

*All Youth-One System: Connected
Conference 2005*

**Youth Council Orientation for Youth &
Youth Perspective Conference Activities**



**January 25-27, 2005
Garden Grove, California**

The Notes Packet

The following notes packet includes notes from the **Youth Council Orientation for Youth** and the **Youth Perspective Session and Closing Plenary**. Also included is an updated participants list and list of resources. For more information or to receive electronic copies of any of the workshop materials, email Chandra at clarsen@nww.org. For more information about YCi, go to www.nww.org/yqi or contact Chandra at (707) 824-4000.

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Youth Council Orientation for Youth

Workshop Summary

On January 25, 2005, New Ways to Work and the Youth Council Institute presented a **Youth Council Orientation for Youth** workshop for youth and young adults during a pre-conference session at the All Youth-One System Conference in Garden Grove, California. Workshop facilitators were Steve Trippe, President and Chandra Larsen, Project Associate from New Ways to Work.

The workshop was designed for current or potential youth and young adult member of local Youth Councils. A fun, interactive format provided support for youth in identifying and meeting goals for participation as leaders and decision-makers. The orientation covered the following topics:

- The skinny on local Youth Councils and WIA;
- Facilitation, conversation, and active participation techniques and skills;
- Acronyms and WIA lingo; and
- How to be an effective team player while working with adults and peers.

Participants in the workshop ranged in experience from serving on their Youth Council for 3+ years to “haven’t decided whether I want to join”. Youth joined from across California, from as far north as Sonoma County and Monterey, to as far south as Anaheim. Participants expressed enthusiasm about the workshop, and commented that they particularly liked the “Lingo Family Feud” game. The workshop ended with gathering recommendations from youth about what they need to support their involvement on Youth Councils.

Goals for Youth Councils

The workshop opened with an ice-breaker, in which participants interviewed each other and then introduced their partners to the group. Everyone reported out on a goal they have for their Youth Council:

- Get youth to work as one
- More youth involved
- Keep city safe and clean
- Involved in community
- Help at-risk youth
- More youth and parents to YC
- Youth informed about WIB
- Bridging gap between adults and youth
- More in touch with youth
- Parent of board of YC
- Increase youth participation
- Meet as many youth as possible
- Provide voice to youth

Workforce Investment Act

Steve Trippe gave a brief overview of the Workforce Investment Act and Youth Councils. Some primary concepts he reviewed included:

- Overarching themes for WIA youth programming:
- WIA Ten Program Elements
- Performance Measures

- Youth Eligibility
- Youth Council roles (whether their scope is regulatory, coordinating, or strategic).

Using a Quick Map, the group discussed coordinating youth services. Following this activity, Steve discussed the Elements of a Comprehensive Youth-Serving System and Functions of a Youth Council in Building the System. These charts can be found online at www.nww.org/toolchest.html.

Lingo Family Feud

Participants broke into two “families” to play “Lingo Family Feud”. Teams were asked to name what an acronym stood for and for extra points, to define the term itself. (Common acronyms and definitions of terms used on Youth Councils can be found in the YCi Guidebook’s Glossary of Terms, available online at www.nww.org/yqi.)

Tips for Youth from Youth

Chandra Larsen reviewed tips for youth from youth, created by Youth on Board (www.youthonboard.org). Participants were given a handout which shared young people’s ideas concerning the following tips:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ You belong on the youth council ▪ Find allies ▪ Ask questions ▪ Build a support base for yourself ▪ Get the word out about your leadership ▪ Know that you are not alone ▪ If you are feeling bored, take responsibility for making the work more interesting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If you don’t like how something is going-change it ▪ Don’t get discouraged ▪ Go to all meetings ▪ Join a committee and take on leadership ▪ Relax, have fun, and be yourself ▪ Appreciate adult allies |
|---|---|

Supporting You(th) on Youth Councils

The final activity, youth participants formed small groups and discussed the following questions:

- What would help you be successful on your youth council?
- What challenges do you experience currently in being fully engaged on your Youth Council?
- What are some suggestions for supporting your participation?

Each group reported out to the adults and youth during the YCi Network Luncheon. The following were the suggestions made by each group:

Group 1

What would help you be successful on your youth council?

- Recruit more youth (youth committee)
- Community involvement
- Partnerships with community organizations
- Sponsors for youth (mentors)

What challenges do you experience currently in being fully engaged on your Youth Council?

- Time management
- Attendance
- Understanding concepts

Group 2

What would help you be successful on your youth council?

- Know all youth council members
- Get our community and youth more involved

What challenges do you experience currently in being fully engaged on your Youth Council?

- Being lost in conversations at the meetings

What are some suggestions for supporting your participation?

- More seminars/meetings for young adults to learn more about the council and what is being planned
- Have a mentor to help speak your opinions/ideas

Group 3

What would help you be successful on your youth council?

- Business cards for youth
- Make sure youth are well-informed
- Have youth participate in target market research
- Support youth in time management challenges
- Create a mentor or buddy support program
- Communicate with youth
- Provide training programs
- Youth should think about their appearance and being respectable

Throughout the workshop, several other recommendations came up from youth participants:

- Referral is not the answer - youth often experience an endless run of referrals from one agency to another and don't have their issues addressed
- Youth don't know about programs available in their communities
- Need more youth feedback – not small minority
- Youth should be involved on their Youth Council RFP process
- Youth need a Youth Council binder: by-laws, acronyms, know your voting choices
- Buddies for new members
- Go into detail before voting about what the Youth Council discussing to vote on
- Encourage youth to ask questions

Youth Perspective Session

Workshop Summary

On January 26, 2005, Edward De Jesus from the Youth Development and Research Fund, and staff from New Ways to Work and the California Workforce Association, facilitated the **Youth Perspective Session**. During this workshop, youth participants explored the people, places, and services they feel connected to and discussed ways to get engaged wherever they feel disconnected. Comments and ideas shared during this session were presented during the closing plenary, held on January 27, 2005. Five youth participated on a panel moderated by Ed De Jesus, in which they shared their comments for supporting youth through community connections.

Participants explored three primary questions:

1. What's connected and working? (To prepare you for work and life)
2. What's disconnected/not working?
3. What do we (adults) need to do?

The primary ideas shared were captured in a PowerPoint show, which was presented during the closing plenary. See the [online presentation](#) which highlights the following points:

What's Connected and Working? (To prepare youth for work and life)

- **Staff who care & believe in us**
- **Giving youth real responsibility**
- **Listening to youth**
- **Being a member not a client**
- **Persistence & second chances**
- **Having high expectations for youth**

In addition,

- Entering the right door: youth pay attention to opportunities
- Someone who cares and believes in me – good mentor
- People will help those that want to help themselves
- Communication among programs and program staff
- Adults who believe in you – good spirit/helpful staff
- Being persistent in a fun way
- Support you if you demonstrate that you are willing and ready
- Good information and access to services
- Fun and easy to connect to
- Follow-up, follow-up, follow-up
- Internships
- College
- Youth who have willpower
- Adults and youth who are committed
- Youth and institutions who are willing to change
- Realistic goals
- Adults who listen to youth
- Second chances
- Don't give up on youth
- Give youth responsibility
- Change takes a lot of time/ commitment.
- Make youth part of the team/membership

What's disconnected/Not working?

- **Agency competition**
- **Labels/ Stereotyping**
- **Transportation/ Child Care**
- **Not connecting to education**
- **Low expectations**
- **Eligibility/ Program Criteria**

In addition:

- People don't understand
- Not connecting to education
- Not connected to employers
- Low expectations
- Bad counseling and advice
- Stereotyping
- Language and lingo/ hard to understand adults
- Agency competition
- Turning away youth because they don't meet the criteria
- Youth's Dad makes too much money
- Transportation – unsafe
- Locked out of services because of geographical boundaries
- Youth (parents) make too much money
- Rules and regulations that are obstacles to achieve
- No one to care for children(REN)
- Transportation to and from childcare
- “Poor”, “criminal” categories
- Labels
- Web sites for low-income folks without access
- Don't know what a youth council is, or where it is
- Schools are hesitant to support community programs because they are afraid they will lose students
- Doing paper work over and over for every agency

What do adults need to do?

- **Hire youth to do outreach**
- **Get more media coverage**
- **Find common ground among programs**
- **Get rid of excessive paperwork**
- **Communicate with each other**
- **Promote programs at school assemblies**

In addition:

- Good information, advertising, media
- Get programs to school: Assemblies and explain the programs
- Get to the kids who need help
- Better communication between programs and schools
- Connect through Youth Groups
- “Youth empower youth”
- EXPOS
- Promote success
- Educate the program staff: website for staff
- Business card exchange
- Get rid of the paperwork! Excessive paper work in unnecessary
- Do it once and that's it!
- Formal, consistent process for sharing info
- Find common ground across programs
- Get rid of competition
- Call youth positive names, labels

- Use our language – keep it simple, make it a youth service environment
- Hire youth to do outreach
- Work together to address barriers like childcare and transportation
- “Connection” van to drive youth where they need to go.

Next Steps & Resources

- During the closing plenary, youth participant Alex Reynoso volunteered to support a reconvening of youth between this year’s and next year’s conference.
- New Ways staff will review the budget for YCi and discuss with the network possibly supporting a youth convening to support youth involvement.
- See the updated youth and adult ally contact list attached to this notes packet to stay in touch.

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To download tools and worksheets from this and other workshops, go to:
<http://www.nww.org/previouscalls.html>

For more information about the California Youth Council Institute (YCi), go to:
www.nww.org/ycci

For more information about upcoming content calls and trainings, go to:
www.nww.org/networkcontentcalls.html

To download additional tools and materials, go to:
www.nww.org/toolschest.html

For a list of online resources and links, go to:
www.nww.org/resources/index.html

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