



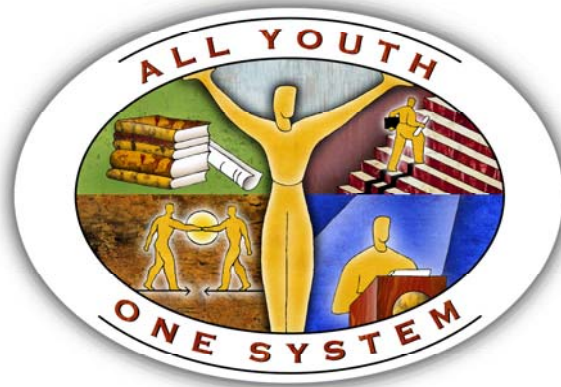
YCIDEAS

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

Youth Council Institute

Chapter Seven

Youth One-Stops



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Mini One-Stop Centers in Schools

Youth Council: Kings County Youth Council

Element: Comprehensive Approach, Academic Excellence, Career Preparation

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

Subject: Youth One-Stops, Coordinating Youth Services, Educational Options

The Challenge: When the Kings County Youth Council began its work, the members wanted to coordinate their services with other programs.

The Practice and Evidence: In addition to their county One-Stop, the Kings County Youth Council has supported the five mini-One-Stops centers, called Work Offices, located in area high schools. Each has one to two Career Advisors who are funded in part by WIA. Programs and services, such as independent living, Workability, Department of Rehabilitation, ROP, Tech Prep, School-to-Career, work experience, and service learning, are coordinated through the Work Offices. Additional programs such as those addressing domestic violence and mental health issues can be accessed through links made at these centers.

The Work Offices have been so successful with attracting targeted youth looking for work and services that the career centers have needed to expand to accommodate them. Through the Work Offices, the Youth Council has built a great foundation to support the goal of a comprehensive system for all youth. Many times the offices are so busy that it becomes necessary for the Career Advisors to hide to get their paperwork done.

The Details: The Mini One-Stops were originally created by the Kings Regional Occupational Program (ROP) office to house Career Advisors who handle ROP relations, WorkAbility, and Department of Rehabilitation TPP for individual high schools. When Kings County Office of Education received the WIA Youth grant, it was a natural step to serve youth at the One-Stops. Having all of the programs' youth outreach housed in one place also consolidates outside agencies' contacts for the high schools, eliminating interruptions to school day.

The offices are provided by the individual schools with the equipment split between the school and WIA. The current attendance and information system is available in all of the Work Offices, providing the Career Advisors with access to student grades, schedules, and contact information. The Career Advisors attend high school staff meetings as an integral part of their team.

Services are blended. Becky Hudson, staff to the Youth Council, says, "Our Career Advisers that are housed at the high schools do it all. They are counselors, job developers, eligibility intakers, recruiters. They also transport their participants to and from life skills workshops and if need be

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to job interviews etc. We truly are a Mini One-Stop at each Kings County High School. Our Career Advisors are awesome!”

The items that follow show the results of the Council’s efforts to establish mini One-Stop Centers in schools. The Council anticipates ongoing improvements, resulting in additional outcomes:

- The Council now requires that all youth served are connected to programs that support their career goal.
- Each Work Office provides a Job Club program, which is a requirement before obtaining a subsidized work experience.
- The Work Offices arrange 150 work-experience hours per young person during the school year and 120-192 hours during the summer program.
- Career Advisors work with students to collect legal documentation such as birth certificates, picture IDs, and social security cards to pave the way for eligibility into WIA or work.
- For youth who legally cannot receive services, such as illegal aliens, the Work Offices make connections for them to organizations that can help.

Breakthrough Moment: The Youth Council knew the mini-centers were working when they heard stories of young people receiving the help they needed. One young man who wanted to work with his hands but didn’t want to go to college was hired as a plumber’s helper following his successful work-experience with a plumbing firm. WIA funding paid for the clothing and tools required for the job. Work Offices also helped six students who moved from home to home but who had not declared themselves homeless to obtain more stable living situations. They were able to help one young woman to get an apartment.

Where to Go for More Information

Kings County Youth Council

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Tools

Available by contacting the Kings County Youth Council:
Programs Descriptions Brochure



Partnership-Run Youth Opportunity Centers are Youth Friendly

Youth Council: Riverside County Council for Youth Development

Element: Comprehensive Approach, Career Preparation, Youth Development and Support, Academic Excellence

Function: Coordinating Youth Services

Subject: Youth One-Stops, Coordinating Youth Services

The Challenge: When the Riverside County Council for Youth Development (CYD) received WIA funding in July 2000, the legislation emphasized providing comprehensive services to youth within a single system. Riverside staff felt that young people needed less intimidating, more hands-on services than would be available at their adult One-Stops. They also realized that no single organization would be able to deliver all of the ten required program elements, and that the solution lay in community partnerships. The goal was to make sure to meet the employment and education needs of all Riverside County youth, including those not funded under WIA.

The Practice and the Evidence: In 2000 the Riverside County Council for Youth Development established seven partnership-operated Youth Opportunity Centers (YOCs) across the county. The Centers provide tutoring, assistance with keeping youth in school, GED preparation, leadership development and civic responsibility, work-readiness skills, paid work experience, and internships. The YOCs also offer support services such as mental health counseling, drug or substance abuse counseling, mental health support, and occupational skills training. The form this training takes is created by each partnership, and each Center operates differently. For example, one concentrates on technology, offering sound production, graphic design, and computer facilities. Another focuses on the construction trades, with youth building guitars, cabinets, and grandfather clocks. Youth who move can transfer to that city's YOC. Once youth have completed these programs, job placement and access to post-secondary education are the primary activities of the Riverside Youth Opportunity Centers. The Centers serve approximately 1200 youth a year, and met or exceeded WIA performance outcomes during the last program year.

The Details: The CYD put out an RFP that stipulated their requirements for each partnership contract. There had to be a designated lead agency and a minimum of four partners (including a local school district, a business partner, and a community-based organization). This structure was chosen in order to ensure that comprehensive services were provided, and to leverage resources as effectively as possible. "For example," explains Felicia Miller, Youth Programs Manager, "instead of having the YMCA run one of Youth Opportunity Centers and try and do all ten program elements, in our model the YMCA would be the lead agency. They might provide leadership development, which they're very good at, but they would partner with other

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community organizations to do the academic skills, work preparation, and other elements. That way we're leveraging resources as well as expertise."

It took the better part of a year to get all seven centers up and running. The CYD drew on a significant sum of Job Training Partnership Act money as well as their first allocation of WIA money. Each partnership had a Youth Advisory group that advised on layout and the design in order to make the Centers highly youth-friendly, another requirement in the RFP. Each has its own flavor; one has a dance floor, another a pool table; each has a resource area, workshop space, and a place with comfortable couches, bright colors, sound systems, television, and Play Station games. "And young people themselves were part of designing them," emphasizes Tiki White, Youth Council Coordinator.

The time pressure brought political pressure, and White advises against trying to open seven facilities at once. She also recommends a hard look at the experience and track record of the agencies being brought in to run the YOCs. "Some organizations had highly skilled, talented staff who knew how to develop great partnerships, who understood youth development, and who could really implement the vision. Other lead agencies didn't have that skill level and ended up trying to do everything themselves. And that was not successful even though we provide lot of technical assistance," Miller explains. Two-year contracts expired on July 1, 2004, at which point the less effective partnerships were replaced.

Success depends on strong community partnerships and commitment, the ability to leverage resources, and the capacity to raise additional money. "You cannot count on one funding stream," says White. WIA funding has since been cut by 50 percent, leaving it unable to support the YOCs nearly so well as in the past. However, partnerships had been informed from the beginning that they would need to seek out other sources of income beyond the WIA seed money. Each is now being called upon to do so to a greater degree, whether in the form of additional cash from grants or more resources leveraged from the community.

Breakthrough Moment: It took a good year and a half to do all of the improvements, to get young people involved, to train staff on all the regulations, to get all the partnerships in place, and to start the programs. It was then, as White and Miller visited Centers filled with busy young people and attended recognition ceremonies for youth who had completed the program or otherwise excelled, that they realized that the YOCs were achieving their goal.

What's Next for the YCidea? Each Youth Opportunity Center must be certified to continue to receive funding from the Youth Council, which is now implementing a continuous quality improvement system. The evaluations are conducted by an independent group of private-sector businesses invited onto the Youth Council by the WIB. Quantitative measures were already in place, but "this is really about quality," says White. "We want to make sure our Youth Centers are run in the best way, at the highest quality because our young people deserve that."

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Where to Go for More Information

Riverside County Council for Youth Development

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Using High Schools and One-Stops to Create Education and Workforce Partnerships

Youth Service Provider: Santa Barbara County Education Office

Youth Council: Santa Barbara County Youth Council

Element: Comprehensive Approach, Academic Excellence, Career Preparation

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

Subject: Youth One-Stops, Comprehensive Approach, Educational Options

The Challenge: Several barriers prevented students from accessing One-Stops in rural Santa Barbara County. In addition to the challenge of transportation, the offices were only open during school hours.

The Practice and the Evidence: The opportunity presented by this challenge was to create coordinated youth services by linking high school career centers and the county's One-Stops to give youth access to a wider range of career development services.

Recognizing that the county does an excellent job of keeping its 20,000 high-school-age youth in school, and that all the high schools have career centers (or the makings of one), the Santa Barbara County Office of Education and One-Stops worked together to address this issue. They created satellite youth One-Stops at the high school career centers. Their partnership solved the problems of access and also enabled the community to forge ahead in its goal of building a countywide Comprehensive Youth-Serving System.

The plan has worked. High school career centers have coordinated services with the county's two off-campus One-Stops, using the YCi Elements framework, in the form of a poster, to guide their service strategies. The problem of youth access to One-Stops has been solved by bringing the One-Stops to where youth are - their schools. According to reports to the Santa Barbara Workforce Investment Board, over 5000 student visits to the high school career center One-Stops take place each month.

Additional benefits include increased communication and sharing of resources, such as online job postings and all kinds of career education materials. "The YCi Elements of a Comprehensive Local Youth-Serving System poster and related written materials really helped by giving people an understanding that collaboration is critical. It broke down the barriers between services," says Program Assistant Tom Spadoro.

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The Details: The Santa Barbara County Education Office was one of 42 agencies to receive a \$100,000 grant from the California Department Education (July 2001-2002). They turned to the YCI Elements framework, which visualizes the way education is related to all other aspects of building the system, in order to raise awareness of the “All Youth-One System” concept. The objective was to create partnerships that would connect youth to the One-Stop system. The County Education Office used grant monies to make posters. They distributed them as part of formal trainings to each comprehensive high school in the county and with program networks (School-to-Career, Workforce Investment Act recipients, Partners in Education, etc.), as well as informally in meetings with schools and community partners. Smaller prints of the poster were also handed out to people staffing all the Santa Barbara networks - youth capacity, youth centers, training centers - and were put in conference packets for their Region 8 Youth Summits attended by upwards of 100 youth service providers. Says Spadaro, “These images promote not only an understanding of services but a view of how they related to each other.” Adds Art Fisher, Director of Career Education Programs for the Santa Barbara County Education Office, “It shows shared ownership of the mission of helping youth.” The Career Education Office has also promoted the Daisy Model Approach to service delivery that they first heard about through a YCi training that goes hand in hand with the YCi Elements framework.

“Schools are the largest youth-service providers in the country,” Fisher points out. “If schools see themselves - and many do - as brokers of all kinds of coordinated youth services to meet youth development needs in addition to providing academic training, it would be fantastic.” School staff are trained in helping students with choosing colleges, applying for scholarships, identifying career paths, and getting jobs. Already accessible to students and geared to provide workforce development services, the high school campus career centers were the perfect place to establish satellite One-Stops. Fisher and his staff approached the schools with this idea, proposing that career center staff come to see themselves as brokers of services, including the youth-service programs available through One-Stops. This effort also served the Youth Council’s function of coordinating youth services, and built upon their vision of a youth-serving system that connects academic excellence, youth development and support, and career preparation through a comprehensive approach.

Breakthrough Moment: The concept of coordinating youth services “has helped promote the collaboration necessary to achieve positive program outcomes,” Spadaro reports. The partnership between the high school career center staff and local One-Stops through a common approach and language depicted by the Elements of Building a Comprehensive Local Youth-Serving System posters created an environment where staff are better informed and communicate more effectively. As a result, new partnerships, supported by grant programs that require such collaboration, have emerged.

What’s Next for this YCidea? The Santa Barbara County Education Office plans to continue to use the YCi Elements of Building a Comprehensive Local Youth-Serving System framework to promote future collaboration and to sustain career education systems in times of limited funding.

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They plan to coordinate with the schools on future grant proposals, and hold collaborative meetings during the year.

Where to Go for More Information

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