



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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