

PARTNERSHIPS *for* SHARED ACCOUNTABILITY: MAKING SYSTEMS WORK *for* YOUTH

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CCRY Network
Communities Collaborating to Reconnect Youth

CLASP
Policy solutions that work for low-income people

Communities Collaborating to Reconnect Youth (CCRY) was born out of the Youth Opportunity Movement (YO), a grant program authorized under the Workforce Investment Act. After the grant ended in 2005, 15 YO grantees formed the CCRY Network to build on the gains that YO had made possible.

For the last 13 years, CLASP and FHI 360 have facilitated semiannual convenings for CCRY communities to connect policy to practice, discuss local and state implications of federal policy, grapple with funding and implementation questions, and share challenges and promising strategies.

The Fall 2019 meeting was held in Los Angeles, California, focused on *Partnerships for Shared Accountability: Making Systems Work for Youth*. During this 2.5-day learning exchange, participants were hosted at three different sites in the LA area: City of Los Angeles Economic and Workforce Development Department, Los Angeles Trade-Tech College, and Boyle Heights Technology Youth Center. At each site, the CCRY members concentrated on the following topics: Performance Partnership Pilots (P3), cross sector collaboration between local workforce and mental health systems, and authentic youth engagement. Through this experience, participants were able to exchange knowledge and generate new ideas for their work.



DAY ONE AT-A-GLANCE: *Welcome • Introductions • Overview • Icebreakers • Big Picture: Federal Policy and Our Response • Mental Health Meets Workforce*

Mental Health Cross Agency Collaboration

We began the CCRY Convening at the City of Los Angeles Economic and Workforce Development Department with a Mental Health Institute discussing workforce development and mental health systems collaboration. Because adolescence is a prime developmental period for the onset of mental health conditions and symptoms, youth may need mental health supports as well as access to economic opportunities to successfully transition to adulthood.

The Mental Health Institute was divided into three sections:

1. **An overview** of *Looking at Life Different: Equitable Mental Health Support for Young Adult Parents*. During this discussion, participants mapped their own experiences with youth and young adult parents on flip chart paper.
2. **Opioid Crisis and SUPPORT ACT**. CLASP released a brief, *Between the Lines: Understanding Our Country's Racialized Response to the Opioid Epidemic*, about the impact of the opioid crisis in various communities of color and the failure of policy responses to address them. CCRY partners commented on possible policy solutions such as debt-free college, a diverse workforce, and support for treatment of substance abuse

more broadly, to include drugs such as heroin and cocaine. These recommendations stem from an understanding that economic justice and health equity are interrelated and required for the opioid crisis to be addressed equitably.

3. **Members discussed ways to collaborate** with local and national mental health resources such as those listed in [this Mental Health Resource Guide](#), which CLASP prepared specifically for the communities represented at the meeting.

Spotlight: New Jersey

New Jersey received \$5 million in federal funding from the SUPPORT Act (legislation to provide people with treatment for opioid addiction) to address the opioid crisis. The NJ Department of Labor released an RFP that offered \$600k of that for community-based organizations (CBOs) to broaden access to mental health specialists for youth affected, directly or indirectly, by any substance abuse. The RFP included best practice examples but placed minimal restrictions on the funds so that CBOs could propose the uses best suited to their needs. New Jersey hopes to gain an understanding of what's working and what's not, which will inform future RFPs.



DAY TWO AT-A-GLANCE: LA Spotlight: Performance Partnership Pilot (P3) • Tour of LA Trade Technical College • Youth Leadership Fishbowl • Principles of Quality Pre-Apprenticeship • Small Group Breakouts • Large Group Share-Out & Wrap-Up

Systems and Youth Partnerships

The next day, the CCRY community moved to Los Angeles Trade-Tech College for a full-day discussion about how Los Angeles leverages public and private partnerships to advance outcomes for Opportunity Youth through the city and county's Performance Partnership Pilots (P3). We also held a Youth Leadership Fishbowl focused on building effective partnerships with young people.

P3 was born out of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014. P3s allow states, localities, and Tribes to pilot better ways of improving outcomes for Opportunity Youth by giving them additional flexibility in using discretionary funds across multiple federal programs. Under the current legislation, the federal government authorizes waivers for cities to use portions of their grants from several departments (Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education as well as the Corporation for National and Community Service, the Institute of Museum and Library Sciences, Department of Housing and Urban Development, and Department of Justice) to implement P3s. Through P3s, cities are able to coordinate services across agencies to provide education, training and employment, as well as social service interventions to improve health and social-emotional wellbeing.

In Los Angeles, city and county agencies are developing creative ways to serve Opportunity Youth. Los Angeles wants to improve the education, employment, housing, physical and mental wellbeing of Opportunity Youth by collaborating and coordinating across agencies and the public and private sectors. One strategy to achieve this goal was to use the YouthSource Centers for community-based

organizations and city and county agencies to operate Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) youth programs and dropout recovery and reengagement services in partnership with the Los Angeles Economic and Workforce Development Department (EWDD) and Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). Through P3 implementation, EWDD and LAUSD learned that buy-in and collaboration at every point — developing programs, serving youth, and evaluation of the services — are vital for the system to work effectively.



Spotlight: Los Angeles Trade Technical College

LA Trade Technical College is a 2-year vocational college preparing students (primarily black and brown youth) for recession-proof jobs. LA Trade Tech creates courses based on the trends of the labor market and the demand of the students. In the college's mechanics program, students are learning how to fix fuel-based cars, hybrid cars, and electric cars. With these types of skills, students can leave the school with an earning potential of more than \$80,000 per year.

The second day ended with a Youth Leadership Fishbowl, during which CCRY members listened to young adults discussing authentic youth and adult collaboration. The youth leaders provided valuable feedback gained from their experience navigating programs and organizing in their communities. Participants emphasized key points and principles we already uphold and value:

1. **Value lived experience.** People who are closest to the problem are closest to the solution.
2. **Shared leadership is horizontal, not vertical;**

3. **Shift narrative and culture** and allow youth to be their whole and authentic selves.
4. **Your network is your net worth;** create opportunities for youth to learn and grow, as well as build social networks and social capital.
5. **Make space, take space;** youth already in leadership roles can make room for new and younger youth leaders.

DAY 3 AT-A-GLANCE: Recap and Preview • LA Spotlight: Partners for Juvenile Justice and Workforce Development • Tour of Boyle Heights Technology YouthSource Center • Debrief of Tour • 2020 Priorities • Adjourn

Coordinating Between Systems

We closed the CCRY convening at Boyle Heights Technology YouthSource Center, which provides comprehensive case management services focused on developing youth assets and strengths. For our last LA Spotlight: Partners for Juvenile Justice and Workforce Development, we heard from agencies working together to reduce recidivism. Among the many lessons shared, two best practices examples stand out:

1. **Co-case management:** Often, juvenile justice and workforce development agencies provide case management services to the same youth. Co-case management is an extension of wraparound services that allows both agencies to stay up to date on the youth's whereabouts, progress, and interactions with other agencies.
2. **Automatic referral system:** Confidentiality laws often prevent cross-agency data sharing, but an electronic referral system can help keep track of youth and the services they are receiving, including

notifying the youth's contact when they miss services or programs.

Spotlight: The RightWay Foundation

The RightWay Foundation works to end the Foster Care to Prison pipeline in LA. When youth transition out of foster care as young adults, they are more likely to experience homelessness or be impacted by the criminal justice system. The RightWay Foundation provides employers and prosecutors with trauma-informed training. They work with employers like Bloomingdale's to train their staff on how to identify triggers and intervene without going to HR so that young people can be successful in these jobs.



Artist: John Zender Estrada

MOVING FORWARD

Entering a new decade, we challenged ourselves to think about a collective advocacy agenda.

This is a pivotal year for young people, advocates, and practitioners alike. Not only will it be a new decade, but it brings a new election cycle. This will be an opportunity for new policy ideas, systems change, and possibly bigger funding streams and investments. During our time in Los Angeles, we gathered input from the CCRY Network on 2020 priorities, resulting in the following broad themes that workforce development and employment strategies and policies for youth should focus on:

- **Removing barriers** to serve immigrant youth and young adults, including documented, DACAmented, and undocumented youth
- **Integrating mental health and wellbeing**, such as trauma-informed practices and policies
- **Cross-agency collaboration** with criminal justice and juvenile justice agencies
- **Equitable access** for vulnerable populations (such as LGBTQIA+, foster youth, and youth experiencing homelessness)

In 2020, the CCRY Network will look more closely at ways to influence national policy. Now is the time to reach out to elected officials and legislators about the insights, challenges, and successes communities have had making federal youth legislation, such as WIOA, work for youth and young adults.