



RECIPES FOR SUCCESS:

A Youth Committee Guide under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

Spring 2017

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND
TRAINING MATERIALS FOR
YOUTH COMMITTEES



EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR





This resource has been adapted from a Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Youth Council technical assistance guide. This version reflects WIOA’s introduction of Standing Youth Committees.

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The principal authors of the original guide were Marion Pines and Jim Callahan of the Sar Levitan Center for Social Policy Studies at Johns Hopkins University. A number of people provided input and assistance in creating the original guide, including the Working Group of Practitioners, which comprised state and local practitioners as well as representatives of business and labor, all with experience in building youth systems. This group was convened to oversee and advise the work performed under the task order. They are acknowledged in the original guide.





Introduction

As our nation's economy continues to evolve, several trends exist that are changing the way our young people will participate in the workforce. New technologies have opened up new industries and revolutionized our notion of the workplace. A resurgent economy has contributed to lower unemployment rates. Today's young people can look forward to unprecedented opportunities, but only if they are prepared. Young people with little sense of direction, who do not obtain the knowledge and skills necessary to enter an increasingly complex workplace, will continue to be left behind. The disparity between skilled and unskilled workers has become particularly dramatic, with shifting demographics and an increasingly technology-based work environment intensifying competition for jobs.

Those of us charged with helping young people reach their full potential must reexamine the way in which we prepare them for tomorrow's workplace. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) provides an excellent opportunity to do just that. WIOA authorizes funding to help youth acquire the education, skills, work experience, and support they will need to make the transition to productive adulthood.

By encouraging Local Workforce Development Boards (Local WDBs) to create Standing Youth Committees (Youth Committees), and allowing Local WDBs to designate eligible and effective existing Youth Councils as Youth Committees, WIOA aims to provide local communities with the framework for developing comprehensive and effective strategies that ensure such successful transitions. By eliminating the requirement that a local area designate a Youth Council to implement the title I youth program, WIOA provides flexibility to address the difficulty that some local areas faced under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), the predecessor statute to WIOA, in maintaining the required Youth Council partnerships. However, the U.S. Department of Labor (US DOL) strongly encourages Local WDBs to establish Youth Committees to provide information and to assist with planning, operational, and other issues relating to the provision of services to youth (see 20 CFR 681.100 and WIOA sec. 107(b)(4)(A)(ii)). The partnerships represented on the Youth Committee bring together a diverse set of stakeholders and resources, partners who can address the needs of young people more effectively than any one partner can do alone.

Youth Committee members have the expertise to advise on issues that support the Local WDB's ability to attain the goals of State, local, and regional plans and to meet the objective of providing customer-focused services to individuals and businesses. WIOA promotes rather than requires the establishment of standing committees, but US DOL notes that examples of areas where standing committees may be particularly beneficial include serving targeted groups of youth. The partnerships represented on the Youth Committee bring together a diverse set of stakeholders and resources, partners who can address the needs of young people more



effectively than any one partner can do alone while also expanding the capacity of the Local WDB in meeting required functions. WIOA provides Local WDBs flexibility to design the Youth Committee membership to meet the local area's needs. While the main function of a Youth Committee is to inform and assist the Local WDB in developing and overseeing a comprehensive youth program, the details of its responsibilities are assigned by the Local WDB.

This guide is designed to provide practical information for community leaders, Local WDBs, Youth Committees, staff, and others that are committed to effective youth and workforce development. It contains four sections.

Chapter 1: “Planning the Menu” defines youth development, outlines the basic concepts of making connections for young people (system building), describes how WIOA can make a difference, and starts a work plan for Youth Committees.

Chapter 2: “Youth Committees: Essential Ingredients” addresses the wide range of potential Youth Committee responsibilities, from organization and staffing to strategic planning and accountability.

Chapter 3: “Transition to WIOA: From Soup to Nuts” addresses resource allocation decision making, follow-up services, the performance system, selecting service providers, and other important administrative decisions.

Chapter 4: “Coming Together at the Table” depicts the pathways to comprehensive service delivery based on proven principles and practices. The building blocks that are available as the platform for developing a system for young people are described.

Youth Committees offer a leadership opportunity for local communities to bring about change in youth activities and outcomes. If communities take advantage of this opportunity, Youth Committees will be in a strong position to stimulate broad-based change, reward innovation, and improve performance in youth development and youth organizations. Communities will need assistance building effective Youth Committees. This guide will provide communities with the help they need to transform the potential of Youth Committees into measurable results, results that will make a profound difference in the lives of our nation's youth.



1. Planning the Menu

WIOA challenges communities to develop a better understanding of how young people grow and mature into responsible adults. In addition, WIOA encourages communities to develop a clearer picture of the diverse array of agencies and organizations, public and private, that are critical to that process. Local WDBs that establish Youth Committees will have both a significant challenge and a unique opportunity. Bringing together new partners and building new relationships of trust and empowerment takes time, commitment, and sustained effort. Throughout this guide, every effort is made to assist that process by “demystifying” legislative requirements and sharing knowledge about effective principles and practices.

A. What is Youth Development and Why is it Important to Understand it?

Youth development is as much a point of view as a discrete set of activities. Youth development helps young people move to more mature ways of thinking, feeling, and acting. It is the process by which young people enter adulthood – a highly individual and often difficult journey. All young people have the same basic developmental need for:

- Safety and structure
- Belonging and membership
- Self-worth and an ability to contribute
- Independence and control over their lives
- Several nurturing relationships
- Competence and mastery



Youth development emphasizes that young people are individuals in need of support and opportunities – not a collection of problems that need to be fixed. This approach requires doing more than simply providing services. Youth development has a dual focus on meeting needs and building competencies for adulthood.

In general, a youth development approach:

- Focuses on a young person’s assets
- Communicates high expectations
- Provides opportunities for leadership
- Encourages a sense of personal identity
- Broadens a young person’s perspective
- Provides safe surroundings
- Connects them with caring adults



RECIPE FOR SUCCESS:

The Youth Development Approach

- ★ Focuses on assets
- ★ Communicates high expectations
- ★ Provides opportunities for leadership
- ★ Encourages a sense of personal identity

It is important to understand these concepts because WIOA fuses youth development with more traditional workforce development approaches. The key is integrating these concepts into a **system of effective connections for youth** that will enable them to succeed. These connections are the programs, the staff, and the multiple stakeholders that work with youth. But the challenge is complex. To reach the goals of productive employment, satisfying family life, and fulfilling citizenship for all youth requires hard work and dedication.

Under WIOA, youth employment can no longer be separated from youth development. Simply helping a young person find a job — any job — is no longer enough. Today’s youth programs must focus on helping young people develop the skills, knowledge, and competencies required for today’s complex workplace. Effective youth programs use work as a tool to develop a broad array of life skills.

B. Making Connections: System Building

Every community has the basic component parts of a workforce development delivery system for youth. Unfortunately, this “system” all too often looks — to young people and the service providers — like little more than a collection of unrelated programs and services. In many



respects, it appears to be a service maze. But what should it look like? A system of connections that creates an effective youth service delivery system has several, distinct characteristics:

- A unified vision with specific plan(s) for operations that are in sync with the vision;
- An integrated mechanism for outreach and intake that is able to engage youth;
- An integrated mechanism for working with young people to clarify goals and service needs as well as with the providers (Individual Service Strategy);
- Coordinated access to education, workforce, and support services that are specifically designed for targeted youth;
- A follow-up capacity;
- Information sharing;
- An integrated and effective case management capacity; and
- An accountability system.



RECIPE FOR SUCCESS:

Characteristics of a System

- ★ Shared Vision
- ★ Coordinated Outreach and Intake
- ★ Service Strategy Development
- ★ Locked-in Services

C. How WIOA Can Make a Difference

Local WDBs who establish a Youth Committee have a unique opportunity to change the way workforce development programs (and other youth development programs as well) are organized and operated to serve youth. WIOA offers local areas the chance to look at how both out-of-school youth (OSY) and in-school youth (ISY) services are blended and deployed. It provides the framework that local areas can build on to realign, enhance, and improve youth services so that they are more closely coordinated, better utilized, and more effective; the result will be the type of youth development system characterized above.

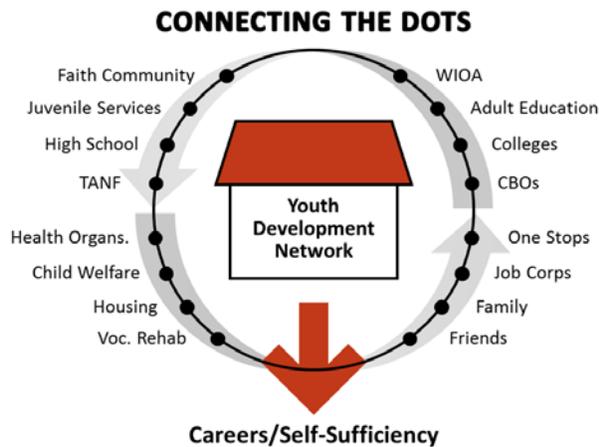
Under WIOA, Local WDBs and Youth Committees bring together a team of players. This team can – if it is appropriately empowered – work to effectively structure major resource streams and services to address youth issues. WIOA and Youth Committees can assemble service delivery into a more rational system that “Connects the Dots” as shown in the graphic below.

In the final analysis, it is a local decision as to how to use WIOA to make a real difference in each community. The sections that follow provide ideas and suggestions that local areas may find helpful on how to use WIOA to further create a more effective set of services and service connections that meet the needs of young people, employers, and the community.



D. WIOA Core Principles and Program Elements

We have learned from the past that there is no “magic bullet” approach to successful youth development. Experience has taught us that a holistic approach to youth development is critical for success, an approach that focuses on assets as well as barriers. WIOA outlines a broad youth vision that supports an integrated service delivery system and provides a framework through which States and local areas can leverage Federal, State, local, and philanthropic resources to support ISY and OSY.



Under WIOA, local programs must make each of the following 14 services or “program elements” available to youth participants (the 5 new items that were not required under WIA are **bolded**):

- Tutoring, study skills training, instruction and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized postsecondary credential;
- Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate;
- Paid and unpaid work experiences that have academic and occupational education as a component of the work experience;
- Occupational skill training, which includes priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that align with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area involved, if the Local WDB determines that the programs meet the quality criteria described in WIOA sec. 123;
- **Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;**
- Leadership development opportunities, including community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors;
- Supportive services, including the services listed in 20 CFR 681.570;
- Adult mentoring for a duration of at least 12 months, that may occur both during and after program participation;



- Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as provided in 20 CFR 681.580;
- Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling, as well as referrals to counseling, as appropriate to the needs of the individual youth;
- **Financial literacy education;**
- **Entrepreneurial skills training;**
- **Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services; and**
- **Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.**

These elements reflect what has been learned from research about the positive connection between education and earnings, and the powerful effect caring adults committed to building our future leaders have on youth programs.

There is no pre-packaged recipe for a successful youth program, only a list of these valued ingredients. Each community will blend the elements outlined above according to the needs of their youth and the vision for success.

E. What Is Really Different?

A look at key differences in WIOA and previous workforce legislation, WIA, provides some useful insights.

Issue	Key WIOA Provisions	Approach Under WIA
Target Populations	Focuses on ISY ages 14 to 21 and OSY ages 16 to 24. ISY must be low income and meet 1 of 8 barriers to employment. OSY must meet 1 of 9 specified barriers to employment. At least 75% of local funds (and statewide funds spent on direct services to youth) must be used to serve OSY.	Ages 14 to 21; low income; met at least 1 of 6 specified barriers to employment; at least 30% of funds were to be spent on OSY.



Issue	Key WIOA Provisions	Approach Under WIA
Services	Requires: assessment; development of individual service strategy, preparation for employment services and strategies linked to one or more of the performance indicators described below; postsecondary education and training; strong links between academic and occupational learning instruction and achievement standards; preparation for unsubsidized employment; effective connections to employers. All local areas must make available the 14 program elements.	Required: assessment; development of individual service strategy, training in basic skills and preparation for employment or postsecondary education; linkages between academic and occupational and work maturity skills, work experience, supportive services. Allowed: an array of training and related services; effective connections to employers. All local areas had to make available the 10 program elements.
Accountability	WIOA youth performance indicators: (1) Percentage of participants who are in education or training activities or in unsubsidized employment during second quarter after exit. (2) Percentage of participants who are in education or training activities or in unsubsidized employment during fourth quarter after exit. (3) Median earnings of participants in unsubsidized employment during second quarter after exit. (4) Percentage of participants who obtain a postsecondary credential, secondary school diploma, or equivalent during participation or within 1 year after program exit. (5) Percentage of participants during a program year who are in education or training that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains toward such a credential or employment. (6) Effectiveness in serving employers (this indicator does not apply directly to youth participants).	Statutory Measures: For 19- to 21-year-olds: placement, retention, earnings, skill attainment. For 14- to 18-year-olds: basic skills attainment, high school diplomas or GEDs, placement and retention in postsecondary education, advanced training or employment. Common Measures: Placement in Employment or Education, Attainment of a Degree or Certificate, Literacy and Numeracy Gains.



Issue	Key WIOA Provisions	Approach Under WIA
Governance/Local	Under WIOA, Youth Councils are no longer required. Local WDBs, however, are encouraged to create Youth Committees to provide information and to assist with planning, operational, and other issues relating to the provision of services to youth. Local WDBs are generally required to maintain responsibility over the youth programs. However, the Local WDB may, after consultation with the chief elected official (CEO) in the local area, delegate oversight of youth providers and other youth program oversight responsibilities to a Youth Committee.	Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs), in partnership with local elected officials, responsible for planning and oversight. Youth Council was to be established as subgroup of WDB. Youth Council developed local plan, recommended providers of youth services, coordinated youth activities.

These changes highlight two features that offer local communities the opportunity for producing the kind of changes needed to improve services for youth:

1. Youth Committees can provide a mechanism for leadership, advocacy for youth issues, and an enhanced focus on youth workforce development. The committee can help to identify gaps in services and develop strategies to use in competitive selections or community partnerships to address the unmet needs of youth.
2. Youth Committees can provide a comprehensive program for youth development. The Committee can coordinate youth policy, ensure quality services, and leverage financial and programmatic resources.

But these are only **opportunities**. As will be described in later sections of this guide, these opportunities will require hard work and team building in order to be maximized.



2. Youth Committee Ingredients

A. Youth Committees

Youth Committees can make a difference in the lives of our young people. They can be the architects for building (or enhancing) comprehensive and effective youth service delivery systems. Local WDBs should encourage Youth Committees to play a major role in implementing quality programs and bringing business, parents, participants, and stakeholders together to solve problems.

If a Local WDB decides to form a Youth Committee, WIOA requires that the Youth Committee include a member of the Local WDB, who chairs the committee; members of community-based organizations with a demonstrated record of success in serving eligible youth; and other individuals with appropriate expertise and experience who are not members of the Local WDB (see 20 CFR 681.110 and WIOA sec. 107(b)(4)(A)). These could include representatives from secondary and postsecondary education, the justice and child welfare systems, disability and vocational rehabilitation organizations, housing, health (including mental and behavioral health), and youth and their families. Also, consider identifying other individuals who play a significant role in youth development in your community.

WIOA also mandates that the Youth Committee members reflect the needs of the local community and be comprised of members who are appointed for their experience and expertise in serving eligible youth. A Local WDB may designate an existing entity, like a Youth Council, to serve as the Youth Committee; however, that entity must meet the WIOA membership requirements discussed above.



RECIPE FOR SUCCESS:

Keeping Members Involved

- ★ Understand what brings each member to the Youth Committee
- ★ Learn about areas of interest
- ★ Avoid overloading members
- ★ Make the work interesting
- ★ Listen to what members have to say
- ★ Encourage members to stay open to new ideas



Many communities are on the way to building a Youth Committee that focuses on all of the critical WIOA transition issues. It's important to emphasize how important it is to assemble the best team for your Youth Committee. This is the Youth Committee that will enable your community to maximize existing services to youth and to seek additional resources to fill gaps in services. While it is important to appoint the right people to the Youth Committee, it is equally important (and often more challenging) to keep them there. As with any volunteer organization, Youth Committee members will stay involved only if they feel they are accomplishing something. Here are some useful tips.

- Take the time to understand what brings each member to the Youth Committee.
- Ask each member to describe his/her strengths and areas of interest.
- Avoid overloading members with unnecessary paperwork and information.
- Allow members to work on the issues that are important to them.
- Listen to what members have to say and integrate their ideas into the youth plan.
- Encourage members to stay open to new ideas.
- Listen, listen, listen.

B. Relationships with Existing Youth Groups

A Youth Committee's success will depend on building relationships. Many groups may already exist in the community that have been focusing on various aspects of youth development. It is critical that the Youth Committee acknowledges the work of these other groups and engages them in the work of developing a comprehensive youth service system. It just makes good sense to build on existing expertise and interest.

Under WIOA, a Local WDB may choose to designate an eligible, existing Youth Council to act as a Youth Committee. Local WDBs may also look to an existing youth planning group as the core building block for the Youth Committee. Local areas should take advantage of work already accomplished where possible. However, it is important, if building onto existing groups, to make sure that the groups' focus take on new energy and an expanded vision for this new challenge.



C. What's A Youth Committee To Do?

What does the Youth Committee actually do? This section of the guide addresses that question.

The regulations that govern youth activities under title I of WIOA describe seven specific responsibilities that a Youth Committee, under the direction of the Local WDB, may wish to undertake (20 CFR 681.120):

- Recommend policy direction to the Local WDB for the design, development, and implementation of programs that benefit all youth;
- Propose the design of a comprehensive community workforce development system to ensure a full range of services and opportunities for all youth, including disconnected youth;
- Suggest ways to leverage resources and coordinate services among schools, public programs, and community-based organizations (CBOs) serving youth;
- Offer ways to coordinate youth services and put forward eligible youth service providers;
- Provide ongoing leadership and support for continuous quality improvement for local youth programs;
- Assist with planning, operational, and other issues relating to the provision of services to youth; and
- Oversee eligible youth providers, as well as other youth program oversight responsibilities.

Regarding the final point, a Youth Committee may only assume oversight responsibilities if so delegated by the Local WDB after consultation with the chief elected official (CEO) of the local area. Otherwise, the Local WDB maintains oversight responsibilities.

But if your Youth Committee is going to look beyond the matter-of-fact responsibilities described in WIOA — and with the blessing of the Local WDB, it must in order to become a real youth policy leadership group — take the time to develop the “Big Picture.”

Typically, the demands of annual program planning and operations leave little time for staff and advisors to think about the bigger picture of planning and building a comprehensive youth service system. The Youth Committee provides an opportunity for key stakeholders in the community to step back from the pressures of day-to-day operations and consider the steps needed to accomplish that. Communities may vary the order in which they address the following steps.



Some may want to collect data before creating their vision. Others may feel they have enough general knowledge about their communities to start “visioning” up front. Drawing the Big Picture involves a number of basic ingredients that are discussed in more detail below.



RECIPE FOR SUCCESS:

Creating the Big Picture

- ★ Creating a shared vision;
- ★ Collecting and using data and information;
- ★ Mapping and assessing the resources and identifying the gaps;
- ★ Creating a youth system strategic plan; and
- ★ Implementing oversight and monitoring/accountability practices.

1. Creating a Shared Vision

One of the first unifying tasks that a Youth Committee should undertake is the development of a shared vision. While there can be no cookie cutter model for drafting a vision statement that reflects the community’s needs and values, there are several approaches to consider. The traditional vision statement provides a short description of what the system or organization hopes to accomplish, and why it’s worth the effort.

Youth Committees may want to consider a vision statement that responds to two basic questions:

- Who are the youth to be targeted?
- What is the purpose of a youth service delivery system?

There is no one “right” answer to these questions. Responding to these questions constitutes the “Who” and “Why” of a local vision statement. This approach can provide a solid foundation for guiding the construction of an effective plan. Another value of this approach to a vision



statement is that it serves as a way to market to the community what the Youth Committee is all about.

A successful vision statement should be brief, easily understood, and foster maximum buy-in from all members.

2. Data and Information for Decision-Making

Developing and using data is an art, not a science. There are three, ongoing data/information tasks critical to youth workforce development planning and operations:

- Demographic data on need (who will be the customers)
- Data on existing resources and services (what’s in place)
- Information on results and outcomes of current services (how effective are they)

There are several administrative databases available to help Youth Committees. While these databases were developed to address requirements that are separate from the Youth Committee, the data they contain can provide valuable information. When the ability to cross-tabulate the data from a variety of data sources exists, a wealth of information on both needs and outcomes can be collected.

For example:

- Unemployment Insurance (UI) Wage Records
- School Leavers Report
- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Database
- New Hire Registry
- College Enrollment and Performance Data
- American Community Survey (ACS) Data



RECIPE FOR SUCCESS:

Information Issues to Consider

- ★ Identify who needs services.
- ★ Identify what services exist.
- ★ Decide what they accomplish.



In addition, there are several advantages to using third-party administrative databases such as:

- **Lower Cost:** They are inexpensive, since someone else is paying for the collection of the data.
- **Timeliness:** Generally, the data is more up to date than decennial Census data.
- **Increased Flexibility:** The ability to get data records and information about special groups of people and to integrate the data with other data sources provides a wealth of flexibility.
- **Constant Updating:** An ongoing source of data that is constantly being refreshed.

However, there are real issues that need to be factored into the use of administrative databases for program planning and outcome analysis:

- **Confidentiality of Data:** This often comes up as a legal concern but many communities are successfully addressing the concern by asking customers to agree to the release of their data.
- **Data Definitions:** For example, just because one program defines a “youth” as 16 to 21 years of age does not mean all programs use the same definition
- **Dirty Data:** Expect an error rate to exist with all administrative data systems.



RECIPE FOR SUCCESS:

Advantages of Administrative Data Sources

- ★ Lower Cost
- ★ Timeliness
- ★ Increased Flexibility
- ★ Constant Updating

In addition, Youth Committees should exercise caution when collecting data from other programs. Care needs to be taken to establish how the data will be used and publicized.

There are two other important bases to touch in terms of collecting useful and important information: youth themselves and the community at large.

Youth Committees should ask local youth to speak for themselves. This process is critical to addressing such important issues as:



- What do the youth in the community say they want in the way of workforce assistance?
- What are their experiences in the work world?
- What are their experiences with various programs?
- How do they define success?
- What are successful youth in the community doing?
- What jobs/careers are youth familiar with?
- What do they like about school? Dislike?
- What are their thoughts about the future?

Many communities have used small focus groups of youth meeting with a trained facilitator to help keep them informal and candid. Many of these communities report that young people expect to be paid a stipend for their participation.

Gaining the perceptions of the community at large is sometimes referred to as an environmental scan. What are the elected officials' views of major issues confronting young people? What kind of coverage do these issues get in the local press? What are the views of some of the major community groups and employers? This kind of background information can help the Youth Committee understand the context in which they are working and how quickly (or slowly) they may be able to bring about change.



RECIPE FOR SUCCESS:

An Environmental Scan

- ★ The perception(s) of the issue(s);
- ★ What impact(s) do(es) the issue(s) have on the community; and
- ★ What group or groups are currently involved with the issue(s)?

The last words on the data issues are to **collect only what you need in order to make informed decisions**. To prevent problems, take the time to think through and discuss how the Youth Committee wants to use all the information they have gathered and how it will be publicized.



3. Community Resource Mapping and Identifying Gaps

A comprehensive planning effort must include the identification and assessment of available community resources. This process has come to be known as Community Resource Mapping and it will enable the Youth Committee to find out:

- What resources are currently devoted to youth?
- What is their scope?
- Whom do they serve?
- What are their goals?
- Who controls these resources?
- How flexible are these resources?
- Who are the providers of these services?
- What is their effectiveness?
- What is their capacity?
- What is their geographic reach?

Once resources are mapped, the next step is assessing how the existing resource mix stacks up against the needs of the targeted youth population and what gaps in services remain. Gap analysis is as much an art as it is a science, but is a critical element in determining how to use scarce resources.

The Community Toolbox, a service of the Work Group for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas, provides guidance for conducting assessments of community needs and resources, and can be found at: <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/assessing-community-needs-and-resources>.

A few other resources available that may be helpful in mapping resources in your community include:

- Map My Community: An interactive mapping tool designed to locate federally supported youth programs in a community. This tool is available at youth.gov: <http://youth.gov/map-my-community>.
- Map of Administration Community-Based Initiatives: This map shows some of the existing federal initiatives underway across the country and may be useful in identifying potential partnerships. This map is available at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/place.4>.



4. Looking Ahead: Creating a Strategic Plan

What goes into a strategic planning initiative? How is it different from the normal planning that occurs in the workforce development arena? All of the Youth Committee activities we have discussed in this section — developing a shared vision for youth services, collecting and using data and information for decision-making, and mapping the resources that the community has to serve youth — are part of a strategic planning effort. The results from these activities become the foundation for a strategic plan.

Is there really a difference between strategic and program planning? The following descriptions may help to clarify the situation.

- **Program Planning** is focused on developing the goals, objectives, and a plan of action that is tied to a specific program. Many times, program planning is tied to funding contracts or grants.
- **Strategic Planning** is focused on developing a blueprint that describes problems and outlines strategies that the community can use to address the problems.

The basic ingredients of a strategic planning process are:

- Defining the issue(s) in quantifiable terms;
- Identifying the goal(s) that will be met;
- Providing a means of measuring progress towards achieving the goal(s);
- Developing strategies to achieve goal(s);
- Articulating roles and responsibilities; and
- Creating a timetable or action plan.



RECIPE FOR SUCCESS:

Ingredients of a Strategic Planning Process

- ★ Developing a full understanding of the issues;
- ★ Creating the goals that will be accomplished;
- ★ Setting objectives;
- ★ Formulating the overall strategy or strategies;
- ★ Articulating roles and responsibilities; and
- ★ Creating a timetable/action plan.

Strategic planning information needs to include objective numerical data, such as:

- How many youth are in the community? What is their economic status?
- How many youth of different ages are in school (K-12, Postsecondary)? Out of school?
- How many are in alternative learning settings?



- Of the children who enter kindergarten, how many graduate from middle school 9 years later? From high school 13 years later?
- How many youth in the community are employed (full time, part time), underemployed, or unemployed? What is the breakdown by age range?
- How many young people are in the foster care system? What is their age distribution? How many are involved with the juvenile justice system?
- How many are involved with public assistance programs such as TANF? Medicaid? SNAP (Food Stamps)?
- What is the geographic distribution of low-income youth in the community?

Once there is a clear understanding of the scope of the youth issues in your community (“status quo”), it is time to set goals and objectives. Goals are global statements of outcomes that will be achieved. Objectives should be quantifiable statements that tell you when the goals have been achieved.

Status Quo	Rate of independent adults and families with head(s) of household ages 18 to 24 living in poverty is NN%. Employment rate for youth in the labor market is NN%. Rate of non-high school completers under the age of 18 who have obtained an educational credential that will increase their long-term labor market prospects is NN%.
Goal	All youth will obtain economic self-sufficiency and the basic skills needed to be productive in the workforce.
Objective	Percent of independent adults and families with head(s) of household ages 18 to 24 living in poverty will be reduced by 80%.
Objective	Employment rate for youth in the labor market will be increased to 97%.
	At least 80% of all non-high school completers under the age of 18 will obtain an educational credential that will increase their long-term labor market prospects.

In the above goal statement, a positive outcome is articulated — “[a]ll youth will obtain economic self-sufficiency....” The objectives that follow provide very measurable definitions of how to determine if the goal has been achieved.

Once goals are set, creating strategies is relatively easy. The difficult part is to develop strategies that will achieve the goal within the existing environment. For example, if there are no high paying jobs, a strategy of enhanced life skills instruction is not likely to achieve the goal of self-sufficiency.



An important part of achieving success with any plan is to ensure that the major stakeholders understand their roles and responsibilities. One of the best ways of articulating roles and responsibilities is to have the Youth Committee staff work with the members, individually and collectively, to clearly identify the resources and services they can bring to the planning table to serve youth.

A timetable for the action plan is a good management tool. Break the plan down into specific action items that include:

- What will be done in specific steps;
- Who will do it; and
- When will it be completed.

Youth Committee planning is team planning. The whole experience should become a trust building process. Building and sustaining trust among the partners is almost as important as the plan itself.



RECIPE FOR SUCCESS:

Strategic Plan Timetable

- ★ What will be done;
- ★ Who does it; and
- ★ When



5. Oversight and Monitoring/Accountability

Accountability has become a mantra in government. Everyone pays homage to the need for it; everyone talks about how critical it is. Clearly, it reflects the desire on the part of the public and the legislative bodies that appropriate public funds to have a better sense of value received in exchange for the expenditure of public funds. Those same demands apply to the private and the not-for-profit sectors. People want a measurable “pay-off” for effort and resources expended. It is commonly recognized that for a program to be effective, continual feedback is needed from the point of program implementation. Feedback requires a system of monitoring, reporting, and observing. With this system, programs can be held accountable for their results. In addition, this system will give Youth Committees the flexibility they need to make mid-course corrections if needed to achieve the goals.

The long-term success of WIOA, Local WDBs, and Youth Committees will hinge in part on the strength of the accountability system they create. An accountability system involves more than simply looking at outcome data. Many times, by the time the outcome data is available, the program may be over. For example, if a program plan of service calls for youth to be engaged in a combination of services that last for up to 7 months, actual outcome data will not come about until the 8th month of a 12-month program funding cycle. If the accountability system for such a program were built solely around outcome data, it will likely be practically infeasible to make any meaningful changes in the program design and operation based on that outcome data in time to improve operations.

A good accountability system should include:

- **Performance Benchmarks:** Do not be limited to Federal and State performance factors. A well-defined set of performance benchmarks — fiscal and programmatic, process and outcome, short-term and long-term — are all needed.



RECIPE FOR SUCCESS:

Ingredients of an Accountability System

- ★ Performance Benchmarks
- ★ Routine and Regular Data Collection and Distribution
- ★ Performance Review Process
- ★ Corrective Action Process
- ★ An Ongoing Feedback and Monitoring Routine



- **Routine and Regular Data Collection and Distribution:** Needed to determine how the program is progressing against the performance benchmarks established for the program.
- **Performance Review Process:** Regular review of the data is necessary to determine what is behind the trends observed in the data.
- **Corrective Action Process:** Based on the performance review, use a formal process for developing and implementing corrective action plans designed to define the cause and cure of any subpar performance.
- **Ongoing Feedback and Monitoring Routine:** A feedback and monitoring routine is needed to monitor and track corrective actions and to feed that information into the data collection regimen.

The time to lay out the framework and foundation for an effective accountability system comes now, as the transition process is taking place. Goals and objectives, strategies and budgets, all need to be developed with an eye on how they will play a part in the overall accountability process.

While a management information system (MIS) is not an accountability system, an effective MIS will make it easier to develop an effective accountability system. An effective MIS does not start with computers or software or high tech tools. An effective MIS starts with fully understanding the workings of your program design and what it is intended to accomplish.

There are two parts to a MIS, one that tracks the expenditure of funds over time (a fiscal MIS), and one that tracks people, activities, and outcomes (a programmatic MIS). The key to an effective fiscal MIS is budgeting. The budget represents the template for the fiscal MIS. It establishes the terminology as to how expenditures will be tracked over time, and it is the overall control factor for those expenditures. Good budgeting and spending controls are the foundation for building a sound fiscal portion of a MIS.



RECIPE FOR SUCCESS:

Part of a MIS

- ★ Fiscal
- ★ Programmatic
- ★ Design and Plan first! Computers come later!

The programmatic part of a MIS needs to be specifically tailored to the WIOA program. The foundation for building the programmatic portion of a MIS starts with the reports you need to manage the program.



Accountability systems and MIS will be an integral part of success in WIOA, and the Youth Committee must make sure that adequate attention is paid to these areas before the first young person is enrolled. Remember, it's very hard to retrieve information that was never collected!

6. Staff Support

Forming a Youth Committee and determining the level of staff support needed should go hand in hand. As noted at the beginning of Section 2.C, the WIOA youth program regulations describe 7 specific responsibilities that a Youth Committee, under the direction of the Local WDB, may wish to undertake (20 CFR 681.120). Those potential responsibilities represent a pretty full agenda, and undertaking all of them would add substantially to the staff workload. Another consideration that will have an impact on the staffing need is how the Youth Committee relates to the Local WDB. If the Youth Committee is simply an advisory group to the Local WDB, then its staffing needs will not be as great (but the Local WDB's staffing needs will be greater). If the Youth Committee is authorized by the Local WDB to assume some leadership or oversight role relative to comprehensive youth workforce development planning and WIOA youth issues, staff demands will be greater.

Why should the Local WDB delegate some responsibility for youth activities to the Youth Committee? Aside from the encouragement in the law and the regulations for this approach, there are practical reasons. Given the leadership role the Local WDB plays in the workforce development system and all the work they will be confronted with in planning, implementing, and evaluating that system, the Local WDB has a full plate. If Local WDBs establish Youth Committees, it would be prudent to use the Youth Committee to the fullest extent by delegating to the Youth Committee a leading role for building a coherent system of effective connections for young people. From a practical perspective, members of groups that do not have authority and responsibility tend to lose interest. To sustain the interest of the Youth Committee members beyond the initial meetings, they need to be vested with some measure of authority to become change agents.

The responsibilities in the law and regulations can be grouped into 4 major functional areas:

- WIOA Program Development and Transition Issues;
- Youth Workforce System Development and Advocacy Issues;
- Oversight and Performance Monitoring; and
- Youth Committee Administration.

Estimating the time it will take Youth Committee staff to perform specific tasks is subject to a host of variables. These variables make recommending a specific staffing model that could be applied for all Youth Committees impractical. Youth Committee staffing will play a major role in



the overall productivity of the Youth Committee. Local areas need to think through the staff issue. Activities and projects that staff may perform include:

- Data collection and analysis
- Research and report on best practices/policy issues
- Youth workforce system's development and advocacy
- Networking with major stakeholders
- Draft youth portions of the strategic plan
- Oversight and performance monitoring
- Regular field visits
- Council Administration Meeting and Logistics Meetings with Chair



RECIPE FOR SUCCESS:

Youth Committee Staff Functions

- ★ WIOA Program Development and Transition Issues
- ★ Youth Workforce System Development and Advocacy Issues
- ★ Oversight and Performance Monitoring
- ★ Youth Committee Administration



7. Youth Committee Orientation

WIOA is new and States and local areas must undergo change to implement the new law. If the youth opportunities under WIOA are to be maximized, there will be major changes in the way we do business. The first step towards taking advantage of the WIOA opportunity (and in coping with the changes it will necessitate) is gaining an understanding of the opportunity.

Youth Committees will need a full orientation to gain this understanding. Orientation should cover:

- Legal and policy background;
- Briefing on the geographic service area;
- The Youth Committee's role; and
- Organizational structure.

Legal and Policy Background. Youth Committee members need to have a broad understanding of WIOA, including: operation of American Job Center Networks (i.e. one-stop delivery system), universal access to basic career services for job seekers, enhanced customer choice, roles and responsibilities of participating partners, and all of the other concepts that differentiate WIOA from previous workforce development legislation. A more detailed session should follow outlining the youth portions of WIOA and including information on how funds are allocated by the State and Local WDBs.

The WIOA briefing should also cover the youth performance measures. Visit US DOL's web site for the most up to date information on performance measures and how to negotiate them.

Internet site: https://www.doleta.gov/performance/reporting/eta_default.cfm.



RECIPE FOR SUCCESS:

Key Components of an Orientation

- ★ Legal and policy background;
- ★ Briefing on the geographic service area;
- ★ The Youth Committee's role; and
- ★ Organizational structure.



Briefing on the Geographic Service Area. The second topic suggested for the Youth Committee orientation session is a geographic scan. The Youth Committee needs to be given information that enables it to understand the characteristics of the youth that live in the area, what the local labor market looks like, and what programs (apart from proposed WIOA programs) exist to address the workforce readiness needs of the young people.

The Youth Committee's Role. Under WIOA, the recommended role of the Youth Committee is to provide the Local WDB with information and assist in planning and operational issues related to the provision of youth services. The exact degree of delegation of these duties by the Local WDB will have been determined prior to the orientation meeting. If so, this is the time to specifically discuss what the Local WDB and the CEO(s) expect the Youth Committee to accomplish in both the short and long terms.

Organizational Structure. Finally, the orientation session(s) should focus on the Youth Committee's structure, including its bylaws, committee organization, etc. If the Local WDB and CEO(s) have delegated the responsibility to the Youth Committee to determine its own organizational structure and to create its own specific agenda, this part of the orientation session becomes the forum for the Youth Committee to consider how it wants to conduct business in both the short and long term.

To help Local WDBs and Youth Committees make some preliminary assessments of how far along they are on the system development track the following are examples of questions to ask:

- Is there a forum(s) for the discussion of youth workforce development issues?
- Is there a group of stakeholders that has assumed the leadership role for youth workforce development?
- Is there consensus as to what needs to be done relative to youth among the major stakeholders and the service provider community?
- Is there a network of effective service providers?
- Are the roles and relationships of the stakeholders formally articulated?
- Is there a common and shared database for information sharing?
- Is there a mechanism for measuring progress towards the accomplishment of the overarching goals and objectives?



3. Transition To WIOA: Soup to Nuts

This section of the guide provides detailed information on key issues the Youth Committee needs to consider in WIOA, and some recipes for approaches that will help build the foundation for a successful WIOA youth service delivery system. It might be helpful to consider some of the more challenging policy and program issues that Youth Committees and program administrators will be confronted in implementing WIOA.

WIOA TRANSITION TO DO LIST	DONE ✓
Resource allocation — OSY/ISY	
Defining “Follow-Up” Services	
Using adult funds for serving 18- to 24-year-olds	
Coordinating with American Job Center Networks	
Developing the performance management system	



A. WIOA Resource Allocation

Everything is important, but perhaps first among equals is decision making about the allocation of WIOA youth resources. WIOA maintains the single formula-based funding stream to provide Federal dollars to States. States in turn allocate funds by formula to Local WDBs. WIOA allows States to retain a certain percent of the formula funds for discretionary statewide activities. Under WIOA, there is a strong focus on serving OSY; at least 75% of local youth formula funds must be used to serve OSY and 75% of statewide funds spent on direct services to youth must be spent on activities for OSY. Additionally, 20% of local youth formula funds must be used for paid and unpaid work experiences.

There are a number of issues to consider in thinking about spending the youth allocation:

- What use of WIOA funds best supports the Youth Committee's vision for a youth service system?
- What WIOA youth performance levels have been negotiated with the State? How can the Youth Committee ensure that their allocation decisions will support achieving these performance levels?

B. Defining Follow-Up Services

Under WIOA, all youth participants must be offered an opportunity to receive follow-up services that align with their individual service strategies for not less than 12 months after the young person leaves the active service delivery portion of the program. Follow-up services are critical services to help ensure the youth is successful in employment and/or postsecondary education and training. Follow-up services may include regular contact with a youth participant's employer, including assistance in addressing work-related problems that arise. Follow-up services for youth also may include the following program elements: supportive services; adult mentoring; financial literacy education; services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services; and activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training. (see 20 CFR 681.580).

Studies have shown that if a person can succeed during the first six months after job placement, they have a much higher chance of long-term success. Should a former participant experience a setback, an aggressive follow-up system can provide the support and assistance needed to get them back on track.



Although required by WIOA, many areas may lack the resources to provide a comprehensive, supportive follow-up service mix. It might be helpful to establish different levels of post-program services for different groups of young people. Youth Committees can strategize the partnerships needed to provide youth with quality and appropriate follow-up services.

Obviously, if the young person ended active program participation by going to college or the military, a different type of follow-up process might be used. Flexibility, communication, and dedicated, well-trained staff are the key ingredients for a follow-up recipe that results in job retention and advancement.

C. Using Adult Funds for Serving 18- to 24-Year-Olds

WIOA creates an opportunity for the adult program to work closely with the youth program to ensure young adults receive the services they need to succeed in education and the workforce. Individuals aged 18-24 may be eligible for both the WIOA youth and adult programs and can be co-enrolled in the two programs.

Some examples where enhanced coordination could take place are as follows:

- Referring 18-24-year-old individuals to the title I youth program if they need more intensive support around specific program elements described under WIOA sec. 129(c)(2).
- Utilizing WIOA adult formula program funded Individual Training Accounts (ITA) as part of a career pathway strategy for youth program participants co-enrolled as adults or dislocated workers;
- Utilizing work-based training opportunities for youth program participants co-enrolled as adults or dislocated workers, as identified in their Individual Service Strategy (ISS) as part of a career pathway; and
- Career pathway planning.

Local program operators may determine, for these individuals, the appropriate level and balance of services under the youth and adult programs. Such determinations regarding the appropriate program for the participant must be based on the service needs of the participant and if the participant is career-ready based on an assessment of his/her occupational skills, prior work experience, employability, and the participant's needs. The chart below illustrates how the two programs differ.



Issue	WIOA Youth Funds	WIOA Adult Funds	Opportunities/Issues
Eligibility	Eligible according to school enrollment status, age, poverty status, and barriers to employment; 75% goes to OSY.	All adults eligible for career services; priority to individualized career services is provided to individuals who are public assistance recipients, otherwise low-income, or basic skills deficient. Training services may be provided to individuals unlikely to obtain employment through career services alone.	Older youth who do not qualify for the youth program can still take advantage of the basic career services in the adult program.
Services	Communities must make all 14 program elements available as outlined in the law.	Career services are to be provided based on the needs of the individual. In some situations only basic career services are necessary, while in other situations more individualized career services may be provided. Training services may be made available if they are determined necessary to enable the adult to enter unsubsidized employment.	How flexible will American Job Center operators be regarding young people who progress from the youth program into the adult program or participate in both? How will the two sets of services be coordinated?



Issue	WIOA Youth Funds	WIOA Adult Funds	Opportunities/Issues
Performance Measures	One set of performance measures based on placement in employment, education, and/or training; earnings; credential rate; skills gains; and employer measures.	One set of performance measures focused on employment, median earnings credentialing attainment and/or skill gains.	Because performance measures are the same across all core programs, provides an opportunity for co-enrollment and shared outcomes across Titles I, II, and IV.
Service Providers	A Local WDB competitively awards grants or contracts to carry out some or all of the youth workforce investment activities.	Career services usually provided at American Job Centers (one-stops), training services provided via an ITA from a pre-approved list of vendors or through a contract with employers to provide work-based training opportunities (including on-the-job training, customized training, etc.).	In order to maximize the use of adult resources for older youth, youth service providers that offer training should be encouraged to apply to be on the pre-approved list of training vendors, so they can offer services to youth under both funding sources.

D. Coordinating with the American Job Center Network

The American Job Center network under WIOA presents two complementary opportunities for the WIOA youth program. First, there is the obvious benefit of the availability of a comprehensive array of workforce and labor market information and services. While each area’s American Job Center network is designed to best meet the needs of the community, the following four principles are key to all American Job Center networks:

- **Universal Access:** All community members will have access to a wide array of employment development services and quality workforce and labor market information.



- **Customer Choice:** The philosophy of giving customers choices is critical to an American Job Center network.
- **Integration:** An American Job Center network offers the potential for a seamless approach to service delivery, providing access to services under a wide array of employment, training, and education programs provided by the multiple partners.
- **Performance-Driven/Outcome-Based Measures:** To ensure customer satisfaction, American Job Center networks must have clear outcome measures.

These qualities will make the American Job Center network a key resource for all youth service providers.

The second opportunity is that the American Job Center network is a means for forming collaborative working arrangements among key service delivery organizations. WIOA stipulates that formal working agreements, called memoranda of understanding (MOU), must be created among the required partners and any other partners that the area believes is critical for the effective operation of the American Job Center network. This creates the framework for collaborative relationships among the partner organizations, many of whom also have an active interest in youth and may be represented on the Youth Committee. Below is a list of the required core and other partners under WIOA.

- WIOA title I programs (e.g., adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs; Indian and Native American (INA) programs; migrant and seasonal farmworker (MSFW) programs; Job Corps; and the YouthBuild program)
- Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service
- Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program
- Vocational Rehabilitation Program
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program
- Senior Community Service Employment Programs
- Career and Technical Education programs under the Perkins Act
- Trade Act title II, chapter 2 trade adjustment assistance activities
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) Programs and other Veterans Programs authorized under 38 U.S.C. chapter 41
- Community Services Block Grant Employment and Training Programs
- HUD Employment and Training programs
- UI programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws
- Second Chance Act sec. 212 reintegration of offenders programs
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP Employment & Training)



Youth and the American Job Center Network

One important caveat should be discussed in connection with American Job Centers. Some areas have mentioned concerns that youth may become “lost” in a busy American Job Center catering to a large and diverse group of customers. Two suggestions have surfaced for coping with this issue:

- Set aside special space and designated staff as a “youth center” within the American Job Center; and/or
- Create smaller, affiliate or specialized American Job Centers for youth that are electronically linked to the workforce and labor market information at the main center.

Some examples where enhanced coordination could take place can be found in TEGL 16-16, Attachment 2 at: https://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr_doc.cfm?DOCN=8772.

E. Performance System

As described in Chapter 1, a key WIOA issue is developing an effective performance management system. For WIOA, this includes three specific elements:

- Appropriate program outcome data so that performance and wage information is available;
- Familiarity with the legal requirements and definitions of the performance measures; and
- Information on how the intake flow and program processes planned may impact potential outcomes.

Someone connected to the Youth Committee (e.g., a staff person, a technically inclined Youth Committee member) should take responsibility for mastering the nuances of the WIOA performance management system so that it becomes a management tool that drives program success. A basic outline of some of the fundamental issues that are a part of the WIOA youth performance management system follows. It is only the beginning. Performance management should be an ongoing process that will require constant attention to ensure success.

The Legal Parameters. The law and regulations provide a set of required core indicators of performance for employment and training activities for eligible youth participants. To fully appreciate these factors, the numerator and denominator for these measures (most of which are defined as rates) need to be identified.



What Performance Indicators to Use? WIOA standardizes performance indicators and definitions across the six core programs. The youth performance parameters are:

- Percentage of program participants who are in education or training activities or in unsubsidized employment during second quarter after exit.
- Percentage of participants who are in education or training activities or in unsubsidized employment during fourth quarter after exit.
- Median earnings of participants in unsubsidized employment during second quarter after exit.
- Percentage of participants who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential, secondary school diploma, or equivalent during participation or within 1 year after program exit.
- Percentage of participants who during a program year are in education or training that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains toward such a credential or employment.
- Effectiveness in serving employers (this indicator does not apply directly to youth participants).

Maximizing Performance. To ensure a successful youth program, measurable objectives for every service provider should be established. If the programs meet their objectives, then all performance factors will be achieved.

Youth Committees might also want to give consideration to creating an incentive system for their vendors of services. An incentive system does not necessarily need to be tied to dollars — it could be public recognition of a job well done — but it is an important part of the total management approach.

And braiding funding resources from multiple sources provides a richer service mix that will yield better results.

Negotiating the Factors. The WIOA performance indicators reflect the specific priorities of the WIOA program. They make a statement as to what is important in the way of youth outcomes. Equally as important, these measures set the parameters that determine how program operations are to be considered “successful.” Therefore, the CEOs and Local WDBs (or the Governor and the State WDB) should try to negotiate realistic measures that will drive the program to achieve good outcomes, but that will also be attainable.

Further, the Statistical Adjustment Model (WIOA sec. 116(b)(3)(viii)), established by the Departments of Labor and Education, is an objective statistical model to be used to make adjustments in the State negotiated levels of performance for actual economic conditions and the characteristics of participants served at the end of the program year. It also is a key factor



to be used in arriving at mutual agreement on State negotiated core program performance levels.

Look for reliable MIS and how they are used. While a common challenge for almost all providers has been “too much paper work,” it is important when selecting service providers to make sure that they can keep accurate records. It is also important that providers understand the use of data as an internal management tool. Providers should make a commitment to examine their data at regular intervals to assess progress toward agreed upon goals. If the program is not meeting expectations, mid-course corrections can be undertaken. Smart managers will use the MIS for continuous improvement, not just contract compliance.



4. Coming Together at the Table

Understandably, the Youth Committee may be preoccupied with WIOA internal organizational issues described in the previous chapters. During that process, the important task of building trust and common understandings and dedication to a common vision among the members has been taking shape. That does not happen overnight, so do not get discouraged. Try not to get so bogged down in the WIOA administrative minutia that the Big Picture that was described in Section 2 of this guide gets lost. This challenge is about building a system of effective connections for youth to the mainstream of productive employment, satisfying family life, and fulfilling citizenship. But in our zeal to put together a system of connecting activities, it is critical that every connection be a quality connection. A smooth looking system that connects poor program components is not what any community wants to end up with!

A. Stick to The Principles/Effective Practices

Many years ago, the Levitan Center at Johns Hopkins University, working with a national youth policy network, identified service principles for youth programs that were based on what people in the field had learned about “what works.” The following key principles remain today:

- Continuity of contact with caring adults;
- The centrality of work;
- Connections to employers;
- Contextual educational options for competency certification;
- Leadership development;
- Postsecondary education; and
- Follow-up over a sustained period.



RECIPE FOR SUCCESS:

Key Principles

- ★ Caring and competent adults
- ★ A variety of educational options
- ★ Work-based learning opportunities
- ★ Leadership development
- ★ Skills development choices
- ★ Positive peer group value development
- ★ Follow-up and follow through support



B. How to Survive and Thrive: Creative Resource Development

Local areas need to keep in mind that WIOA youth resources are but a small part of the range of resources and programs that may be used to offer a comprehensive range of services to youth. While the identification of the other resources and programs that support youth activities should be a part of the Youth Committee's orientation, a more in-depth consideration of how these resources are used and what they produce in the way of youth services must be a part of the Youth Committee's long-term strategic planning effort.

Throughout the guide one ingredient constantly referred to is **partnership**. Partnerships are easier to talk about and write about than to build and sustain at the local and state levels. However, they are an implicit and explicit goal of WIOA, starting with the required partner agencies in the workforce system. That partnership theme carries over to the membership of the State and Local WDBs, and it is further articulated in the membership requirements of the local Youth Committees.

The challenges we confront are, quite simply, beyond the expertise and the resources of any one agency or funding stream. Bridges must be built among the various systems in which youth are frequently involved: schools, labor markets, welfare, health, recreation, juvenile justice, adult education, foster care, homeless, vocational rehabilitation, faith, and community service.

Local WDBs who establish Youth Committees will provide a forum for local areas to discover how the resources described above (and others) are currently deployed and to initiate the discussion of how these resources may be redeployed in order to make youth service delivery more comprehensive and rational.



As the partners begin to craft their design of a comprehensive youth development system, each partner should begin to see how its “piece” or building block fits in, or duplicates, or needs to be redirected. Just as important, as the partners buy into a common vision and common goals, there can be new energy behind seeking additional resources.



RECIPE FOR SUCCESS:

Ideas to Grow On

- ★ Sustain and grow your youth workforce development system and expand it to reach greater numbers of OSY
- ★ Build on what exists
- ★ Use your Youth Committee as a community collaborative leadership group
- ★ Develop a system of neighborhood hubs to conduct outreach and engage youth
- ★ Develop an intermediary entity to work with employers
- ★ Don't duplicate services

The mission involves a long-term process. To keep from being overwhelmed or discouraged and also to be able to see early indicators of progress, it is a good idea to build systems and relationships incrementally. Think BIG . . . but start small. Here are some suggestions to think about again:

- Sustain and grow your youth workforce development system and expand it to reach OSY, connecting them also to learning, jobs, and caring adults.
- Seek arrangements with school systems to offer flexible educational options that can both prevent dropout and re-engage dropouts and link them to career pathways and postsecondary opportunities.



- Use resources creatively, such as State and local school aid, WIOA funds, American Job Center resources, Pell grants, TANF, housing, juvenile justice funds, and other Federal, State, local, foundation, and private resources as well as seasoned providers in the community.
- Use the Youth Committee as a community collaborative for leadership, planning, implementation, and oversight. Make sure that schools, employers, and effective community-based organizations are partners in this collaborative. They are often the voices of seasoned experience and have a direct stake in successful outcomes.
- Develop a system of neighborhood hubs or anchors to conduct outreach and engage youth to connect or reconnect them to learning, skill development, needed supports, and jobs.
- Develop an effective intermediary to work with employers that both employers and young people will trust. The intermediary must engage employers in an efficient manner and provide a trustworthy bridge among young people, youth serving organizations, and employers.
- Try not to duplicate the services of other systems. Build on what's in place and concentrate on linking the successful pieces together.

C. What to Leave Out

This guide has been replete with recipes and ingredients for success. But as every cook and every diner knows, it is how the ingredients are put together and presented that makes a difference. The mix of ingredients should reflect local tastes and appetites. Not every recipe works every time. Practice brings skill. So, it will be with this complicated menu of youth development system building. As in all recipes, what to leave out is as important as what to include! There is no room in an effective comprehensive system for:

- Insufficient investment in building infrastructure and staff capacity;
- Single-component interventions;
- Inadequate leadership;
- Weak management capacity;
- Inadequate data systems to monitor progress and aid program improvements;
- Lack of planning time; and



- Unwillingness to commit to sustained partnerships.



RECIPE FOR SUCCESS:

Stay Away From

- ★ Short-term/low-intensity interventions
- ★ Insufficient investment in infrastructure and staff
- ★ Single-component interventions
- ★ Inadequate leadership
- ★ Weak management
- ★ Inadequate data systems
- ★ Lack of planning time
- ★ Groups unwilling to commit to sustained partnerships

D. The Prize

At the local level, there is simply no substitute for initiative, creativity, leadership, and – particularly – persistent commitment to the task. However, it must be recognized that every youth the new system reaches will not be successful. A shared responsibility rests with young people themselves. If Local WDBs invest in Youth Committees they can seize the challenge and start constructing a system of opportunities for all young people and put them on a positive trajectory, helping to secure a generation that will make an important contribution to our society. But if communities do not pull together and think together to make sure youth receive help in an accessible and understandable way, young people may not succeed, deflecting the country from its true course. And that is not a matter of fate, but of choice.

Youth Committees cannot become a missed opportunity. Too much is at stake.