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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**

Humboldt County Youth Council

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## **Tool**

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