Building Your Year-Round Youth System

Training Packet Produced By School & Main Institute

One of twelve training packets created for Texas Workforce Board regions as part of the Texas Workforce Commission Youth Program Initiative.

You may download additional copies of this packet or any in the series from the Board & Network Partners area of the Texas Workforce Commission website: www.twc.state.tx.us/customers/bnp/bnp.html.

Building Your Year-Round Youth System

TRAINING GOALS

- Understand how to identify developmentally appropriate practices for younger and older youth.
- Explore different opportunities for year-round services.
- Look at models for organizing and managing a collaborative system of year-round youth services.

IN THIS PACKET

Opportunities All Year Round (for Eight Years!)

If you run a youth program or youth center, your calendar may already include a collection of career development activities: an initial assessment; resume writing, workplace readiness, and interviewing workshops; internships; job search help; etc. All good services and topics. "Going year round" could just mean making these same opportunities more readily available in more non-summertime slots: before and after-school, Saturdays, and vacations.

But there's a deeper challenge in WIA's year-round services agenda! You have to think about more than "a year." Imagine you'll work with the EXACT same young person year-round for eight straight years, from 14 to 21, the age range of WIA eligibility.

Lead with this view and you'll not only serve youth more effectively; you'll also open a world of other activity possibilities and provider connections.

This packet is the culminating packet – or a great starting point – in a 12-packet series created for the Texas Workforce Commission's Youth Program Initiative. As such, it's a bit different than the other packets in the series. You won't find in-depth implementation 'how to's' here. For those, look for the packets on work-based learning, case management, mentoring, and other specific practices.

Instead, this packet is designed to spark ideas and help you organize practices into a coherent, developmentally appropriate system. You'll find a sample flow of year-round activities for younger and older youth, as well as guiding principles and several tools you can use to plot and plan your system of services.

Designing Developmentally: Practice Checks

The starting point for this packet is practice...what youth specialists, mentors, employers, and young people actually do together. There you have no shortage of possibilities. On the contrary, you have an incredibly rich tradition of career and youth development activities to draw from. School-to-career, youth leadership initiatives, educational reform – as a country, we're well into one of the most sustained drives we've ever had to design effective youth strategies.

However, your goal is to do more than fill your calendar, One-Stop center, or youth initiative with activities and employment resources. A youth center open throughout the year is a great start to – but by no means the end of – a strong year-round youth services system.

Youth ages 14-21 are on an incredibly steep developmental trajectory. They can also be rather services averse. With youth, arguably more so than with adults, you need to design developmentally and strategically. Which practices make sense? Why? And one of the most important questions for youth providers, when and in what sequence?

Wouldn't it be ideal if someone could just give you a tried-and-true, 100% effective 'eight year youth development curriculum' or model? While individual programs are getting close to having such a thing, communities as a whole aren't. Yet, in many ways, that's exactly how the year-round services push is asking you to think.

Instead of a curriculum, you have a virtual puzzle of practices, programs and possibilities to assemble:

- Year-round time slots you might use
- Existing career/youth development activity
- Employer and economic development activity
- New opportunities, i.e., community needs youth might address
- Youth providers
- Partners
- WIA and other resources

In the next section of this packet, you'll find calendars packed with ideas and resources, an amalgam of youth practices from around the country. There are even more examples and websites in the back of the packet. The intent is to inspire you with possibilities. Job placement support, interest inventories and resume-writing workshops represent a small fraction of the methods you might use!

The intent is also to overwhelm you a bit. With so many practices to choose from, activities usually aren't the problem. Making sure they are effective is. You need a methodology for selecting, sequencing, and evaluating activities – for turning them into a system of services.

HERE ARE FOUR TESTS OR "CHECKS" YOU CAN USE TO PLAN, FOCUS, ADJUST, AND EVEN ASSESS YOUR PRACTICES:

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One:	Deliverables Check
Two:	Developmental Check
Three:	Cluster Check
Four:	Reality Check!

ONE: DELIVERABLES CHECK

The term "career development" is a catch-all. Hear it, and most people envision interest inventories, resumes, job searches, a meeting with a career counselor... On the other hand, career development is a mushy, amorphous term. Its definition and the activities it encompasses depend on the person using it.

In addition, youth providers ideally deliver services within a holistic youth development framework. You're ready to go beyond career development support to provide or refer youth to other services. That's a good thing, but it also creates a potential weakness: breadth but no depth in your targeted service area, career preparation.

In order to maintain the focus, you need to know your programmatic bottom line. Your client has come to you for career and training help. At the end of the day, at the end of the week, what should your menu of career development activities help youth do, develop, or achieve? Do your activities directly and explicitly support these "deliverables"?

When you strip away 'activity'-based language, most career development – and WIA youth element – activity is designed to support one or more of the following day-to-day deliverables:

DIAMOND OF DELIVERABLES

Plans

Informed Decisions and Transitions

Skills

Workplace and Community Experience

It's a simple diamond to look at, yet powerful as a youth services planning tool. Start by using it as a framework to identify strengths and gaps in existing activities. Do you have activities that support "informed decisions and transitions?" Do you know what the key decision and transition points are?

Next, use the diamond to review the purpose of activities. Are they delivering what you need? For example, could a short-term workplace experience like a job shadow support the development of specific "skills"? It could with the right tweaks; for example, if you ask youth to help plan the event or bring back a project idea they can work on. Are youth working on one "plan" for their post-high school life, or do they have multiple plans and planning skills that will help them deal with contingencies or uncertainty?

TWO: DEVELOPMENTAL CHECK

There's a measure of psychology to the design of year-round youth services. Youth in this age range are in such transition. It's important to understand where they are coming from and what they're going through developmentally. Services need to be 'age and stage' appropriate: an interesting challenge when, in the course of a day, you might provide 'career' support to a 14-year old and a 21-year old. One-size-fits-all services definitely don't work for all WIA youth or people working with them. You are very clearly dealing with different sizes!

However, there's something about career development...it's easy to depend on a standard set of activities and reuse them across age ranges, youth and adult. Refract your practices against what we know about adolescent and young adult developmental characteristics and needs. Do you see different "sizes"?

A classic example:
Resumes and younger youth. In our eagerness to provide career exploration support, we'll ask any age group to do resumes. Younger youth tell you themselves: it's frustrating. They have nothing [authentic] to write about. This is a tip-off. Developmental adjustments needed! It's more age and stage appropriate to have

them write a resume for someone they admire – a famous person, business, community, or family member, etc. You get at the skills but the purpose is actually workplace and community exploration, a good developmental match.

Doing resumes with older youth? Are they just writing them and turning them in, much like they would a paper in school? Let an employer or someone else who actually hires review them – not just a youth specialist or career counselor. Have the employer talk with youth about good and bad resumes they've seen. Many people who hire can give such great concrete examples of things they've seen that didn't go over well or that really worked. You've connected youth with people outside school and home in a way that is authentic and meaningful.

Of course, age and maturity don't always match up neatly. Staff need to look for developmental clues and cues – signs that a young person is ready for a particular experience or stage (an internship, job, etc.) One-on-one mentoring is not for every young person; nor is a job. Small group mentoring or job rotations might be a more appropriate development match.

Strong year-round youth programs will frequently include activities specifically designed to reveal a young person's developmental assets and needs. Some will tier activities and ask youth to demonstrate readiness before moving upward and onward. Others are prepared with activities that can help a young person address needs unmet at an earlier stage.

Ages & Stages: Youth Development

Young Child, Ages 6-11

Characteristics
- Moving from playing to competency development, confidence in abilities
- Internalizing rules
- Developing social relationships
- Learning to stand up for themselves
- Learning to deal with failure
- Filled with boundless energy

Needs
- Challenging, meaningful opportunities to discover own skills, interests, and strengths
- Chances to prove themselves to themselves and others
- Physical activity

Adolescent, Ages 12-17

Characteristics
- Defining identity and role
- Thinking abstractly
- Developing a philosophy of life, a personal value system
- Breaking home and family dependencies; forming new loyalties
- Looking for limits or setting them (stereotyping) in order to establish their identity
- Worrying about money

Needs
- Small group settings
- Open discussions of values
- Respect
- Chances to explore and experiment with identity and role in society
- Meaningful participation and contributions
- Opportunities to set own rules and policies
- Positive role models – especially peers
- High-quality, supportive adult relationship(s)

Transitional Adult, 18-21

Characteristics
- Developing independent living and self-advocacy skills
- Testing reality
- Changing friendship patterns
- Establishing a network of social/community supports
- Achieving balance between family support and independence
- Experiencing change and uncertainty in career and personal areas of life
- Making own major life decisions
- Marketing themselves, advocating for themselves

Needs
- Bridging support between youth and adult services and systems
- Opportunities to develop multiple plans – contingency plans
- Communication and organizational skill development
- Personal and professional networking opportunities

THREE: CLUSTER CHECK

The idea of pathways and career clusters as a way to organize career exploration and preparation is fairly well-established in career preparation circles – in concept; less so in practice. That is, youth frequently research a career field to see what occupations are available and the skills and education needed. However, clusters provide more organizational power than simply framing research. Clusters can help you frame and sequence practices.

For example, pick one career cluster area, "Health Science," from the 16 States Career Clusters:

- How do youth know about clusters in general?
- Where and when would they get their first exposure to opportunities in Health Science?
- How do they get a local and national view of career opportunities?
- What skills do they need to develop? What project and work-based learning opportunities are available to help them?
- Are there employers in the cluster area that can help give shape and form to services you offer?

Very often a cluster check turns up spotty coverage. Career clusters exist mainly on paper but aren't used to help recruit and organize projects, mentors, job placements, and so on. In contrast, employers, colleges, and workforce boards have combined forces and practices into terrific pathway exploration and training models.

FOUR: YOUTH REALITY CHECK

The ultimate reality check: youth themselves. We use the term "youth-friendly" frequently. But what does it really mean? What are the characteristics of youth-friendly practices? Matching developmental needs is surely on the list. Go directly to youth to find out other important criteria!

Even a basic question about their career exploration experiences – what's worked and what hasn't will uncover important information. A recent survey of high school juniors and seniors around the country turned up findings like these[1]:

- 78% said that one or both parents were the people primarily responsible for helping them plan for a career or job.
- Just over half of youth reported that no one at high school was especially helpful about jobs or careers; 25% said that teachers were.
- As for people outside immediate family and school, fewer than 5% said that an employer or mentor helped; 23 % said a relative helped; 13%, a neighbor or a friend. 46% said no one helped.
- 72% said they wanted to be educated to pursue careers in a variety of job areas, not just one.
- Nearly all picked their course of study or jobs for one of four reasons: "It's something I like." "It's something I'm good at." "I want to help people." "I've always been interested in it."

Practices need to reflect or address natural youth patterns. If family, friends, and teachers are critical points of contact and connection, how can services enhance or support this "reality principle"?

[1] "Decisions without Direction: Career Guidance and Decision-Making among American Youth." Ferris State University Career Institute for Education and Workforce Development, National Association of Manufacturers, May 2002.

Among other things, youth send strong signals about where and how they prefer to access support, and the relevancy of the support. Services must be accessible, flexible, and non-judgmental. It's not a case of "If you build it, they will come." Many youth are tentative – even afraid of – "services," service agencies and centers. Or for reasons of transportation, schedule, and inclination, they don't access services the way an adult might: another reality principle that thoughtful workforce programs look at straight on. Staff at Tri-County Youth Works in Golden, Colorado post youth job opportunities to their website weekly and handle inquiries online – a simple, practical service that area youth love. Other workforce boards go where youth already go, a mall or public library, for example, where they won't be stigmatized.

Talking with youth is more than just good customer service and a quick "youth friendly" check. Youth are your partners-in-design and delivery. From marketing to skill-building topics to resource and partner development, they'll have vital design input and energy to invest. Here are a few of the things youth around the country have done to ensure that services match youth reality:

- Created a youth-friendly One-Stop guide
- Surveyed area youth and employers about needs
- Managed the youth activities budget; approved mini-grants for youth-related projects
- Served on youth councils
- Evaluated community-based organizations providing youth services
- Helped staff youth centers
- Participated in or helped facilitate staff training

The next section of this packet presents a sample flow of activities, in two year

blocks of time. Note that the focus is deliberately on career development elements – delivered within the framework (but not including all possible elements) of a broader youth development approach. After you review, use Activity One at the end of the packet to try your hand at outlining and analyzing your system of practices and opportunities. Then go back and review your calendar using the 'checks' presented in this section.

Years at a Glance: Youth Ages 14-15

IDENTITY AND EXPERIMENTATION YEARS

Big Decisions
Who am I? Where do I fit? What are my major (non-family!) relationships and peer loyalties?
What's my approach to high school courses and opportunities? Where do I get spending money?!

FALL

After-school/Saturday Skill Builders
• High School Survival Skills
• "Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens"

My H.S. Mission
Create a high school mission statement.

Career Sleuth
Interview/research three people: friends, family, or famous. Write bios or resumes.

Around Town/Community Scavenger Hunt
Teams hunt to identify businesses, career and community leadership opportunities around town.

SPRING

Skill Builders
• TAKS Jocks - State Test Prep
• Speaking and Writing Your Way to Success
• Computer Crash Course

Mini-Apprenticeships
6-8 week team projects in various career cluster areas with mentor as coach.

Groundhog Shadow Day
Participate in national shadow day event

College Tours
Visit at least two area college campuses to compare and contrast. Sit in on courses, meet older youth.

Sophomore Smarts
Help with sophomore year course plans and goal-setting; ask older youth to provide tips.

Summer Job Fair
Including a "Ready for Your First Job?" workshop.

SUMMER

Job Tryouts
Career exploration/employability activities with 3-4 job rotations at various business & community organizations (one week or full summer program).

Community Corps
Meet with leaders and community groups to identify summer community service projects. Academic credit for service learning if possible.

FALL

Skill Builders
• Money In, Money Out – Money Management Skills
• Computer Skills – Very Visual Presentations

Powerful Portfolios
Session on professional portfolio examples. Youth begin own portfolio.

Life Map
Draw a funky picture/map of life so far and major decisions, forks in the road, etc. Add to show possible future direction(s) through old age.

My Life, Your Life
Youth and parents map and compare their personal histories, childhood, career dreams and experiences in fun, social gathering.

More Mini-Apprenticeships
6-8 week projects with mentor/coach (youth pick new career area).

SPRING

Skill Builders
• Car Parts – Buying & Maintaining Your First Car
• Cool Tools for Career Planning

Groundhog Shadow Day

Vocation Vacation
One-week mini-internship at a local business/organization during spring vacation.

Junior Jumpstart
Help with junior year decisions; tips from older youth.

Mentor or Internship Hunt
Begin process to match youth with mentor or internship for junior and senior year (group pre-match activities).

Summer Job Fair
Including a job search skills workshop.

SUMMER

Neighborhood Leadership Internship
Help an area non-profit or community/civic group for 6-8 weeks.

Entrepreneurs' Camp
One week program on entrepreneurship and business skills. Teams create business/marketing plan for a new product.

Years at a Glance: Youth Ages 16-18

ASPIRATION AND AUTONOMY YEARS

BIG DECISIONS
What am I good at? What do I like? What don't like? Where and how do I best learn?
What will I do next? How will I pay for it?

FALL
After-School/Saturday Skill Builders
• No Fear-Test Taking Skills
• People Skills
• Computer Skills – Word Processing & Business Writing

Living Career Research
List 5 jobs/occupations youth interested in. Interview person who does each (phone or in person).

Micro-Society/Mini-REAL
Mock community project. Youth assume roles, jobs to see if they can make personal and community life thrive.

One-to-One Mentoring or Internship
Mentor/supervisor, youth, and others meet to create learning plan.

Employability Certificate Program
Youth earn certificate, validated by area employers, for career development/job readiness activities completed.

SPRING
Skill Builders
• 'Educational Access Rooms' – second chance to catch up on missed credits
• Dream Job, Dream Home

Groundhog Shadow Day

Follow the Leader Day & Youth Town Meeting
Youth shadow community leaders, attend meetings. Discuss recommendations at Youth Town Meeting event.

Business or Organization Case Study
Youth pairs/small teams research a business or company and its industry. Interview employees, managers. Present findings (specific need or general).

Senior Savvy
Help with senior year plans and goal-setting; panel of older youth with tips, do's & don'ts

Summer Job Fair
Including how to create your own work-based learning plan.

SUMMER
Youth Mapping
Map youth opportunities and community needs. Evaluate services to youth.

Garden Pros
Spend summer growing food for local shelters. Learn produce growers' business skills.

Campus Tryout
Summer course or program at local college campus. Emphasis on special certification programs, financial aid, application process. Meet youth and faculty in programs.

Summer of Work & Learning
3-6 youth and 1 educator/ youth specialist work as team at one work site.

Summer Job or Internship
Youth have work-based learning plan with skill development, industry exploration goals.

FALL
Skill Builders
• Local and National Career Trends
• College Clinic with Admissions Staff – Applications, Essay, & Financial Aid Tips
• Did You Know? Training and Service Opportunities after High School

Meet the Employer 'Open Shops'
Area employers host afternoon open houses for youth and families with tour, career info, and demonstrations.

Saturday Parent Academy
Workshops for parents on how to help their children transition from high school to college, work, etc.

Graduation Challenge
Youth design final one-month career project for high school or GED program completion. Exhibit to team that includes educator, employer in that field.

SPRING
Skill Builders
• Real Deal: Things Every Grad Should Know How to Do
• Truth from Youth – Life after Graduation
• Hidden Job Market

Groundhog Shadow Day

Open House for High School/College Counselors
Invite area counselors, with youth representatives, to One-Stop for National School Counseling Week.

Mock Interview Morning
Area employers and leaders give youth firsthand interview practice.

Vacation Career Institute
Business and community representatives teach mini-sessions on skills, workplace situations.

Best of My Best Portfolio
Youth present examples of best high school, job, or program-related work.

SUMMER
College Material
Session on how to navigate college or advanced training; study tips, balancing courses, work, and life.

Summer Job or Internship
Youth have work-based learning plan with skill development, industry exploration goals.

Years at a Glance: Youth Ages 18-19
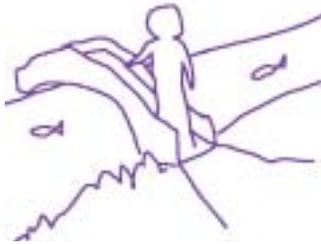
TRANSITION AND INDEPENDENCE YEARS

BIG DECISIONS
Where and how will I live? How do I cover my living expenses?
Do I like the career/life choices I'm pursuing? What additional training or experience do I need to develop my skills?

FALL

Skill Builders
- Turning 18 – Legal Rights & Responsibilities
- Help Wanted! – Job Ads, Applications, Interviews
- Independent Living Skills
- College Survival Skills
- Gearing Up for the GED

Emergency Job Search Clinic
Special job search workshop for new grads/new GED completers.

Meet the Trainers
Workshop on area training and certification programs – employer, post-secondary, and community-based organizations. Focus on single or multiple career areas.

Bank on It
Youth visit local bank; learn savings & retirement account info.

SPRING

Skill Builders
- Stress Management
- Tax Attack – How to File
- TASP (state college exam) Prep
- Life after the GED

Never Too Late
Information session on area college and training programs. Tips on applying.

Community Visitor's Guide
With area business group and historical society, produce a practical and historical community guide – just in time for summer.

Customer Service Crash Course
Workshop on services skills and practice scenarios, with representatives from area businesses.

SUMMER

Summer Safety Check
Check housing developments, home for the elderly, day care centers for safety – fire detectors, emergency kits, etc. Report on needs and progress on repairs.

Digital Storytelling Project
Combine a course in video production skills with digital projects on community or youth topic/issue.

Mini Career Cluster Academies
1-week programs give youth in-depth feel for career cluster and pathways. Include site visits, skill-building, and information session on clusters linked to area employment needs.

FALL

Skill Builders
- Networking Skills
- All about Benefits
- Got It, Keep It – Staying on the Job

Career Buddies/ Peer Mentoring Program
Older students mentor younger – career clubs, after-school biz clubs, tutoring, science & math experiments

Meet the Alumni
Youth meet alumni from their training or college program to get tips, lessons learned about school and career field.

Virtual Career Circle
Join a moderated online forum or discussion board in career interest area. Make list of questions to ask members about lessons learned, trends in field.

SPRING

Skill Builders
- Alternate Plan B – Handling Career Ups and Downs
- Time Management / Organization Skills
- Dealing with Differences – Diversity & the Workplace

Youth Economic Development Study
Youth do a spending (cash flow) and needs survey of community members to identify new local business opportunities.

Breakfast with Bosses
Youth meet and eat with area supervisors. Discuss career paths to leadership. Mock scenarios to practice boss situations.

SUMMER

Youth-Led Evaluation Project
Youth teams evaluate services provided by community-based organizations.

Youth Annual Report
Research, interview community youth and prepare annual report for city leadership.

Summer Crash Course
6-week series of business math and writing skills workshops.

Years at a Glance: Youth Ages 20-21

ADULT LIVING YEARS

Big Decisions
How do I advance in my career area? How do I change career areas? How do I make and manage professional relationships? How do I balance family, work, community participation, and fun? How do I manage my money?

FALL

Skill Builders
- Marketing Yourself
- Real World Math Skills
- Real Word Writing Skills
- Effective Job Searches

Youth One-Stop Handbook
Youth create a youth-friendly guide to services available through area workforce centers.

Dress for Work, Dress for Play Fashion Show
Partner with area business to hold a fashion show. Proceeds go to youth life/school/ training scholarships.

Project in Parallel
Youth develop work-related learning project. Supervisor or employer may serve as mentor/coach.

Employment Fair
Youth participate in adult job fair. Special job search and readiness workshops/ sessions for youth.

SPRING

Skill Builders
- Influencing without Authority
- What Did You Mean by That? Communication Skills

Women & Work
Celebrate National Business Women's Week. Youth shadow area business women for a day. Ends with workshop(s) on skills and tips.

Youth at the Table
Youth receive stipend to serve on youth advisory groups, councils and community organization boards.

Youth Business Incubator
Small youth teams launch new business or non-profit venture, with business plan and coaching support from area business people/entrepreneurs.

Slack Attack
Fun session on how to handle indecision, loss of career momentum.

SUMMER

Summer Arts Academy
Focus on careers in the arts. Youth and local artists work on visual and performing arts projects. Showcase at summer arts festival.

Neighborhood/Rural Allies
Youth teams are "on call" to groups and people looking for help with community projects.

Summer Crash Course
Series of workshops on soft skills: communication, teamwork, workplace problem-solving.

FALL

Skill Builders
- Turning 21 – Legal Rights & Responsibilities
- Saving for Something Big - Financial Planning Skills

Youth Employment Agency
Youth run a job placement service for and by youth. Alternatively, youth hired to research, post to website, and maintain weekly youth job and internship listings.

Working at Home
Special session on home-based jobs. Tips on how to balance home and family life.

Career Club
Youth with like interests or needs form job/study/training support group.

SPRING

Skill Builders
- Money Matters: Managing a Household Budget
- Managing Others
- Changing Career Choices

Promoters
Youth are hired or given stipends to promote career and college preparation services (peer-to-peer outreach).

Let's Do Lunch
Mentoring program for working youth.

The Next Step
Youth analyze paths and opportunities available in current job, career trends, and how to keep a job and make advancement plans.

Workshops for Working Parents
Series of classes on parenting skills, family resources, and balancing work and family.

SUMMER

Employer Youth Field Day
Youth, job supervisors, mentors, and other area business people "square off" in morning or afternoon of fun field-day style activities (softball game, 'business attire' dress-up relay race, etc.).

20-Something Symposium
Special goal-setting/career planning session on how to navigate your 20's.

Calendar and Career Connections

The year is full of opportunities to highlight particular fields and career-related skills. Think like an elementary school teacher or librarian – well-known for their ability to create a calendar and lessons that highlight special occasions. In many cases, national sponsors provide materials and activities you can use to promote and participate in events. Click events in the calendar below to link to web resources.

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE
Human Resources Month	National Engineers Week	National Agriculture Day	National Youth Service Day	National Police Week	National Safety Month
International Printing Month	National Manufacturing Week	National Business Women's Week	National Dance Week	National Nurses Week	Tech Support Appreciation Day
Health Awareness Week	National School Counseling Week	Law Day USA	Equal Pay Day	National Small Business Week	National Zoo & Aquarium Month
Poverty in the US Awareness Month	Random Acts of Kindness Week	Youth Art Month	Earth Day	National Transportation Week	Entrepreneurs "Do It Yourself" Marketing Month
National Reaching Your Potential Month		American Red Cross Month	Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day	Older Persons Month / National Nursing Home Week	
National Mentoring Month		World Theatre Day	Math Awareness Month	National Historic Preservation Week	
Organize Your Home Day			Stress Awareness Month	Be Kind to Animals Week	
			National Fun at Work Day	Personal History Awareness Month	
			Administrative Professionals Day	Physical Fitness & Sports Month	
				Be a Millionaire Day	

Calendar and Career Connections, Continued

| JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
Cultivate Your Character/ "Character Counts" Month	National Inventors Month	National Civic Participation Week	National Newspaper Week / Newspaper Career Day	World Communication Week	Universal Human Rights Month
National Parks & Recreation Month	Artist Appreciation Month	Labor Day	National Chemistry Week	National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week	International Day of Disabled Persons
National Animal Agriculture Week	National Aviation Week	Full Employment Week	National Customer Service Week	Election Day	International Language Week
National Financial Freedom Day	National Failures Day	International Day of Peace	National Techies Day	Veteran's Day	Underdog Day
Music for Life Week		National Financial Services Week	National Case Management Week	American Education Week	Make Up Your Mind Day
National Purposeful Parenting Month		National Child Care Week	World Space Week	National Family Caregivers Month	
		National Good Neighbor Day	Home-Based Business Week	National Game and Puzzle Week	
			Family History Month	National Authors Day	
			Fire Prevention Week		
			National Cosmetology Month		
			National Boss Day		
			National Higher Education Week		
			Diversity Awareness Month		
			Get Organized Week		
			Train Your Brain Day		
			Clergy Appreciation Day		

Delivering Collaboratively: Systems Check

Good youth practices have a good management and collaboration strategy supporting them. It's a bit easy to see how you might manage some of the activities in the previous section within the context of a single program. Workforce boards and other collaborative youth initiatives have a more complicated management decision to make. How do we structure our effort? How do we organize operations – provider contracts, youth intake, and case management so that youth can (and do) access great opportunities?

A SCAN ACROSS THE COUNTRY TURNS UP VARIOUS REGIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY APPROACHES:

Programmatic
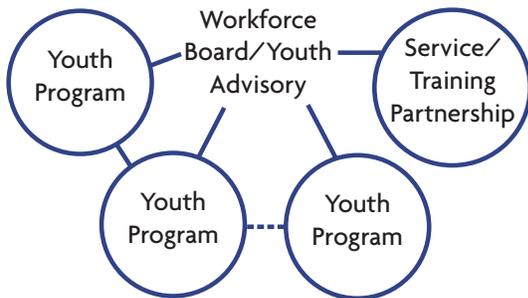
- Individual providers/vendors receive funds to provide services in all WIA youth element areas or a partnership forms to create a new initiative (i.e., an employer-driven training program
- Board may encourage/require provider collaboration
- Providers refer youth to other programs
- Youth specialist/case managers are staff hired and managed by provider. Distinct case management tools/processes

One-Stop
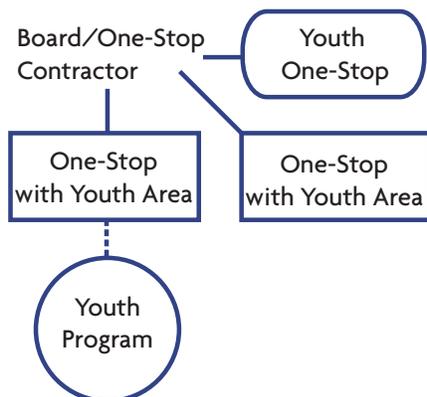
- Services instigated by and delivered primarily at One-Stop center – adult, adult with a youth component, or youth only
- One-Stop staff refer youth to other services as needed
- Some activities/events done in partnership with One-Stop partners or youth providers

Integrated/Multidisciplinary
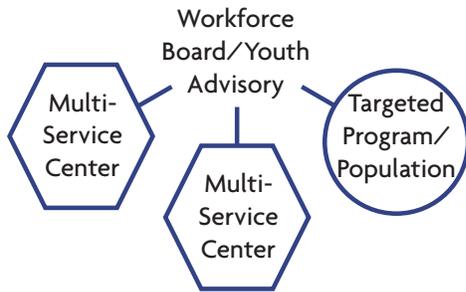
- Active strategy to locate and integrate youth services with other social and community services
- Some funding to 'specialists' – providers that can serve particular youth (out-of-school, disabled, juvenile offenders, etc.)
- Youth program/provider hires youth specialists; case management and services coordinated with staff from other agencies

Central/Team Case Management
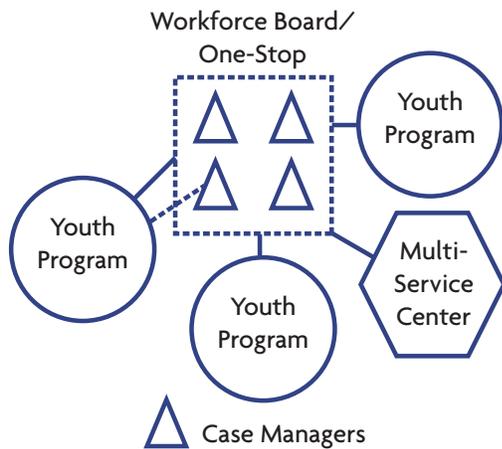
- Separate RFP process for case management services and vendors
- Case managers housed in provider organizations but hired and managed by One-Stop. Function as an interagency team, use same process and tools, and can share cases
- Provide intake and referral services for all vendors

Case Manager as Facilitator
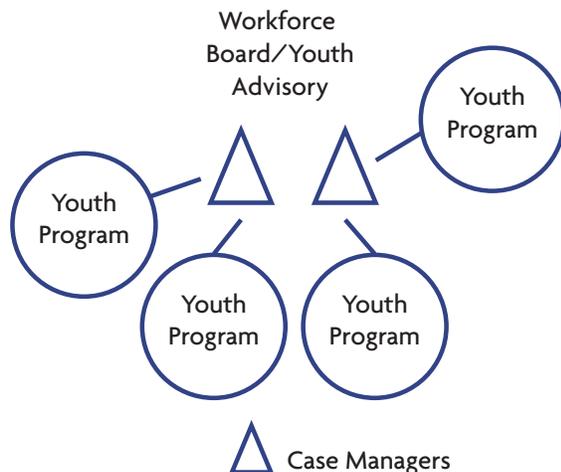
- Youth specialist or case manager serves as 'circuit rider'
- Provides intake and referral support to youth-serving organizations in a particular region or serving particular youth
- Often provides services beyond intake and assessment, i.e., tutoring, career research, job placement

The important thing is to know you have choices and to be deliberate in your approach. Don't go into "push money out the door" or "open youth center" mode without considering your options. You'll end up isolating providers, services, adding to the jumble of youth programs and force-fitting services and programs to youth. There are pros and cons in each one of the approaches described above – and some simply work better in certain situations (i.e., rural regions). Find an approach that best fits your:

- Geography
- Landscape of providers and youth opportunities
- Ability to access youth – and maximize youth access to opportunities
- Ability to foster improved coordination and collaboration among youth organizations

As you review your options, step back from the nuts and bolts of operations and administration every now and then. Think functionally – that is, think about the overall functions you, along with other partners, need to perform in order to effectively coordinate, design, deliver, evaluate, and sustain a system of services. For example:

- Sharing information about available services and resources; identifying potential providers
- Marketing services to youth
- Developing common/shared procedures among frontline staff; nurturing collaborative working relationships

For a more in-depth look at system functions, infrastructure and collaboration, look for two other packets in this training series, Powerful Partnerships and Getting Your Youth Council from Here to There.

Activity One: Visions, Plans and Puzzles

Goal
- Test your ability to see a complete and coherent system in scattered pieces and parts. Fun session warm-up.

Materials
- Blank paper, pens/pencils
- Legos®, Knex®, or other connecting/construction toys or materials

Preparation
- Prepare identical bags of 10-12 building objects, one bag for each team.

Time
- 30 minutes

Instructions

1. Form teams of 3 or 4 people.

2. Place one bag of building materials on each team's table. Team members should NOT touch the bag. Give one person on the team a blank piece of paper and a pencil or pen.

3. At the word "go," one member of each team may open the bag and empty the contents in the center of the table. Without touching any of the objects, your team has 8 minutes to imagine something you could construct with all of the objects. Your task is to write – not draw – instructions for building the design you envision.

   - You are free to discuss ideas or change seats to get a different view of the objects. Again, no team member may touch the objects.
   - No doodling, drawing, or note-taking. Only one person may have paper (for the instructions) at a time.

4. When time is up, teams should leave their building instructions and objects on their table, and then rotate as a team to another table.

5. At your new table (and the word "go"), build the contraption the other team envisioned, per their instructions. You have 5 minutes.

6. After five minutes, stop. How far did teams get? As a large group, discuss the experience:

   - How is this activity like year-round youth system building?!
   - How well did your group articulate a vision for how pieces could fit together? How about instructions?
   - How well did you do following another group's plan?
   - What would have made the exercise easier? What would have made it more challenging?

Activity Two: Practices at a Glance

Goal

- Visually map existing and potential youth opportunities.
- Synchronize activities with youth developmental needs – and employer and community needs and activities.
- Identify gaps in important service areas, age ranges, and time slots. Develop strategies to address them.

Materials

- Practices at a Glance – Worksheet
- Flip chart, markers, and masking tape

Preparation

- Make eight wall-sized copies of the Practices at a Glance worksheet. Optionally, use flip chart paper to recreate the worksheet so that teams can produce large-scale versions of their year-round calendars.

Time

- 1-2 hours (depending on number of teams and whether training or planning activity)

Instructions

PART I: PIECES AND POTENTIAL (15 MINUTES)

1. Form teams of 3-5 people. Ask one member of your team to serve as Recorder. Pick (or be assigned) one of these four topics. Several teams may work on the same topic.

   - Our Community's Youth Stuff
   - Events and Happenings
   - Business and Community Groups
   - Things Youth Do /Places Youth Go

2. Brainstorm a list of as many things as you can think of for your topic – in three minutes.

   For example:

   - For "Youth Stuff," list as many programs, activities, and services as you can.
   - For "Business and Community Groups," list business types, associations, civic groups, community-based organizations.
   - For "Events and Happenings," list community, youth, or neighborhood events, happenings, celebrations and occasions.
   - For "Things Youth Do/Places Youth Go," list places younger and older youth go at different times during the day and on weekends.

   Ask your Recorder to write ideas (neatly) on flip chart paper as fast as your team says them. If team members come from different places or regions, get examples from each person's community. Great ideas are shared that way.

3. When time is up, have a team member read your list to the full group, as quickly as he or she can.

4. Write your topic at the top of your list and post it, together with the lists from other teams, on a common wall of the room. As a large group, stand by the lists and review them quickly again. Jot down notes on anything interesting you want to remember – i.e., an event or youth hot spot you hadn't remembered.

Activity Two: Practices at a Glance, Continued

PART II: PIECING IT TOGETHER (60 – 90 MINUTES)

1. Form teams of 3-5 people. Mix it up! Distribute team members from the previous activity to new teams.

2. With your team, pick one of these youth age ranges: Youth Ages 14-15, Youth Ages 16-17, Youth Ages 18-19, or Youth Ages 20-21

3. Next, imagine what two great (effective, engaging!) service years might look like for a young person in that age range. Your task is to create a wall-sized version of your two-year calendar.

   Plot out your ideas on the Practices at a Glance worksheet first. As you work, think back to the lists from the previous exercise. Did they give you ideas about new methods or strategies?

   At the 20-minute mark, stop and use the "Practice Checks" described in this packet to evaluate your system:

Deliverables Check:	Do the activities support a clear set of tangible, valuable outcomes?
Developmental Check:	Is the activity or your variation of it "age and stage" appropriate?
Cluster Check:	Would youth have access to a continuum of experiences in important career cluster areas?
Youth Reality Check:	Can youth easily and fearlessly access the activities? Would they give a "youth-friendly" stamp of approval?

   Do you see any gaps that need filling? Are activities sequenced well? Continue on! When you feel ready, transfer your ideas to the wall-sized version of your calendar.

4. At the 45-minute mark, stop again. How is your wall calendar? Take 5 minutes to finish up. Spend another 3-4 minutes evaluating your effort. How do you feel overall about your two-year sequence? What was the biggest challenge? What was one of your best ideas?

5. Report out. As a team, present your calendar. Don't read every little detail! Give the group a 2-3 minute overview. What was your basic approach? What are 2-3 three things that happened or ideas you had that everyone should know about?

6. Post your section of calendar, along with those of other teams, on a common wall in the room. Take stock of the full eight-year flow! As a large group, discuss how this system compares with current services.

   Note:

   The goal of this activity is to create an eight-year development view of what services could look like for youth in your area, using all the brain power in the room. The focus is deliberately on career development aspects of youth development. Adjust as needed.

   • If you have fewer people, you might ask teams to do two years.
   • You might want to focus on an underserved or targeted group of youth: out-of-school youth, youth making the transition out of foster care, court-involved youth, etc.
   • You could focus on a particular "deliverable;" for example, plans or work-based learning experiences. Or you might analyze WIA's youth elements – just be sure you articulate the main goal, outcome, or deliverable of elements ("Mentoring is for.....")
   • You can use the activity to frame and develop a new career pathway model.
   • You can look at other – or all – aspects of youth development; for example, health, civic leadership and participation, etc.

Practices at a Glance – Worksheet

Age/Age Group:

Big Decisions:

FALL Community & Calendar Connections	SPRING Community & Calendar Connections	SUMMER Community & Calendar Connections
Possible Practices	Possible Practices	Possible Practices

A – After-School   W-Weekends   B-Breaks (Winter, Spring)
P - Planning   S - Skill Development   E – Workplace & Community Experience   I - Informed Decisions & Transitions

Activity Three: Delivery System at a Glance

Goal
- Examine your current service delivery model to see if it maximizes youth access to year-round opportunities.
- Explore strategies for encouraging or improving coordination among providers and across services.

Materials
- Flip chart, markers, and masking tape
- Delivery System at a Glance Worksheet
- Delivery System Check

Time
- 60 minutes

Instructions

1. Form teams of 4-5 people. Divide up so that people from one organization are distributed across teams.

2. As best you can (and it sometimes takes two or three attempts), draw a picture of your "youth services delivery system." Use the Delivery System at a Glance Worksheet to guide you. (20 minutes)

   Note that you aren't drawing your organizational chart per se. Instead, try to capture the network of players and relationships – partners, referral sources and resources, etc. – that make up your delivery approach.   If you represent a single organization, focus on your organization's system and relationships first. Then, draw in as much as you know about relationships within and across your area workforce system (i.e., area One-Stop centers, other WIA providers, the Workforce Board).

   Put your final system drawing on flip chart paper.

3. Next, use the Delivery System Check worksheet to discuss the implications of your approach in key youth system development areas.

   If you come from different workforce board regions:

1. Take 10 minutes to draw your "youth service delivery system" individually. Your task is the same #2 in the instructions above.

2. Next, take turns showing drawings to each other. Briefly summarize your delivery approach and identify one thing you like about it and one thing that is challenging or doesn't work well.

3. Now identify one example that your team can use as a more in-depth case study. Ask a team member to volunteer his or her organization or workforce region, or put the decision to a vote!

4. Imagine that this organization or region has called your team in. They (represented by your team's volunteer) want your appraisal of their service delivery approach. More to the point, they want suggestions for improvements and validation of things working well. Use the Delivery System at a Glance and System Check worksheets to guide you. Be kind to your volunteer. Organize your line of inquiry!

Delivery System at a Glance

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│                   Our Delivery System                    │
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Draw a picture of your youth services "delivery system."

- What people and organizations help you connect with and serve youth?
- What is your "customer workflow"? How do youth in your community enter your system? What services can a young person access from those "doors" or points of entry? What other organizations or providers are involved in those services?
- Are there any gaps? Missing entry points? Important services youth can't access from entry points you identified?

Delivery System Check

AWARENESS AND EFFECTIVE USE OF AVAILABLE SERVICES, PROVIDERS, RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES

★	★★	★★★	★★★★
limited knowledge of services & eligibility criteria	some knowledge and referral in specific service areas	some knowledge and referral in specific service areas one-time inventory of all youth providers/services, referral increasing	shared, detailed, and routinely updated inventory, active referral

BEST EXAMPLE:
TOP PRIORITY IMPROVEMENT AREA:

YOUTH ACCESS TO YEAR-ROUND OPPORTUNITIES

★	★★	★★★	★★★★
youth have limited or no knowledge of opportunities	specific youth have access to a subset of services, major gaps exist in services	many youth are aware of and can easily access a wide range of services, major services gaps being addressed	all youth have easy access to full menu of youth development services

BEST EXAMPLE:
TOP PRIORITY IMPROVEMENT AREA:

EFFECTIVE CASE MANAGEMENT

★	★★	★★★	★★★★
"different doors" lead to different services, case management procedures, and referral resources; no coordination	"special doors" or points of entry lead to integrated services; case managers for those services and providers coordinate referrals and some cases	"many doors" lead to comprehensive services menu; similar intake, referral, and case management procedures	no "wrong door" – staff in every organization can help youth access services across providers; common intake and assessment process; case managers coordinate responsibilities

BEST EXAMPLE:
TOP PRIORITY IMPROVEMENT AREA:

COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION ACROSS SERVICES AND PROVIDERS

★	★★	★★★	★★★★
lllittle interaction between providers; no reason or incentive to coordinate	some service, event or case-specific coordination among a limited set of providers; collaboration encouraged	regular instances of collaborative service design and delivery in many youth development areas; coordination/ collaboration an explicit priority	established working relationships and service coordination among providers in all youth major development areas

BEST EXAMPLE:
TOP PRIORITY IMPROVEMENT AREA:

Examples From the Field

The Northern Virginia Workforce Board recently launched the "Job Hut," a youth One-Stop center at the Manassas Mall. Services include career exploration, assessment, college and job search help, workshops and classes. Employers also post jobs and conduct interviews at the center. Comcast Cable donated high-speed internet, the mall supplies the space rent-free, and the D.C. Metropolitan Subcontractors Association supplied labor and materials to help renovate the site.

In **Missouri**, career centers around the state hosted an afternoon open house and forum for elementary and secondary school counselors, in conjunction with National School Counseling Week, held the first week of February each year. Counselors toured the center, met partners and learned about programs and resources available to help youth explore careers and their area labor market.

In Hartford, CT, young people can opt to spend their April break at the Capital Region Workforce Development Board's YOUTH **Employability Skills (Yes) Academy**. The academy's intensive four-day curriculum, delivered with the help of more than 50 employees from area companies, includes interview skills, resume writing, job readiness, and more.

Beginning in 2001, the **Southeast Texas Workforce Board and Youth Advisory Council** adopted a vision for a year-round system that would serve all youth in the southeast Texas region. A collaborative design process that included focus groups involving youth, parents, employers, schools, faith-based groups, youth providers, advocacy, and the general public resulted in the "Youth Power Zone" – a youth-centered area in each career center with its own staff, resource room, services (and color scheme) specifically geared to youth.

Futureworks, Indianapolis, runs for 10 weeks – on Saturdays. Part of an intensive pre-employment strategy, high-risk and out-of-school youth take four 1-1/4 hour classes, each session on a range of topics: teamwork, computers, crisis management, business writing, GED or academic skills preparation, and career exploration. A mock city project, run by Junior Achievement, gives young people a chance to "live" different jobs to see if they can keep themselves and their city economically viable. The program recruits participants from high schools, alternative programs, social service agencies, juvenile probation, homeless programs, and treatment facilities.

The Work Force of Cambridge, Massachusetts, based at three housing authority sites, provides young residents with a structured after-school "unemployment prevention" program – for five years straight, from age 13-19. It's a full-service deal that includes homework and test prep help, counseling and goal setting, college and career prep, computer classes, and employment experiences. Older youth can do "try out jobs" – Work Force serves as the employer of record, and to entice employers, subsidizes two thirds of each youth's salary.

In San Francisco, **The Mayor's Youth Education and Employment Program (MYEEP)** initiative is a collaborative of 14 agencies that finds and matches youth with after-school job opportunities (each agency has its own MYEEP coordinator). In addition to work experience, young people enroll in 10-14 hours of mandatory employment training and maintain a career portfolio.

In **Santa Barabara, California, The Inland Agency's Neighborhood Academy** provides a 12-week leadership training to youth and adults interested in building neighborhood capacity. Participants learn how to organize community events, facilitate neighborhood meetings, and initiate change in their community.

Resources

Practices and Programs
• What Kids Can Do http://www.whatkidscando.org
• Youth Conservation Corps http://www.fs.fed.us/people/programs/ycc.htm
• City Scan http://www.city-scan.com/
• 'Possible Selves' – What Kids Can Do http://www.whatkidscando.org/shorttakes/possibleselves.html
• 'Youth IMPACT – Youth Led Evaluation Project' http://www.whatkidscando.org/studentwork/impact.html
• The Food Project www.foodproject.org
• Human Rights 101 http://www.thirteen.org/edonline/hr101/projects/index.html
• CATAPULT – Youth Leaders for the Great Valley http://www.greatvalley.org/catapult/index.aspx
• Radio Rookies http://www.wnyc.org/radiorookies/
• INROADS - http://www.inroads.org
• AVID – Advancement Via Individual Determination http://www.avidonline.org/
• Rural School and Community Trust   http://ruraledu.org/index.html
• National Service Learning Clearinghouse   http://www.nicsl.coled.umn.edu/
• Rural Entrepreneurship Through Action Learning - REAL Enterprises http://www.realenterprises.org/
• BizWorld   http://www.bizworld.org/
• Junior Achievement http://www.ja.org/
• Youth Venture http://www.youthventure.org/home.asp
• Kaufman Foundation – Entrepreneurship   http://www.emkf.org/pages/150.cfm
• Quitman County Youth Credit Union Program, Marks, MS See also: Youth Credit Union Network
  http://www.natfed.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=285
• Mentor Texas!   www.mentortexas.org
• Youth as Resources http://www.cyar.org/

Tools
• Career Tools- Career OneStop   http://www.careeronestop.org/CareerTools/CareerTools.asp
• Career Education: Setting Your Students on the Path to a Valued Education – Education World
  http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/lesson160.shtml
• The Employer How-To Guide for Supporting Student Achievement (pdf)
  http://www.e3oregon.org/pdf/res_E3HowToGuide.pdf
• Career Quest - USA Today http://www.usatoday.com/educate/careers/careers.htm
• Tackling the Tough Skills: A Curriculum for Building Skills for Work and Life http://outreach.missouri.edu/tough-life-skills
• Search Institute's 40 Development Assets   http://www.search-institute.org/assets/
• America's CareerOneStop – Testing and Assessment Center
  http://www.careeronestop.org/TESTING/TestingAssessmentHome.asp
• Cornell Youth and Work Program – Workplace Mentoring Training Tools
  http://www.human.cornell.edu/youthwork/mentoring/training.html
• The Road to Self-Sufficiency: An Income Growth Strategy for Out of School Youth (pdf)
  http://www.doleta.gov/youth_services/pdf/IncomeGrowthStrat.pdf
• States' Career Cluster Initiative Homepage http://www.careerclusters.org/
• Learning Through Projects – Cornell Youth and Work Program   http://www.human.cornell.edu/youthwork/ptools/learn/
• Career Development Resources – Texas Workforce Commission
  http://www.cdr.state.tx.us/Researchers/Emerging/index.html

Working with Youth – Professional Development

- Different Stages to Expect in Adolescent Development – Kids C.A.N. Mentoring Program, Hartford County, Maryland
  http://www.co.ha.md.us/services/mentor/growth.html
- National Youth Development Information Center http://www.nydic.org/nydic/
- Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development http://www.theinnovationcenter.org/
- Institute for Youth Development   http://www.youthdevelopment.org/default.asp
- Fires in the Bathroom - Advice for Teachers from High School Students
  http://www.whatkidscando.org/Publications/A_firesDirectory.html
- Weaving a Path to Success for Latino Students – ENLACE (pdf)
  http://www.wkkf.org/Pubs/YouthED/ENLACEreport_00252_03774.pdf
- Growing Up Fast. Joanna Lipper. Picador USA, November 2003.
- Youth Practitioners Toolbox – Sar Levitan Center for Social Policy Studies
- Career Paths – Facilitators Guide (Canada) http://www.careerpathsonline.com/facguide/2002/index.cfm
- Free Online Training & Resources - Workforce Tools of the Trade
  http://www.workforcetools.org/free_online_courses.asp
- BEST Strengthens Youth Worker Practice – An Evaluation of Building Exemplary Systems for Training Youth Workers (pdf)
  http://scs.aed.org/best.pdf
- Decisions without Direction: Career Guidance and Decision-Making Among American Youth
  http://www.acrnetwork.org/r0050.htm

Building a Youth System

- 7 Elements to Build and Sustain a Youth Development Infrastructure (pdf)
  http://aed.org/publications/sevenelements2.pdf
- Dashboards for Youth – Sample Framework – Forum for Youth Investment
  http://www.forumforyouthinvestment.org/issues/policyframe.htm
- The Intermediary Guidebook: Making and Managing Community Connections for Youth (pdf)
  http://www.jff.org/jff/PDFDocuments/IntermGuide.pdf
- Who Should Know What? Confidentiality and Information Sharing in Service Integration. Des Moines: National Center for Service Integration   http://www.ehsnrc.org/InformationResources/ResourceArticles/ftconf.htm
- At the Table http://www.atthetable.org/
- Recipes for Success: Youth Advisory Group Guide to Creating a Youth Development System Under WIA (pdf) - Heldrich Center for Workforce Development, Johns Hopkins University
  http://www.doleta.gov/usworkforce/resources/pdf/recipes-ycouncil.pdf
- Fixing a Flat at 65 MPH: Restructuring Services to Improve Program Performance in Workforce Development (pdf)
  http://www.ppv.org/pdffiles/changingflat.pdf
- Quality Performance Standards- YouthNet Kansas City http://www.kcyouthnet.org/practice.asp
- New Ways to Work ToolChest http://www.nww.org/toolchest.html
- Youth Development System Toolkit – Ohio Learning Work Connection   http://www.nww.org/toolchest.html

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