



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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