinating Youth Services

The Challenge: One in every four residents in the City of Los Angeles is under twenty-one, creating a serious public need to ensure that the entire youth services system is linked and efficient. Members serving on the City of Los Angeles Youth Council faced the crucial task of maximizing, leveraging, and connecting all the players to make the best use of their resources.

The Practice and Evidence: The Council established basic common goals that every Council member committed to support. By keeping their over-arching theme and unrelenting “battle cry” of Integrated Quality Services in the forefront of all interactions, an unmistakable vision is supported.

Youth Council members are bound by these common ideals:

1. All hold to the common vision of Integrated Quality Services.
2. Each understands the value of school-to-career principles.
3. Each has a passion and compassion for youth.
4. Each brings extensive resources or “rolodexes.”
5. Each is committed to make the Youth Council broader than WIA.

Other outcomes were as follows:

- Systemic partnerships, such as a jointly operated project with the Casey Family Program, which leverage state money requiring 100 percent cash match. Through their partnership with the Probation Department, the Council receives referrals electronically through shared databases, and provides training to youth in Boot Camps.
- The CA Department of Education is funding a Unified School District position to work as a full-time liaison to the WIA system, deepening the connection between education and the Council.
- The Council offers two free technical assistance consultations to each provider.
- Training and collaboration workshops are conducted for providers on the 10 WIA elements.
- Providers are now required to attend five days of training. More than anything else, this brings together the system. Providers also attend monthly follow-up technical assistance sessions.

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The Details: Council members realized that it is only through effective partnerships and integration of services that they would be capable of tackling the overwhelming needs of their youth. For example, a major thrust of the Council is to enhance opportunities for youth through their partnership with School-to-Work, resulting in more relevant academic experiences.

The intentional overlapping of the Council and partnership members ensures that strong educational preparation for productive employment opportunities is a cornerstone to the Youth Council foundation.

The City of Los Angeles Youth Council suggests the following ideas for making the best use of resources:

- Invest in skilled staff and/or consultants to conduct goal development sessions.
- Members are each formally appointed by the mayor. Find the right person to expand membership.
- Use facilitators to reach understanding, develop the strategic plan, and create partnerships.
- Require collaboration for bidding service providers. Through collaboration, providers show they can provide all ten WIA elements.
- Require collaborative groups to use one centralized assessment organization.
- Establish subcommittees and task forces on which providers can serve.
- Involve Council members in oral review of bidders and service providers.
- Each member of the Council is personally contacted and asked questions about how they feel the Council can be improved.
- The Council Chair is always from the private sector.
- Develop strong vision and principles prior to the bidding process.

Where to Go for More information

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SNIPPET

One-Stop for Coordinating Youth Services and Involving Youth

Youth Council: Fresno County Youth Council

Element: Youth Leadership, Comprehensive Approach

Function: Coordinating Youth Services

Subject: One-Stops, Coordinating Youth Services

The Challenge: With the advent of Workforce Investment Act legislation, the Fresno County Workforce Investment Board recognized that there was a need for collaboration among youth services in order to implement youth programming under WIA. They also realized that youth needed to be engaged in leadership in a coordinated way throughout the large county. The challenge was to find effective ways to support these efforts.

The Practice and Evidence: The Fresno County Youth Council created the Youth Service Network (FCYSN) to address the need to collaborate and to also engage youth in decision making. The network acts as a One-Stop for youth and offers youth referrals to YCYSN members. The network's mission is to serve as a catalyst in a united effort to nurture the well being of all Fresno County youth through coordinated youth services that invite full community participation.

The FCYSN serves as a clearinghouse of information for youth, service providers, and community members in Fresno County. FCYSN maintains a resource library and a quarterly newsletter as well as an email listserve to keep youth agencies connected. The network also created opportunities for youth organizations to partner and share best practices.

In addition, the network created a youth commission and advisory board to engage youth at the decision making table. The commission provides an opportunity for youth to develop leadership skills and provide an active youth voice to the county's decision makers.

The community benefits from the youth commission by the development of young leaders who are able to communicate needs effectively, engage decision makers, and create further opportunities for youth to be heard in order to serve their communities.

The Details: Established in 2002, the FCYSN was created by the Fresno County WIB, which funds 80 percent of the network. The James Irvine Foundation funds the remaining 20 percent. The network serves both as a youth service clearinghouse and a central coordinator for the youth commission. It is advised by a youth-adult partnership board, with 50 percent youth members and 50 percent adults.

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The FCYSN serves as a One-Stop shop for youth by coordinating youth services. The network maintains a youth-friendly website as well as a large resource library open to all youth.

The network connects youth providers in the county by producing a newsletter and email listserv and regularly distributing best practices and emerging youth issues. Youth benefit from having a central point to access youth services and providers benefit from joint marketing and outreach as well as resource sharing.

The youth commissions cover the entire county and are supervised by college-aged youth assistants. The commissions create a direct link of adult decision makers to youth voice as well as provide an outlet for providers to outreach to the youth community.

Where to Go from More Information

Fresno County Youth Council

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SNIPPET

Coordinating Regional Youth Services in Rural Communities

Youth Council: Humboldt County Youth Council

Element: Comprehensive Approach

Function: Coordinating Youth Services

Subject: Coordinating Youth Services

The Challenge: It is the mission of the Humboldt County Youth Council to “provide the youth of the County a coordinated system that ensures opportunities to become productive, contributing, and socially responsible adults.” This aspiration produced an invigorated and focused Youth Council accepting the challenge of developing a five-region system for the delivery of youth services, assuring services are distributed and available throughout their large rural county.

Most Youth Program Operators (YPOs) are based on-site at widely located regional high school districts, but meeting as a group is difficult, due to long driving times (up to 4 hours) and some scheduling coordination issues. Also, reaching youth who live far out in very rural communities, some without phones or electricity, remains a consistent challenge.

The Practice and Evidence: The Humboldt County 5-region system distributes youth services deep into their rural communities, so that they are now serving more youth and connecting them positively into their own community network. Their YPOs have made a united commitment to offer services in ways that “make sense” for their particular community’s youth. YPOs now meet consistently on a monthly basis, increasing the opportunities to network and share resources.

YPOs have developed alliances with local community resources and employers, strengthening each individual program’s ability to address complex issues. Many community relationships are based on connecting or providing supportive services (including shelter, clothing, and crisis- and medical-services referrals) needed by some participating youth. YPOs have also expanded the scope of work experience activities available for youth by increasing participation with private sector employers in their respective regions.

The individual needs of youth are a main focal point for all regions. Both in-school and out-of-school YPO staff focus on youth gaining independent living skills, and often serve as their personal advocates.

The Details: Some highlights of YPO linkages with other programs/agencies that work with youth include the following collaborations:

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- The Eureka Region collaborates with local Independent Living Skills (ILS), Transition Partnership Program (TPP) and WorkAbility, over 100 student clubs, probation, campus programs (such as the homeless project and the family resource center), and pre-collegiate programs (such as College Knowledge, Upward Bound, and Talent Search).
- The Eel River Valley Region partners with foster youth; the City of Fortuna; individual businesses; Redwood Community Action Agency (RCAA) housing; ILS; the Humboldt Regional Occupational Program (HROP); TPP and WorkAbility; probation; a medical van; Catholic Charities; anger management programs; private drug, alcohol, and mental health counselors; and College of the Redwoods (CR).
- The Eastern Humboldt Region works closely with California Indian Manpower Consortium, probation, Dream Quest, HROP, and TPP.
- The Northern Humboldt Region meets with Homeless Project staff, attends Safe Schools meetings with probation, and develops and presents joint workshops with the foster care program.
- The Southern Humboldt Region collaborates with Nick's Interns, TPP, Workability, probation, public health, Child Welfare Services, and the Garberville Teen Center.

What's Next for this YCidea? The Youth Council and staff conducted an in-depth analysis of the 5-region Humboldt County Youth Program that was started 3 years ago. The analysis resulted in a decision to maintain the program structure with continuous improvement and training measures to be implemented in the next three-year cycle. All the YPO contractors applied to continue, and were awarded new contracts. The report gathered invaluable data and statements from young people, the analysis of which will be used for developing a strategic plan for an "All Youth-One System" in Humboldt County. The following recommendations have been accepted by the full WIB for implementation during 2005-2008:

1. Continue Current 5-Region Program Design

Ongoing development of this program design will continue to provide for a high number of quality program linkages and connections, with opportunities to leverage extending into the future. Access to a larger number and distribution of county youth is another intended outcome of this system.

2. Increase Youth Program Sophistication

The Youth Council will support the YPOs to move to the next level of sophistication for youth services with training, best practice sharing, and on-going technical assistance. The academic program for youth is very strong. There is also a recognized desire to continue enhancing connections to employment for youth. YPOs have requested specific training regarding how to motivate youth to find and keep jobs, and they have asked for technical assistance to move youth toward successful career paths.

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Where to Go for More Information

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Tool

Humboldt County Youth Program Analysis (June 2005)
available by contacting the Humboldt County Workforce Investment Board



SNIPPET

Promoting Policies to Support Coordinated Services

Youth Council: City of Richmond Youth Council

Element: Comprehensive Approach

Function: Promoting Policies to Sustain Effective Practices, Coordinating Youth Services

Subject: Coordinating Youth Services

The Challenge: The Youth Council members wanted to make sure that they were carrying out their mission in the most effective way possible. In order to do so, they needed a good way to communicate the goals and purpose of WIA and of their programs to their service providers.

The Practice and Evidence: After attending the YCi “Road Trip” Institute in January, 2002, the City of Richmond Youth Council decided to develop a policy statement that would center on coordinating youth services and give new direction and purpose to the work of the Council within the larger community.

The policy statement for coordinating youth services reads “The City of Richmond’s Workforce Investment Board’s Youth Council is committed to improving and promoting collaboration of the various youth-serving programs in our community. Our intent is to create a coordinated, universally accessible youth-serving system to assist in acquiring educational, life and employment skills with priority given to Richmond youth.”

Although the policy was developed specifically for services coordination, it more finely tuned the direction of the entire Youth Council. The Council is now driven to have an impact on policy throughout the community for a comprehensive youth serving system.

The Details: The core group that attended the Institute received permission from the Youth Council to become an ad-hoc committee with the purpose of developing the policy statement. The committee presented the completed statement to the full Council, followed by the WIB’s Executive Committee, for full approval. The ad-hoc committee became a subcommittee of the Council to focus on the issues involved in coordinating services and to take them back to the larger Council body.

Where to Go for More Information

City of Richmond Youth Council

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SNIPPET

Mapping and Marketing Resources for the Entire Community

Youth Council: Ventura County Youth Council

Element: Comprehensive Approach

Function: Coordinating Youth Services

Subject: Resource Mapping

The Challenge: The mission of the Ventura County Youth Council is “To form collaborative alliances with other dedicated youth-service agencies and youth advocates to more effectively disseminate and share information, as well as provide for and assist with opportunities that benefit our youth – our future.” Toward that end, they and their Workforce Investment Network had formed the Workforce Investment Network for Youth Program (WINetwork). They recognized a need to inform the community and potential collaborators of the program, to gather information about local youth serving agencies, and to recruit members to the network.

Practice and Evidence: The Council developed community outreach and marketing strategies for their WINetwork. The WINetwork began by sending letters and surveys to community youth advocates. They also conducted a series of town hall meetings and arranged for one of them to be televised on a local cable network. These efforts had three goals:

1. To introduce the community to the unified effort forming the Network.
2. To administer the Youth Services Survey to gather provider information.
3. To invite all youth advocates and survey respondents to participate as members of the Network.

After the initial outreach efforts, the WINetwork developed ways to create community awareness and market their Network. They developed a strong tag line for all their materials: “Advocates for an enlightened and mighty generation.” They established a color code so that the community would begin to identify the “look” as that of the Network. The Network promoted the concept that healthy and effective youth programs will eventually contribute to the success of adult programs. This message educated the community that good youth programs were the best investments that can be made for the entire county.

Through the Network, all youth services were marketed as a whole, thus creating a clear, unified message for youth seeking assistance.

The WINetwork was able to complete several projects as a result of its outreach and marketing practices. It published the Ventura County Youth Services Resource Directory, and held a Youth Summit during which the resource directory and its purpose were introduced. It also established monthly meetings for members, with benefits such as professional development workshops,

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monthly calendar discussions, technical assistance, and program education. (See the YCidea “Forming a Network for Youth Service Providers” beginning on page 43.) The Network also produced a full-color publication that outlines the youth services in the county, explains the scope of the Network, and invites participation. In addition, it published the second edition of the resource directory, “Jobs for Youth and More,” and held a countywide job fair where the directory was released.

After the initial collection of data through the survey, the WINetwork continued to solicit responses. They knew that more time was needed to gather all the information about youth services in the area and that the work would always be evolving. The members continued to develop new ways to engage additional stakeholders, including reaching more youth.

Where to Go for More Information

Ventura County Youth Council

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Tools

Tools are available from the Ventura County Youth Council
Youth Services Resource Directory I
Youth Services Resource Directory II
Youth Services Directory Survey
Youth Summit Flyer and Agenda



SNIPPET

Forming a Network for Youth Services Providers

Youth Council: Ventura County Youth Council

Element: Comprehensive Approach

Function: Coordinating Youth Services

Subject: Coordinating Youth Services, Staff Development

The Challenge: The mission of the Ventura County Youth Council is “To form collaborative alliances with other dedicated youth-service agencies and youth advocates to more effectively disseminate and share information, as well as provide for and assist with opportunities that benefit our youth – our future.” The Youth Council wanted to find ways to form alliances effectively.

The Practice and Evidence: In October 2000, the Ventura County Youth Council initiated an effort to build a comprehensive youth development system by creating the Workforce Investment Network for Youth (WINetwork for Youth). WINetwork for Youth is a collaborative effort of the WIB and the Youth Council, a unified effort to form an alliance of youth advocates. The Network was designed so that everyone working with youth would equally recognize its work and identify with it. All youth-serving organizations that completed a mapping survey were automatically included as members; therefore, the Network has developed into a system capable of serving all youth. The success of the Network has been strengthened by providing the following member benefits:

- an opportunity for youth service providers to network with fellow youth advocates regarding youth development efforts across the county;
- a structured forum to communicate and disseminate information;
- An opportunity to discuss community events and include them on a monthly calendar posted on the WIB website, (www.wib.ventura.org);
- workshops and technical assistance for staff development and capacity-building, especially important to non-profit organizations with limited funds;
- youth services marketed as a comprehensive system, rather than as specific programs. (See the YCidea “Mapping and Marketing Resources for the Entire Community” beginning on page 41.)

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The Details: Several strategies have helped make the Network a success:

- Although WINetwork is a project of the Youth Council, it was intentionally created as a separate identity. Network members feel ownership through regular opportunities to discuss and determine what is important to all youth.
- The Network holds monthly meetings to keep everyone connected, engaged, and informed, and creates incentives so that champions, individuals, and organizations will want to be involved.
- In designing the Network, the Council involved all key stakeholders in the community, giving them the opportunity to build a comprehensive system to leverage collaborations.

Where to Go for More information

Ventura County Youth Council

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Tools

The following tools are available through the Ventura County Youth Council:

Youth Services Resource Directory I
Youth Services Resource Directory II
Youth Services Directory Survey
Creating Choices Marketing Piece