



Building a Comprehensive Youth Employment Delivery System:

Examples of Effective Practice

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CLASP

policy solutions that work for low-income people

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Introduction

The situation for young people in many of our nation's communities of high poverty and high youth distress is a tragic one. Exposed to a tremendous number of risks and negative environmental factors, their passage to adult success is often impeded. For a significant proportion of these youth, academic failure and detachment from school predominate the middle school years culminating in high dropout rates in high school. Without the academic skills and credentials and with few options in the labor force, so many of these youth spiral downward resulting in increasing involvement in gang or criminal activity, involvement with drugs, and early childbearing. This describes the landscape for youth in many of the high poverty urban communities across the country.

Across the nation, only about 7 in 10 young people graduate from high school on time. In many distressed communities, less than half of students who begin the 9th grade will graduate 4 years later.ⁱ For African American and Hispanic youth, the scenario is much the same. It is estimated that 8% of teens ages 16-19, or 1.4 million youth, are not working and not in school, with no education credential and few skills.ⁱⁱ There is no question that young people want to work judging from the millions of youth who sign up for employment programs in the summer, though many are turned away due to lack of sufficient resources. The question is whether the subset of youth who have dropped out of school and lack the skills to be viable in the labor market, can be better served if that summer job served as a portal to a range of education, training and support services that would prepare them for adult success as civically engaged community residents, responsible parents and skilled workers.

Many communities have shown a tremendous commitment to youth employment as evidenced by their quick response in implementing a high quality jobs program in the summer of 2009, extending service to older out of school youth. The return on that investment and effort, however, can be greatly multiplied if summer funding is used in tandem with other federal youth funds, discretionary funding, resources from other youth serving systems, and community resources to build a comprehensive youth employment support system for those youth in more vulnerable situations for which a summer job alone is simply not enough.

A comprehensive youth employment delivery system pulls together the resources and funding streams - public, private, and foundation - in a strategic way and draws on the strength of public systems and community providers to create supported pathways that provide youth with the education, skills, and access to good jobs and successful careers. Many communities have some good programs, effective youth practitioners, and well-intentioned efforts scattered throughout the city. The challenge is that when dealing with a situation at the scale and complexity of the youth problem seen in many low-income communities, the solution lies beyond a group of independently operated programs each doing its own thing for youth. If the landscape of education and labor market outcomes is to be substantially altered for youth who are disconnected or at high risk, all of a community's sectors, systems, and resources must come together in a more strategic way to form a youth employment service delivery system of considerable comprehension and scale.

Such a system must have a broad range of options, considerable depth in support services, and the nimbleness and flexibility to connect youth to the most appropriate set of services, including integrated education, skills training, and work experience leading to secondary and/or occupational credentials; postsecondary education and training opportunities;

applied skills such as teamwork, leadership, oral and written communication, and ethical responsibility. Several urban communities have worked for a number of years to develop such a cross-system approach to the youth challenge. Drawing from their experience, CLASP has identified some of the common elements of a successful youth employment services delivery system. They include:

- I. **A strong convening entity** to amass stakeholders, shape a community vision, maximize resource sharing, and hold systems accountable to that vision.
- II. **An effective administrative agent** to work in partnership with the education system, other youth systems, and community providers to assure that the vision of the convening entity is effectively implemented.
- III. **A well-trained case management arm** which is responsible for engaging youth by identifying and meeting needs in the areas of education, employment, basic skills, and wrap-around supports.
- IV. **Strong partnerships across systems that serve youth**, such as education, juvenile justice and child welfare systems, to share resources and provide additional support to very vulnerable youth.
- V. **High quality work experience and career exposure components** which provide hands-on exposure to the work place, instill appropriate work behaviors and ethics, and allow for exploration of various occupations and career options.

Methodology

CLASP was tasked with identifying and documenting effective practices in youth

employment service delivery from communities across the country, with particular focus on the function and effectiveness of the workforce investment system and its collaborative relationship with other systems that serve at-risk and disconnected youth. CLASP first defined the components of an effective youth service delivery system, which are discussed in detail throughout this report. CLASP then developed an assessment tool that identified communities where these effective practices exist. Once the communities were identified, CLASP conducted comprehensive site visits, telephone interviews and internet-based research to gather relevant information. The findings from these activities are presented in this section of the report. The profiles and examples presented in this report are based on visits and interviews with program administrators and providers in Baltimore, Boston, Hartford, Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia, Portland and San Diego.

I. Convening Entity

When we speak of a convening entity, we mean a strong and credible coordinating body that assembles the key stakeholders and focuses attention on a collective vision and approach to the development of a comprehensive and high quality youth delivery system. Creating and sustaining such a system is dependent on the strength and integrity of the convening process, which generates the community's strategy for youth employment and establishes many of the partnerships necessary for the system to function and be sustained. An effective convening process requires the buy-in from the community's elected officials, corporate leadership, youth serving-systems, and community providers. Moving a community-wide agenda requires that the Mayor or chief elected official, Workforce Investment Board and corporate leaders,

and school superintendents carry the message and signal to all involved that this agenda has priority. Without engagement of public agencies, the process would most likely not leverage sufficient agency buy-in to alter the way they do business. Coordinated efforts among just the public agencies miss the richness of the experience and resources that the larger community can bring to the table. Those representing respective agencies should be in positions that have the authority to make decisions on behalf of the organization. The leadership level of the person delegated to represent the agency or organizations sends an important message about how the agency has prioritized the effort.

One of the key outcomes of the convening process is the building of relationships across agencies to institutionalize programming. The only way to sustain progress when administrations and leadership change is to assure that the commitment to the efforts permeates beyond just the upper echelons of leadership. Thus, conscious efforts should be built into the process to bring along the broader community and those within the various systems, agencies, and organizations to be part of this shift in vision, and more importantly, shift in paradigms about how youth are served.

The role of the convening entity is to move the group forward in planning and implementing a comprehensive youth employment service delivery system and setting the stage in the community for collective action and mutual accountability. The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 mandated youth councils with the intention that they would play this role. However, there has been an uneven evolution of youth councils across the country as it relates to performing this function. Some have seized the opportunity to be more strategic in their efforts related to high risk youth; others have focused more narrowly on WIA oversight. It has been suggested that WIA Youth Councils can serve as “the architect of a comprehensive youth service delivery system,

bringing together the multiple and fragmented funding streams and agencies that currently deliver some piece of the whole”ⁱⁱⁱ. It is important that the leaders from education (secondary and postsecondary), workforce, child welfare, justice, community and faith-based sector, and business and industry be assembled to craft a sustained approach to the successful re-engagement of youth and structuring of pathways to put them on track for labor market success.

Whether this function is vested in a youth council or some other appropriately constituted entity, the important functions are to:

- ***Serve as the neutral table***
Provide a space where leadership from different agencies and sectors, each with their own cultures and priorities, come together to forge a common vision and action agenda around youth.
- ***Help to shape a collective vision***
All stakeholders should identify their niche and how they can contribute to moving the vision.
- ***Catalyze changes in the way systems and agencies provide services***
Play a strong role in creating comprehensive and coordinated strategic partnerships across sectors that allow for alignment in resources, policies and practice.
- ***Assure collective accountability***
Assemble data from various systems to set priorities, goals, and benchmarks that are anchored in solid data analysis and an understanding of the need for multi-pronged interventions.

- ***Leverage and maximize resources***
Use all resources – local and community based resources, state and federal resources, private funding, and discretionary and competitive funding opportunities – to maximally benefit youth.
- ***Work with all involved to chart an agenda for action***
The focus should be the multiple moving parts of a system, not singular program initiatives.
- ***Sustain the energy and momentum***
Changing the education and labor market outcomes for youth is not an overnight process, so it's imperative to find creative ways to keep the community engaged in the long-term goal.
- ***Mark progress and celebrate accomplishments***
Identify short-run activities and opportunities that are in keeping with the vision, benchmark progress, and celebrate interim accomplishments, all while keeping attention focused on reaching the ultimate goals.

EXAMPLES OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICE:

Convening Entity

San Diego

Convening Entity: The San Diego School-to-Career Youth Council reports to the Workforce Investment Board and is the primary policy body for youth issues under the Workforce Investment Act. The Youth Council is staffed by San Diego Workforce Partnership.

HIGHLIGHTING EFFECTIVE PRACTICE: *Convening Entity*

Philadelphia Council for College and Career Success

Philadelphia's primary convening and strategy body that governs the approach and vision for youth is its youth council, newly renamed the Philadelphia Council for College and Career Success. The council for College and Career Success, staffed and supported by the Philadelphia Youth Network, has been working to shape a collective vision that makes clear its focus on achieving larger educational goals for means of reaching the workforce development needs of the city¹.

Philadelphia's Mayor Nutter committed to two bold educational goals (reducing the high school dropout rate and doubling the baccalaureate attainment rate) and designated the council as its primary vehicle through which his education goals will be pursued and accomplished. The council is now actively engaged in a variety of strategies designed to build cross-sector approaches that address the needs of youth and young adults, and is also developing, leveraging and aligning resources from diverse funding streams to support them.

Under the leadership and vision of the Youth Council, WorkReady Philadelphia was developed as an initiative to address a serious skills gap of high school students graduating with limited skills and created a coordinated system of existing and new programs for youth 14 – 21 years old that would provide academic enrichment, career and college preparation, and access to jobs in high growth fields.

Also, the council made a bold decision to strengthen its focus on out-of-school youth and voted to allocate 50% of its funding towards out-of-school youth activities. This led to the creation of Project U-Turn - a citywide campaign to raise awareness of and develop strategies to address the City's dropout crisis and to enhance the career prospects of struggling and out-of-school youth by expanding the availability of high-quality education and training options.

Charge: To build and support a regional youth workforce system and to manage state and federal workforce development funds on behalf of vulnerable youth throughout San Diego County. The council's three main goals are to: provide quality training programs focusing on the most vulnerable youth; bridge the disconnection between the local workforce system and stakeholder groups and increase cross-system collaboration; and build and sustain a strong governing body and structure, which involves a youth engagement campaign, to improve system coordination^{iv}.

Role of Elected Official: The County Board of Supervisors has been a strong advocate for increased investments in workforce development, especially for youth transitioning out of the foster care system, and has supported the council's work in moving its agenda.

Membership: The council is a collaborative partnership consisting of members from the local workforce investment board, youth-serving agencies, secondary and postsecondary education, public housing, juvenile justice, business, parents and youth. The Chair of Youth Council brings a comprehensive understanding of the issues as she also sits on San Diego's Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council, is the Executive Director of the Children's Initiative, the Chair of the state Disproportion Minority Contact Commission, the Chair of the Governor's Afterschool Advisory Board for the state of California, and is a Workforce Investment Board member.

Activities and Accomplishments: In the last four years, leadership has revamped the council to include strategic members on the council that represented youth populations most in need in the area; out-of-school youth and youth involved in the juvenile justice and foster care system. With the right people at the table, the council was able to "change

the funding map" to target funding specifically to programs that serve those youth.

Baltimore

Convening Entity: Baltimore's primary strategy body for youth is the Baltimore City Workforce Investment Board's Youth Council, staffed by the Mayor's Office of Employment Development.

Charge: To build a comprehensive youth system that will promote the opportunities for youth to acquire the necessary life skills, education, work exposure and experiences to enable them to have productive careers and become responsible family members and citizens^v. The council focuses its programming on tying services to labor market needs and creating effective connections to local and regional employers; developing meaningful connections between academic and occupational learning; providing education relevant to identified high growth industries and on creating pathways to postsecondary educational opportunities^{vi}.

Role of Elected Official: Baltimore has had a history of Mayors who have made youth a high priority on their agenda. Mayor Sheila Dixon has provided continuous general fund support to continue the successful work of the Youth Opportunity Grant program after termination of federal funding. She promotes her YouthWorks summer jobs campaign 2009 with the theme that "summer jobs are everyone's business". She is asking everyone to become involved in order to identify enough job opportunities and allocate sufficient funds so that every Baltimore City youth who wants a summer job will have that opportunity^{vii}. The Mayor also is a strong advocate for extended day opportunities for young people, with particular emphasis on work and learning. She provided funding for the year-round internship

program, Afterschool Matters, and other extended day programs.

Membership: The Youth Council convenes 50 to 60 people from education, justice, social services, employers and community organizations. There are several subcommittees on the council around issues such as: dropout prevention, summer jobs, systems building, homelessness, and apprenticeships. The council recently elected a local businessperson as chair to explicitly connect activities and planning to private sector employment.

Activities and Accomplishments: The Youth Council sponsors an annual technical assistance and capacity building conference for educators, employers, case workers, profits and non-profits that provide services to youth and young adults. In addition, the council sponsored several youth practitioner seminars and summits that featured speakers to share effective practices for issues such as gang intervention and prevention and dropout prevention and alternative education options.

In addition, it was brought to the attention of the Youth Council that Baltimore has a contingent of homeless youth that were not being served. The council developed the Transitional Housing Committee and a \$750,000 Compassion Capital grant was received to implement a Baltimore Homeless Youth Initiative. The Initiative selected partners to build a 43 unit permanent housing facility with supportive services for homeless and unstably housed youth to be completed in summer 2010.

Boston

Convening Entity: The main governing body in Boston for youth service delivery is the WIA Youth Council which is held by the Boston Private Industry Council (PIC). A subcommittee or partner to the council is the Youth Transitions Task Force. The

Youth Transitions Task Force is focused on an overall goal of lowering the high school dropout rate and could be seen as the research body for youth development and service delivery in Boston. The WIA Youth Council advises the Youth Transitions Task Force through collaborative strategic planning and assessments on overall youth service delivery.

Charge: The Youth Transitions Task Force works to raise the visibility of the dropout crisis by conducting research, making policy recommendations, and piloting innovative changes in practice^{viii}.

Role of Elected Official: Mayor Thomas M. Menino has been a champion for improving education and youth workforce development in Boston. He convened the Youth Transitions Task Force in 2004 and charged it with lowering the high school dropout rate. The Mayor also strategically appointed the Youth Council Chair to also sit on the School Committee - fostering an important relationship that brings workforce development knowledge into educational decision making.

Membership: The council and Transitions Task Force have many of the same members. The Youth Transitions Task Force has a broad cross-section of organizations that includes the Boston Public Schools, community organizations, city departments and state agencies.

Activities and Accomplishments: The Task Force has been working hard to raise awareness of and develop solutions to the dropout crisis. The Task Force began an advocacy campaign, informing key decision makers and the public on the issue by releasing the publication *Too Big to Be Seen: The Invisible Dropout Crisis in Boston and America*. The Task Force also drafted and helped pass legislation that addresses dropout prevention and recovery and requires collaboration among key state agencies,

such as Public Health, Public Safety, Labor and Workforce Development and Education, and local school officials and community organizations^{ix}.

II. Effective Administrative Agent

Here, the term “Administrative Agent” means an organization or agency that: (1) has staff with leadership skills and capacity to work across systems, and with community entities, to implement the strategies identified in the collaborative planning process; (2) has effective management systems in place to assure fiscal and programmatic accountability; and (3) can work effectively with providers to assure the consistency and quality of the service delivery. A strong youth employment delivery system requires an effective “administrative agent” that has the responsibility for implementing and overseeing the plan established by the convening entity. Where this function resides and how it is structured will vary depending on the relative strength and management ability of the agencies and organizations in the community. In some communities, the administrative agent is the local workforce investment board (WIB) who directly contracts with providers to serve youth. In other communities, the WIB contracts with an organization that functions as an intermediary and acts as the administrative agent for overall youth employment service provision.

The administrative agent manages the quality of delivery – both administratively and programmatically. The process of outreaching to thousands of youth who are disconnected or in high-risk situations, re-engaging them, assessing their complex needs, assuring that the mix of services is sufficient to meet those needs, and helping them

navigate across systems and programs requires a well-defined management support structure.

Along with managing administrative and programmatic functions of delivering quality service to youth, an effective administrative agent must be aware of local economic and workforce conditions and take those factors into consideration in its overall planning. Preparing youth for jobs that do not exist in their own community or that do not lead to a career is neither helpful to youth nor to the local economy. Many communities have a large aging population; others have several high growth industries that require skilled workers. The administrative agent must assess the needs of the labor market and take the lead in developing strategic partnerships across the sectors, specifically business and education, to create pipelines for workers into jobs that are both in demand and that lead to careers.

An effective administrative agent is responsible for the following key functions:

- Ensure system has multiple points of entry for youth
- Make provisions for a sufficient range of services and service providers, provided year-round
- Craft articulated agreements to assure ease of referral and engagement are in place
- Manage contractual relationships, monitoring programs for both quality and fiscal accountability
- Establish and maintain a process and system for tracking the youth’s progress through multiple systems and programs

- Establish a process for evaluating the performance of service providers
- Clarify overall goals and outcomes for youth and develop strategic plans around those goals
- Assess needs of the local labor market and identify the regions high-demand, high-growth industries
- Engage appropriate partners such as education and business to determine a strategy to meet those needs
- Develop service models that can be effectively implemented through the youth service delivery system

EXAMPLES OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICE:

Effective Administrative Agent

San Diego

Administrative Agent: The San Diego Workforce Partnership (Workforce Partnership) is a nonprofit public benefit corporation that was created from a joint powers agreement between the City and the County of San Diego to oversee programs that help at-risk youth plan and achieve their educational goals and secure employment through a network of community-based youth-service providers^x.

Relationship to Coordinating Entity:

Workforce Partnership staffs and supports the San Diego Youth Council and works to implement the youth workforce system strategic plan developed and guided by the council. Workforce Partnership staff are assigned to a group of council members to ensure members have received the agenda,

encourage participation, address questions or concerns before the meeting so members are prepared, to remind them of meetings, and to follow up on action items.

Key Elements of Delivery System:

- Youth Navigators in the WIA One-stop Centers
- Contracts with a network of community providers for education and training services
- Formal structure for transitioning adjudicated youth to education and training
- Joint WIA/Independent living skills program
- Formal process for evaluating service provider performance
- Customer Information Services Reporting system used by all providers to track youth activities and outcomes

Services to Youth: Work readiness training, work preparation, employment opportunities, youth development services and independent living services such as identifying educational barriers, long-term mentoring, incentives to reinforce learning to encourage participation in activities and/or achievement of goals, individual service strategy with a youth-centered approach, follow-up services to assist youth sustaining a successful transition^{xi}.

Services to Providers: The Capacity Building Committee's (a sub-committee of the School-to-Career Youth Council) primary work is to develop a continuous improvement evaluation and technical assistance strategy for youth programs. The committee's focus is to identify and develop cross-system leveraging opportunities and the sharing of "effective practices" to promote youth career development and education attainment. The Capacity Building Committee also works to implement a "culture change" for youth service providers in order to increase the awareness and opportunities for youth workforce/career preparation programming via the

support of the Workforce Partnership. The Workforce Partnership provides technical assistance funding up to \$2000 that contractors can access for professional development and strategic planning activities^{xii}.

Philadelphia

Administrative Agent: Philadelphia Youth Network is the non-profit intermediary organization in the city of Philadelphia and is charged with increasing the capacity and resources that help educate, train and employ the city's youth^{xiii}. PYN acts as the fiscal agent for the council and administers the majority of funds it oversees.

Relationship to Coordinating Entity: PYN is contracted to provide staffing and coordination to the Philadelphia Council for College and Career Success and works to implement the youth workforce system strategic plan developed and guided by the council.

Key Elements of Delivery System:

- Contracts with a network of community providers for education and training services including contractors with providers to operate the City's five E3 Power centers
- A variety of program models, including private sector internships, service learning, subsidized employment in non-profit organizations and academic support, including college awareness exposure for summer and year-round career preparation
- Partnership with education to create nearly 3,000 new high-quality education opportunities for over-age and under-credited youth
- New system for reconnecting dropouts to educational options including a re-engagement center

- Focus on aligning and strengthening the career and occupational skills curricula for youth in juvenile placement
- Development of methodology to attach costs to the young person not to the activity to better blend funding
- In-house management of wage and stipend payment for providers
- Quarterly assessment of metrics that are set against programs outcomes for continual development of a standard of practice

Services to Youth: educational services to prepare youth for postsecondary education and employment, employment readiness and placement into subsidized or unsubsidized employment, occupational skills training with certificates in nurse aid training, multi-media production, customer retail skills training, among others, and life skills training^{xiv}.

Services to Providers: PYN's philosophy is that providers are their partners. PYN works collaboratively with providers to assess how they can best provide support to ensure positive outcomes for youth. PYN offers opportunities for professional development through trainings and through partnerships with other providers to share effective practices. As members of the Alternative Education Network, providers can also be a part of a larger out-of-school youth network where they come together to provide peer support to one another.

Baltimore

Administrative Agent: The Mayor's Office of Employment Development (MOED) serves as the grant administrator, convenes community organizations and businesses with a goal of creating a coordinated, comprehensive, and seamless service delivery system for youth.

HIGHLIGHTING EFFECTIVE PRACTICE: *Effective Administrative Agent*

Hartford's WIB – Capital Workforce Partners

Capital Workforce Partners (CWP) is an incorporated regional consortium that functions as the local workforce investment board for North Central Connecticut and coordinates comprehensive workforce development programming for youth provided through contracted private and public partners and service providers. CWP works to create a “workforce of the future” through the implementation of strategies and programming geared towards meeting the needs of youth, employers and the local economy for over 3,000 young people served in a given year through summer youth employment, year-round employment programming, WIA youth, Job Corps, and other programming.

CWP developed a comprehensive framework for competency attainment called the Career Competency System as the foundation for all youth programming and is a required model for all providers who are contracted through CWP. The Career Competency System is a “work and learn” tier level design approach to competency development. It was developed to help provide young people exposure to careers and career competencies, to design youth workforce development services that reflect the needs of regional growth industries, to document work readiness skills and collect data for outcomes analysis, and to be used as a model for quality and developmental service provision used by all providers¹.

The Youth Employment and Learning Program is a year-round set of services in four progressive tiers targeted to youth ages 14-19:

- Tier I: Project-based learning and career exploration;

- Tier II: Supported work environments and career exploration;
- Tier III: Enhanced employability skills training and employment (ages 16+); and
- Tier IV: *Career Connections* (aimed at youth who have completed the above tiers or can demonstrate appropriate skills at this level).

Capital Workforce Partners, Hartford Office of Youth Services and its partners are able to track progress for youth through Hartford Connects II - a web-based, program management tool for youth service organizations that captures data and reports information. It has a multiple entity data sharing mechanism which allows for better sharing, tracking and correlation of educational and youth development data¹.

CWP contracts with up to 25-30 youth-serving agencies to track outcomes to ensure that:

- Youth will gain basic skills in reading and math.¹
- Youth will gain Career Competencies in appropriate Tier Level.
- Youth will acquire knowledge of career interests, of various careers and related educational pathways. Ninety percent of youth will complete a portfolio that includes resume, personal development profile, personal learning and career plan, and competency-based learning plan.
- Youth will acquire knowledge of personal development assets and how external and internal factors affect both learning and working.
- Youth will remain in school and progress into the next Tier level of programming.

Altogether, CWP tracks those participants through a multi-year programming sequence that assures graduation from high school with a full set of career competencies and 21st century skill development necessary for the global economy.

Relationship to Coordinating Entity: The Mayor's Office of Employment Development staffs the Baltimore City Workforce Investment Board's Youth Council and implements the youth workforce system strategic plan. MOED, in partnership with the Youth Council, is responsible for Baltimore youth initiatives' oversight and direction.

Key Elements of Delivery System:

- Contracts with a network of community providers for education and training services
- Partnership with community colleges to provide career training in high growth industries
- Management structure and electronic tracking system to evaluate performance and to identify participants that require additional wrap around services^{xv}
- Career Navigator technology to provide follow-up services, resume assistance, career development workshops, and resources to youth
- Use of approved MD Department of Education online program called Novell Stars for alternative education programming
- Comprehensive youth development and dropout prevention programming supporting students in eight and ninth grade who are at-risk of academic failure
- Career Academy alternative education center providing GED preparation and intensive career exploration, skills training, and employment readiness

Services to Youth: YO! Baltimore that offers job readiness training, job shadowing, paid public/private sector internships, employer-based training, and occupational skills training and GED classes; YouthWorks Summer Employment Program; Try Out Employment internship program; a work program called Afterschool Matters that supports at-risk students afterschool and exposes and

trains youth in workplace career skills and provides employment during the school year and summer months; and an innovative, youth development and dropout prevention initiative called FUTURES Works that focuses on education, personal growth and teamwork. Another initiative, Operation Safe Kids (OSK), works in partnership with MOED to provide career development opportunities for court appointed youth.

Services to Providers: WIA Providers attend monthly meetings and are notified of upcoming conferences, workshops and opportunities that would provide training and educational opportunities to staff and participants.

III. Case Management

The youth population is not monolithic. The wide range of academic skills, personal experiences, support needs, and interests will require that youth be matched to the most appropriate program and set of services. The role of effective case management is to help youth navigate through a complex maze of programs, services, educational options to choose the set of services that best suits the youth's situation. It creates a personal, one-on-one relationship between the youth and a well-trained, caring adult that should continue throughout the youth's matriculation through the youth system.

One important function to be played by the administrative agent should be investing in the professional development and networking of those who function in the various systems as case managers or youth advocates to build their knowledge, skills, and abilities in working with youth, particularly those deemed high-risk. Another important function is that of assuring that there is sufficient access to a range of programs, services and supports and sufficient information provided to case

managers on the capacity of these programs to enable them to help youth make informed decisions about their service strategy.

Often referred to as the case managers, youth advocates, or youth navigators, these individuals function in the following ways:

- provide the adult support to youth in assessing their strengths, talents, barriers, and support needs
- formulate individualized plans based on that assessment, and facilitate their engagement in an appropriate set of activities
- provide the counseling and support to keep youth on track
- support the transition for youth who are engaged in the child welfare or justice system and connect them to the education, training, and community supports they will need
- assure that youth don't fall between the cracks of multiple systems and programs
- account for the ultimate attainment of education credentials and employment success

The function of case management can be accomplished in several different ways. Some communities opt for a case management function that is located in their youth intake centers or one-stop centers. There, a case manager meets with the young person to get a sense of their background, needs, and goals. Based on this assessment, the case manager directs the young person to a particular service provider, and also gives the provider notification of the young person's intent to participate in their specific program. The case manager may conduct timely follow-up to ensure that the young person and the program are a successful match, monitor progress, and work with the program and the youth to assure successful transition to the next step.

Other communities place the responsibility of case management with the service providers. Youth sign up for programs and services directly with the provider; they are not directed to a centralized intake center if they decide to sign up with a particular provider. A case manager there performs the necessary assessments of needs and goals, and then either provides the services or directs the young person to another service provider better able to meet their needs or goals. This case manager is then responsible for tracking a young person's progress in the program, and helping to ameliorate any barriers to full participation.

The most successful communities meld these two methods of case management to create a system that provides continuous support and smooth transitions until the youth is solidly anchored in successful labor market and postsecondary endeavors. Whether this function is embedded in the program offerings of service providers, or structured as an overarching system of support in youth one-stops or intake centers, research has repeatedly pointed to the existence of caring adult support as the key ingredient in achieving successful outcomes for youth.

EXAMPLES OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICE:

Case Management

Boston

Case Management Approach: Boston uses a model where case management is imbedded in the program offerings of direct service providers. Boston's RFP for youth program services is very explicit about the components of the case management system that must be in place including: joint development of service plans; identification of the assets of each participant, and plans to build

upon them; identification of the barriers faced by each participant, and steps initiated to overcome them; clearly-stated education, employment and career goals, with projected start and end dates for activities; identification of competencies and skill levels required for the participant's target occupation; supportive services needed; regular review and revision by both the service provider and the participant; and a minimum of 12 months of follow-up service after exit from the program.

Example of Effective Case Management:

Boston's Youth Options Unlimited (YOU) is a workforce development program that serves a court-involved youth population ages 14 – 24 years old. YOU focuses on providing intensive case management, development of individual service plans, referrals to other appropriate services, placement in educational options and connections to transitional jobs programs that lead to employment opportunities.

Transitional Supports for High Risk Youth:

YOU offers intensive pre-release intervention in detention facilities as well as intensive aftercare support^{xvi}. Case managers meet youth while in placement and collaborate with probation and parole officers in development of plans. Youth are assessed and create pre- and post-release assessments. Youth receive pre-release "day passes" to attend professional and life skills training or internships three to four days a week^{xvii}. Once released, case managers conduct several contacts per month either by phone or one-on-one to develop appropriate plans tailored to short or long-term goals around housing, mental health, child care, incarceration, court appearances, stipulations of supervision, education and employment. Case managers provide youth with interpersonal skills development, effective communication training, decision making workshops, youth development, re-entry/court

HIGHLIGHTING EFFECTIVE PRACTICE: *Case Management*

Hartford's Our Piece of the Pie

Our Piece of the Pie (OPP®) is a youth development organization in Hartford, Connecticut that helps youth ages 14 to 24 become successful adults. The two primary goals of the program are to complete college or receive a postsecondary vocational credential, and find long-term employment. The cornerstone of OPP® programs and services is its signature Pathways to Success approach. Pathways to Success is a youth development strategy designed to help youth access and attain education, employment and personal skills. Together, youth and their youth development specialists (YDS) create individualized plans which map a realistic path to reach their goals.

A crucial component to the Pathways to Success program is the role of its youth development specialist (YDS) – a guide to the services OPP® offers and a caring and consistent adult who advises and supports youth as they work to accomplish their goals. When a young person enters OPP®, they are matched with a YDS, beginning the trust-building process. The YDS assesses the young person's status and needs and works with them to determine a pathway to a long-term educational and/or employment outcome. Together, they build an individualized service plan broken down into practical steps to achieve larger goals, like graduating from high school or improving school attendance.

The YDS supports youth as they participate in educational, training or employment activities and helps them to navigate the systems and services he/she may be involved in. An average caseload for a YDS is between 60 to 70 youth, with conscious thought about balancing case loads of each YDS by assessing the level of need of each youth.

OPP® and the Pathways to Success approach stays with youth up until age 24. Should a young person enter OPP® at age 14, he/she could potentially have that caring and consistent adult with them for up to ten years. Because transitioning to adulthood is a critical time in a young person's life, maintaining that support and guidance beyond the period he/she enters into employment or postsecondary education is essential.

liaison service, support and guidance and reduction of barriers to employment^{xviii}.

Average Case Load: YOU case managers work on average with 45 to 50 active youth. Active status refers to youth who are in an education or employment placement or are actively working towards gaining education or identifying the appropriate educational placement.

San Diego

Case Management Approach: San Diego Workforce Partners, with leadership by the Youth Council, has developed a case management approach that is integrated in the partnerships created to serve targeted groups of at-risk youth, including foster and former foster youth transitioning to self-sufficiency and youth returning from juvenile facilities or those involved in the juvenile justice system.

Example of Effective Case Management:

The Youth Empowerment Services (YES) program at San Pasqual Academy (SPA) has developed an integrated approach to serving foster teens to help them achieve self-sufficiency. San Pasqual Academy (SPA) is a residential educational campus designed specifically for foster teens that live and learn at the academy as they prepare for college and/or a career path. Youth work with a case management team made up of YES Career Case Managers, Residential and County Social Workers, and Youth Advocates who work with each youth individually to set goals, review accomplishments, and provide guidance.

Transitional Supports for High Risk

Youth: The case management team works to connect youth to additional services offered at the academy which include independent living skills (ILS), work readiness training, paid internships (on

and off campus), after school activities, and comprehensive health services^{xix}.

Average Case Load: Yes Career Case Managers have an average caseload of 45 youth. The case management team meets on a regular basis and works together toward making a seamless array of services for the youth on campus. The purpose is to avoid duplication of services and ensure that every youth has personal, employment and educational goals set and is working toward accomplishing them. The approach of the case management team was developed by the collaborative partner approach to managing the campus.

New York

Case Management Approach: New York uses a model where case management is imbedded in many of the program offerings of contracted vendors of the Department of Youth and Community Development (the youth workforce system in NYC) as well as in the contracts by the Office of Multiple Pathways to Graduation (OMPG) within the Department of Education.

Example of Effective Case Management:

West Brooklyn Community High School (WBCHS), a transfer school under OMPG, is a full-time high school for students who are far from promoting on grade level that offers a personalized learning environment, rigorous academic standards, a student-centered pedagogy, and a focus on connections to college^{xx}. The key component at West Brooklyn is the role of the advocate counselor that provides intensive support to help youth meet instructional and developmental goals by employing a highly effective youth development model.

Transitional Supports for High Risk Youth:

WBCHS advocate counselors help students achieve their academic goals by creating plans that lead them

from completion of a high school diploma to entering and succeeding in postsecondary education^{xxi}. Advocate counselors provide intense services such as attendance outreach, individual counseling, group advisory, conflict mediation, goal setting, linkages to Learning to Work internships, postsecondary planning, individualized programming and referrals to outside services (mental health counseling, housing, medical, etc).

Average Case Load: Advocate counselors have a caseload of 25 students and meet with youth as well as with teachers, other faculty and family on a regular basis to ensure all supporting partners in the students life are engaged.

IV. Effective Collaboration Across Systems

Effective collaboration is a vehicle that relies on mutual benefit, concerted action, and shared risks and accountability to produce meaningful results and rewards. Systems ranging from education to child welfare, workforce and juvenile justice touch the lives of youth. In communities of high youth distress, many youth have multiple contacts with one or more of the systems. Therefore, it is imperative for community and agency leadership, administrators and front-line staff to broker relationships – both programmatic and systemic in nature - to support young people in meeting their individual goals as well as the community in advancing youth outcomes.

In the context of improving services for youth, the use of collaboration as a vehicle to move across systems is essential. Beyond partnership, collaboration must address turf, share resources, and acquire trust. Success is rooted in a communities' ability to navigate these terms and develop relationships that recognize the well-being of young people as the focal point of coming together.

Key benefits to cross-systems collaboration aimed at advancing outcomes for struggling and disconnected students include:

- **Improved Access and Services** - effective systems collaboration allows communities to appropriately fill gaps in service and provide more comprehensive programming and interventions to address varying youth issues.
- **Leveraging Public and Private Resources** - cross-system collaboration result in more effective uses of public resources and increase a community's ability to attract and leverage private funding.
- **Cultivating the field** - cross-system initiatives support the development of policies and practices that improves service delivery quality, allow for sharing valuable information on best practices and promising strategies.^{xxii}

PARTNERING WITH EDUCATION

A strong partnership with secondary and postsecondary education institutions is essential to establishing the multiplicity of education options needed to re-engage dropouts and to provide alternatives for overage and under-credit in-school students. These youth need a solid education leading to credential and a set of applied skills. Employers emphasize that beyond academic mastery, they are in need of individuals with skills in oral and written communication, teamwork, leadership, critical thinking ability, and a commitment to social and civic responsibility.^{xxiii}

Coupling the knowledge and expertise of the workforce system, the youth providers, and the education system can bring the pieces of the puzzle together in a way that provides youth with all the

skills they need to succeed. It can create learning environments more suited to the learning styles of young adults that still place them on the path to secondary and postsecondary credentials. The key is the coupling of the academics with the work experiences, support, and career exposure activities to provide youth the base of skills and knowledge necessary to successfully compete.

There are several examples in communities where workforce systems and educational systems which have created strong alliances to meet the education and training needs of youth, included those who might be classified as “disconnected.” While the models vary, there are several approaches and steps which are useful:

There are several examples in communities where workforce systems and educational systems which have created strong alliances to meet the education and training needs of youth, included those who might be classified as “disconnected.” While the models vary, there are several approaches and steps which are useful:

- Work together to identify struggling and disconnected youth for services
- Provide the rigorous educational grounding that is complemented with relevant work experiences
- Give students access to multiple options for educational completion
- Re-engage youth who have dropped out of school through using school-work models which allow them to work while also completing their educational credentials
- Create partnerships between high schools, work program, and community college to

create comprehensive concurrent enrollment programs which also provide work experience

- Utilize competency-based measures to document mastery of skills required for graduation and labor market success

EXAMPLES OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICE:

Partnering with Education

New York

Partnering entities: Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) which is the youth workforce system in NYC, the Office of Multiple Pathways to Graduation (OMPG) within the Department of Education and a strong network of community-based organizations.

Relationship of partners: The Commissioner of DYCD works to move the message of education though incorporating educational outcomes as part of all DYCD contracts. In addition to DYCD services, OMPG serves over-age and under-credited high school students through schools and programs designed to incorporate education components, youth development support as well as career and college preparation. Community-based providers are savvy in creating innovative programs that incorporate workforce development and education components in programs thereby leveraging resources.

Services to youth: DYCD contracted programs include summer youth employment program, out-of-school youth program, and young adult internship program that set aside a certain number of hours for education as well as job readiness training, career options, postsecondary transition services, internship

and employment preparation, employment and support services. OMPG contracted programs include Young Adult Borough Centers, Blended GED programs, and Learning to Work (LTW).

Example of model program: Young Adult Borough Centers (YABCs) are evening academic programs in supportive learning environments with an instructional model that allows students to concentrate only on the credit portfolio they need for graduation through a non-traditional block schedule. YABCs are operated through a collaborative partnership between the DOE and a community-based organization which provides services to students, such as youth development support, career and college counseling, and assistance with job placement. YABCs incorporate the Learning to Work model in its program that assists students in overcoming some of the obstacles that impede their progress toward a high school diploma and lead them toward rewarding postsecondary employment and educational experiences. Learning To Work offers academic support, career and education exploration, work preparation, skills development, and internships^{xxiv}.

Philadelphia

Partnering entities: Philadelphia Youth Network (PYN) - intermediary organization for youth workforce development, Project U-Turn – a campaign to raise awareness of dropout crisis in Philadelphia, School District of Philadelphia and community-based providers

Relationship of Partners: Project U-Turn has brought together more than 60 partners and stakeholders to work collaboratively on the dropout crisis.^{xxv} Through these efforts, Project U-Turn has helped to create nearly 3,000 new high-quality education opportunities for over-age and under-credited youth; design and implement a new system

HIGHLIGHTING EFFECTIVE PRACTICE *Partnering with Education*

Portland's Workforce Development and Education Partnership

Work Systems, Inc. (WSI) - the workforce development agency in Portland, Portland Public Schools (PPS) Education Options Program and a strong network of community-based organizations working to ensure a comprehensive education system for students, called the Coalition of Metro Areas Based Community Schools (C-MACS), have partnered together to leverage WIA dollars from WSI with the Education Options program to offer a range of programs for out-of-school youth or youth at-risk of dropping out. These are run both directly by PPS as well as through contracts with community-based providers. Education Options, in partnership with WSI, also offers the Summer Scholars program - a high school credit recovery and credit advancement program for students wanting to retrieve credit, improve a grade, or for advanced credit.

Through WSI and EOP contracts youth choices include school-within-school programs in high schools, night schools, alternative offerings such as specialized programs targeting primarily at-risk youth, out-of-school youth, homeless students, teen parents, teens with drug and alcohol problems, and teens returning from the juvenile justice system. Portland also has Gateway to College – a Portland Community College Alternative Program that provides young people who have dropped out the opportunity to earn a high school diploma while earning community college credits towards an associate's degree.

An example of a model program is The Alliance HS @ Meek PreTech Program. This program is a PPS within district alternative education option that provides individualized academics with small classes and counseling and support programs to prepare students for postsecondary college or career. The program provides counseling groups to address special needs, technical training to prepare students for employment, personalized, individualized instruction, and dual credit options in academic and professional technical courses.

for reconnecting dropouts to educational options including a re-engagement center jointly staffed by the School District and the City Department of Human services; and develop and leverage more than \$50 million to support re-engagement strategies.^{xxvi} Project U-Turn works with the School District to support the establishment and support of high-quality educational options for all Philadelphia students and to promote related aspects of the School District's new strategic plan.

Services to youth: Educational pathways, such as accelerated schools, GED prep, bridge literacy programs; student support services; and Educational Options Programs, Virtual School, and young adult diploma programs.

Example of model program: Learning-to-Work model is an engagement and retention strategy to help remove barriers that prevent young people from completing their high school degree and to help develop work-based skills and postsecondary planning. This strategy is supported by partnerships between community-based organizations and the school to serve target populations of students by providing work exposure, job readiness training, tutoring, social service support and counseling, youth development activities, and subsidized or unsubsidized transitional employment.

PARTNERING WITH JUVENILE JUSTICE

Due to the large amount of youth entering and exiting the juvenile justice system, it is increasingly important to create partnerships that allow youth to reconnect to the economic and labor market mainstreams. Young offenders need the active engagement of communities and other sectors to make connections to systems and supports that provide pathways for reconnection.

The gains from a well-connected juvenile justice system to the workforce system are numerous. The existence of strong collaboration results not only in a decrease in youth offender recidivism but also a smaller economic burden on the cost of youth offenders. Although the political and cultural differences of these youth serving entities may present initial difficulties in creating partnerships, communities that have been successful at system-wide collaboration find that the rewards more than outweigh the challenges. The result is a smoother transition back into society for the young people they serve.

In the examples that are cited in this publication, the workforce system begins working with youth while they are still under the jurisdiction of the juvenile justice system or in pre-release from incarceration or a residential facility and they continue to work with and support youth on an on-going basis after release. In order to facilitate the transition, the workforce system should partner with all of the public entities involved in the young person's life; such as the parole or probation department, the court, the police department, the district attorney's office, the department of human services and the school district. The focus must be on a safe and healthy transition back into society and on continuing education and gaining workforce skills and employment.

A comprehensive re-entry model should include^{xxvii}:

- A focus on reintegration needs from the beginning of placement based on a single probation-driven plan
- A thorough assessment of the young person's social-emotional, academic, and workforce needs
- Clear and on-going communication with the court about reintegration plans

- A dedicated staff person who works closely with probation, coordinates communication among all partners involved during and post-placement, and provides case management
- Family involvement and support and access to community resources
- A supported transition from placement into a program that provides academic support, connections to appropriate education options, workforce preparation and experience, and subsidized or unsubsidized employment

EXAMPLES OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICE:

Partnering with Juvenile Justice

Philadelphia

Partnering entities: Philadelphia School District, Philadelphia Youth Network, Community-Based E3 Centers, Philadelphia's Probation Department, the Department of Human Services, and residential providers.

Relationship of Partners: In 2005, the partnering entities launched the Reintegration Initiative to enhance the support and supervision of youth reentering into the community from placement.

Example of model program: Community-Based E3 Centers serve as "step-down" programs to offer academic support, GED training, workforce preparation, job referral and placement, and life-skills training in addition to providing support related to the services to youth mentioned below^{xxviii}.

Services to youth: Reintegration Initiative partners focus on reintegration planning at the

beginning of placement, clear communication of reintegration plans with the Court, reintegration workers who work with probation officers during and post-placement, and support in connecting services from multiple systems, such as education, workforce development and behavior health^{xxix}.

Baltimore

Partnering entities: Mayor's Office of Employment Development (MOED), Baltimore City Schools, YO Baltimore, Department of Juvenile Services (DJS)

Relationship of Partners: The United States Department of Labor awarded a discretionary grant for the Building School District-Based Strategies For Reducing Youth Involvement In Gangs And Violent Crime Through A Workforce Development Approach to reduce gang violence and crime by reducing the number of youth who drop out of school; Increasing school reengagement; Providing educational and workforce training; And supporting youth in the city who are most likely to become victims and perpetrators of violence and crime. The initiative supports the following objectives: 1) prevention and intervention; 2) recovery and remediation; and 3) reintegration efforts^{xxx}.

Example of model program: There are two major components to the grant. The FUTURES Works program serves eighth and ninth grade students who are at least two years behind grade level and who are returning from detention with the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) and offers youth follow-up support provided by Baltimore City Public School System. Youth Opportunity (YO!) Baltimore provides GED and pre-GED classes on-site, careers screenings, classes and on-line courses to help these youth earn a diploma, life skills, job readiness classes and job placement services, career training in high growth industries^{xxxi}.

Services to youth: The grant provides tutoring to in-school youth in math and reading and GED preparation. The YO! Baltimore Centers offer workforce development and support services such as clinicians on staff that work to increase mental health assessment and subsequent referrals, an internet-based curriculum integrated with an online assessment and prescriptive system as well as a full battery of screenings to find the right career area and support for youth who participate in the program^{xxxii}.

Los Angeles

Partnering entities: Community Development Department's Youth Opportunity System, County of Los Angeles Probation Department

Relationship of Partners: The Community Development Department's Youth Opportunity System (YOS) acquired funding from the County of Los Angeles Probation Department to form a Youth Opportunity Intensive Transition (YOIT) team to: lead relationship-building efforts with the juvenile justice facilities through a juvenile referral mechanism; provide outreach and marketing of services to probation staff, youth, and parents and act as a bridge between probation, the city, and more than 50 contracted partners. YOIT is intended to provide both the city of Los Angeles and the LA County Probation Department with specific tools to identify and connect incarcerated city juveniles with the WIA-funded community-based job training, work experience, and supplemental education programs. The Los Angeles YOIT has an Internet-based client data Integrated Services Information System (ISIS) that refers youth being released from probation camps to a WIA youth service provider. Probation officers are trained to utilize the YOIT system to refer and monitor probation youth, ensuring that youth are served immediately upon release^{xxxiii}.

HIGHLIGHTING EFFECTIVE PRACTICE *Partnering with Juvenile Justice*

Boston's Youth Options Unlimited

A strong example where partnership is key to a successful strategy for serving youth involved in the juvenile justice system is Boston's Youth Options Unlimited (YOU) program. YOU is a workforce development program that serves a court-involved youth population ages 14 – 24 years old, mostly male and largely gang-affiliated, and works in tight collaboration with many of the agencies and departments in the city that also serve or come into contact with these young people. These partners include workforce development, juvenile justice, law enforcement, and other youth serving systems. YOU connects youth with intensive case management, educational opportunities and support, and employment year-round. It has a three-part service system: (1) intervention in detention facilities and referrals from law enforcement partners; (2) stabilization, case management and support services provided by YOU staff; and (3) education and employment readiness and placement support to get youth on the path to skill development and self-sustainability.

Since 2005, YOU has served exclusively court-involved youth and is sustaining its efforts with the support of the state Shannon Anti-Gang grant - a program that requires multi-disciplinary approaches to combating gang violence through law enforcement initiatives such as the targeting of enforcement resources to programs aimed at successful reintegration of released inmates and youth from juvenile detention, and programs that provide youth with supervised out-of-school activities, among others.

YOU offers youth a Multi-Tier Transitional Employment Approach to gaining workforce skills and employment. Services provided are *transitional employment services* such as job readiness training, community service, individual counseling, life skills, career and education planning, specialized workshops, software application training; *education* which includes the promotion of lifelong learning and an alternative education placement; and *case management services* such as interpersonal skills development, effective communication training, decision making workshops, youth development, re-entry/ court liaison service, support and guidance, reduction of barriers to employment and service strategy.

Example of model program: The Youth Opportunity Movement Amends Program connects incarcerated youth, and those recently released, with resources in education and employment. Participants take online classes through Los Angeles Trade Technical College and complete courses in employment preparedness. Los Angeles Youth Opportunity Movement has case managers on site at Los Angeles County Probation Camps and offers direct services to prepare youth for a positive entrance back into the community^{xxxiv}.

Services to youth: The Program connects incarcerated and probation youth with resources to reduce participants' return to juvenile detention camps by: referring youth to probationary conditions, tracking youth's educational plan (strive for high school diploma), referring to a vocational/post-secondary education training/program and linking youth to community activities^{xxxv}.

PARTNERING WITH CHILD WELFARE

Youth involved in the foster care system face many challenges. They often move from placement to placement and from school to school, lacking a stable home environment and making it nearly impossible to stay on grade level. Once emancipated from the foster care system, problems can worsen. Many foster youth have serious difficulties finding and keeping jobs, getting an education, learning the skills necessary to live independently and maintaining stable housing – large numbers finding themselves homeless within the first year of leaving the system^{xxxvi}. For these reasons, strong collaboration between the child welfare system and the workforce development system is critical to preparing and supporting youth who are transitioning out of the child welfare system and into a productive and healthy adulthood.

A strong partnership between these two systems helps to create a true continuum of services and supports necessary to serve these youth as they move into independent living by creating a shared vision among leadership in both systems, aligning policies and practices, such as common outcomes and goals, and leveraging resources by joint contracts or sharing staff.

Providing youth skills development, workforce preparation and employment, along with transition planning and case management, are essential services to support youth in becoming self-sufficient adults and can be provided more effectively by the systems that have expertise in their respective areas. Many times, both systems try to do everything for these youth, often creating duplication of services and inefficiently utilizing resources. Both systems can work simultaneously with targeted services or create an appropriate “hand-off” from one system to the other.

Not only do both systems reap the benefits of collaboration, but also the youth experience greater support (and much less confusion) as their transition out of the child welfare system and into adulthood is supported by a clear set of services and delivery models.

A set of services that should be provided to all youth, but especially foster youth, include^{xxxvii}:

- **Educational services:** basic skills instruction, GED or alternative secondary educational services, contextualized learning opportunities, and educational supports
- **Work readiness training:** on-going work readiness through a sequenced continuum of options, soft skills instruction, and individual coaching and support

- **Work preparation and work-based opportunities:** internships, work experiences, job shadows, and community service
- **Youth development services:** mentoring, life skills, independent living skills, physical and mental-health related services, financial literacy, computer literacy, healthy decision-making and conflict management

In addition to the services mentioned above, the service delivery model for transitioning youth should include^{xxxviii}:

- Identifying educational barriers
- Collaboration with the secondary and postsecondary education systems
- Long-term mentoring
- Incentives to reinforce learning to encourage participation in activities and/or achievement of goals
- Individual service strategy with a youth-centered approach
- Follow-up services to assist youth sustaining a successful transition

EXAMPLES OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICE:

Partnering with Child Welfare

Baltimore

Partnering entities: Mayor's Office of Employment Development (MOED), Baltimore City

Department of Social Services (BCDSS) and Youth Opportunity Baltimore (YO Baltimore)

Relationship of Partners: MOED received a grant from the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation to use Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) funds to serve foster youth aging out of the system. The grant funds a program liaison position to work closely with BCDSS case managers to identify foster care youth for targeted recruitment into the Youth Opportunity Bridge to Career Success program.

Example of model program: Youth Opportunity Bridge to Career Success provides a comprehensive menu of career development, job readiness, literacy and support services to 200 Baltimore City out of school Foster Care youth between the ages of 16-21 over a 16-month period.

Services to youth: Youth Opportunity Bridge to Career Success provides support to create a realistic "individual opportunity plan" for academic and employment goals, expanded life skills, including nutritional basics, communication skills, personal responsibility, and financial literacy as well as job readiness, physical and mental health services, GED preparation and support for college placement. Youth also acquire career preparation and work experience in several occupational areas with a focus on high growth industries^{xxxix}.

Hartford

Partnering entities: Our Piece of the Pie (OPP®) and Department of Children and Families (DCF)

Relationship of Partners: OPP®'s Youth Development Specialists and DCF workers work collectively to provide updates and progress reports as well as overall general support in the area of case

management to one another. The youth development specialist role is also to provide the DCF worker and other care providers an assessment of career skills, interests and aptitudes of the youth to better assist in goal planning. This working relationship between the Youth Development Specialist and DCF worker continues to play an integral role in making sure foster care youth are successful in terms of reaching their outcome goals.

Example of model program: The CT Youth Opportunity Strategy offers youth ages 14-21 with present involvement in foster care support in making a successful transition to adulthood by providing them with opportunities through Opportunity Passport™. Through the Opportunity Passport™ program, participants receive a match savings account, known as an Individual Development Account (IDA), to be used for purchasing specific assets. The participants are also provided with a 1:1 match up to \$1,000 and all participants receive financial literacy training which helps the youth become financially literate by gaining experience with the banking system, and saving money for education, housing, healthcare, and other life expenses.

Services to youth: The participants enrolled in OPP®'s CT Youth Opportunity Strategy program benefit from a menu of services and supports such as health care, housing, transportation assistance, health and wellness and mental health referrals, educational planning, connection to a caring adult, community service opportunities, case management services, financial counseling, referrals for internal and external programming, job placement assistance, pre-employment training, work readiness, internships and job retention with on-site job support, and monetary incentives for positive participation^{x1}.

HIGHLIGHTING EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

Partnering with Child Welfare

San Diego's Programming for Foster Youth

With the leadership of the San Diego Youth Council, the San Diego Workforce Partnership (the local workforce development system) made a strategic choice to concentrate funding and programming on targeted groups of at-risk youth, including foster and former foster youth transitioning to self-sufficiency. To carry this out, the Workforce Partnership and the County's Child Welfare Services began partnering in a number of ways.

A few years ago, the County engaged in a major redesign of the child welfare system and reached out to develop a stronger partnership with the San Diego Workforce Partnership. The Workforce Partnership was able to use a community planning grant as a large set-aside from the Workforce Partnership's WIA formula dollars to leverage with the County's Child Welfare Services resources to provide Independent Living Services that have a strong workforce, education and youth development focus to current and former foster youth as they transition out of the foster care system.

The leveraging of resources allowed the two systems to create one joint Request for Proposal (RFP) as a mechanism through which collaboration could occur. The County and Workforce Partnership now put out one RFP that results in two contracts: the Workforce Partnership holds one and the County holds the other. Both contracts have the same statement of work and both go through the same contracting process. Community-based organizations then must bid for both contracts and must either bring in a partner or demonstrate how they plan to provide both quality workforce development and Independent Living Services.

Monitors from both the Workforce Partnership and the County conduct site visits together for purposes of efficiency, to show providers system-cohesion, and to ensure providers are maximizing resources.

Los Angeles

Partnering entities: City of Los Angeles, Community Development Department, Youth Opportunity System, Workforce Development System; DCSF Emancipation Services; LA Probation; Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD); Youth Council; Education Coordinating Council; Human Services and Family Development.

Relationship of Partners: The Los Angeles Youth Transition Action Team Initiative (YTAT), part of the state-wide initiative conducted by New Ways to Work and Casey Family Programs, focuses on bringing together the resources of the workforce, education, and child welfare systems to better prepare adolescents who are current or former foster youth to achieve economic, educational, and employment success as they transition into the adult world.

Example of model program: L.A. YTAT assists foster youth in connecting their summer job experience to their career and educational goals as part of Foster Youth Summer Jobs Plus.

Services to youth: Emancipating foster youth augment their summer employment experience through the development of work-based learning contracts that identify the skills they will develop during their summer employment experience. Youth and their supervisors document the skills acquired through the experience with a goal of preparing youth for future career and educational options. Youth will receive evaluations from their worksite supervisors, be prepared to garner a Work-Ready Certification, sharpen their career and educational plans, and be working or enrolled in school (or both) after program completion^{xli}.

V. Workforce Preparation and Employer Engagement

While it is imperative for the public systems to educate, train, and prepare youth for the workforce, youth can never truly be ready for employment without actually having experienced employment in some way. And, whether it's through internships, job shadowing, or another form of entry into the world of work, that experience cannot be gained without the engagement of employers. Often, the workforce development and education systems work in silos developing training curriculum for soft skills, work readiness and work opportunities without seeking advice from the employers needed to place and hire their youth. At the same time, employers say they lack the supply of skilled workers necessary to fill positions. This lack of partnership and collaboration among these stakeholders creates a severe disconnect, ultimately hurting providers, young workers and employers.

Across the country, workforce development systems recognize the need for increased employer participation to create opportunities for workplace and career exposure, hands-on experience, opportunities for applied learning, mentoring, role models, and ultimately successful transition to the workplace. To do so, workforce and youth development professionals along with education must work to engage and get input from business to craft a quality pipeline model and support structure. There are several key roles employers can play in collaboration with the workforce, education and youth providers to develop a pipeline of prepared workers, including^{xlii}:

- Participate in the customizing of training content/ assist teachers with contextual – hands-on learning

- Mentoring and coaching at workplace, E-mentoring
- Employer involvement in delivery of workshops and training
- Employers opening up work place for exploration, internships, on-the-job-training, work experience
- Establishing workplace and occupational competencies and methods for documenting them
- Providing exposure for teachers to the business/industry sectors
- Providing access to full-time and part-time jobs
- Serving on Employer Advisory groups and serving as champions
- Assuring the quality of graduates and assuring their hire in the sector

EXAMPLES OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICE:

Workforce Preparation and Employer Engagement

Baltimore

Baltimore has developed a variety of strategies to increase employer engagement in its youth programming. It has worked to tie services to labor market needs by creating effective connections to local and regional employers and developing meaningful connections between academic and occupational learning. It also seeks to provide

education relevant to the job market particularly in the area's identified high growth industries such as healthcare and social assistance, business services, computer, hospitality/tourism, and bioscience^{xliii}.

One example is the Healthcare Careers Alliance, a partnership with five of the area's leading hospitals including Johns Hopkins Hospital and University of Maryland Medical System, and Civic Works, Baltimore's Urban service corps, that offers a 12-week job readiness training program that works to prepare 18 to 21 year old out-of-school youth for careers in health. The program features paid training, skills development, life skills, on-the-job training, and paid employment^{xliv}. There are two phases to the program: the first 6 weeks youth participate in soft skills training and the second six weeks is a paid on-the-job training. Youth work 20 hours per week and both youth and the host site are supported by a full-time Career Coach^{xlv}.

Also offered to 16- to 22-year-old youth is Try Out Employment, an internship program in the YO! Baltimore centers to work up to 25 hours for three months with local employers. YO! Baltimore subsidizes the wages for employers who have been identified by YO! job developers. During this time employers may train, coach and evaluate soft skills and build hard skills prior to hiring. Roughly 75 young people are in this program and about 75 percent of the youth get hired upon completion of the activity.

The Mayor's Office of Employment Development also offers an after-school, career-focused program for in-school youth ages 14 to 19 called After School Matters (ASM) II. This program offers life and work readiness skills training and career-related work experience in three phases. Phase one offers training in workplace basics after school for two hours twice a week. In phase two, youth earn minimum wage for two hours after school, four times a week engaging in career exploration activities in sport management,

health education, and hospitality provided by local partners. In phase three, youth begin an apprenticeship where they train in-depth for work in one of these career areas while they earn minimum wage, working four days a week for three hours each day. This program is intended to end as summer begins so that youth transition into summer employment^{xlvi}.

San Diego

Two examples for how San Diego has worked to increase employer engagement and workforce connections are worth noting. San Diego Workforce Partners, in collaboration with Biocom Institute and Southern California Biotechnology Center, developed a Life Sciences Summer Institute (LSSI), an eight-week student internship program to help increase awareness of the life science industry and related fields of research to students and teachers in the region. There are two programs offered: the LSSI high school student research program for upper-level high school students as well as teacher externship program for high school and community college teachers.

The student internship program includes a one-week pre-internship “Boot Camp” training, held at partnering colleges, followed by a seven-week paid internship at one of San Diego’s life science industry or academic research labs^{xlvi}. During “boot-camp” students receive basic and refresher hands-on laboratory skills and safety training and LSSI industry soft skills certification which includes effective communication, time management, teamwork, presentations skills and industry expectations^{xlvi}.

The 12-day teacher externship program includes a one-week “Boot Camp” training, held at a community lab facility, where high school and community college teachers receive an industry

HIGHLIGHTING EFFECTIVE PRACTICE *Workforce Preparation and Employer Engagement*

Hartford’s Capitol Workforce Partners

As Capital Workforce Partners works to create a “workforce of the future”, it targets its training resources toward occupations in the region that have sustainable wages and high growth potential. CWP has identified clusters of industries in their area which includes; allied health, financial and insurance services, high technology manufacturing and retail/ hospitality and has begun to develop the appropriate relationships with those industry leaders in order to craft appropriate training and programming that will prepare youth for these industries as well as arranging formal and informal ways for employers to engage.

The Capital Workforce Partners Career Competency System mentioned above was developed with extensive input from employers to define not only the skills required for success in entry-level employment and/or postsecondary education but also how and at what stage employers should be involved. CWP integrated employer engagement activities into its four-tiered Career Competency System.

CWP developed Career Connections a “work and learn” model that allows students to participate in a job readiness program which may include one-on-one mentoring, educational classes and team building exercises. Subsequent to the program, students are placed in paid internships within area businesses such as Aetna. Aetna’s partnership with Capital Workforce Partners begins with human resources being responsible for maintaining the relationship, identifying student supervisors/mentors, orchestrating selection and hiring of students and facilitating centralized hiring.

The supervisor/mentor works to create a meaningful and productive work experience by providing coaching and feedback and promoting learning by sharing of experience. The intern is responsible for demonstrating a willingness to learn and be a member of the team, operating independently and demonstrating a degree of professionalism consistent with the role¹.

introduction and hands-on laboratory training using the Amgen-Bruce Wallace Biotechnology Laboratory Program curriculum that they can then introduce back into their classrooms^{xlix}. Teachers receive standards-based curriculum training as well as the opportunity to visit a variety of industry sites to view both hard skills and soft skills in practice. They also receive ongoing support for curriculum implementation and can receive free supplies, loaner equipment, and staff support to implement the curriculum^l.

Also offered to WIA eligible youth in San Diego is a pathways program that San Diego Community College District has recently developed called the Career Pathways for After School Staff (CPASS), modeled after the work around Career Advancement Academies. This program was developed in partnership with San Diego Workforce Partnerships, Children's Initiative and San Diego City College. CPASS is in its 2nd year of the "bridge program" that offers basic skill remediation, college readiness courses, selected coursework in career pathways, along with work experience and employment in after-school facilities. The courses are taught in cohorts that create learning communities targeted at WIA eligible, young adults with an 8th grade competency. The program also offers a counselor throughout the entirety of the program to help navigate the system.

Boston

The Boston Private Industry Council (PIC) has developed a variety of strategies to increase employer engagement in its youth programming and to meet local workforce needs. The PIC has developed several opportunities for employers and youth to support each other's goals through providing youth opportunities for career exposure, internships and employment, and support for high school graduates transitioning into college or career.

The PIC offers three career exploration programs that businesses or individual professionals can participate in: Job Shadowing, Mock Interviews and Career Speakers. The PIC asks adult volunteers to share their job responsibilities and career path with high school students to introduce them to the work world and motivate career aspiration and effort in school. PIC career specialists work directly with students to prepare them for the experience through a series of career readiness workshops^{li}.

The Classroom at the Workplace program combines 90 minutes of classroom time focused on improving student's literacy and math skills with a summer or after school job. Students improve their academic skills in the context of the work experience, making the connection between education and career. All classes are led by Boston Public School teachers and are geared either towards passing of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) state high school exam or college preparation^{lii}.

In addition to college preparation offered through the Classroom at the Workplace program, PIC "college and career coaches" can offer support to recent high school graduates in their transition to a local college. These students have participated in PIC internship programs and are pursuing careers in healthcare, financial services, or life sciences. The PIC seeks employer partners who will provide part-time employment for these young people as they work towards college and career programs in healthcare, financial services, or biotechnology^{liii}.

PIC also has career specialists who work with high school students year-round to prepare them for paid employment through School Year Internships or Summer Jobs program. PIC staff identifies student's interests, develop job descriptions with employers, and facilitate the interview and matching process. PIC staff supports students and their supervisors on the job^{liv}.

APPENDIX:

Full Profiles of Communities

BALTIMORE, MD

BOSTON, MA

HARTFORD, CT

PHILADELPHIA, PA

SAN DIEGO, CA

BALTIMORE, MD

Best Practice Examples in:

- ✓ **Convening Body**
- ✓ **Delivery Agent**
- ✓ **Workforce and Employer engagement**
- ✓ **Partnership with Juvenile Justice**
- ✓ **Partnership with Child Welfare**

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Overview

Baltimore faces the challenge of addressing barriers to education and employment for a significant number of disconnected young people. Nearly 6,000 teens are not attending school and not working, and around 13,000 young adults ages 18 to 24 also are not attending school and not working¹. To address these barriers, the Baltimore City Workforce Investment Board's Youth Council works to build a comprehensive youth system that will promote opportunities for youth to acquire necessary life skills, education, work exposure and experiences that enable them to have productive careers and become responsible family members and citizens². The Youth Council is staffed by the Mayor's Office of Employment Development (MOED) and convenes 50 to 60 people from education, juvenile justice, social services, employers and community organizations. There are several subcommittees on the council around issues such as dropout prevention, summer jobs, systems building, homelessness and apprenticeships. The council recently elected the Vice President of External Affairs Verizon – Maryland, Inc. as Chair to connect activities and planning to private sector employer needs. The Youth Council has engaged more divisions and sectors of Baltimore City Schools on the Council to strengthen the connection between education and workforce. Each of the council's standing committees has facilitated the implementation of strategies that will address barriers to youth success.

¹ Kids Count 2007 Data, the Annie E. Casey Foundation Web site, <http://www.aecf.org/MajorInitiatives/KIDSCOUNT.aspx>.

² Baltimore City Workforce Investment Board Youth Council, Request for Proposals, Youth Workforce Development Services, September 19, 2007.

Major Accomplishments

In 2000, Baltimore received a national Youth Opportunity Grant funded by the U.S. Department of Labor to increase the long-term employability of youth residents in the Empowerment Zone.

Baltimore sought to implement a comprehensive youth service, yet seamless system for out-of-school and disconnected youth. The Baltimore Youth Opportunity System (BYOS) was created to offer youth comprehensive, coordinated programs, which build on youths' strengths, increasing their development and competency. The initiative addresses Baltimore's youth dropout rate, disconnection, high unemployment rate, secondary education completion rate, and linkage to post-secondary education. Although Department of Labor funding ended in 2006, Baltimore's mayor and city council elected to sustain funding for two Youth Opportunity (YO!) centers based on positive impact data documenting success in decreasing recidivism and early pregnancy as well as increases in educational attainment and wages.

The YO! System provides a broad network through which employers can access untapped, skilled youth workforce resources. BYOS developed a continuum of training to prepare youth for the workplace, beyond just summer employment. This includes job readiness training, job shadowing, paid public/private sector internships, employer-based training, and occupational skills training.³

The Mayor's Office of Employment Development (MOED) serves as the grant administrator, convenes community organizations and businesses with a goal of creating a coordinated, comprehensive, and seamless service delivery system for youth. It also supports a management structure and electronic tracking system to evaluate the performance. MOED, in partnership with the Youth Council, is

responsible for the initiative's oversight and direction and serves 7,000 young people during the summer and nearly 2,400 in a host of year-round programming. The city also serves nearly 1,400 18- to 21-year-old young adults in its One Stop System.

The Youth Council, supported by MOED, sponsors an annual technical assistance and capacity building conference for educators, employers, case workers, for profit and non-profits, which provides services to youth and young adults. In addition, the council sponsors several youth practitioner seminars and summits that featured speakers to share best practices for issues such as gang intervention and prevention and dropout prevention and alternative education options. The Youth Council funds education and workforce programs for disconnected youth. The current programs include the Baltimore Career Academy, Health Care Careers Alliance and the Urban Alliance.

Health Care Career Alliance is a partnership between Johns Hopkins Hospital, Sinai Life Bridge, University of Maryland Medical Systems, Genesis HealthCare and Civic Works that annually serves 75 youth ages 18 to 21. The program focuses on academic advancement and occupational training in the health field. When the work-based learning, internship and training phase of the program concludes, youth are placed in regular full-time positions at one of the partnership institutions at a minimum of \$8.50 per hour.

The Urban Alliance's core service is a partnership between corporations and Urban Alliance that provides positive youth development opportunities through internships. The goal is to engage youth year-round through meaningful, paid internships while providing ongoing support services, which include mentoring, life-skills instruction, post-high school planning, and financial literacy training. Once placed, the students work at their job sites part-time during the school year starting at \$7.55 per hour.

³ Baltimore community page, CCRY Network Web site, <http://www.ccrnetwork.org>.

Students are eligible for raises up to \$10 an hour based on performance.

Baltimore has a contingent of homeless youth that at one time were not being served. The council developed the Transitional Housing Committee and it received a \$750,000 Compassion Capital grant to implement a Baltimore Homeless Youth Initiative. The Initiative selected partners to build a 43-unit permanent housing facility with support services for homeless and unstably housed youth to be completed in summer 2010.

Education and Workforce Development

MOED works with Baltimore City Public Schools (BCPP) to create pipelines that link to workforce opportunities. High schools refer students to the BCPP's Alternative Options Program Office (AOP) due to a myriad of academic and personal reasons. AOP reviews and determines to which alternative site the youth will go.

MOED supports several initiatives, including:

YO! Baltimore provides job readiness training, job shadowing, paid public/private sector internships, employer-based training, and occupational skills training and GED classes. YO! Baltimore uses Novell Stars Program which is the approved Maryland Department of Education online program. The programs also collaborate with Baltimore City Community College to provide career training and certification in high growth industries such as, certified nursing assistant, cable installation and banking. BCCC provides curriculum for specific programs.

YO Academy serves youth in 9th through 12th grade and is a high school diploma program staffed by the Baltimore Public School System. Students come in and complete a needs assessment that identifies their academic and other needs. Individual plans are

determined for students so that they complete the appropriate coursework and receive the support services they need. YO Academy has credit recovery and accelerated learning, career and college readiness skills training.

Career Academy is an alternative education center directly administered by the MOED and the Baltimore City Workforce Investment Board. CA provides GED preparation, and intensive career exploration, skills training, and employment readiness, and is funded jointly by WIA dollars, Baltimore City Public Schools and Job Corps. It offers a diploma plus model where students are working on getting their diploma while enrolling in BCCC (Baltimore City Community College) in the Early College Enrollment program. This program helps students transition into postsecondary education. Students must take at least one class at BCCC. Career Academy also offers the Woodstock Job Corps Center, the only non-residential Job Corps in Maryland, on-site.

The Career Academy is a structured program that implements a multiple pathway approach for obtaining an academic credential. Students ages 16 to 21 may take the traditional approach to obtaining a high school diploma, enroll in the General Education Development program to prepare to take the state test for obtaining a high school diploma and/or enroll in the Diploma Plus model. Youth may simultaneously enroll in Job Corps to take the Business Technical course, leading toward MOUS and IC³ certification. The Career Academy has a more than 90 percent graduation rate. Many of its graduates pursue postsecondary education or employment upon graduation.

FUTURES Works is an innovative, youth development and dropout prevention initiative focusing on education, personal growth and teamwork. FUTURES is a comprehensive program supporting students in eighth and ninth grades who

are at risk of academic failure based on indicators identified by Baltimore City Public Schools staff, including reading level and attendance.

Afterschool Matters, sponsored by MOED, Mayor Sheila Dixon and the Baltimore City Council, is a work program designed to support at-risk students after school. The program provides increased life and employability skills, exposes and trains youth in workplace career skills, provides employment during the school year and summer months and ensures that students remain academically successful. Students work eight hours a week while in school and are placed in careers of interest. Employer partners are sports management, fire safety, hospitality and child care.

Try Out Employment is an internship program for 16- to 22-year-olds in the YO! Baltimore centers to work up to 25 hours for three months. Roughly 75 young people are in this program and about 75 percent of the youth get hired. YO! subsidizes the wages for employers who have been identified by their job developers.

YouthWorks Summer Employment Program is the Mayor's campaign to engage employers to hire young people. Employers, community organizations, foundations, state and city agencies, and individual citizens are being asked to build upon the success of YouthWorks 2008 in hiring 6,500 teens and invest in Baltimore's teens by connecting them to meaningful summer activities. Mayor Dixon asks everyone in the city to become involved to identify enough job opportunities and allocate sufficient funds so that every Baltimore City youth who wants a summer job will have that opportunity⁴.

Through federal recovery funding received in 2009, YouthWorks provides summer employment

opportunities to at least 100 22- to 24-year-olds. These young adults serve as Team Leaders for the more than 500 worksites that have committed to host city teens. The program assigns team leaders to worksites that host at least 10 other youth. Additionally, YouthWorks has implemented its first Mayor's Green Jobs Youth Corps for 350 youth. The program uses a work and learning model to education youth on green jobs. This is a partnership between the city's Department of Recreation and Parks, MOED, and the BWIB Youth Council. Instructors and Teams Leaders coordinate with worksite supervisors to deliver instructions and practical application of works and lessons learned around the green job industry.

Juvenile Justice

Baltimore City Schools contracts with the Mayor's Office of Employment Development, YO! Baltimore and the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) to support the Building School District-Based Strategies For Reducing Baltimore's Workforce Development Initiative to Reduce Youth Gangs and Violent Crime discretionary grant awarded by The U.S. Department of Labor to curb gang violence and crime by reducing the number of youth who drop out of school, increasing school reengagement, providing educational and workforce training and supporting youth in the city who are most likely to become victims and perpetrators of violence and crime. The initiative supports the following objectives: 1) prevention and intervention; 2) recovery and remediation, and 3) reintegration efforts. The grant provides tutoring to in-school youth in math and reading and GED preparation at the YO! Baltimore Centers along with workforce development and support services.

There are two components to the grant subcontracted to MOED. The FUTURES Works program serves eighth- and ninth-grade students who are at least two years behind grade level and who are returning from

⁴ Baltimore Office of the Mayor Web site, <http://www.ci.baltimore.md.us/mayor/>.

detention with the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS). Youth receive follow-up support provided by the Baltimore City Public School System. Youth Opportunity (YO!) Baltimore provides GED and pre-GED classes on-site, careers screenings, classes and on-line courses to help these youth earn a diploma, life skills, job readiness and placement services, and career training in high growth industries.

Other grant partners include Baltimore Mental Health Systems, New Vision Youth Service, Inc (Violence Free Zone Implementation) and Community Law in Action (mentoring component) to round out and support services to youth in Baltimore.

Child Welfare

The Mayor's Office of Employment Development also partners with Baltimore City Department of Social Services (BCDSS) and YO! Baltimore to support a grant from the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation to use Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) funds to serve foster youth aging out of the system. The grant funds a program liaison position to work closely with BCDSS case managers to identify foster care youth for targeted recruitment. The Youth Opportunity Bridge to Career Success program provides a comprehensive menu of career development, job readiness, literacy and support services to 200 Baltimore City out of school Foster Care youth ages 16 to 21 over a 16-month period. The Youth Opportunity Bridge to Career Success program works to create a realistic "individual opportunity plan" for academic and employment goals, expanded life skills, including nutritional basics, communication skills, personal responsibility, and financial literacy as well as job readiness, physical and mental health services, GED preparation and

support for college placement. Youth also acquire career preparation and work experience in several occupational areas with a focus on high growth industries⁵.

⁵ Youth Opportunity, YO! Highlights, New Grant to Serve Foster Care Youth, December, 2008.

BOSTON, MA

Best Practice Examples in:

- ✓ **Convening Body**
- ✓ **Partnership with Education**
- ✓ **Workforce and Employer engagement**
- ✓ **Partnership with Juvenile Justice**

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Overview

Boston faces the challenge of addressing barriers to education and employment for a significant number of disconnected youth. Every year between 1,500 and 2,000 youth drop out of school and approximately 11,000 youth ages 16 to 24 also are not attending school and not working⁶. Boston, however, is a strong example of strategic planning, capacity and partnerships supporting a comprehensive workforce development system for youth to help prepare them for successful adulthood. In Boston, the strategic planning around youth service delivery occurs within the Workforce Investment Act Youth Council, which is supported by the Boston Private Industry Council (PIC). The PIC is the intermediary organization connecting education, workforce development and business. A subcommittee or partner to the Council is the Youth Transitions Task Force. The Youth Transitions Task Force is focused on an overall goal of lowering the high school dropout rate and could be seen as the research body for youth development and service delivery in Boston. The WIA Youth Council advises the Youth Transitions Task Force through collaborative strategic planning and assessments on overall youth service delivery. The Youth Transitions Task Force, organized by the PIC, is made up of state agencies, local alternative education and youth development providers, and state and school officials working to raise awareness of the dropout crisis and its impact on youth and the community⁷.

The Mayor's Office of Jobs and Community Services (OJCS) is the City's workforce

⁶ American Community Survey, 2006, <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/>.

⁷ Hastings, S., *Harnessing the Power of Advocacy: Massachusetts' Efforts to Increase State Resources for Youth*, CLASP, December 8, 2008

development agency responsible for administering a number of federal, state and local grant programs. OJCS manages the grants, and monitors and provides technical assistance for alternative education, career exploration, summer employment, and youth development providers funded by the federal WIA, the HUD-funded Community Development Block Grant, state Youthworks, and City funds. OJCS also operates programs that provide direct service to young people, including Youth Options Unlimited, which serves young adults involved in the juvenile justice system, and Read Boston and Write Boston, programs designed to improve the reading and writing skills of youth in the public school system. Approximately 400 youth are enrolled in education and workforce development contracts administered by OJCS. About 10,000 youth are connected with summer employment through a combination of city, state, federal, and private funds. OJCS' Youth Options Unlimited program serves approximately 350 young people involved in the juvenile and adult justice systems. Finally, an additional 49,000 youth are served by the Community Development Block Grant, Read Boston, and Write Boston.

OJCS embeds case management into its education and workforce development contracts, including summer jobs. Whether the grant is for alternative education, career exploration, training or other workforce development activities, case management is a strong component within each contract. Programs funded with federal workforce funds have designated case management staff who work with youth to develop individual case plans articulating personal, education, and career goals. These programs are required to provide ongoing follow-up service for at least 12 months after program completion. In Boston, a host of community providers are vendors for OJCS and provide comprehensive workforce and youth development services at their sites. The Boston Youth Service Network (BYSN) is the network of non-profit

service providers who offer alternative education, career exploration, and summer job programs for youth at risk. OJCS funds these organizations and works with them on program development and policy development⁸. Three one-stop career centers in the city staff one person in each center devoted to working with young adults to provide information and support in accessing education and career development opportunities, including secondary and postsecondary options and skills training programs.

Major Accomplishments

Education

The Task Force has been working hard to raise awareness of and develop solutions to the dropout crisis. The Task Force began an advocacy campaign, informing key decision makers and the public on the issue by releasing the publication *Too Big to Be Seen: The Invisible Dropout Crisis in Boston and America*. The Task Force also drafted and helped pass legislation that addresses dropout prevention and recovery. The creation of such an effective coalition required collaboration among key state agencies, such as Public Health, Public Safety, Labor and Workforce Development and Education, and local school officials and community organizations⁹. The Task Force, in partnership with the school system, created a dropout recovery program in which dropout outreach specialists get a list of all the youth in the city who have dropped out, find them and reconnect them to education or training opportunities.

Within Boston's leadership, the Mayor's commitment to education was made clear by his declaration of support to double the college graduation rate for Boston Public Schools and is devoting funding to support this new goal. The

⁸ City of Boston, Office of Jobs and Community Development Web site, <http://www.cityofboston.gov/jcs/youth.asp>.

⁹ Hastings, S., *Harnessing the Power of Advocacy*.

Youth Council Chair was strategically appointed by the mayor to also sit on the school committee - fostering an important relationship that brings workforce development knowledge into educational decision making. Also, the new superintendent of Boston Public Schools has reorganized her cabinet and has three deputies, one focused solely on high schools. The high school deputy understands the importance of the alternative education system and offering more vocational programs and activities. The school system has a history of supporting alternative education options, but with new leadership it has renewed energy.

Workforce Preparation and Employer Engagement

There are several layers to employer engagement in Boston. Within Boston's School-to-Career (STC) strategy, the Boston Private Industry Council places a career specialist in every school to work with high school students year-round to prepare them for paid employment. PIC career specialists identify students' interests, develop job descriptions with employers, and facilitate the interview and matching process. PIC staff support students and their supervisors on the job¹⁰. The relationship with the career specialist is a key component to the summer youth employment program, Summer of Work and Learning, and makes a strong effort to match student's career interests with their summer job placement.

Also, every high school (as well as elementary and middle school) has at least one corporate or employer partner that sponsors the school and supports workforce preparation and career development by supporting job shadow days and career fairs, serving on advisory panels, organizing volunteers to tutor or mentor students. Employer

engagement in education and workforce preparation for youth is now institutionalized in the city.

Youth Options Unlimited (YOU), Boston's comprehensive reentry program supported by the Mayor's Office, offers a Multi-Tier Transitional Employment Approach to gaining workforce skills and employment.

Level One (Pre-Placement): The first level job readiness training and professional development track is offered for youth during summer and for year round groups. This paid two-week pre-employment series focuses on communication (with peers and supervisor) decision-making, conflict resolution, team work, maintaining a positive attitude, and defining success. These topics are explored and examined through role plays and an interactive curriculum based on the issues youth struggle with when in the work environment and other areas of their lives. The completion of the Pre-Placement curriculum is critical to future retention within the YOU employment continuum.

Level Two (Bridge): This second level gives young people a chance to improve workplace behavior and their academic skills. The Bridge Program takes a small group of youth, partners with agencies/ organizations to help young people develop in a particular skill area, continues to develop youth professionally and adds an academic component. Reading and math skills development is infused into the TES model.

Level Three (Individual Placement-IP): The third level offers employment placement and career counseling support once young people have acquired the fundamentals. Individual youth are matched with a community partner in a position that allows for more independence than the Bridge team and the opportunity for increased hours (up to 25 per week). YOU, with the support of its partner agencies, offers GED classes and a high school diploma curriculum

¹⁰ City of Boston, Office of Jobs and Community Development Web site, <http://www.cityofboston.gov/jcs/youth.asp>.

at the YOU Center. The GEDPlus program is housed at YOU, as is the Community Transition School, a collaboration between the Boston Public Schools and the Department of Youth Services offering education services to young people re-entering the community from long-term treatment.

Level three also provides youth placement in entry level employment with support from career development staff that help youth focus on increasing skill development, acquiring further credentials and placement in positions that allow for personal growth and expanding opportunities. Placements for older youth are in primary labor-market positions in the private sector or long-term occupational skills training programs. Career Specialists provide advice and support to individuals at this level, with a view to bringing youth to a point where they can compete independently in the labor market¹¹.

Juvenile Justice

The Mayor's Office of Jobs and Community Services, and the City of Boston have made consistent decisions to focus service provision on the most disconnected youth, specifically targeting juvenile justice involved youth. The partnerships required to effectively serve these youth have been developed over time and are key to creating a comprehensive system of supports and services for youth involved in the juvenile justice system. The partners in Boston's justice initiatives include the Boston Private Industry Council, Mayor's Office of Jobs and Community Services, Youth Options Unlimited Boston, Boston Police Department, Boston Redevelopment Authority, Department of Probation, Suffolk County House of Correction, Boston's Center for Youth and Families, Department of Youth Services, Boston Public Schools, and the Department of Children and Families.

YOU is an example of a city-wide program helping young court-involved and gang-affiliated young people turn toward a positive, self-sufficient future. It is a strong example of partnerships among workforce development, juvenile justice, law enforcement, and other youth serving systems described above. YOU connects youth with intensive case management, educational opportunities and support, and employment year-round. It has a three-part service system: (1) intervention in detention facilities and referrals from law enforcement partners; (2) stabilization, case management and support services provided by YOU staff; and (3) education and employment readiness and placement support to get youth on the path to skill development and self-sustainability. Since 2005, YOU has served exclusively court-involved youth and is sustaining its efforts with the support of the state Shannon Anti-Gang grant - a program that requires multi-disciplinary approaches to combating gang violence through law enforcement initiatives such as the targeting of enforcement resources to programs aimed at successful reintegration of released inmates and youth from juvenile detention, and programs that provide youth with supervised out-of-school activities, among others.

¹¹ Youth Options Unlimited,
<http://www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/yoboston/en/tes.asp>.

HARTFORD, CT

Best Practice Examples in:

- ✓ **Delivery Agent**
- ✓ **Workforce and Employer engagement**
- ✓ **Partnership with Education**
- ✓ **Partnership with Juvenile Justice**
- ✓ **Partnership with Child Welfare**

Overview

The Future Workforce Committee (the Youth Council) is led by Capital Workforce Partners (the region's Workforce Investment Board) and is comprised of a youth services division representative, other governmental agency representatives, employers, youth serving organization representatives and others. The Committee faces the challenge of addressing barriers for a significant number of disconnected young people - nearly 3,000 young adults 18-24 are not attending school and not working¹² and many more younger youth have dropped out or are at-risk of dropping out of high school. The Committee is tasked with developing the strategic plan to address these issues. The Plan is then implemented by Capital Workforce Partners (CWP). CWP is the local workforce investment board for North Central Connecticut and coordinates comprehensive workforce development programming for youth provided through contracted private and public partners and service providers. CWP works to create a “workforce of the future” through the implementation of strategies and programming geared toward meeting the needs of youth, employers and the local economy for more than 3,000 young people served in a given year through summer youth employment, year-round employment programming, WIA youth programming, Job Corps and other programming.

The focus of CWP’s Youth Council is to increase the number of in-school youth graduating from high school with a full set of career competencies. It does this by targeting resources to major municipalities in the Capitol Region of Connecticut. A primary

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¹² Kids Count 2007 Data, the Annie E. Casey Foundation Web site, <http://www.aecf.org/MajorInitiatives/KIDSCOUNT.aspx>.

example of this in Hartford is Capital Workforce Partners' work with the Hartford Office of Youth Services (HOYS), which funds positive youth development programming and special initiatives to address current community needs and coordinate with state and foundation partners to maximize the effectiveness of dollars invested in Hartford youth. Established in fall 2006, HOYS focuses on coordination, capacity building and strategic partnerships with key stakeholders to address the needs of all Hartford Youth. Our Piece of the Pie® (OPP®), a youth development organization in Hartford, is a key provider of services for both in-school and out-of-school youth in Hartford, and it closely partners with CWP and HOYS. Up to 15 to 20 agencies form the nucleus of youth-serving organizations that compose the entire future workforce development system in Hartford. Special emphasis is placed on professional youth development training, program development and tracking of outcomes through Hartford Connects.

Accomplishments

Workforce and Employer Engagement

CWP runs a four-tiered, age appropriate set of strategies that focuses on job readiness, placement, and preparedness at different age brackets. Tier I is traditionally designed for the youngest students, ages 14-15. This tier is strongest in learning and development. Tier II adds more real work and job-readiness components to the work experience. Tier III is often comprised of high school juniors who have already experienced this type of program and are further developed. Tier IV is for those ready to enter the Career Connections IV program and to seek out partially or unsubsidized "work and learn" experiences.

CWP developed a comprehensive framework for competency attainment called the Career Competency System as the foundation for all youth

programming. It is a required model for all providers who are contracted through CWP. The Career Competency System is a "work and learn" tier design approach to competency development to help provide young people exposure to careers and career competencies, to design youth workforce development services that reflect the needs of regional growth industries, to document work readiness skills and collect data for outcomes analysis, and for use as a model for quality and developmental service provision used by all providers¹³.

Capital Workforce Partners, Hartford Office of Youth Services and its partners are able to track progress for youth through Hartford Connects II - a web-based, program management tool for youth service organizations that captures data and reports information. It has a multiple entity data sharing mechanism, which allows for better sharing, tracking and correlation of educational and youth development data¹⁴.

As Capital Workforce Partners works to create a "workforce of the future", it targets training resources toward occupations in the region that have sustainable wages and high growth potential. CWP has identified clusters of industries in their area, which includes allied health, financial and insurance services, high technology manufacturing and retail/hospitality. It has begun to develop relationships with these industry leaders to craft appropriate training and programming that will prepare youth for these industries and arrange formal and informal ways for employers to engage.

The Capital Workforce Partners Career Competency System was developed with extensive input from employers to define not only the skills required for

¹³ Capital Workforce Partners, Career Competency System, PowerPoint presentation.

¹⁴ *Hartford Connects, A Budding ETO City*, Capital Workforce Partners, Hartford Office of Youth Services, PowerPoint presentation.

success in entry-level employment and postsecondary education but also to define how and at what stage employers should be involved. CWP integrated employer engagement activities into its four-tiered Career Competency System.

In addition to the Career Competency System, Our Piece of the Pie (OPP®), along with all other contracted youth delivery organizations who receive funding from CWP, work with youth to create a “Dream Resume” where they explore future career options and possibilities as well as a real-time resume so that when they leave the program after the summer they will know what it takes to get the jobs they want and they have an action plan for how to get there. Through the training sessions at OPP®, youth receive solid links from school to career. Youth must also create a “portfolio” before they exit the program demonstrating goals, financial literacy, communication and other skills.

At OPP®, youth can participate in “Youth Businesses” for 20 hours over a six-week period. This opportunity includes 10 hours of hands-on experiential learning in arts, environmental sciences, woodworking, community advocacy, multi-media or computer science, and 10 hours of Integrated Learning Training - life and career skill building - where youth work on resumes, interviewing and time-management. These youth (depending on age and experience and where they fall in the Tier System) receive either stipends or minimum wage while completing their project. Recent projects have included: a citywide lead-poisoning awareness campaign aimed at educating elementary school students and their families; an anti-violence themed CD written, recorded and produced by OPP® youth, and collaboration with National Geographic to study snapping turtles in the Connecticut River¹⁵.

¹⁵ Our Piece of the Pie Web site, http://www.opp.org/youth_businesses.asp.

Case Management

Our Piece of the Pie (OPP®) helps youth ages 14 to 24 become successful adults. The two primary goals of the program are to complete college or receive a postsecondary vocational credential, and find long-term employment. The cornerstone of OPP® programs and services is its signature Pathways to Success approach. Pathways to Success is a youth development strategy designed to help youth access and attain education, employment and personal skills. Together, youth and their Youth Development Specialists create individualized plans that map a realistic path to reach their goals.

A crucial component to the Pathways to Success program is the role of its Youth Development Specialist (YDS) – a guide to the services OPP® offers and a caring and consistent adult who advises and supports youth as they work to accomplish their goals. When a young person enters OPP®, they are matched with a YDS, beginning the trust-building process. The YDS assesses the young person’s status and needs and works with them to determine a pathway to a long-term educational and/or employment outcome. Together, they build an Individualized Service Plan broken down into practical steps to achieve larger goals, such as graduating from high school or improving school attendance. The YDS supports youth as they participate in educational, training or employment activities and helps them to navigate the systems and services in which they are involved in. An average caseload for a YDS is between 60 to 70 youth with conscious thought about balancing case loads by assessing the level of need of each youth.

OPP® and the Pathways to Success approach stays with youth up until age 24. Should a young person enter OPP® at age 14, they could potentially have that caring and consistent adult with them for up to ten years. Because transitioning to adulthood is a critical time in a young person’s life, maintaining

that support and guidance beyond the period he/she enters into employment or postsecondary education is essential.

Education

The Hartford Public School system is in the midst of a transformation to become a system composed of small learning communities that provide a variety of options to students throughout the school system. At the high school level, the system created new schools that appeal to different career interests of youth and provide the rigor necessary to them excel.

Opening in fall 2009, OPPportunity High School will be the first partnership school in Hartford. Based on a model initiated in New York between Good Shepherd Services and the New York Department of Education, OPPportunity High School will provide the three R's necessary for success: Rigor, Relevance and Relationships. The school will be a small, academically rigorous diploma-granting high school that combines the expertise of Our Piece of the Pie® - best practices in the youth development and workforce development fields - along with the skills of Hartford Public Schools - the rigor of the classroom and high school requirements. School governance will be shared equally between the school system and OPP®. OPPportunity High School enrolls over-aged and under-credited youth, those who are 18 or younger, have at least one year of high school, but not enough credits to go on to 10th grade, and are motivated to get a high school diploma¹⁶.

There are additional small learning communities/academies with which CWP and HOYS work, such as the Hartford High School Government and Law Academy designed for

students with an interest in pursuing a career in law, government or community leadership¹⁷.

Child Welfare

OPP® has a strong working relationship with the Department of Children and Families helping youth aging out of the foster care system through a program called the Connecticut Youth Opportunity Strategy. OPP®'s Pathways to Success program is designed to insure that youth aging out of foster care have increased opportunities to provide for a successful transition to adulthood in the following areas: youth leadership, youth engagement, employment, housing, and physical and mental health. Community-based agencies are contracted by the Department of Children and Families to provide various services to foster care youth. OPP®'s youth development specialists and DCF workers work collectively to provide updates and progress reports as well as overall general case management support. The youth development specialist's role also is to provide DCF worker and other care providers an assessment of career skills, interests and aptitudes of the youth to better assist in goal planning. This working relationship between the youth development specialist and DCF worker continues to play an integral role in making sure foster care youth are successful in terms of reaching their outcome goals.

The CT Youth Opportunity Strategy offers youth ages 14 to 21 with present involvement in foster care the opportunity to be part of a major national effort to help youth in foster care make a successful transition to adulthood by providing them with opportunities through Opportunity Passport™. Through the Opportunity Passport™ program, participants receive a match savings account, known as an Individual Development Account (IDA), to be used for purchasing specific assets. The participants

¹⁶ OPPportunity High School summary document, provided by Bob Rath, OPP®, March, 2009.

¹⁷ Hartford Public Schools, Hartford High School Government and Law Academy Web site, <http://www.hartfordschools.org/schools/Hartford-Public-High-School-Law-and-Government-Academy.php>.

also receive a 1:1 match up to \$1,000 and all participants receive financial literacy training, which helps the youth become financially literate by gaining experience with the banking system, and saving money for education, housing, healthcare, and other life expenses.

The participants enrolled in OPP®'s CT Youth Opportunity Strategy program benefit from a menu of services and supports such as health care, housing, transportation assistance, health and wellness and mental health referrals, educational planning, connection to caring adults, community service opportunities, case management services, financial counseling, referrals for internal and external programming, job placement assistance, pre-employment training, work readiness, internships and job retention with on-site job support, and monetary incentives for positive participation. These services enhance life chances of foster youth transitioning from care and prepare them for the future workforce and adulthood.

Juvenile Justice

To address the issue of youth violence in Hartford, The Hartford Office of Youth Services (HOYS) implemented an initiative called Peacebuilders, which is a collaborative effort of OPP®, Compass, The Village and the City of Hartford. Peacebuilders' staff partner with the Hartford Police Department and St. Francis Hospital to work with families in the emergency room and treatment settings. Because of OPP®'s experience working with the Court Support Services Division and the Prisoner Reentry Program and the deep connections the Peacebuilders have with the community, they are able to work on a street level to quell violence, prevent retaliation and help youth and families process grief in the immediate aftermath of an incident. They also work to connect families to additional community services and supports. The trust that Peacebuilders' staff have built often provides them with access to information

about violent acts and allows them to intervene and prevent additional acts of violence. Since the initiative began in 2007, Peacebuilders have engaged 358 youth in the program and have mediated 44 conflicts involving youth on the caseload and in almost all of those instances, have prevented additional retaliation and/or violence¹⁸.

Also supported by HOYS is Street Smarts to Business Smarts grant program where 14 to 19 year old disconnected youth who are truant, deemed at risk for violence or delinquency activity, and/or has been identified as needing intervention, participate in a community-based training program and are linked to a small businessperson in a mentor/mentee relationship with the potential of a paid internship. With GED, academic and youth development support and entrepreneurial training and guidance as key components to the program, HOYS' expectation is that all grantees prepare youth for success in postsecondary and the workforce¹⁹.

¹⁸ Peacebuilders Report, *Year One*, provided by Hartford Office of Youth, February 2009.

¹⁹ *Street Smarts to Business Smarts*, Request for Proposal, 2008.

PHILADELPHIA, PA

Best Practice Examples in:

- ✓ **Convening Body**
- ✓ **Delivery Agent**
- ✓ **Workforce and Employer engagement**
- ✓ **Partnership with Education**
- ✓ **Partnership with Juvenile Justice**

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Overview

Thousands of young people in Philadelphia are disconnected from employment, education and social support systems. For example, the Center for Labor Market Studies reports that more than 52,000 Philadelphians ages 16 to 24 are unemployed and not in school. At least 30,000 of them have not earned either a high school diploma or a GED. Philadelphia puts youth education and workforce development at the top of its agenda and is working hard to address these issues.

Over the last ten years, the City of Philadelphia, the School District of Philadelphia, the Youth Council and the Workforce Investment Board (WIB) have analyzed data, designed models and built systems to address the needs of youth and young adults for high-quality education, training and employment opportunities. These efforts continue to flourish.

In his inauguration speech in January 2008, Mayor Michael A. Nutter directly confronted issues of education and career preparation, pledging to reduce the high school dropout rate by 50 percent in 5 to 7 years (or inversely raising the graduation rate to 80 percent), and to double the baccalaureate attainment rate of Philadelphians in eight to ten years²⁰.

To lead these efforts, Mayor Nutter re-constituted the Youth Council as the Philadelphia Council for College and Career Success, appointed representatives from strategically important sectors in the Greater Philadelphia region to serve on the body, and made the Council responsible for leading efforts to accomplish the City's high school graduation and college completion goals. The

²⁰ Philadelphia Council for College and Career Success, First Meeting document, December 17, 2008.

Council is now actively engaged in a variety of strategies designed to build cross-sector approaches that address the needs of youth and young adults, and is also developing, leveraging and aligning resources from diverse funding streams to support them.

The new council is directed by a four-person Leadership Team, comprised of the mayor's chief education officer, a leading private sector employer, the superintendent of the School District of Philadelphia, and a president or provost of a local higher education institution²¹. Council members include leaders in secondary education, higher education, the business community, public care systems like foster care and juvenile justice, non-profit youth serving agencies, youth advocates and other representatives from municipal government. The council works through three subcommittees that address critical elements of the city's goals: addressing the needs of disconnected and out-of-school youth; creating strategies to increase the work readiness and career preparation of Philadelphia's young people, and improving college preparation, access and success. The strength and breadth of council membership helps to foster strong relationships among systems and stakeholders across the city and to build consensus approaches to address the city's goals.

The Council is staffed and supported by the Philadelphia Youth Network (PYN), a youth intermediary organization dedicated to ensuring that Philadelphia youth take their rightful places as full and contributing members of Philadelphia's regional economy. PYN also manages federal funds available to the Council, based on a competitively procured contract with the Philadelphia Workforce Investment Board.

²¹ Philadelphia Council for College and Career Success, First Meeting document, December 17, 2008.

Major Accomplishments

Workforce Preparation

After several years of experience overseeing youth workforce preparation programs funded through investments from government sources (the Workforce Investment Act, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, the School District of Philadelphia and the Philadelphia Housing Authority), the Youth Council established WorkReady Philadelphia in 2003 to coordinate and expand opportunities for academically enriched summer and year-round career preparation experiences for young people. WorkReady Philadelphia offers a variety of program models, including private sector internships, service learning, subsidized employment in non-profit organizations, and academic support, including college awareness exposure. Depending on funding levels, WorkReady annually offers opportunities for between 7,500 and 9,000 young people. WorkReady programs are administered by the Philadelphia Youth Network, and are supported by hundreds of employers, youth-serving organizations, public agencies, foundations and individuals.

Philadelphia also operates five community-based E³ Power (Education, Employment and Empowerment) Centers, which offer skill-building experiences for out-of-school and other disconnected 14- to 21-year-old youth, and help them to achieve long-term goals in the areas of education, occupational skills, life skills and employment. The Philadelphia Youth Network contracts with youth-serving organizations to operate the centers, which are expansions of the city's three original Youth Opportunity Centers. E³ Centers offer GED preparation, job readiness, occupational skills training, job referral and placement, as well as a schedule of diverse activities.²² Advisors help center youth to stay focused on meeting their goals, and to address any other challenging issues, such as child care, system involvement, and health care.

²² Philadelphia's E3Power Centers Web site, <http://www.e3philly.org/>.

Education

Due in part to the success of Philadelphia's nationally recognized school-to-career system developed in the 1990s, the Youth Council from its inception was keenly interested in promoting career preparation and academic achievement for all young people in Philadelphia. Over time, this interest in school-based connections grew to include young people who were struggling academically and who had already dropped out of high school. After a careful analysis of its efforts on behalf of out-of-school youth, Youth Council in 2003 took two important steps: (1) establishing a formal committee focused squarely on dropout recovery; and (2) increasing its Workforce Investment Act funding for out-of-school youth from the statutory floor of 30 percent to 50 percent. Based on this work and on major matching support from the William Penn Foundation, Philadelphia in 2004 became one of only five cities nationally to receive support from the Youth Transition Funders Group, a set of national and regional philanthropies dedicated to enhancing opportunities for struggling students and out-of-school youth. After 18 months of data collection, analysis and discussion, Philadelphia launched Project U-Turn - a citywide campaign to build public will to resolve the City's dropout crisis. Since its launch in Fall 2006, Project U-Turn has brought together more than 60 partners and stakeholders to work collaboratively on the dropout crisis.²³ Through these efforts, Project U-Turn has helped to create nearly 3,000 new high-quality education opportunities for over-age and under-credited youth; design and implement a new system for reconnecting dropouts to educational options including a re-engagement center jointly staffed by the School District and the City Department of Human services, and develop and leverage more than \$50 million to support re-engagement strategies.²⁴ Project U-Turn

continues to work with the school district to support the establishment and support of high-quality educational options for all Philadelphia students, and to promote related aspects of the School District's new strategic plan.

Juvenile Justice

Youth advocates and public officials in Philadelphia understand that youth involved in the juvenile justice system need specialized services, supports and tools to transition successfully back into their communities for school, rehabilitation and work. To that end, a strong partnership has developed between the workforce, education and juvenile justice systems to support youth leaving delinquent placement by connecting them to the E³ Centers and the City's Reintegration Initiative.

In the last several years, Philadelphia's juvenile justice work has focused on aligning and strengthening the career and occupational skills curricula at juvenile placement sites. Attention has been paid to program of study for youth and a system through which they can continue their studies when they return to the community. Much of this is being done in partnership with the E³ Centers (serving as "step-down" programs to offer academic support, GED training, workforce preparation and job referral and placement, and life-skills training) and through a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor.

Based largely on the successes of the Youth Council's focus on struggling students and out-of-school youth, Philadelphia received two Department of Labor grants in 2007 that support the creation of academic and occupational skill pathways for youth returning from delinquent placement to augment their core academic skills, and to support a variety of educational and employment interventions for youth who are at high risk of being involved in gangs or the juvenile justice system.

²³ Philadelphia Council for College and Career Success, First Meeting document, December 17, 2008.

²⁴ Project U-Turn, "Where Are We Now? An Update to the Community," November 2007, http://www.projectuturn.net/downloads/pdf/WhereAreWeNow_hi_res.pdf.

SAN DIEGO, CA

Best Practice Examples in:

- ✓ **Convening Entity**
- ✓ **Delivery Agent**
- ✓ **Partnership with Education**
- ✓ **Partnership with Child Welfare**

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Overview

The San Diego School-to-Career Youth Council is the primary policy body that addresses youth issues under the Workforce Investment Act. The Council faces the challenge of addressing barriers for a significant number of disconnected young people. Nearly 4,000 teens are not attending school and not working and around 15,000 young adults 18-24 are also not attending school and not working²⁵. The Council reports to the Workforce Investment Board and is staffed by the San Diego Workforce Partnership. The Council is the driving force behind emerging or youth workforce development, and is a collaborative partnership among employers, educators, community-based organizations, parents and youth. The Council has three standing committees – the Capacity Building committee, the Executive Committee and the Youth Advisory committee – and often forms committees on a time-sensitive or as-needed basis.

The Youth Council's mission is to build and support a regional youth workforce system and to manage state and federal workforce development funds on behalf of vulnerable youth throughout San Diego County. Its three overarching goals are: to provide quality training programs to the most needy youth, to build a bridge between the local workforce system and stakeholder groups and to build and sustain a strong governing body and structure²⁶.

The San Diego Workforce Partnership staffs and supports the San Diego Youth Council and works to implement the youth workforce system strategic plan developed and guided by the council. The Workforce

²⁵ Kids Count 2007 Data, the Annie E. Casey Foundation Web site, <http://www.aecf.org/MajorInitiatives/KIDSCOUNT.aspx>.

²⁶ San Diego Workforce Partnership Web site, <http://www.sandiegowork.com/>.

Partnership oversees programs that help at-risk youth plan and achieve their educational goals and secure employment through a network of community-based, youth-service providers. The Workforce Partnership provides a comprehensive, countywide system of services to youth through a network of youth services agencies, schools and the One-Stop Career Center Network. Roughly 1,000 youth receive services through WIA funding.

Major Accomplishments

The leadership of the San Diego Youth Council and the Workforce Partnership has made a strategic choice to concentrate funding and programming on targeted groups of at-risk youth, including foster and former foster youth transitioning to self-sufficiency and youth returning from juvenile facilities or those involved in the juvenile justice system. The council was able to do this by bringing the “right” people to the table. In the last four years, council leadership revamped the membership to include strategic leaders that represent these targeted youth populations within other systems. Together, these leaders assessed what the collective group was funding and how they could maximize their resources. With the appropriate buy-in, the Youth Council was able to “change the funding map” to target dollars specifically to programs that serve the most needy and least served youth in San Diego County.

One example of the “right” person sitting at the table is the Chair of the Youth Council. She brings a comprehensive understanding of youth issues and also sits on San Diego’s Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council (a state-mandated body), is the executive director of the Children’s Initiative, the chair of the state Disproportion Minority Contact Commission, the chair of the Governor’s Afterschool Advisory Board for California and is a Workforce Investment Board member. Because of her role, she

is able to strategize how these entities can partner better and how resources can be effectively leveraged. Other examples of leaders sitting at the table are the chief probation officer for the county, the dean of Economic & Workforce Development at San Diego Community College District and the executive director of the Commission on Gang Prevention and Intervention. All bring a unique, yet essential perspective into the decision-making process.

Among other accomplishments, the Youth Council spearheaded the San Diego Youth Resource Mapping Project, which is a user-friendly database of organizations that provide services core to the local youth system to improve the education and employment services available for youth across San Diego County. The purpose of the database is to improve the responsiveness of workforce preparation programs to better serve youth, build toward a comprehensive system that is responsive to needs identified by the community, educate the community about the value of youth workforce preparation services, increase the availability and access of youth workforce preparation services, and increase community and youth participation in youth workforce preparation program design²⁷.

Education

San Diego Community College District has recently developed a Career Pathways for After School Staff (CPASS), modeled after work around Career Advancement Academies, in partnership with San Diego Workforce Partnerships, Children’s Initiative and San Diego City College (SDCC). CPASS is in the first year of this bridge program that offers basic skill remediation, college readiness courses, selected coursework in career pathways, along with work experience and employment in afterschool facilities. The courses are taught in cohorts that create learning

²⁷ <http://www.sandiegootwork.com/generate/html/Youth/youthmappingpage.html>.

communities targeted at WIA eligible, young adults with an eighth grade competency. The program also offers a counselor throughout the entirety of the program to help navigate the system²⁸. The Chancellor committed \$1.5 million statewide for a two-year project for five of these programs. SDWP is providing the planning and the development and used their provider network to help enroll their participants into community college and connect to employment. Youth maintain their case management from WIA program's supportive services component as well as receive counseling and support staff at the SDCC campus. Youth receive \$800 in support services to help pay for transportation, child care, and other living expenses.

Child Welfare

The San Diego Workforce Partnership awarded six community planning grants to help direct community investment strategies across systems, foster inter-agency agreements and relationships, and encourage the formation and the continued growth of collaboratives that focus on the development of coordinated educational and workforce strategies for youth. The Workforce Partnership staff as well as members of the Capacity Building Sub-Committee on the Youth Council are participating in each of the six collaboratives²⁹.

One example of a community planning grant is the a large set-aside from SDWP's WIA formula dollars leveraged with the County's Child Welfare Services resources to provide Independent Living Services that have a strong workforce, education and youth development focus to current and former foster youth as they transition out of the foster care system.

ILS/WIA foster youth services is a partnership between San Diego County's Independent Living

Services with the Workforce Partnership to provide, under one joint contract, both independent living skills plus workforce development skills to youth transitioning from the system. Youth receive work readiness training, work preparation, employment opportunities, youth development services and independent living services such as identifying educational barriers, long-term mentoring, incentives to reinforce learning to encourage participation in activities and/or achievement of goals, individual service strategy with a youth-centered approach, and follow-up services to assist youth sustaining a successful transition³⁰.

Another example of collaboration in San Diego that enhances services for foster or former foster youth is one between the Workforce Partnership, the County Child Welfare Services, the nonprofit New Horizons, and the San Diego Office of Education to support San Pasqual Academy (SPA). SPA is a residential educational campus designed specifically for foster teens that live and learn at the academy as they prepare for college and/or a career path³¹. San Pasqual Academy is the first residential education campus for foster youth in the nation and was developed in response to the critical issues that many foster youth experienced such as high numbers of placements, lack of fully developed independent living skills and exiting the foster care system without earning a high school diploma³².

Juvenile Justice

Another example of a community planning grant awarded by the Workforce Partnership is a large set-aside from WIA formula dollars to serve adjudicated youth transitioning out of juvenile detention centers. This is a partnership between the Workforce Partnership and the County Probation Office. The San Diego County Office of Education, Juvenile

²⁸ CCRY Network Winter 2009 Meeting Summary, <http://www.ccrnetwork.org/reports/winter2009summary.pdf>.

²⁹ San Diego Workforce Partnership Web site.

³⁰ San Diego Workforce Partnership Web site.

³¹ San Pasqual Academy Web site, <http://www.sanpasqualacademy.org/>.

³² San Pasqual Academy Web site.

Courts and Community Schools and Second Chance Strive were awarded this funding. The San Diego County Office of Education's (SDCOE) Juvenile Court and Community Schools (JCCS) Youth One-Stop Career Centers offer various programs to prepare JCCS students ages 16 to 21 for job and career prospects.

The Workforce Partnership also supports the Youthful Offender Re-Entry Program that provides assessment, work-readiness training, and behavior modification training while a young person is incarcerated. Subsequently, it provides post-release intensive case management, educational support and job placement. The program also helps identify employers, eliminate employment barriers, and help youth obtain a GED or diploma. The Work-force Partnership drafted the RFP based on specific recommendations from probation about their identified needs.

The Workforce Partnership is also an active partner with the City of San Diego Commission on Gang Prevention & Intervention and funds secondary school-based gang prevention programs that provide year-round work readiness and educational support to youth ages 14 to 16. The Commission's Strategic Action Plan works to bring cooperation and accountability within the city to quell gang-violence. The plan includes the use of technical teams composed of various city agencies, including a strong workforce component, that would meet monthly and be responsible for producing reports to the Commission on Gang Prevention that the action plan would create³³.

³³ CCRY Network 2008 Summer Meeting Summary, CCRY Network Web site, <http://www.ccrystnetwork.org/reports/BostonNewsletterFinal.pdf>.

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^{liii} Boston Private Industry Council Web site,
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^{liiii} Boston Private Industry Council Web site,
<http://www.bostonpic.org/employers>.

^{liv} Boston Private Industry Council Web site,
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About CLASP

Since 1968, CLASP has been a trusted resource, a creative architect for systems change, and one of the country's most effective voices for low income people. CLASP's mission is to develop and advocate for policies at the federal, state, and local levels that improve the lives of low income people. In particular, we seek policies that work to strengthen families and create pathways to education and work.

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policy solutions that work for low-income people

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