

Youth Council Regional Forums

Summer 2005
Youth Council Institute



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Introduction

In June, July, and August, 2005, the Youth Council Institute (YCi) sponsored a series of **Regional YCi Forums** across the state to discuss state and federal direction and legislation affecting workforce programs for youth. Participants discussed their needs and strategies towards continuing to build comprehensive youth-serving systems in the current changing environment. Among the topics addressed were

- DOL's New Strategic Vision for Youth
- WIA Reauthorization and DOL's Common Measures
- California's Strategic Two-year Plan
- YCi Impact Report

After receiving an overview of each of the above elements (see PowerPoint overview, Attachment C.) Participants discussed the impacts and challenges of these shifts in workforce policy in both small and large groups, facilitated and recorded by New Ways/YCi staff. Participants shared implementation strategies to address some of the current or proposed changes and anticipated shifts in policy. In addition, specific attention was paid to discussing strategies for partnering across systems with a focus on the "neediest youth", especially youth in and emancipating from foster care.

Forums were hosted in six regional locations in California by local Youth Councils, and facilitated by the following YCi staff: Steve Trippe, Charlene Mouille, Chandra Larsen, and Brenda Gray. All 50 YCi team leaders were invited to attend and to send or bring with them some or all of the following representatives to one of the local forums: Youth Council representatives; representatives from partner organizations such as Department of Social Services, Education, or Juvenile Justice; local service providers; and key staff. The following YCi Forums were held throughout the state in June, July and August: Thursday, June 23rd in Visalia, CA; Tuesday, June 28th in Los Angeles, CA; Thursday, June 30th in Ukiah, CA; Thursday, July 14th in Sacramento, CA; Monday, July 18th in Irvine, CA; and Monday, August 8th in Ventura, CA.

In addition to YCi staff facilitators from New Ways to Work, representatives from the California Workforce Investment Board (CWIB) and the Employment Development Department's capacity building unit attended some of the Forums. Anna Chambers from the CWIB participated in the forums and shared information from the State Board and provided a statewide perspective.

Participants

Over 150 participants from across the state attended one or more of the regional forums. Thirty-one local Youth Councils participated (see participant lists - Attachment D), representing and inviting partners from some of the following cities: Anaheim, Auburn, Camarillo, Capitola, Carmichael, Carson, Colusa, Costa Mesa, Davis, El Centro, El Dorado Hills, Eureka, Fresno, Glendale, Guerneville, Hayward, Irvine, Los Angeles, La Habra, Long Beach, Madera, Marin, Napa, Newberry Park, Orange, Oxnard, Petaluma, Redlands, Rialto, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Francisco, San Rafael, Santa Ana, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa, Sebastopol, Simi Valley, Stockton, Sun Valley, Sunnyvale, Thousand Oaks, Tulare, Ukiah, Ventura, Visalia, West Sacramento, Westminster, and Woodland.

Host Your Own Forum

Participants expressed interest in hosting their own forums and to use the materials to stimulate conversation around their issues among their Youth Council and community members. In response, New Ways/YCi posted the documents, PowerPoint presentation, and other supportive materials from the Forums on the YCi website. The documents can be personalized and used to share this information with local YC members, colleagues and service providers. These documents are available at <http://www.nww.org/new/initiatives/yci/legforums.html>.



Youth Council Regional Forums Summary

This notes packet summarizes discussions from all six forums, arranged in the following six broad areas. Each includes an overall summary of the participant responses in the topic area.

- Preparation.** Participants discussed how they are planning and preparing for state and federal changes in legislative direction.

Of those who reported that planning and preparation had taken place, the most common responses included shifting services to a higher percentage of out-of-school youth, identifying new partners in alternative education, targeting hard to serve populations and conducting strategic planning activities with the Youth Council and WIB. However, many locals, particularly those in the smaller local areas reported that little or no planning had taken place – in fact in many cases the Youth Council members and staff were unaware of the potential implications of these policy shifts.

- Local Strategies.** Participants discussed the local strategies they are implementing or exploring to provide services as described in USDOL's New Vision, including the following topics: alternative education, high-growth industries and occupations, neediest youth, and improved performance.

The local representatives reported and shared a number of strategies in this area as related to the four pillars as described in the new vision for youth. In general, strategies focused on creating and promoting collaborations with new service partners and employers, leveraging resources beyond WIA and aligning work in the workforce system with education reform outcomes.

- Connecting to Other Systems and Serving Special Populations.** Locals discussed strategies that support connections to Child Welfare Systems/Foster Care Youth, juvenile justice, and other "at-risk" populations they are implementing or exploring.

Overall participants reported developing the strongest strategies around serving youth in, or emancipating from, foster care and the child welfare system. Participants from more urban communities reported that they were building strategies to engage and support youth offenders and youth in the juvenile justice system. In addition, participants from rural communities expressed interest in finding ways to support migrant youth. As previously discussed, many of the strategies for serving special populations often surrounded developing or enhancing programs to serve out-of-school youth, which often include, disproportionately, many "at-risk" populations.

- Challenges and Barriers.** Participants discussed challenges and barriers to implementation that local are experiencing or anticipate occurring as a result of the changes in legislative direction.

This area drew the most conversation at the forums, and centered on a few key themes. The first related to a lack of clarity and consistency in what was to be expected and what and when new rules and guidelines would apply to local programs and having adequate time and support (from the state) to prepare for these changes. The second area of concern was that increased targeting and new program prescriptions paired with diminishing dollars creates a no-win situation for program operators. Increased and longer term services to special populations is much more expensive, and in some cases the expected outcomes are unrealistic. The third area identified was a lack of consistent and clear direction from the state and federal government. After four years of promoting All Youth-One System, modeling the importance of youth issues through the State Youth Council and supporting local implementation through the technical assistance activities of YCi, the current lack of support and direction causes for uncertainty at the

