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## ABSTRACT

This report is designed to assist communities engaged in or contemplating initiatives focused on at-risk youth. Much of the information comes from evaluations of the Communities in Schools, SafeFeatures, and Children at Risk initiatives. Brief descriptions of experiences or practices of the community programs are used to illustrate points made or suggestions provided. In some cases, several examples are used to demonstrate diversity in approaches. Chapter 1, "Introduction," reviews the three initiatives. Chapter 2, "Services Integration and Case Management," describes steps involved in using services integration and case management. Chapter 3, "Parental Involvement," explains the desirability and necessity of parental involvement and describes how to promote such involvement. Chapter 4, "Volunteers for Tutoring and Mentoring," explains that using local volunteers and mentors is a good way to involve the community, offering strategies for recruiting and retaining volunteers. Chapter 5, "Fund-Raising and Marketing," presents essential steps in fundraising and marketing. Chapter 6, "Monitoring Program Outcomes to Improve Accountability," focuses on measuring and reporting program outcomes. The report also includes a checklist of suggested activities related to each chapter. (Contains 63 resources.) (SM)

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## LESSONS FROM COMMUNITY - BASED INITIATIVES

# HELPING AT-RISK YOUTH

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# **HELPING AT-RISK YOUTH: Lessons from Community-Based Initiatives**

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ELAINE MORLEY  
SHELLI B. ROSSMAN

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# Acknowledgments

This report is designed to assist communities engaged in or contemplating initiatives focused on at-risk youth. Much of the information here is drawn from evaluations of the Communities in Schools (CIS) and SafeFutures initiatives, in which the authors played key roles. Funding for these evaluations was provided by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice.

The authors acknowledge the contributions of many individuals who assisted in the evaluation of the CIS program, particularly the program directors and staff members of the 21 communities visited for that evaluation. The sites, in order of visitation, are Richmond, Virginia; Greenville-Emporia, Virginia; Rocky Mount, North Carolina; Pinal County, Arizona; Long Beach, California; Columbia, South Carolina; Griffin-Spalding, Georgia; Miami Private Industry Council (PIC), Florida; Palm Beach County, Florida; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; San Antonio, Texas; Austin, Texas; Chicago, Illinois; Southwestern Pennsylvania; High Point, North Carolina; Marianna, Arkansas; Helena/West Helena, Arkansas; Adams County, Colorado; Seattle, Washington; Metropolitan Corporate Academy, New York City; and Houston, Texas. Similarly, we appreciate the cooperation and assistance of the directors and staff of the CIS national office, regional offices, and state offices who participated in site visits and provided materials. We particularly wish to thank Linda Britt, CIS' Director of Research and Evaluation, for her assistance during the evaluation of CIS, and for additional information provided for this report. In addition to the programs visited for the national evaluation, information was provided for this report by the CIS programs of Central Texas (Austin); High Point, North Carolina; Jacksonville, Florida; Kingsville, Texas; Troup County, Georgia; Wichita/Sedgwick County, Kansas; the North Carolina state CIS program; and Gary Bowen of the School of Social Work at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Their assistance is greatly appreciated.

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# Checklist of Suggested Practices

## **SERVICES INTEGRATION**

- Build broad-based collaboratives and partnerships to promote services integration. (p. 6)
- Use formal agreements to promote services integration. (p. 9)
- Colocate staff to promote integrated services and enhance case management. (p. 10)
- Facilitate working relations with relocated staff (e.g., provide orientation, training, and adequate supervision). (p. 11)
- Adopt practices to support services integration, such as holding regular meetings of collaborative groups, sharing information about agency services, and developing good relationships with school districts and schools. (p. 12)

## **CASE MANAGEMENT**

- Use staff with appropriate qualifications to provide case management. (p. 15)
- Provide ongoing training for case managers. (p. 17)
- Implement comprehensive case management activities. (p. 17)

## **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

- Involve parents as soon as possible and make clear expectations of involvement. (p. 24)
- Create a welcoming atmosphere. (p. 25)



- Reduce barriers to involvement—schedule meetings at parents’ convenience, provide child care, and help with transportation. (p. 25)
- Use outreach and home visits to involve parents. (p. 26)
- Offer services that interest and help parents, such as parenting skills training, Graduate Equivalency Diploma classes, and parent support groups. (p. 27)
- Involve parents in volunteer efforts, enabling them to “give back” to the program. (p. 29)
- Stay in touch with parents. (p. 29)

## **VOLUNTEER TUTORS AND MENTORS**

- Establish responsibility for volunteer efforts. (p. 33)
- Put energy and creativity into volunteer recruitment. (p. 35)
- Arrange to screen volunteers. (p. 37)
- Provide training to volunteers. (p. 37)
- Select students to be tutored or mentored consistent with the goals of the program. (p. 40)
- Inform and involve parents. (p. 40)
- Match volunteers and youth, considering factors such as gender, ethnicity, language, and shared interests. (p. 40)
- Provide ongoing support and monitoring of volunteers. (p. 42)
- Recognize volunteers’ work in ongoing and small ways in addition to public recognition activities. (p. 43)

## **FUND-RAISING AND MARKETING**

- Diversify funding sources and seek long-term commitments of funds. (p. 45)
- Pursue public or private grants. (p. 47)
- Involve board members in raising funds. (p. 48)
- Seek in-kind contributions, including reassigned staff and pro bono services. (p. 49)
- Be responsive to the goals and information needs of funders. (p. 50)
- Put a human face on fund-raising efforts. (p. 51)
- Use special events to raise funds. (p. 51)

- Acknowledge supporters. (p. 52)
- Use publicity and the media to generate public awareness and support. (p. 52)
- Encourage staff and clients to become actively involved in community service and activities to build program awareness and support. (p. 53)
- Use newsletters to keep in touch with the community. (p. 53)

## **MONITORING PROGRAM OUTCOMES TO IMPROVE ACCOUNTABILITY**

- Identify outcomes used by similar programs as a starting point for identifying your own outcomes. (p. 57)
- Construct logic models to help realistically identify outcomes of key programs. (p. 58)
- Select outcome indicators, considering factors such as relevance, importance, understandability, extent of program control over the outcome, and the feasibility and cost of data collection. (p. 59)
- Obtain data from official records—of the program and other agencies. (p. 65)
- Address information sharing and confidentiality issues. (p. 65)
- Use surveys as sources of data. (p. 67)
- Establish data collection procedures. (p. 71)
- Present data using breakouts, comparisons, and explanatory information to make it more useful. (p. 73)
- Use findings to strengthen programs. (p. 76)

# 1

## Introduction

In recent years, attention has increasingly focused on issues such as youth crime and violence, substance abuse, gangs, school dropouts, academic performance, and other issues associated with “at-risk youth.” Common sense and years of research suggest that at-risk youth and their families have multiple needs and interrelated problem behaviors that are not likely to be successfully addressed by single-response, stand-alone initiatives. There is growing interest in community-based collaboratives focused on services integration or comprehensive service delivery that address clients’ multiple needs by implementing a broad-based continuum of care and linking youth and families to a variety of services.

Support for such initiatives by federal agencies and foundations underscores the interest in exploring these approaches and in communicating lessons learned to assist similar efforts. For example, the U. S. Department of Justice’s (DOJ) Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) provides support for the SafeFutures initiative. A federal interagency partnership, including the U.S. Departments of Commerce and Health and Human Services and OJJDP, supported Communities in Schools (CIS). The Annie E. Casey Foundation funded the New Futures initiative in five cities. OJJDP and two other DOJ agencies, the Bureau of Justice Assistance and the National Institute of Justice, joined a consortium of foundations, trusts, and other organizations to support the Children at Risk (CAR) initiative. Another community-based collaboration supported by the Bureau of Justice Assistance is the Comprehensive Communities Program, which addresses overall community crime prevention and includes a youth crime prevention component.

This report draws on the experiences of such initiatives to distill findings and suggestions that may benefit other communities seeking to introduce or already in the process of implementing such efforts. The information here is intended for two primary audiences: (1) community leaders and others who make decisions about introducing community-based initiatives for at-risk youth or who guide such initiatives, and (2) program administrators responsible for managing such initiatives.

The five topics addressed here—services integration and case management, parental involvement, using volunteers for tutoring and men-

toring, fund-raising and marketing, and monitoring program outcomes—are critical components of community-based initiatives for at-risk youth, yet local programs often experience difficulty implementing them. The suggestions presented here derive from experiences reported by or observed at a variety of programs. They are primarily drawn from an evaluation of CIS, which included field visits to CIS programs in 21 communities. Some material is drawn from an on-going evaluation of the SafeFutures initiative. Since SafeFutures is a relatively new effort (local implementation began during summer 1996) and was not fully implemented at the time of this study, fewer examples are drawn from it than from CIS. Examples also are drawn from an evaluation of the CAR demonstration program (based on reports developed by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) to document the implementation and operations of the program; see “Resources” section).

Brief descriptions of experiences or practices of various community programs are used to illustrate points made or suggestions provided. In some cases, several examples are used to demonstrate diversity in approaches. Due to space limitations, only selected examples can be presented, even though other programs may use similar practices. Some CIS programs are cited repeatedly because they illustrate practices in different areas addressed here, such as case management, use of volunteers, and fund-raising. The CIS and CAR examples reflect circumstances during the time period covered by those evaluations (from October 1991 to February 1994 for CIS, and from fall 1992 through December 1995 for CAR). SafeFutures examples reflect conditions and practices through early 1997. Changes may have occurred subsequently.

Overviews of the three initiatives are provided below as context for the material that follows.

**Communities in Schools, Inc.**, formerly called Cities in Schools, is a national, nonprofit organization that encourages the coordination of youth-oriented services in local communities and schools. The CIS model is based on holistic approaches to school-based, site-specific services to youth at risk of dropping out of school. The CIS model is based on using existing community resources and services that are integrated and repositioned at school sites to achieve dropout reduction and to mitigate related problems, such as teen pregnancy, gang involvement, violence, and other risky behaviors. The model assumes that youth who drop out of school generally have nonacademic problems (such as low income, dysfunctional families, health or mental health problems, substance abuse, etc.) as well as academic ones. The belief is that nonacademic issues must be addressed to adequately resolve the dropout problem.

Autonomous city- or county-level CIS programs develop partnerships with local government (e.g., school districts), service agencies, and local businesses. Usually structured as nonprofit corporations, the community programs are responsible for initiating and managing CIS school-based projects and for developing resources to support program administration and service delivery. There are more than 100 local CIS programs in the United States, and others are under development.

At the school level, the prototype involves bringing together a team of adults to provide services to youth identified as being at risk of dropping out. The team ideally includes case managers, service providers (e.g., counselors from substance abuse agencies), and volunteers (who provide a variety of ser-

vices, most commonly tutoring or mentoring) under the supervision of a project coordinator, who may serve a dual role as a CIS, school district, or service agency staff member.

The original CIS approach targeted a relatively small number of students in each school. Eligibility criteria generally included poor academic performance, school behavioral problems, or presence of risk indicators. A variation on this approach is the CIS academy, often organized as a separate “alternative school” in which all students are part of the CIS program, or as a “school within a school.” Another variation is the “whole school” model, in which all students are considered CIS participants, although some students may be targeted for more intensive services than others. Although CIS programs initially were formed at the high school level, they have been implemented widely in middle schools and even in elementary schools.

CIS programs typically provide some form of case management to assess student needs, develop service delivery plans, and monitor student progress. Services commonly provided on site or by referral include counseling, health care, assessment of employability skills, anger management, and prevention education. Some of these services are offered in a CIS class, which is frequently provided as an elective in middle and high schools. While the CIS classes’ content varies by program, many feature life-skills education, which may include employment-related topics, as well as a variety of prevention-oriented topics, study skills, and remedial education. Other CIS services range from individual or group counseling and field trips—provided by virtually all programs—to more specialized offerings, such as teen parenting programs. Most programs have established tutoring or mentoring programs for CIS students.

**SafeFutures** is a five-year demonstration program supported by OJJDP in six communities: Boston, Massachusetts; Contra Costa County, California; Fort Belknap, Montana; Imperial County, California; Seattle, Washington; and St. Louis, Missouri. The participating sites were selected to represent urban, rural, and Native American communities and their efforts to combat delinquency, youth gangs, and serious, violent, and chronic juvenile offenders. The initiative is being implemented in specified target areas or to specified target groups in most of the communities.

The SafeFutures initiative links research findings about risk and protective factors for youth with state-of-the-art knowledge about “what works” in juvenile delinquency prevention and control. SafeFutures goals include the prevention and control of youth violence and delinquency by reducing community risk factors, increasing factors that protect youth from delinquency, developing a continuum of services for at-risk and delinquent youth, and imposing graduated sanctions for juvenile offenders. At a broader level, the initiative is intended to facilitate an enhanced service delivery system and build the community’s capacity to institutionalize and sustain the efforts implemented under SafeFutures.

SafeFutures implementation is overseen by local collaborations of key community stakeholders responsible for providing services to at-risk youth, such as schools, health and human services agencies, law enforcement, probation offices, and juvenile courts. These stakeholders are responsible for such activities as community needs assessment, strategic planning, and service coordination. The SafeFutures initiative does not provide a specific model for service

configuration, enabling local autonomy to develop a system conforming to local needs and resources. Most communities use case management to promote service coordination and linkages; some provide school-based services, including use of Family Resource Centers in schools.

The initiative funds services in nine recommended or required component areas: after-school programs; mentoring; family strengthening; mental health; delinquency prevention (such as tutoring, employability skills training, substance abuse prevention, leadership development, or recreational services); gang-free schools and communities efforts; programming for at-risk and delinquent girls; rehabilitation services and graduated sanctions for serious, violent, and chronic juvenile offenders; and implementation of intensive, nonresidential, community-based treatment centers for pre- and postadjudicated youth. Taken together, the SafeFutures program components provide a foundation for community development of customized, comprehensive frameworks and graduated interventions.

**Children at Risk** was an intensive, two-year intervention for high-risk youth in high-risk neighborhoods. CASA, in partnership with DOJ, managed the demonstration program. Programs were initiated in four communities in fall 1992; two others were added in early 1993. Participating communities included Austin, Texas; Bridgeport, Connecticut; Memphis, Tennessee; Newark, New Jersey; Savannah, Georgia; and Seattle, Washington. Local programs followed the basic CAR model but had flexibility in implementation. Several programs used names other than CAR, including the CAR predecessor, Strategic Intervention for High Risk Youth, or locally-determined names.

CAR was a comprehensive, community-based initiative that brought together social services, law enforcement, and juvenile justice agencies to provide intensive prevention and intervention services to youth and families. The model was intended to bring about increased prosocial bonding and to build educational and social skills for future success by reducing neighborhood, family, peer-group, and personal risks. CAR programs operated within target areas characterized by high crime, poverty, and social problems. Youth in the program met specified risk criteria, attended selected schools in the target area, and were eleven to thirteen years old when they began participating.

Lead agencies in the CAR program created multiagency networks to implement a comprehensive set of services to eligible youth. Enhanced law enforcement efforts and community policing were required in the target areas as part of the model to reduce illegal drugs and crime in participants' neighborhoods. Other core services in the CAR model included intensive case management, family services, education services (such as tutoring or homework assistance), after-school and summer activities, mentoring, incentives, and juvenile justice interventions (such as working with juvenile courts to provide community service opportunities and enhanced supervision of youth in the justice system). The initiative also sought to better coordinate service delivery among human services and justice system agencies for program participants. The linkages created among collaborators were also intended to have a broader effect on service delivery in the community.

# 2

## Services Integration and Case Management

Programs designed to address the needs of at-risk youth typically recognize that such individuals (and their families) have multiple problems and needs, requiring services from more than one source. Thus many programs for this clientele seek to counteract service fragmentation by implementing holistic approaches built on a foundation of integrated services and case management. Integration of services occurs at the system level. It involves coordinating the policies and procedures of different institutions to establish a multiorganizational infrastructure that ensures service recipients do not “fall through the cracks” formed by the various service providers. Case management occurs at the client-service delivery interface. Although case managers may support clients in a variety of ways, core functions involve coordinating and monitoring a suite of services customized to the needs of each particular youth or family.

Integrated services and case management are key features of the CIS model. (The SafeFutures and CAR initiatives also include service coordination and case management as part of their program models.) An underlying premise of CIS is that resources to help youth and their families are already allocated, but a coordinating structure for them is lacking. In addition, CIS believes that gaps in and duplication of services may exist when agencies work in isolation. Thus, CIS emphasizes bringing various agencies together as a team, in regular or alternative public school settings, to promote more effective provision of services to youth and families. CIS projects are deliberately located in schools, because youth are legally required to attend school. This location facilitates identification of youth and families who need supportive services, while enhancing the accessibility of those services to youth and their family members.

It is beyond the scope of this report to describe in detail how to implement integrated services or case management practices. Significant aspects of these topics are discussed here, including an overview of collaborations and partnerships and the major functions performed under case management. The “Resources” section identifies agencies and publications that can provide further information or references on these topics.

## SERVICES INTEGRATION

Key objectives of services integration include identifying gaps in service delivery and assigning organizational responsibility for implementing needed services; reducing barriers to obtaining existing services (e.g., unacceptably long waiting periods before treatment can commence, and geographical distance between provider and clients, compounded by insufficient public transportation); and conserving institutional resources by sharing some efforts across systems or by reducing unnecessary duplication of services. Given this focus, developing collaborations and public-private partnerships, bringing together service providers to support these efforts, becomes a crucial consideration for programs that wish to incorporate services integration initiatives.

Collaborations or partnerships of social service providers and other agencies that affect at-risk youth (such as law enforcement or juvenile justice agencies) may facilitate service coordination in a number of ways. Examples include centralized client intake, assessment, or referral; increased information sharing, possibly even developing a centralized management information system; cross-disciplinary team staffing of cases; joint fund-raising; and sharing resources. For example, several agencies may elect to colocate their staff members in one place (i.e., “one-stop shopping”) to improve access and promote service coordination. Some agencies call this approach “outstationing.” CIS programs frequently include providers who have been “repositioned” to serve clients at the CIS school site. Similarly, schools share their resources by dedicating teachers to CIS classes or by providing space, furnishings, and, occasionally, some equipment for the program. In effect, reassigning staff to a different site is a resource allocation decision.

### **Build broad-based collaboratives and partnerships to promote services integration.**

Services integration usually is accomplished through institutional arrangements to colocate staff or to ensure that clients referred to different agencies are provided services (e.g., by reserving a specific number of “slots” for them or by giving them priority status). Collaboratives and partnerships among agencies are common institutional arrangements to promote services integration.

Collaboration commonly occurs at two levels: the policy level (the focus of this section) and the practitioner level. On the policy level, collaboration occurs through participation of high-level agency administrators on boards of directors, steering committees, and similar collaborative groups, or through formal agreements among agencies. Collaboration among practitioners may involve the formation of service cabinets that regularly meet to exchange information and resolve systemic issues. The arrangement may also be more informal, occurring when colocated staff of different agencies interact regularly to serve clients or when service providers meet periodically to develop plans, review cases, or address service delivery issues.

Collaboratives should represent diverse providers, particularly system actors who represent institutions that can have a major impact on client needs (e.g., schools, human services providers, law enforcement, juvenile and family courts, and employers). Since communities are unique, local collaborations can evolve and be structured in different ways. Local CIS programs are generally structured as independent, nonprofit organizations, each with a board of direc-



tors whose members represent the local partnership or collaboration in support of CIS. The national CIS organization trains communities to replicate the CIS model, with an emphasis on developing the community partnership and establishing a board of directors.

CIS boards include representatives of the private sector (business and industry), government, nonprofit agencies, school districts, and the community. Social service, health, mental health, employment, and substance abuse treatment agencies are commonly represented. Since CIS programs are located in and work closely with schools, the superintendent of the school district is usually represented on the CIS board. Service agencies represented on the boards typically provide staff for CIS programs or help facilitate service access for CIS participants. Business or community leaders on the boards often work behind the scenes to encourage staff relocation or development of coordinating mechanisms.

SafeFutures delinquency-prevention and violence-reduction programs are also implemented by local collaboratives. At least some of the partners initially developed their community's SafeFutures proposal to receive federal funds. In communities chosen to participate, the collaboratives, usually called steering committees or policy boards, function much as a board of directors in providing oversight and direction for the initiatives. They include representatives from public and nonprofit organizations serving youth and families, business and industry, and parents and youth. Because of SafeFutures' emphasis on mitigating juvenile crime, these boards include representatives from local law enforcement and juvenile justice agencies. One lead agency in each community has primary responsibility for implementing and managing the initiative.

CAR initiatives were sponsored by a lead agency—in various locations, these included citywide collaboratives, government agencies, and direct service providers—supported by agencies that provided the service components required by the CAR model. These agencies generally included the local school district, police department, and a range of government and nonprofit social service agencies.

Partner organizations and their representatives should have parity in decisionmaking. Some community collaboratives spend considerable time envisioning desired outcomes and how to prioritize their reform efforts. In addition, successful collaboratives make concerted efforts during their formative stages to exchange information explicitly about the mission, services, flexibility, and limitations of each partner. Where a particular model is to be implemented (such as the CIS approach), it is important that collaborative members fully understand and buy into the program to ensure their support and cooperation. Providing an orientation to the program at the early stages of collaborative development promotes such support.

- ▶ The CIS executive director in Adams County, Colorado, believed that the involvement of collaborative members (e.g., school board members, principals, and directors of social service agencies) in CIS training was crucial not only to promote their acceptance of the program, but also to ensure commitment to free up resources, such as staff and other in-kind support. CIS regional staff traveled to Adams County to provide several presentations on CIS for community leaders. In addition, a

number of potential CIS staff and community leaders attended training at CIS regional or national training centers. A group also traveled to Houston to observe CIS operations there. The school district paid for these trips.

When a collaborative is initiated without a predefined approach, it is important for partners to reach consensus on the outcomes they hope to achieve and the efforts needed to accomplish their objectives. Some community-based collaboratives hold retreats, facilitated by professionals, to help them develop a strategic plan to guide their efforts.

Cross-agency collaboration is the primary mechanism for systems change, as organizations agree to modify existing procedures, adopt new ones, or address gaps in services. However, even where there is a shared vision of what can and should be accomplished, collaboratives may encounter obstacles, including specific missions or mandates that limit the flexibility of some member agencies. Despite such stumbling blocks, collaboratives are often able to bring about change.

- ▶ Collaboratives in several communities contributed to changes in juvenile probation practices. In Adams County, Colorado, the probation department assigned some probation officers juvenile-only caseloads and assigned other officers to school districts or specific schools to facilitate closer coordination with school and CIS staff. Previously, juvenile cases had been assigned on a rotational basis, resulting in geographically widespread caseloads. In Pinal County, Arizona, the probation department realigned caseloads in order to assign a single officer to the youth in each community. As a result, schools and the CIS Family Resource Center (FRC) no longer had to deal with changing probation officers, and the officers had a more efficient service area. In Contra Costa County, California, one probation officer was assigned to work part-time at three schools with SafeFutures initiatives in place, facilitating information exchange with school and SafeFutures staff.
- ▶ At one Seattle, Washington, elementary school, assessments determined that high absenteeism was related to student inadmissibility because required immunizations were lacking. CIS obtained serum from the public health department and arranged for a local hospital to administer immunizations.
- ▶ In Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the school system adopted a charter schools approach (e.g., a thematic magnet school-within-a-school) for all high schools, modeled after the CIS block scheduling approach used in CIS high-school programs in that city.
- ▶ Although Pinal County, Arizona, had a number of organizations that provided emergency food supplies, their locations were widespread, and they were often open for limited hours. The FRC facilitated meetings of ministers and other interested parties who established a food bank that would be open six days a week and staffed by community members recruited and trained by VISTA volunteers. The city provided a building for \$1 a year, and the library started a program enabling borrowers to bring food for the bank instead of paying a fine for overdue books.

- ▶ In the Savannah, Georgia, CAR program, a collaborative member alerted the group to the poor condition of a baseball field next to a school involved in the CAR program. This resulted in the city providing funds to restore the field. Similarly, after the group determined that there was no transportation between the school and the local recreation center, the group was able to obtain a school bus for this purpose.

### **Use formal agreements to promote services integration.**

Successful integration of services is facilitated by shared governance and common procedural practices across agencies or, at least, by consensual arrangements that remove turf barriers. Some collaboratives rely on informal arrangements to define partnership roles and responsibilities. For example, the Columbia, South Carolina, CIS program did not use formal agreements with agencies, believing it was better to have relationships based on trust. It was felt that if formal agreements were used, agencies might adhere only to what was specified in the agreement, and that they might be more flexible to changing needs and provide additional services in the absence of such agreements. Informality was also believed to be beneficial in the event that repositioned staff did not work out well.

However, because informal agreements can easily fall apart, most partnerships prefer to use formal agreements, such as Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) or contracts.

- ▶ Adams County, Colorado, used different agreements for each agency; a local attorney developed the contracts for CIS pro bono. The agreements, which were renegotiated annually, specified the number of staff to be relocated at the CIS school site and their roles, responsibilities, and working conditions. Use of these agreements forestalled potential issues such as background checks, liability, and supervision. Since the school board officially adopted repositioned staff as independent subcontractors, the contracts also eliminated issues of confidentiality and information sharing among organizations that were part of the service network. The CIS director engaged the support of the school system (the superintendent or a school board member), the relevant agency director or board member, and a local government leader, such as the county commissioner, in officially authorizing each agreement.
- ▶ SafeFutures initiatives generally use MOUs with each agency providing staff or services. These MOUs typically specify the services and other resources (such as staff or office space) to be provided and, in some cases, the minimum number of youth and families to be served. Other aspects of the collaboration may also be spelled out. Imperial County, California, MOUs included such items as cooperating to promote SafeFutures' goals, participating in planning meetings or other groups, sharing client information, coordinating with other agencies, participating in ongoing training, and providing data for use in evaluating the local initiative.

**Colocate staff to promote integrated services and enhance case management.**

Colocation of staff in the same facility on a full- or part-time basis can reduce service barriers and enhance collaboration among practitioners. For example, colocation of staff from a range of agencies, particularly at a school site, may increase service use by eliminating the need to travel to different locations to obtain different services. Colocation also may reduce clients' reluctance to use services that have negative connotations, such as mental health or substance abuse treatment, since their use is less obvious in a multiservice setting.

- ▶ Colocation of staff from health and human services agencies at the school site is the primary mechanism for services integration in CIS programs. Staff commonly relocated to CIS programs include social workers (supplemented by social work practicum students or interns in several communities), counselors, health care providers, and job training staff. Police and probation officers are also colocated in some programs. Schools typically provide one or more teachers for the CIS class; some also provide other school staff, such as school nurses or counselors.
- ▶ In the Imperial County, California, SafeFutures program, a variety of service providers were colocated in the FRC begun in a target area high school. Service delivery staff located at this site on a full- or part-time basis included two FRC staff members who performed case management functions, a social service eligibility worker, a nurse-practitioner, a mental health case manager, and a social worker. This program also initiated a law enforcement team (a police officer, a deputy sheriff, and two juvenile probation officers) to help coordinate prevention and intervention efforts. Law enforcement team members were colocated in the police department and also spent time in the FRC.
- ▶ In the Bridgeport, Connecticut, CAR program, family mentors (case managers) shared a storefront office in the target area with two neighborhood police officers. The police officers and family mentors jointly conducted some home visits; they also collaborated on individual cases and participated in team meetings.

Colocated staff can work together to respond holistically to the spectrum of problems exhibited by at-risk youth. Colocation enables staff to interact informally to discuss client issues, changes in needs, progress, options for service provision, and differing perspectives on a case. In addition to promoting services integration, colocation of staff was reported to provide a variety of other benefits, including increased professional development and growth for staff, networking and understanding of capabilities and limitations of other agencies, and enhanced knowledge of how to access local resources for one's own clientele. Emphasizing such benefits may help in efforts to obtain relocated staff.

The ability to obtain staff for colocation or to maintain such commitments over time is a problem for a number of CIS programs, particularly those in small communities with relatively few human service agencies, in areas where agencies had suffered budget cutbacks and downsized their staff, and in cities with heavy service demand. In such cases, agency administrators often feel so "stretched" they are unwilling to reposition any staff. One way to offset service agencies' reluctance to relocate staff is to pay part or all of the salaries and costs of such staff. Some programs find this arrangement desirable because it gives them more control over staff.

- ▶ The Miami PIC (Private Industry Council), Florida, CIS program contracted with local-government and private-service organizations to provide staff for counseling, service delivery, and referrals. The PIC believed that purchasing these services guaranteed stable service delivery, averting loss of staff if agencies suffered fiscal cutbacks, and made the service provider more accountable to PIC. Service providers included community-based organizations, state and local government agencies, employment and training organizations, postsecondary institutions, and social and mental health agencies.
- ▶ In Columbia, South Carolina, the CIS program paid a portion of the salary of its repositioned social worker. The portion was negotiated each year and varied according to the social service agency's financial condition.
- ▶ In High Point, North Carolina, funding for two social workers in the county's human services agency was earmarked by county commissioners for the purpose of relocating them in the CIS program.

Although collocation of services is desirable, it is not always possible or necessary to provide all services on site. Those needed by relatively few students might be obtained more efficiently through referral. Few CIS programs are able to secure a sufficient diversity of repositioned staff to enable them to provide a comprehensive range of services at the school site. Referrals to off-site services are common, but many are to entities that are not part of the CIS "umbrella" and do not guarantee services will be provided to CIS students or families. In cases where agencies limit the number of referrals accepted, CIS staff generally refer only the most serious cases. As a result, some students who might have benefited from particular services do not receive them.

### **Facilitate working relations with relocated staff.**

Program directors can facilitate smooth working relationships with colocated staff by providing adequate orientation to the program, its operations, and procedures when staff are initially assigned. Some CIS program managers send repositioned staff to national or regional CIS-sponsored training programs and conferences to help them better understand CIS and make them feel a part of the team. Some large programs, such as Houston's CIS program, provide their own annual training and orientation. Similarly, some SafeFutures initiatives have begun cross-training staff to encourage greater interagency compatibility.

Since service agency staff are often viewed as "outsiders" by school staff (particularly if they are repositioned on a part-time basis), it is helpful for repositioned staff to participate in school activities, such as faculty meetings, committees, family nights, and special events. Some CIS programs made a practice of introducing repositioned staff to school staff at all-staff meetings held by the school each fall or at other events attended by school staff.

One problem identified by a number of CIS staff was their relative lack of control over relocated staff whose salaries they did not support. Although arrangements for such staff generally were satisfactory, in some cases CIS staff felt schools or service agencies were "dumping" unwanted employees on them.

Ideally, program staff should help choose and evaluate relocated staff. Some CIS programs have agreements providing this arrangement, but others did not ask for or were unable to obtain such input. This issue should be addressed early and included in MOUs or staff contracts.

Program directors also need to adequately supervise relocated staff, individually or in groups. Some CIS coordinators held weekly or monthly meetings with all repositioned staff to identify problems or concerns and make sure that everyone is “on the same page.”

### **Adopt practices to support services integration.**

Developing collaboratives or partnerships, signing MOUs or contracts, and colocating staff all promote services integration and coordination. Other steps that support integration are discussed below.

Collaborative members should meet regularly to ensure their efforts are functioning smoothly. Most collaborative bodies meet on a quarterly basis; some meet monthly. Some communities have established additional, smaller groups (e.g., “service cabinets”) that meet more frequently and focus on issues related to program operations, while the overall collaborative focuses on “big picture” policy issues.

For example, in addition to its larger collaborative groups, the Imperial County, California, SafeFutures program established a management team, comprised of directors or key staff of agencies involved in direct service provision. Similarly, the Seattle, Washington, initiative established a SafeFutures inter-agency staffing group, comprised of key staff from agencies serving youth and families involved in or at risk of involvement in the juvenile justice system. This group coordinated the day-to-day efforts of the initiative, identified key areas for systems change, and made recommendations to the larger collaborative body, the community planning board.

Many agency administrators and service-providing staff have only a vague—and sometimes not entirely accurate—understanding of what other agencies can provide. This lack of information hinders services integration. Sharing information about the services, capabilities, and limitations of participating agencies can lead to greater coordination and better referrals for youth.

- ▶ Members of collaborative bodies usually end up sharing information about what their agencies do. This often occurs informally, in response to topics under discussion or questions about who can provide particular services or why a service is not available. Some groups deliberately promote information sharing when they realize that members are not fully aware of each other’s services. The St. Louis, Missouri, SafeFutures program initiated monthly meetings of its partner agencies to promote information sharing and coordination. Participants in an early meeting went around the room identifying the services and resources they could provide. In Seattle, Washington, the SafeFutures program developed an electronic resource guide, available on the Internet, that identified services available from different agencies and included other information, such as location, hours of operation, and languages spoken by agency staff. This guide was intended for use by service delivery staff and parents.

- ▶ In the developmental stages of the Adams County, Colorado, CIS program, the executive director met several times with key representatives of agencies identified as potential partners. Some representatives felt that their missions were misunderstood and that other institutions, such as schools, viewed them in a negative light due to unrealistic expectations of what they could accomplish. Workshops were held to bring together school administrators, staff, and service providers to enhance communication and begin team building. Worksheets were developed to (1) enable agencies and schools to define their missions and boundaries, services provided, and existing interagency linkages; (2) assess strengths and weaknesses of existing relationships; and (3) identify opportunities for developing a more efficient, effective approach that would be mutually beneficial to the supporting agencies.

Establishing and maintaining a good relationship with the school district and individual school(s) is critical for programs that are located in or work closely with schools. It is particularly important to enlist the support of the principal as the key school administrator. Arranging for services or resources that benefit the entire school is one way programs can promote good relations with schools. Programs have developed a variety of other practices to strengthen their ties with schools.

- ▶ The Houston, Texas, CIS program strongly emphasized school relationships. CIS signed contracts with school districts identifying the services and responsibilities of each. CIS located programs only in schools where principals really wanted them and involved principals in selecting the CIS project manager for their school to create a sense of ownership of the program and commitment to working with the manager. Project managers provided monthly reports to both CIS and the principal. They also served on the school's shared decision-making committee. Other CIS staff participated in faculty meetings, committees, and school functions. School staff were invited to participate in CIS events or activities.
- ▶ The CIS in Adams County, Colorado, was intimately tied to the school system by design. The executive director was a school district employee, and participating school districts assigned staff to coordinate and participate in CIS. Rather than create an additional structure to address the needs of students with social and family problems, the Adams County CIS process was woven into the school's existing referral and review process. (Each school in Colorado has a mandated, formal referral and review team to respond to the needs of students unable to learn in a regular classroom setting. District 14, for example, has child advocates, school employees who have master's degrees in psychology or social work, in each school. The CIS site coordinators in District 14 are also the system's child advocates.)
- ▶ The Central Texas (Austin), CIS program used a variety of techniques to strengthen its relationship with schools. An annual survey of school staff was conducted to provide feedback about the CIS program at each school site as well as suggestions for improvement and additional services. The short form included questions about familiarity and level of satisfaction with CIS services. It asked what CIS was doing that respon-

dents liked, what changes they would like to see, and what recommendations they would make to strengthen the relationship between the school and CIS. The program developed a referral feedback form, which was sent to the teachers or other school staff members who referred students to CIS to advise them of the status of their referrals. The program also provided support services for school staff, such as consultation or technical assistance regarding at-risk students, conflict management, team building, and stress management. CIS also hosted an annual “school district appreciation” luncheon for key school district decisionmakers, school board members, principals of schools with CIS programs, and CIS program managers from these schools as a mechanism for sharing information and building relationships.

- ▶ Advocates (case managers) in the Savannah, Georgia, CAR program began attending teacher team meetings in the middle school participating in CAR. The teams met to discuss academic issues and student problems. The advocates provided background information on youth participating in CAR and helped develop plans to address problems.

CIS programs in a number of communities promote service continuity by establishing programs in sets of schools that feed a particular high school. That is, the program is gradually put in place in all elementary schools feeding into middle schools whose students feed into a targeted high school. The intent of this practice is to enable the program to serve students as they progress through school levels and to provide services to siblings of CIS students who attend different schools. To accomplish this objective, however, care must be taken to identify students when they transfer from one school to another, so the program in the receiving school can “pick up” those who participated in the program in their prior school.

## CASE MANAGEMENT

Case management is derived from social work practices. Programs vary in the functions assigned to case managers and in terms of organizational structure. Although most case management programs geared to at-risk youth view the child as the client, some programs also attempt case management for parents, caregivers, and other family members.

At the bare minimum, case management includes a limited assessment of client needs and referral to appropriate services. More extensive approaches include assessment of client problems and needed services using standardized tests or diagnostic instruments; development of individual service plans; coordination of referral and provision of services (serving as a linchpin or broker); crisis intervention or provision of emergency services (e.g., food, clothing, shelter); and advocacy for clients in their contacts with service providers and institutions such as schools and juvenile court. Other activities may include outreach to family members, integrative activities such as arranging transportation to services, monitoring service delivery and student (or family) progress, and revising service plans as needed. Case managers also may provide formal or informal counseling or guidance, depending on their qualifications. In addition,



case managers may be in the unique position of “sentry”—identifying gaps in existing services or areas where demand for services greatly exceeds the system’s capacity to respond quickly.

### **Staff the case management function.**

A key assumption underlying case management approaches is that clients will benefit from individualized attention engendered by low client-to-staff ratios and multiple services customized to individual needs. Most programs expect case managers to assume responsibility for their clients. However, some programs adopt a team model of case management, in which several individuals share responsibility for decisionmaking and the provision and monitoring of client services. There are strengths and limitations associated with each approach. For example, a single case manager assigned to each client encourages a bonding relationship that may have distinct therapeutic or interventive advantages. However, if several clients on a case manager’s caseload experience simultaneous crises, the case manager may be unable to provide satisfactory attention to routine cases while focusing on the higher-need individuals. Sharing of case management duties among a small team of staff members who are fairly interchangeable and familiar with all cases may provide balanced services to all clients, even those who require extra attention.

Programs studied used various hiring strategies. Social workers or similar professionals such as counselors were often assigned or hired as case managers. Alternatively, some programs sought individuals who were “street wise” or had prior experience working with at-risk youth. Still others sought community residents, feeling they would more easily establish rapport with youth and family members. A few programs assigned all or almost all staff members as case managers for at least some youth. In a number of CIS programs, particularly smaller programs with no repositioned staff, the program director at the school site served as the case manager and primary service provider.

Programs without staff with social-work backgrounds often lacked an adequate case management system. In general, case manager qualifications should match the functional requirements of the job. When case managers are expected to perform only basic needs assessments and make referrals, programs probably can hire and train staff with limited prior experience. However, programs that expect to implement comprehensive case management services should seek staff with professional credentials related to social work or human services provision.

- ▶ In the Central Texas CIS program, the program manager at each school site generally had a master’s degree in social work. In addition to directing the program and overseeing other staff, this individual provided case management and counseling. Most schools had a second caseworker and one or more interns, all of whom performed case management functions. Some schools had a casework assistant or case aide (generally parents or community residents) who performed administrative or clerical functions.

- ▶ The Miami PIC, Florida, CIS program, called Stay-in-School (SIS), contracted with various service providers to reposition staff as full- or part-time counselors for CIS high school students. Counselors, who performed case management functions, had caseloads ranging from sixty to ninety students. Each school had one or two school staff members assigned as full-time SIS facilitators who managed site-specific SIS activities, supervised coordinators, and acted as liaisons between counselors and school staff, to facilitate information exchange.
- ▶ In Palm Beach County, Florida, full- or part-time home visitors were hired to support case management. Home visitors had some experience with youth or counseling and generally had four-year degrees; some had master's degrees. They were responsible for visiting each CIS student's home at least twice a year to obtain information on family circumstances. This information was used to develop service plans and provide understanding of factors affecting student performance and behavior. When the program was no longer able to obtain repositioned counselors, home visitors took over some of their roles, such as telephoning parents and making referrals to service providers.
- ▶ The High Point, North Carolina, CIS program had two full-time social workers who served as case managers for the largest number of students, including those with serious problems. The two teachers assigned to CIS were responsible for teaching and case management; they had caseloads of about 15 students each. The program's administrative assistant also had a small caseload because she liked working with students and had good rapport with them.
- ▶ In Contra Costa County, California, individuals who lived or had worked in the target community were hired as community resource specialists for the six schools with SafeFutures programs. Because the specialists were responsible for outreach to parents and the community, in addition to case management functions, the program wanted staff familiar with the area who could readily establish rapport with its low-income population. Since most of the specialists did not have social work backgrounds—although some had prior experience working with youth—they were supervised by a social worker, who met with them every two weeks to discuss the status of their cases and provide advice. More serious cases, such as those needing mental health or therapeutic services, were referred to the social worker.
- ▶ The SafeFutures program in Imperial County, California, used a centralized case management approach. Youth who entered the SafeFutures network through one of the partner agencies were referred to the FRC, whose staff performed case management functions (discussed below). A common intake form was used by all agencies to facilitate referral.
- ▶ CAR programs sought various qualifications in their case managers, including experience working with inner city youth and families, life experience, and a connection to the target community, such as living or working there. Some programs required that case managers be bilin-

gual or reflect the racial or ethnic group to be served. Most case managers had prior experience in the social service field, including counseling, working in a group home, casework, teaching, and probation.

### **Provide ongoing training for case managers.**

Many programs provided or arranged for periodic training for case managers, particularly those with no social work background. Even for those with such experience, periodic training is desirable to keep the staff abreast of current information and practices and to expose them to different perspectives. Many social service agencies provide regular in-service training for their staff for this reason. These workshops may be offered to staff relocated by these agencies and possibly to other staff members who work with them.

- ▶ National and regional CIS offices provide a variety of training opportunities relevant to case managers. Many local CIS programs encourage case managers and similar staff to attend, often providing paid time to do so and/or covering travel and lodging expenses. Some large local programs provide their own training. The Houston, Texas, CIS program annually held week-long in-service training at the beginning of the school year for CIS and repositioned staff. Organized along the lines of a professional conference, it provided workshops on various topics, so participants could attend sessions most relevant to their needs.
- ▶ The Bridgeport, Connecticut, CAR lead agency, in conjunction with Child Guidance Center of Bridgeport (one of the participating agencies), held bimonthly staff development sessions for family mentors (who performed case management functions) and other outreach staff. Family mentors also attended in-service training provided for Child Guidance Center staff on such topics as child development, crisis intervention, engaging difficult clients, and domestic violence. The lead agency in the Savannah, Georgia, program held regular in-house seminars on case management, community organization, and child development. Before the program began, the case managers were given extended training in case management and addiction. When the program modified its approach to place greater emphasis on families, a consultant was hired to provide staff development on engaging families.

### **Implement comprehensive case management activities.**

Case management activities can be viewed as occurring more or less in sequence when a youth or family enters a program. Assessment or identification of needs and development of individualized service plans are the initial stages. Standard forms for needs assessment are commonly used; these typically include information about the youth (such as grades, absenteeism, tardiness, behavioral problems, health status, involvement with the juvenile justice system, alcohol or substance abuse, gang involvement, and interests or goals) and family (such as family composition and stability, employment, income, housing conditions, and alcohol or substance abuse). This information is often collected by interview-

ing the youth and parent(s); some of it may come from school or other records. Some forms also include information obtained through observation and interaction (such as appearance, attitude, concentration, and behavior). Some programs use surveys or psychological tests as part of their needs assessment. Assessment information forms the basis of a case file, to which new information is added over time.

Outreach to family members—parents, caregivers, and siblings—usually occurs in the early stages of case management. Parental consent is usually necessary to provide services to the child, particularly therapy or health services, and to share information among service providers. It is also desirable to involve parents in identifying youth and family needs. Finally, it is important to enlist family support for services recommended for their child. (See chapter 3 for a more extensive discussion of parental involvement.) Although the child is usually the main focus of case management, some programs attempt to provide case management for other family members. Other programs involve parents or other family members to a more limited extent, for example, as participants in family therapy.

Once needs have been identified and a plan developed, linking (or referring) the client to services occurs. This may involve referring a youth to collocated providers or off-site agencies that have agreed to provide services. In some cases, the case manager may have to broker services with other agencies or locate a source for a particular service. Case managers also may need to perform integrative activities, such as scheduling appointments and arranging or providing for transportation to services. The latter role was common in CIS and SafeFutures programs due to inadequate public transportation in low-income communities or lack of a vehicle or funds for transportation on the part of the family.

Monitoring service delivery and the progress of clients is an ongoing aspect of case management. Monitoring includes checking whether clients actually followed through on referrals and whether services were provided. Ongoing contact with youths and their parents to check their status and identify problems is also done. Monitoring includes periodic reassessment of needs, which may lead to modification of service delivery plans because a service is no longer needed or the need for different services surfaces.

Keeping records of student contact (or contact on behalf of students) in the case file is part of the monitoring function. Programs with personal computers have begun keeping much of their monitoring information in databases, which enables them to readily determine the status of referrals made and services provided and to store original and current data related to school performance, juvenile justice system involvement, and other issues. Such information can be used to help make decisions about service provision and frequency of contact. Combined data on all cases, or selected types of cases, can help agencies manage programs by identifying services used most, gaps in available services, and client characteristics and outcomes associated with different services. (See chapter 6 on monitoring program outcomes.)

Other functions case managers commonly provide include crisis intervention and advocacy for clients in their contacts with service providers, schools, and juvenile court. Case managers also generally provide formal or informal counseling, depending on their qualifications. Some lead regular support groups or provide periodic training sessions, for example, on anger management or applying for college or jobs.

The extent to which case management components are provided varies among programs. Most CIS programs studied provided some but not all of the components considered to be elements of case management. For example, almost all CIS programs identified needs of youth (although some did so informally) and made referrals to a range of service agencies or other sources of assistance (e.g., clothing banks, free eyeglasses). The CIS programs that offered more comprehensive case management were generally those where social workers had key roles, either as colocated staff or as project directors. This situation is not surprising, since social workers are likely to be trained in or familiar with case management practices.

The case management components most frequently missing or weak in CIS programs studied included conducting needs assessments, developing individualized plans for service delivery, following up on service receipt, monitoring client progress, and contacting families. These components tended to get lost in the shuffle in programs where case management was performed by staff who did not have backgrounds or training in case management or social work (or a related profession), where caseloads were too high for staff to perform all of the desired case management activities, or where case management was added to the staff member's primary functions.

The following examples illustrate case management practices in selected programs.

- ▶ In High Point, North Carolina, the initial case management step was a home visit conducted by repositioned social workers during the summer before the youth entered CIS. The social workers explained the program to parents and caregivers and obtained family information used to prepare a case history for each student's file. They also reviewed school and social service agency records, notes from counselors or teachers, and notes from individual interviews conducted with students the previous spring. Student files contained reasons for referral and information on grades, attendance, family, peers, and goals for improvement. Case histories were updated annually.

Case managers developed service plans for each student in a meeting that usually involved the student, parent, teacher or other school staff, and service agency staff. The plan identified areas of concern—e.g., grades, attendance, tardiness, or behavior—goals, and intervention strategies. Students were referred to outside services as needed, usually for more serious issues such as substance abuse. Case managers kept in contact with referral agencies to be sure students were receiving services. Case managers monitored progress through ongoing contact with their students; a minimum of twice-monthly contact was required, but most had more frequent contact. "Contact" was defined as in-person or telephone conversations for specific purposes, such as discussing grades, report cards, or problems the student was having, as opposed to purely social contact, and was viewed as informal counseling. Case managers conducted home visits (two visits per year were required in addition to the initial visit; more were conducted as needed) and had telephone contact with parents on an as-needed basis. For example, case managers

checked daily school attendance and called home if the student was absent. Case managers functioned as advocates with teachers and other school personnel, such as guidance counselors, as needed.

Record-keeping practices supported case management. Student plans were submitted to the lead social worker, and case managers were required to write brief notes summarizing each student contact for the case file. Each case manager was assigned a specific color of paper for their notes, so anyone reviewing a file could readily determine who entered particular notes. The lead social worker or program director reviewed student files twice a year to check that they were complete and up-to-date and that contacts were being made. An end-of-year report was completed to summarize the student's academic status, plans for the summer and the next school year, status of the mentoring relationship, and a brief assessment of the year's progress. This summary was intended to help case managers review the student's status at the start of the next school year.

- ▶ Miami PIC, Florida, CIS counselors worked with each student to develop a “diagnostic-prescriptive-evaluative plan,” updated quarterly. They met with the student at least four times during each nine-week grading period and made at least four home visits annually. Counselors coordinated with other social service providers when needed.
- ▶ In the Imperial County, California, SafeFutures program, the guidance technician assigned to the FRC performed the initial needs assessment and service plan development in conjunction with the youth and parent(s), who were invited to the office to participate. If the parent could not come to the office, the guidance technician conducted a home visit. The guidance technician also called the parent a few weeks after the initial visit to check whether the youth and family received the services to which they were referred and to determine if additional needs had surfaced. In some cases, the technician called the agency to which a referral was made to let it know the client was being referred by the FRC.

Staff colocated in the FRC met as a team once a month to discuss new referrals and to jointly develop a plan of action, which could include referrals to services other than those identified initially. One team member was assigned responsibility for following up on these referrals. A second team meeting each month focused on reviewing the status of existing cases, including possible new referrals or courses of action, if needed.

- ▶ The St. Louis, Missouri, SafeFutures program used a “caring adult” to provide case management services. At the FRCs located in community education centers (schools in the target area), the caring adult was either the FRC's family therapist or community outreach worker. The therapist was responsible for determining the initial services needed, sometimes assisted by the outreach worker. Interviews with youths, parent(s), teachers, and the referring source were conducted to gather information for this purpose.

Caring adults were responsible for meeting with youth regularly—a minimum of once a week, more often if needed. They completed initial information forms and set up a team meeting for all service providers associated with the youth within two weeks of referral to identify needs and resources. The caring adults also coordinated monthly team meetings to ensure that services were delivered and that changes in needs were identified. In addition, they linked youth with services, contacted agencies to ensure services were delivered, provided ongoing support such as counseling and tutoring, tracked progress, and submitted monthly progress forms. Caring adults also arranged and facilitated weekly “wrap-around” services meetings with key program and school staff to discuss the youth’s needs.

The program developed a number of forms to support the case management function. A youth data form with checklists for problems identified and services provided was used for those referred for case management. A more detailed form was used for clients referred to therapy; it included family and child history, school performance and adjustment, problems, and clinical assessment information. When youth were referred to other agencies, a checklist form was used to identify these services. This form was updated monthly and kept in the case file. In addition, a referral feedback form was sent to the referral source, to be completed and returned to verify the services provided. A progress report form similar to the youth data form, with checklists to identify problems and services provided, was completed monthly by the caring adult. It included space for comments on progress, goals for the coming month, and team meeting dates and participants.

- ▶ Some CAR programs used a team approach to develop and monitor service plans. In Austin, Texas, for example, representatives of the various service delivery agencies participated in weekly “mega staffings.” Case managers rotated cases for discussion on a regular basis and used the advice provided by meeting participants to develop or modify service plans. In Bridgeport, Connecticut, family mentors and other outreach staff of one of the participating agencies participated in weekly case conferences with a supervisor from that agency to share information on cases and discuss strategies and resources. The supervisor also had weekly group and individual meetings with the family mentors.

Periodic meetings of all team members also are commonly used for case management purposes. Such exchange provides a more complete picture of a child’s situation, as each service provider is likely to have different information or insights to contribute.

## OBSERVATION

Programs that endorse collaborative efforts often assert that integration of services can be accomplished without new or additional resources—that is, that needed services exist and only require shifting or enhanced coordination to facilitate more efficient access by clients. This belief is often combined with a second assertion that existing systems incorporate duplication of services that

can be streamlined through services integration, thereby freeing up resources for allocation elsewhere. Field visits to nearly two dozen CIS community programs did not support these assertions. Programs should expect and prepare for shortfalls in services, even with the highest level of collaboration possible. As programs to serve youth and families are implemented, agencies may find that additional issues are uncovered that require more social service intervention or for which no resources are available. Similarly, they may find that as referrals and monitoring of case-managed clients take root, previously underserved populations may significantly increase their service utilization, thus taxing previously acceptable service capacity.



# 3

## Parental Involvement

Parental involvement in programs seeking to assist at-risk youth is desirable and, some might argue, necessary. At a minimum, parental consent is usually required for youth to participate in such programs or in specific activities such as field trips, as well as to share information among agencies that provide services (see additional discussion under “Case Management” in chapter 2). More important, efforts to change a child’s behavior will generally be more successful if parents (and possibly other family members) support these efforts—which means they must be aware of them and understand how they can reinforce them at home. Since the problem behaviors of at-risk youth often stem from difficulties in the home—such as poverty, inappropriate disciplinary practices, or substance abuse—many programs also seek to provide services to parents and other family members to help resolve the child’s problems. Both the CIS and SafeFutures programs stress a holistic approach that includes family involvement and services to address family needs.

Parental involvement means different things in different programs. In most programs, it includes participation in periodic meetings with staff to discuss a child’s progress and occasional activities with other parents, some of which may include youth. In other programs, it may also include participation in home visits, workshops or activities designed to help parents and families (such as parenting skills courses), individual or family therapy, job training, or substance abuse treatment.

Many CIS staff reported little success in involving parents, even when special efforts were made. There are undoubtedly numerous reasons for this, including the many demands on time parents face and the limited resources of low-income families. Concerns about being “blamed” for their children’s behavior or school performance also may make some parents reluctant to become involved. A number of CIS program staff members pointed out that many parents of at-risk youth had unsuccessful experiences in school themselves and therefore were reluctant to participate in school-related activities or even to interact with school staff. The age of the child also appears to be a factor. CIS staff reported a decline

in parental involvement as students entered adolescence and became more independent of their parents; in some cases, youths even discouraged their parents' involvement in school-related activities.

Despite the recognized importance of parental involvement, it often appears to be neglected in practice. Programs may allocate so much staff time and other resources toward services for youth that there are insufficient resources left for parental involvement. Although many programs were frustrated in their efforts to involve parents, some programs had more success in this area. Their experiences and advice have been used to develop the suggestions provided here.

**Involve parents as soon as possible and make clear expectations of involvement.**

Parental consent requirements provide an opportunity to involve parents when their child starts the program. Instead of sending a form home to be signed, ask parents to attend an individual get-acquainted meeting with program staff or an open house for all parents. Use these meetings to explain the program's objectives and what it has to offer their child and the family and to have consent forms signed. Forms can be sent home to those parents who don't attend the in-person meeting, so this approach does not preclude participation of their children. A telephone call can be made in addition to sending the form home, to establish personal contact and extend an invitation to meet program staff at a later date.

Some CIS programs predicated a child's enrollment on an interview with parents, and some also required parental commitment to participate in specific activities. One program director noted that involvement in the admission process is intended to help "set the tone" that a partnership between the parent and school is needed and that parental involvement is expected. Formal contracts detailing parents' responsibilities were used in a few programs.

- ▶ The CIS programs in Columbia, South Carolina, and Houston, Texas, required an interview with parents before admitting a child. In Columbia, parents were expected to attend 80 percent of the parents' meetings and sign a "contract" agreeing to do so. At the Metropolitan Corporate Academy (MCA) in New York City, staff interviewed parents of prospective students. Parents also were asked to accompany their children to school on the first day to meet with the principal and the CIS coordinator.
- ▶ In the Imperial County, California, SafeFutures program, a staff member called the parents of youth referred to the FRC and invited them to come to the office for an initial meeting, where consent forms were signed and a needs assessment conducted with the parent and child present. Referrals were made for services needed by families (such as housing and medical care), as well as by youth. If the parent was unable to come to the office due to transportation or other problems or could not be reached by telephone, the staff member conducted a home visit.

## Create a welcoming atmosphere.

Creating an atmosphere that makes parents feel comfortable can help overcome feelings of intimidation or resistance to involvement. This welcoming can be done in a variety of ways, some as simple as offering coffee or other refreshments. Involving parents in fun activities, such as holiday parties, picnics, and open houses, also can help make parents feel more welcome.

- ▶ The High Point, North Carolina, CIS program created a homey atmosphere in its main office with a (donated) couch, armchairs, and coffee table, along with a coffee maker and cookies. Staff put pictures of students taken at various activities on the walls and in photo albums as evidence of the staff's genuine caring for students. Parents of graduating students were invited to attend a graduation banquet along with their children.
- ▶ MCA in New York City invited parents to periodic special events, such as a year-end multicultural festival, as well as to monthly meetings of its parent-staff association. The program also "buddied" parents of new students with parents whose children had been attending MCA for a while to develop a peer support network and help new parents feel more comfortable.
- ▶ Each month, Colman Elementary School in Seattle, Washington, had a drawing from the names of students who had perfect attendance the previous month. The winner received dinner out for the entire family.
- ▶ The CAR programs in Memphis, Tennessee, and Savannah, Georgia, initiated regular social gatherings for families to promote parental involvement. The Memphis program had bimonthly family nights at the YMCA that included games and activities designed to help family members learn to make joint decisions and relate to each other. Staff "modeled" social behavior to illustrate how parents could interact with their children. Staff also occasionally held recreational outings for a few families, such as dinner and bowling. The Savannah program had a biweekly Saturday Academy that included social, educational, and recreational programs—some for parents alone, others for adults and children together. Parents also were invited to assist in ceremonies recognizing children's successes.

## Reduce barriers to involvement.

CIS staff identified three key areas that affected parental involvement: scheduling, transportation, and language barriers.

Many parents do not work in "9 to 5" jobs or may hold two jobs, so finding the right time to schedule meetings may be difficult. Consequently, some programs schedule every major meeting at least twice (on a weekday evening and on a Saturday). When initial contact is made with parents, program staff ask what times they are usually available for meetings or events, then select meeting times that will draw the most participants. Provision of child care also facilitates parental attendance at meetings.

In programs that serve youth of various ethnicities, it is important to have staff who speak the predominant languages of the communities served. Be sure that written materials for parents are translated into the appropriate languages.

Programs should avoid using English-speaking children to translate for their parents. This approach has two drawbacks: it may undermine parental authority, and the youth may deliberately misinterpret some information.

Many low-income families do not have a car and often live in communities with little or no public transportation. Staff in some CIS programs, particularly in rural areas with no public transit, frequently drove parents to school in their own vehicles so they could attend meetings with school or CIS staff.

- ▶ The Central Texas CIS program scheduled its “parents as educators” meetings in both the morning and evening and conducted them in Spanish and English.
- ▶ The SafeFutures program in Imperial County, California, offered two sessions of its parenting skills course: one in English, the other in Spanish. The ten-week course rotated among different communities in the county to make it more accessible.
- ▶ In the Seattle, Washington, CIS program, the North Seattle Family Center provided free child care for virtually every activity or presentation it sponsored. A series of monthly parenting classes rotated among three elementary schools.
- ▶ In San Antonio, Texas, staff at the Stafford Elementary School CIS program arranged for child care for CIS parents attending GED classes. Students at an alternative high school for teen mothers provided child care while CIS parents attended class as part of their school’s partnership with CIS.
- ▶ To increase attendance at weekly parent support groups held by the Austin, Texas, CAR program, staff invited all family members to attend the evening session. Younger children played by themselves or in groups on the side of the room; older youth who participated in the program often joined in the discussion.
- ▶ In the Fort Belknap, Montana, SafeFutures program, located on a rural reservation, one outreach worker frequently drove parents to important meetings, such as court hearings and counseling sessions. She also regularly brought some parents to parenting skills classes they were court-ordered to attend. The SafeFutures staff assigned to a middle school in Richmond, California, similarly drove parents to important appointments.

### **Use outreach and home visits to involve parents.**

Some programs have a specific outreach function or outreach staff to promote parental awareness and involvement. Home visits were used to varying degrees in CIS and SafeFutures programs as a way to establish contact with the child’s family and assess family needs (formally or informally) for food, clothing, shelter, or other services. Home visits were also used to inform parents about problems they might not have been aware of, such as truancy, to help parents better supervise their children. Sometimes home visits were part of family counseling

efforts. Although the value of home visits was frequently cited, most programs conducted them just once or twice a year, and some made regular visits to a limited number of families with more severe problems.

- ▶ In Fort Belknap, Montana, each of the four SafeFutures locations had an outreach worker who obtained information from schools about students with attendance problems, conducted home visits to advise parents of the problem, and explained what the SafeFutures program could offer them and their children. They provided similar follow-up on cases referred by the family court.
- ▶ In High Point, North Carolina, the CIS social worker conducted home visits during the summer for students entering the program in the fall. The social worker explained the program and obtained information about the family and the student to develop a case history and service plan for each student. Two other home visits were required each year: one during the fall term and a final visit later in the school year. Additional visits were made as needed.
- ▶ At one school in the Palm Beach County, Florida, CIS program, home visitors were school employees who worked an additional 20 hours each week for CIS. They checked school attendance daily, called parents when students missed one day, and visited homes if students missed additional days. Teachers also identified issues for CIS staff to check into. Home visitors helped families obtain and complete housing applications, relocate to more suitable housing (including providing transportation and volunteer labor to accomplish the move), identify job openings, apply for food stamps and other social services, and obtain medical services.

### **Offer services that interest and help parents.**

Sponsoring activities or services that address parents' needs and interests can draw them to the program. Once parents become involved and benefit from these activities, it may be easier to keep them involved. Many CIS and SafeFutures programs offer workshops or courses in parenting skills, which often include information about appropriate disciplinary methods, self-esteem building, and supporting academics. Some programs bring in occasional speakers to address topics of interest to parents or help them help their children, e.g., dealing with divorce, or helping parents support reading skills. Some programs create formal or informal support networks for parents. A number of programs have established "one-stop shops" for a range of social services and referral to other agencies at the school site.

- ▶ The CIS program in Central Texas (Austin) collaborated with the Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) in two schools. Using home visits, HIPPY staff trained parents to prepare their preschool children for school using storybook and lesson packages. Parents also met with the HIPPY coordinator at the school for group discussion and additional training. Because of HIPPY's association with CIS, participating families had access to CIS resources.

- ▶ In the Pinal County, Arizona, CIS program, the Coolidge FRC provided one-stop shopping for social services and offered flexible hours and a welcoming atmosphere. Services for parents included support sessions and parenting classes, individual and family counseling, crisis intervention, access to emergency services (food, housing, rent and utility assistance), and a clothing bank. The FRC sponsored a Parents Anonymous support group for abusive adults, and a spin-off group addressed women's issues. The FRC also provided individual and family counseling for substance abuse and other dysfunctions.
- ▶ The SafeFutures program in Imperial County, California, established an FRC in the high school in its target area. The FRC functioned as a one-stop shop for a range of services for youth and families. It had an eligibility worker to help families apply for various social services for which they were eligible. The program also provided parenting skills classes.
- ▶ In San Antonio, Texas, each CIS elementary school program developed a "clothing closet" of donated clothing for children and adult family members to fill emergency needs. Similarly, some kept nonperishable foods and school supplies on hand. The program also had other arrangements to provide clothing, including vouchers from retail stores, churches, and charitable organizations. The Stafford Elementary School CIS program also arranged for provision of GED, English as a Second Language (ESL), and parenting classes through the school district. Once a month the parenting class focused on an arts and crafts project as a "fun" incentive. (Parents had to attend the other three sessions to participate in it.)
- ▶ In Columbia, South Carolina, a "talk show" format was used in group meetings involving parents and youth. Staff served as hosts "Harpo Winfrey" and "Sally Jesse Ravioli," while guests addressed such topics as "Teens Who Will Not Assume Responsibility" and "Parents Who Expect Too Much." The talk show format was believed to facilitate communication, since it was familiar to everyone and added some levity to serious topics.
- ▶ The Cambodian Girls Group, one of the SafeFutures initiatives in Seattle, Washington, provided parenting classes for parents of the at-risk girls in the program, many of whom were refugees or immigrants. These classes included traditional parenting skills training, such as disciplinary practices, as well as aspects of U.S. culture, such as how to read a report card, call the school counselor, and open a bank account to save for college education. Staff developed culturally appropriate teaching methods for this group—such as using drama and proverbs, traditional teaching tools in Cambodia—but avoided role playing, which was considered embarrassing.
- ▶ In a number of CIS and SafeFutures programs, staff were available to serve in a support or advocacy role, accompanying parents and youth to meetings with school principals or other staff, providing moral support and advice, and helping with translation or explanation of procedures. In Imperial County, California, for example, expulsion cases were

referred to one SafeFutures staff member who explained the procedures to parents and gave advice about requirements for readmission to school.

### **Involve parents in volunteer efforts.**

One way programs involve parents is by encouraging their participation as volunteers. Volunteer activities that require an ongoing commitment, such as mentoring or tutoring, may not be compatible with the time demands many parents face. However, even sporadic volunteer opportunities—such as chaperoning field trips, organizing or supervising special events, and fund-raising activities—can help parents get to know program staff and youth and make them feel part of the program. Different parents can be asked to help with different events, enabling more parents to get involved. Volunteering also provides a way for parents to “give back” to the program that is helping their children. (See chapter 4 for a detailed discussion of volunteer efforts.)

- ▶ Some elementary school programs in San Antonio, Texas, had parent volunteers who functioned as teacher aides, helping students (by listening to them practice reading, for example), making classroom decorations, helping teachers, and helping office staff with activities such as mailing fliers. Parents participating in the ESL and GED classes at Adams Elementary School helped by collecting recipes for a fund-raiser cookbook.
- ▶ Pinal County, Arizona’s CIS program involved parents and community residents in an extensive “Christmas bundle” volunteer effort that provided clothing, toys, food, and household goods to needy families in the county. The project also expanded community awareness of the FRC. Volunteers were used to sort, gift wrap, and label donated items and assemble “bundles” (large plastic bags) of items that matched family needs. (The FRC developed sign-up sheets for clients to identify their needs and provide information about clothing sizes.)

### **Stay in touch with parents.**

Programs use a variety of strategies to stay in touch with parents. Telephone contact is the primary method of communication. Some programs phone parents regularly, while others phone only when a student is not in school or some problem has developed. Other communication tools include meetings and written notices or announcements sent home with students or mailed. A few programs have regular newsletters. A number of programs maintain contact with parents by inviting them to observe sporting events, performances, or other activities involving their children. Staff use these informal opportunities to build or maintain relationships with parents and to get feedback about their programs.

- ▶ In New York City, MCA teachers routinely called parents. For example, staff called when a student was absent even once or if a student missed a mentoring session. Sometimes calls were made just to keep in contact with parents to better understand the family situation.

- ▶ In Columbia, South Carolina, parents were invited to the school to confer with school staff at the time of report card distribution. Parents were sent a monthly calendar with dates marked for special school and CIS events and parents' meetings. The program also issued a quarterly newsletter.
- ▶ In the Colman Elementary School CIS program in Seattle, Washington, parents were required to sign homework every night. In lieu of suspension, parents had to come to class and sit with children who had misbehaved. If transportation was a problem, the principal made some arrangement; if getting time off from work was an issue, the principal contacted employers. Parents had to come to school to pick up at least two of the four report cards issued each school year, creating an opportunity to confer with teachers.
- ▶ In Fort Belknap, Montana, the local public radio station made announcements about SafeFutures activities and events. Staff also prepared weekly press releases for the local newspapers. Staff felt that these approaches reached more community residents and required less staff time and resources than preparing a newsletter. This program also held quarterly meetings in the four communities on the reservation. Parents were invited to attend athletic events and dance practices and performances by youth learning traditional Native American dance as part of the SafeFutures program. Staff held brief meetings with parents after such events.



# 4

## Volunteers for Tutoring and Mentoring

Programs that provide services to youth often rely on volunteers to expand their offerings. Using volunteers not only benefits the youth, it connects the program to the community and enlarges its circle of resources.

Volunteer activities fall under two major categories. Volunteers can be used to provide core services, such as tutoring or mentoring. They make a commitment on a regular, frequent basis, and interact closely with youth. Most CIS and SafeFutures programs use volunteer tutors and/or mentors.

Volunteers also are used on a less regular basis or to perform non-core functions. Examples of the former include serving as chaperones for field trips or special events such as dances and helping organize or operate activities such as athletic events or fund-raisers. Some professionals, such as doctors, dentists, and therapists, provide pro bono services occasionally or on a regular basis. Some programs use volunteers to assist with office or administrative functions, such as publicity, developing program materials (e.g., annual reports or newsletters), bookkeeping, accounting, and clerical functions. Other programs use volunteers to track student attendance, call parents of absent students, or assist in the school as classroom aides and hall monitors.

Connecting youth with caring adults has assumed greater importance recently, partly because research indicates that mentoring has a positive influence on a number of behaviors. (See “Resources” section.) Considerable attention has been paid to mentoring since spring 1997, when President Clinton, several former presidents, and other leaders launched a national campaign urging adults to become involved in mentoring and other volunteer services for youth.

There are many variations on the activities volunteers can perform with youth. Even seemingly “standard” activities such as mentoring and tutoring are performed somewhat differently in different programs. But usually these activities are similar across programs.

Adult mentors usually function in “big brother/big sister” capacities, providing encouragement, guidance, informal counseling, and serving as role models. Mentors usually expose students to enrichment opportu-

nities and social situations, such as museums, cultural events, restaurants (some low-income youth had never eaten in a restaurant before being taken to one by their mentor), college campuses, and libraries. Some mentors expose youth to employment opportunities by taking them to their place of work for “job shadowing.” Mentors may also demonstrate responsibility and adult roles by including students as they carry out their normal routine (e.g., running errands, participating in sports) or by inviting them to participate in activities with the mentor’s family or friends. Mentors typically agree to meet with students on a regular basis, ranging from once a week to once a month. Some programs ask mentors to have telephone contact in between meetings.

Mentoring is generally structured as a one-on-one activity. While some programs arrange to have mentors meet with students at the school site (commonly during lunch or after school), many mentoring pairs meet at least occasionally at other locations. Some programs have students meet mentors at their workplaces, an opportunity to emphasize employment. Most programs treat mentoring as a low-cost, high-quality commitment for the volunteer, making it clear that mentors are expected to spend time but little money on their students. Some programs reimburse mentors for out-of-pocket expenses, such as transportation costs.

Volunteer tutors generally provide homework assistance and help students study for tests or prepare assignments; some concentrate on particular subjects. Some programs ensure that tutors have contact with teachers, so they are familiar with course content, assignments, the student’s performance, and areas in which assistance is needed.

Tutors are not always assigned to work with individuals. One or more tutors might be assigned to work with a small group of students, or a group of volunteers might be available to assist students who “drop in” for help at scheduled times. Tutoring activities are often scheduled once or twice a week, although some programs have volunteers available every school day. Tutoring usually takes place at the school site, sometimes during lunch period. Alternatively, tutoring may be held at the program office or some centralized location such as a community or recreation center.

Some programs combine the tutoring and mentoring roles. In other programs, mentoring and tutoring efforts are incorporated with other special programs.

- ▶ In High Point, North Carolina, “partners” met with ninth- and tenth-grade CIS students once a week during the CIS class period. They typically provided assistance with homework or class projects or worked on exercises developed by CIS staff, but they also interacted as mentors. Most volunteers periodically met with their students after school or on weekends to attend cultural or fun events or to watch their students compete in sporting events.
- ▶ In Seattle, Washington, the Downtown Seattle Association partnered with CIS on a summer youth employment program, Helping Interns Reach Excellence (HIRE). The program combined paid summer jobs with a mentorship component that paired students with an employee in the company where the student worked. Mentors provided general support and guidance and generally were not their student’s supervisor.

Some volunteer efforts are less structured but still provide students with adult exposure.

- ▶ In Adams County, Colorado, the Adopt-a-Cop program brought police volunteers to schools to spend lunch hours or other downtimes assisting with courses, eating with the students, or participating in sports or games on the playground.

Programs that are considering or just beginning mentoring or tutoring programs (or other substantial volunteer efforts) often do not realize the extent of support activities needed for such efforts to operate smoothly. This chapter suggests activities that support volunteer efforts, namely, recruiting, screening, and training volunteers; selecting youth for program participation; matching volunteers and youth (usually done only for mentoring relationships); and providing ongoing support, monitoring, and recognition for volunteers. Exhibit 4-1 provides a list of standards for mentoring programs developed by Greater Boston One to One, a coalition that supports mentoring efforts, which expands on the activities discussed here.

### **Establish responsibility for volunteer efforts.**

Activities aimed at finding and keeping volunteers can be overlooked, given the many responsibilities that program staff face. Tutoring and mentoring require many volunteers on a regular basis. Consistency within the volunteer ranks is also important. Assigning a staff member to be responsible for managing and coordinating the volunteer effort helps ensure these programs will operate as smoothly as possible. It also gives volunteers a regular contact and ensures that someone pays attention to this important function on a regular basis. Some CIS programs, particularly those providing mentors or tutors for large numbers of youth, establish a full- or part-time volunteer coordinator position. Others make volunteer coordination the responsibility of a particular staff member or even another volunteer.

- ▶ In the Central Texas CIS program in Austin, VISTA volunteers served as coordinators for the program's extensive volunteer efforts. Each VISTA worker supervised the activities at two schools, each of which had about twenty volunteers. One VISTA worker also coordinated the overall volunteer program and, along with CIS staff, trained new coordinators. The original volunteer coordinators developed a manual to use in training future coordinators. It described job responsibilities, provided suggestions about recruiting, and offered samples of letters that coordinators might need to write (such as recruiting and thank you).

Another option for managing a volunteer program is to partner or contract with another organization. Local affiliates of national youth-service organizations, such as Big Brothers/Big Sisters or Boys and Girls Clubs, commonly provide services such as mentoring or tutoring. Thus they have experience and skills in operating these programs and have procedures and standards (which may be established by their national organization) for recruiting, screening, and training volunteers—responsibilities that can seem daunting to program

## Exhibit 4-1 Greater Boston One to One Mentoring Program Standards

The following are the criteria for which Greater Boston One to One believes all mentoring programs should strive to achieve:

1. **A program operations and management plan including:**
  - Program mission statement, goals, strategies, outcomes, and time lines
  - Clearly identified roles/responsibilities for program staff, mentors, mentees, parent/guardian/family
  - Dedicated resources
2. **A recruitment plan for both mentors and mentees that includes:**
  - Targeted outreach based on mentees' needs and program goals
  - Volunteer opportunities beyond mentoring
3. **An orientation for both mentors and mentees that includes:**
  - Program and process overview
  - Level of commitment expected (time, energy, flexibility)
  - Expectations and restrictions (accountability)
  - Benefits and rewards they can expect
4. **Eligibility screening for mentors and mentees that includes:**
  - An application and review process including a face to face interview
  - Reference checks for mentors, which may include character references and CORI (Criminal Offender Records Information) evaluations
  - Successful completion of pre-match training
5. **A readiness and comprehensive training component for all mentors and mentees that includes:**
  - Utilization of experienced, professional trainers and appropriate curricula materials
6. **A matching process that includes:**
  - Mentor and mentee profiles (appropriate criteria for matches, including some or all of the following: gender, age, language requirements, availability, needs, interest, preferences of volunteer and participant, life experience, and temperament)
  - A statement of understanding (verbal or signed) that both parties agree to the conditions of the match and the mentoring relationship
  - Structured, well planned "first meeting" process, which includes use of trust building activities
7. **A monitoring process that includes:**
  - Consistent scheduled meetings with staff, mentors and mentees
  - Input from community partners, family and significant others
  - A process for managing grievances, praise, re-matching, interpersonal problem solving, and premature relationship closure
8. **A support, recognition, and retention component that offers the opportunity to build group cohesion and networking.**
9. **Relationship closure process that includes:**
  - Private and confidential exit interviews including, but not limited to: mentor, mentee, staff, parent/guardian/family
  - Clearly stated policy for future contacts
  - Clearly understood strategies for mentee to access additional/ongoing support
10. **An evaluation process including quantitative and qualitative data and participant feedback.**

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staff inexperienced in working with volunteers. This option may be particularly useful for programs that lack staff capacity to manage a volunteer program and are unable or unwilling to add staff to do so.

- ▶ SafeFutures initiatives typically use community-based organizations to provide various program components, including mentoring and tutoring. In Boston, Massachusetts, a coalition of churches in the target area operated one of the mentoring programs, a community development agency operated another, and the Boys and Girls Club operated an after-school tutoring program. In Imperial County, California, and St. Louis, Missouri, the mentoring component was handled by the local Big Brothers/Big Sisters. Seattle, Washington, used Big Sisters of King County for one of its mentoring programs for at-risk girls and Girls, Inc. to operate a combined after-school and mentoring program.

Before initiating volunteer or student recruitment, it is desirable for program managers and staff to develop a mission statement for the volunteer program. This statement should set goals or objectives for youth, such as improving academic performance and reducing delinquent behavior. A clear understanding of the volunteer effort's purpose will help establish criteria for recruiting the participants and volunteers most appropriate to the mission.

### **Put energy and creativity into volunteer recruitment.**

One of the early, key responsibilities of a volunteer coordinator is to recruit volunteers. Recruitment usually involves making presentations to various groups, including service-oriented clubs (Kiwanis, Lions, Junior League, etc.), employees of businesses or other organizations, school staff, college and university students, fraternities and sororities, and churches and religious organizations. Personal friends and social networks are another common source of volunteers. Volunteer coordinators generally use multiple recruiting techniques.

- ▶ The director of Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Imperial Valley, California, jokingly noted that “no one is safe” from her recruiting efforts. She encourages almost everyone she meets to volunteer as a mentor. Her other recruiting methods include newspaper ads, billboards, public service announcements, press releases, and television appearances. She tries to bring a student and a mentor along to discuss their feelings about mentoring when she makes presentations to groups, or she brings a video showing local mentors and students. The agency brochure also mentions the need for volunteers and includes an application form.
- ▶ The Pinal County, Arizona, CIS program conducted an annual campaign to solicit volunteers, including letters to community residents noting the program's need for volunteers on a regular or irregular basis. A list of available volunteer positions at different schools was attached to the letter along with a volunteer application. Staff maintained a registry of applicants to contact as volunteer opportunities arose.

A number of CIS programs have a regular arrangement to use VISTA or AmeriCorps volunteers as tutors or mentors. Foster Grandparents and similar organizations also serve in CIS programs. Although most programs seek adult

volunteers, some use high-school students (and even middle-school students) as tutors or mentors for elementary-school students. This approach fits the requirements for community service that some school districts have. Volunteer coordinators often ask new volunteers to recommend friends or colleagues. Current volunteers are another good source of recruits.

Many programs concentrate their recruiting efforts on their corporate partners and the businesses or organizations for which their board members work. The volunteer coordinator in one CIS program noted that the business community had been generous in providing volunteers and that it was an “easy sell” because education and dropout prevention were “hot” topics, as was business involvement with schools. Programs in other communities do not always find businesses so receptive, however, and small communities may not have enough businesses to fill the many requests for volunteers of organizations that seek such assistance.

Large organizations that provide significant numbers of volunteers in their communities may have someone on their own staff who is responsible for volunteer efforts. Such individuals may recruit internally, then link those interested in volunteering with community organizations that need them.

- ▶ For example, Goldman, Sachs & Co., the corporate partner of MCA in New York City, encouraged its employees to volunteer for a variety of organizations. Its director of community services coordinated volunteer efforts. She recruited potential volunteers and hosted events where representatives of community organizations presented their programs and discussed the kinds of volunteers and commitment needed.

Recruiting strategies are usually affected, at least to some extent, by decisions about the nature of the program and any restrictions on “matching.” For example, many mentoring programs seek to match mentoring pairs by gender; some also seek to match youth with adults of the same race or ethnicity. Since such decisions affect recruiting efforts, program staff should make such decisions before recruiting begins.

- ▶ For the Boston, Massachusetts, SafeFutures program, the Boys and Girls Club in the target area began recruiting mentors from an African American fraternity, while a church-based mentoring program recruited among church members. In Seattle, Washington, the Cambodian Girls Group used female Cambodian college students as tutors, mentors, and group leaders. A Seattle SafeFutures mentoring program for juvenile offenders returning to the community recruited mentors through Alcoholics Anonymous (since a drug-free lifestyle is one of the goals for these youth), community leaders, and churches. In Contra Costa County, California, female staff members organizing a mentoring program for at-risk girls networked with other women they knew in social-service and helping professions to assemble a group of African American and Latina mentors. Big Sisters of King County linked with ethnic and other grassroots community groups to recruit for its school-based mentoring program.
- ▶ The High Point, North Carolina, CIS partner program wanted to match youth particularly at risk of delinquency or in need of a strong male role model with police officers. The police chief allowed CIS to recruit police volunteers and served as a CIS partner himself. Based on their sat-

isfaction with the police volunteers, the program planned to begin recruiting fire fighters as well. Some members of the Adams County, Colorado, police department were involved in mentoring students in that CIS program.

- ▶ The Palm Beach County, Florida, CIS program developed a partnership with the educational psychology department of West Palm Beach Community College when it established a formal mentoring program. The mentor coordinator met with a faculty member from the department, then provided an in-class orientation for psychology students, obtaining 45 mentors for the program. The faculty member also remained involved by monitoring the students' mentoring efforts.

It is important to be clear about the nature of involvement and the level of commitment required—that is, the number of hours per month expected of volunteers—when recruiting volunteers. Volunteers without this understanding may quickly drop out if they find the expectations are more than they can meet. Some programs have mentors sign a “contract” acknowledging their understanding of the tutoring or mentoring role and its obligations. In some cases, students are also asked to sign the contract (or one designed for students).

Some individuals may want to volunteer but can't make a substantial or regular time commitment. Some volunteer coordinators maintain lists of such individuals, calling on them for sporadic or short-term volunteering, such as serving as guest speakers for a class, helping with special events, or allowing students to job-shadow them.

### **Arrange to screen volunteers.**

It is important to screen volunteers for the safety of the children in the program and to be sure they are appropriate for work with at-risk youth. Many programs require volunteers to fill out application forms, participate in interviews, provide references, and undergo police background checks. Local police departments or organizations such as Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Boy or Girl Scouts, and Boys and Girls Clubs can provide information on how to arrange for background checks for programs unfamiliar with this procedure. It can take several months to complete a thorough screening process, including a background check. The Seattle, Washington, CIS program used a private security firm to conduct background checks because that was faster than using the police department, although the latter service was free. Program staff were concerned that they might lose potential volunteers while waiting for the police to complete the background checks.

### **Provide training to volunteers.**

Most programs with a substantial volunteer effort provide training and orientation for mentors and tutors before they begin working with youth. These sessions provide an orientation to the program overall as well as training in the specific activities volunteers are to perform. Because volunteers may have little or no experience with the difficulties and pressures faced by at-risk youth, training often includes sensitizing volunteers to the range of behavior and needs they might encounter. Some programs teach youths' vernacular to help volunteers

understand their use of language. Some also address gang-related issues, encouraging volunteers not to wear gang colors. Training sessions also include (or should include) guidance on confidentiality, since volunteers may learn sensitive information, as well as training on recognizing abuse and legal requirements for reporting it. Most training efforts consist of a single session (sometimes repeated at different times to accommodate volunteers' schedules), generally lasting from ninety minutes to three hours. Program administrators are often present for the training, to meet and thank volunteers and discuss the program. Sometimes current volunteers attend to help provide the training and answer questions.

Most programs that offer volunteer training also provide written guidelines in the form of a volunteer manual or handbook. Such written materials serve as ongoing resources for volunteers, enabling them to refresh their memories about specific points after their activities begin. Some programs offer periodic refresher training sessions to emphasize key points and address questions or problems volunteers have after they begin working with youth.

- ▶ In the Central Texas CIS program, volunteers participated in a two-hour orientation and training session held in the early evening. Several sessions were offered in the early part of each semester, since college students (the primary source of volunteers) had varied schedules. Volunteers were given a handbook that provided information about children and adolescents, at-risk families, the role of tutors and mentors, communication suggestions, ways mentors could spend time with students, tips for tutoring, and discussion of the difficulties and rewards of volunteering.
- ▶ In High Point, North Carolina, CIS held an initial training session each fall, covering an overview of the dropout problem, partner responsibilities and expectations, and suggestions for interacting with at-risk students. Role-playing was used, with staff acting as students to demonstrate how students might behave in different scenarios, to give volunteers an opportunity to practice responding to students, with staff feedback and suggestions. The coordinator gave volunteers a list of tips for working with students, information about the program and factors that put students at risk, names and telephone numbers of CIS staff, a confidentiality form, and a release for a police background check.
- ▶ The MCA program in New York City provided a mentor training session that explained the philosophy and mission of the MCA, including the role of the mentor in the school's team approach. "Ice breaker" exercises required participants to take credit for an accomplishment and were followed by a discussion of standing out, discomfort, acknowledging one's importance, and how young adults feel about such issues. The training also discussed media images of urban youth, stereotypes, and problems experienced by at-risk youth. A role-playing exercise was used, with MCA staff portraying different ways students might act during initial meetings with their mentors (e.g., withdrawn, excessively outgoing). Participants then discussed the potential meanings of different behaviors. Volunteers were also asked to discuss people who had helped them in some way, leading to a discussion of mentors and their attributes.



- ▶ The Seattle, Washington, CIS program partnered with World Vision, which recruits, screens, trains and matches adult volunteers with at-risk youth. CIS volunteers participated in an orientation and training session in which volunteer coordinators from each school provided information specific to their schools, such as arrival procedures (e.g., where to park, sign-in procedures), while the program director provided general information about volunteering. A handbook was developed for tutors, including such topics as how to identify and teach to the student's learning style, positive discipline, motivation, and specific tips and activities for tutoring reading and math. A local bank underwrote All-City Tutor Training, which provided hands-on training for volunteers after they had started tutoring and needed additional resources. These sessions were held in schools around the city. Participants could attend their choice of workshops on such topics as reading or math tutoring, structuring tutoring sessions, cultural diversity and the learning process, learning styles, and discipline and boundary setting.
- ▶ The Columbia, South Carolina, volunteer coordinator typically held one training workshop for mentors each year. But in recent years she found that volunteers' time pressures made it difficult to arrange group training that all could attend, so she began providing one-on-one training. Volunteers also received a manual and a handbook including guidelines and suggestions for relating to students.
- ▶ The Boston, Massachusetts, SafeFutures program arranged to have Greater Boston One to One, a coalition that provides support for mentoring efforts, train staff of selected community-based organizations in starting and operating mentoring programs. One to One was also available to train mentors using its own "Mentoring 101" curriculum and manual. Topics included in the four-hour training session were mentoring roles and tasks, stages of the mentoring relationship, communication skills, diversity, adolescent development, values clarification, goal setting, and problem solving.
- ▶ Mentor training provided by Big Brothers/Big Sisters in St. Louis, Missouri, included such topics as listening and communication skills, modeling values, policies and guidelines for mentors, tips for dealing with problem situations, goals and activities in various life-skill areas, characteristics of children at different ages, and child abuse and neglect identification and reporting.
- ▶ One of the business partners in Seattle's HIRE program, a major department store, provided a half-day training session for other participating companies, including training for employees who would serve as mentors. The training included a cultural diversity component used in the store's own staff training sessions. A guidebook on mentoring and tutoring was also provided. Separate training was provided for students on workplace expectations, behavior, and dress.

Training sessions provide an opportunity to explain any "rules" for volunteers, such as where meetings with youth may take place (some programs only allow meetings at school sites) and whether volunteers may give their telephone

numbers to students (some programs prohibit this; others require that the student be able to contact the mentor by telephone). Confidentiality requirements are also typically explained during training sessions, as well as discussion of when confidentiality cannot be honored (such as legal requirements to report suspected abuse). The potential for parental concern about mentors' possible interference with parental roles and how to avoid such situations is also discussed.

### **Select students to be tutored or mentored.**

Most CIS and SafeFutures programs do not formally recruit youth to participate in mentoring or tutoring; they draw from those already participating in the program. In many cases, programs allow youth to self-select for participation in these activities. An advantage of this approach is that children participate in these programs because they want to, which may enhance their level of participation and improvement. A disadvantage is that youth who are most at risk may be least likely to self-refer. Thus it is often desirable to establish criteria to identify those who need these services most and recruit them (unless the program can provide mentors or individual tutors for all its youth, which is unusual).

Criteria should be established so that youth selected for participation are good matches for the anticipated outcomes of the volunteer effort. If a program is designed to increase academic performance, the criteria should allow youth in need of academic assistance to be eligible for assistance. If a program is designed to deter gang involvement, youth already involved in gangs or identified as likely to become involved should be selected. It is helpful to involve knowledgeable individuals in referring youth who meet the criteria. Many programs use teachers or guidance counselors to refer youth to specific program activities.

### **Inform and involve parents.**

Most programs require parental consent for children to participate in one-on-one activities, primarily mentoring. Parents may be uneasy about having another adult establish a relationship with their child, with concerns about undermining their authority or criticizing their parenting skills. In addition, parents are likely to be legitimately concerned about the safety of their child. Program staff need to assure parents, through letters or meetings, that mentors are not intended to supplant or interfere with the parent-child relationship, and that the screening process ensures safety. Programs should provide an orientation for parents and youth to explain the intent and activities of mentoring programs. This session may be done as part of the overall program orientation or as a separate meeting. Some programs use telephone contact or written materials to explain their efforts. Ideally, parents should have an opportunity to meet the prospective mentor before the match is finalized.

### **Match volunteers and youth.**

Since mentors and youth are supposed to develop a fairly close relationship, it is important that there be some commonalities between them. Many programs seek to match mentors and youth by gender, ethnicity, or language, which may promote communication and understanding. Other programs match them

according to shared interests. Some CIS programs use “interest finder” forms, completed separately by volunteers and students, to help in matching them. These forms typically ask the student or volunteer to identify likes, dislikes, and interests in various categories, such as favorite things to do; things liked best about school or work; things that make them happy, sad, or angry; favorite foods; and preferences in reading, movies, and television programs. Other programs bring students and volunteers together to involve students in selecting their mentor.

- ▶ In High Point, North Carolina, the volunteer coordinator and other program staff used a “mixer” to match students and partners. On the first day partners came to school, students in the CIS class were asked to pair with mentors at random for five minutes and exchange information. After this, the mentor-student pair told the group about each other. This process was repeated about three times during the session, so each student met three potential partners. The CIS social worker observed the session to get a sense of which pairings seemed to click. After the session, students were asked which partner they preferred. Staff then made the matches, taking preferences and student needs into account. The program also used an “interest finder” form for partners and students to fill out during one of their initial meetings to help the pair get to know each other better and discover commonalities, instead of using it as a matching tool, as in some programs.
- ▶ In the MCA program in New York City, an introductory session used a variety of small-group, ice-breaking activities to allow students and volunteers to get to know each other. Students then identified the volunteer with whom they would like to be matched. A second, kickoff session took place at the corporate partner’s office, where the matched pairs were announced. The pairs then met to share information about each other and introduce each other to the large group.
- ▶ In Fort Belknap, Montana, an initial meeting involving the mentor, youth, and parent was scheduled before mentoring activities began to help the parties get to know each other and ensure that the match was satisfactory to all.
- ▶ Big Sisters of King County, Washington, considered such factors as compatibility of values, life experiences, individual interests, and personality traits in making a match. Any party (mentor, child, parent) could reject a match for any reason. Identifying information was kept confidential until all parties approved of the match.

In cases where the initial match does not seem to be working, most programs make another match at the request of the student or mentor.

Some programs try to match mentors with particular characteristics to certain students. For example, some programs seek college students or college graduates of the same ethnicity or from the same neighborhood as the youth to demonstrate that higher education is an achievable goal. Women who are or were young mothers might be paired with teen mothers to offer support and

encouragement. Women who avoided becoming teen mothers might be matched with at-risk girls who are not yet teen mothers to demonstrate that avoidance of teen motherhood is possible.

### **Provide ongoing support and monitoring.**

Support for volunteer efforts should not end after training is provided. Ongoing contact and communication helps solidify ties between the program and the volunteers, reducing the potential for volunteer dropout. It is also important to monitor the volunteer relationship to ensure that obligations of both parties are being met, assess student progress, identify problems, and provide suggestions for addressing them. A number of programs use regular telephone contact with volunteers to keep in touch. Several others use sign-in sheets, and one asks volunteers to write a brief description of each meeting with students. Programs also use newsletters to keep both volunteers and students informed. "Evaluation forms" filled out by students and volunteers at the end of mentoring can yield feedback and suggestions for improvement.

- ▶ The Central Texas CIS volunteer coordinators performed several supportive roles. They scheduled volunteer activities at their assigned schools, and reminded students and teachers about scheduled meetings (which were held during class periods). They called or met with each volunteer once a month to discuss how their work was going and to provide assistance. Coordinators also kept track of volunteer hours served, greeted volunteers, and had refreshments (coffee, soft drinks) available. The program also published a monthly newsletter that recognized the efforts of volunteers and provided general program news and reminders about upcoming events or important dates (such as school closures, exam dates). Volunteers filled out an evaluation form at year end to provide feedback about their experience.
- ▶ In Columbia, South Carolina, the volunteer coordinator had monthly telephone contact with mentors, in part to keep track of hours worked, but also to discuss problems and student progress. New mentors were called more frequently. In addition to training for new volunteers, the coordinator held an annual workshop for all mentors. This workshop was used to exchange information, including presentations by experienced mentors, to reinforce key points, and to thank mentors for their help.
- ▶ In the Seattle, Washington, SafeFutures program, mentors are required to stay in touch with the Big Sisters case manager, who conducts telephone and in-person supervision. The case manager monitors the mentor-student relationship, the child's relationship with the parents, and any changes in needs or behavior.
- ▶ The MCA program in New York City provided ongoing assistance through "how's it going" meetings each semester, which included input from mentors, the CIS coordinator, and the Goldman Sachs volunteer coordinator. These meetings were structured as small-group discussions about the mentors' experiences, problems, and concerns. In addition, the program's administrative assistant coordinated the mentor program, reminding students and mentors of scheduled meetings and conveying

messages (about a last-minute cancellation, for example). She periodically called mentors to check how the mentoring relationship was going and checked students' perceptions through informal contact during lunch period. MCA also sent volunteers and students a monthly newsletter announcing upcoming events and key dates and highlighting past activities.

- ▶ The High Point, North Carolina, volunteer coordinator provided a refresher training session in January of each year. This primarily involved small-group discussion of partners' questions and problems, with CIS staff and case managers serving as facilitators. The coordinator also kept track of volunteers' participation and called if they did not attend as scheduled. She also informally greeted and thanked partners as they checked in at the CIS office before meeting with their students. Each partner was given a survey at the end of the year to obtain feedback and suggestions. The coordinator also conducted informal exit interviews with partners who left the program.
- ▶ The Seattle, Washington, CIS program used volunteer coordinators (parents or community members who received a small stipend) at each school to monitor student participation in tutorial sessions. They supported volunteers by functioning as a point of contact familiar with the school and acted as liaisons between teachers and volunteers.

### **Recognize volunteers' work.**

The important work that volunteers perform is not always high profile, and the severe problems that at-risk students face often mean that progress is limited. Therefore it is important to recognize volunteer efforts. Recognition may occur in frequent, small ways—such as staff remembering to say “thank you” each time they have contact with the volunteer, having refreshments available, or ongoing recognition in program newsletters. Some programs also organize occasional larger-scale recognition events or invite volunteers to attend holiday parties and year-end events, where their contributions are acknowledged.

- ▶ High Point, North Carolina, held a small reception to thank partners on the last day of class. Partners also attended a year-end dinner for graduates as guests of the program.
- ▶ In Central Texas, the CIS bulletin board in each school honored a “volunteer of the month.” The program also held an annual volunteer appreciation event, such as a picnic in a park or a reception in a hotel. In addition, volunteers were given a recognition certificate signed by the program manager and volunteer coordinator of the school to which they were assigned.
- ▶ At the conclusion of Seattle, Washington's summer HIRE program, the mayor's office held a reception for participating employee-volunteers and students.

# 5

## Fund-Raising and Marketing

**F**unds are the fuel all organizations need to survive and fulfill their mission. Nonprofit organizations face the challenge of having to generate their funds or other resources themselves. Therefore the importance of funding cannot be overemphasized. Funding is as big a concern for successful programs as for those just starting out. Locating funding is a challenge, and so is maintaining it over time. Programs must be creative and tenacious in seeking and holding on to financial support.

### FUND-RAISING

Programs often implement particular services or activities that appear successful but can't continue them because funding ends. Like many nonprofit organizations, CIS programs often obtain funding in the form of "seed money" for new projects or programs. But once this initial funding ends, programs often have difficulty finding funders willing to support continued operations. Funders might have different agendas, or want to be associated with "innovative" approaches rather than existing services—even if those services have proven track records.

The CIS programs studied tapped into many different funding streams. This chapter provides suggestions based on their experiences. Since marketing supports fund-raising, the latter portion of this chapter focuses on marketing.

**Diversify funding sources and seek long-term commitments of funds.**

Multiple sources of funds help local programs survive reductions in funding that almost inevitably occur. Long-term commitments, such as obtaining earmarked funds from a state legislature or being established as a line item in the school district budget, reduce some of the pressure for repeated fund-raising. Similarly, some communities pass tax levies to support education or services for children and families. Dropout prevention and other youth programs are likely to be eligible for such funds.

However, overdependence on one source of funds can spell disaster, since any source of support, no matter how stable it seems, may disappear or diminish for any number of reasons. Diversification is always desirable, even for ongoing funding streams.

- ▶ The Florida state legislature provided funds for CIS programs for many years. Initially, most of the state support went to the Palm Beach County CIS (PBCIS) program. As the number of CIS programs in the state grew, Palm Beach CIS received fewer state funds as the existing “pie” was divided into smaller pieces. However, PBCIS also received funds from a local taxing authority, the Children’s Service Council, created specifically to fund services for children, which helped mitigate the reduction in state support.

Many foundations and other donors are willing to provide seed money to help a new project or program get started, but such funds are usually provided for only a brief period of time. Federal grants are available for initiatives intended to test innovative programs or practices that may be replicated elsewhere. But programs need to supplement seed money from the beginning with funds that are not linked to the newness of a particular service, e.g., earmarked tax funds or a school district budget. Developing long-term relationships with local governments, businesses, foundations, organizations such as the United Way or Junior League, and even individuals can generate ongoing funds that are not tied to new programs.

- ▶ In Texas and Florida, state legislatures funded CIS programs. State CIS programs were responsible for distributing these funds to local programs.
- ▶ In Houston, Texas, the school district made CIS a line item in its budget.
- ▶ In Washington, the Boeing Company provided considerable monetary support to the state CIS office, which reallocated funds to community programs. Although corporate leaders recognized that education had been a key concern since the 1980s and did not expect a “quick fix,” Boeing still regarded its financial contributions as seed money and began to reduce its support gradually. Anticipating this action, the Seattle CIS program worked to become eligible for funds through the city’s Families and Education Levy, a property tax designed to generate \$8.5 million annually for programs related to education, children, and families.
- ▶ The Columbia, South Carolina, CIS program received support from the local Junior League since its inception. Donations from such organizations and local businesses provided about two-thirds of the program’s budget (in 1993-94). The majority of these funds were unrestricted, the type of funding the program primarily pursued. Program staff credited their success in obtaining such support to several factors: (1) The program positioned itself as a collaborator and facilitator rather than a service-providing agency; (2) it had a small staff and did not try to raise large amounts; (3) it was perceived as being run in a businesslike way; and (4) the program had demonstrated success in terms of graduates.

## Pursue public or private grants.

Grants have their drawbacks. They are often designed as “start-up” money or apply only to a particular aspect of a program, such as a single group of students (teen mothers, below-grade pupils) or a specific effort (after-school tutoring, life-skills training). However, they are an important source of funding for most programs. Grant writing may be particularly important for smaller communities with a limited number of businesses and industries to serve as potential local funders. However, the time and expense needed to seek grants must be weighed against existing resources and the likelihood of obtaining funds.

Successful grant writing hinges on finding grants applicable to your program and writing a winning proposal. A number of CIS state and regional offices assist local CIS programs by notifying them of grants for which CIS activities are likely to be eligible. The national office also keeps programs apprised of funding opportunities. In addition, grants are often announced on Web sites of federal agencies and foundations that provide funds and of organizations that monitor such opportunities.

Grant preparation often requires some technical expertise—to gather and present supporting demographic data, to prepare a detailed budget to support the application, and to write a proposal casting a project in the most favorable light. The CIS national, regional, and state offices frequently provide seminars or workshops on grant writing at conferences and training seminars. Local organizations, including colleges or universities, government agencies, professional organizations, and nonprofit organizations, periodically offer courses or workshops related to grant writing and sources of grants. Asking for informal advice from successful grant applicants or reviewing proposals they submitted can also be helpful to novices.

Keeping abreast of grant opportunities and writing proposals can take a considerable amount of time. Some CIS programs dedicate a portion of a staff position for that purpose or use volunteers to help write proposals.

- ▶ In early 1994, the Palm Beach County, Florida, CIS created a new position, community development coordinator, to write grant proposals, develop partnerships, and coordinate agencies.
- ▶ In Pinal County, Arizona, a rural county with limited resources, grant writing and fund-raising were primary responsibilities of the CIS executive director, who raised \$1 million in grant money by 1993. VISTA volunteers assigned to the program also participated in writing grant applications.

Hiring a grant writer or seeking assistance from organizations such as nearby universities that provide pro bono service to community organizations is another option that might be pursued.

Federal, state, and local government funds that are already committed to organizations in the community can be tapped for specific program activities that meet their eligibility criteria. Program staff should make an effort to learn about these sources, since they may well be serving children who are entitled to the assistance provided.

- ▶ The Houston, Texas, CIS program received support from Houston’s federally funded Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) as well as the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse.



- ▶ Pinal County, Arizona, used Racketeer-Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act money to reposition a Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) officer to a school.

### **Involve board members in raising funds.**

An involved board is important to fund-raising. Members' employers can be approached for funding or other forms of support. Some CIS programs are straightforward about their expectations of board members.

- ▶ The Columbia, South Carolina, CIS program created a board of trustees in addition to a board of directors. Trustees were high-level business and community leaders whose association with the program helped promote its credibility, but who were too busy to serve as active board members. The board of trustees was used as a vehicle to obtain the guidance and support of certain individuals without requiring the work or responsibilities of a board member. Trustees were asked to provide three kinds of resources: assigning someone from their organization to serve as a board member, permitting recruitment of volunteers from their organization, and providing money or in-kind donations.

Since assistance with fund-raising is a typical responsibility of board members, it is important to select board members who have credibility and are well-connected with community and business leaders. Board members can serve as program advocates, promoting the visibility and successes of program efforts, which are key factors in successful fund-raising.

- ▶ The High Point, North Carolina, CIS program had a number of prominent individuals on its trustee advisory board (which had functions similar to the board of trustees in Columbia) and its board of directors. The two boards included government officials (city council members, county commissioners, and present or former mayors), school administrators, and key business leaders, including the chairperson of a major local manufacturing firm and the executive vice president of a local bank.
- ▶ In Seattle, Washington, the board's executive committee included the deputy superintendent of Seattle public schools, the president of the Seattle Education Association, a county prosecutor, a corporate director of the Boeing Company, the director of public transportation for Seattle, and the general partner of a private-sector business.
- ▶ The Houston, Texas, CIS program had a diverse board reflecting various "power brokers" in the community. Staff felt it was important to have high-level executives and administrators on the board because they can make commitments without going back to their organizations for approval.

Inviting board members to become involved with components of the program—to increase their sense of "ownership"—may enhance their efforts in fund-raising.

- ▶ The Columbia, South Carolina, CIS program used a variety of mechanisms to promote board involvement. Board members helped interview potential students, giving them a greater awareness of the kinds of issues CIS students and staff dealt with. Directors of the four CIS school projects attended board meetings and provided brief reports on activities and accomplishments at their schools. Board meetings were periodically rotated among the four school sites to provide an opportunity to see the facilities and hear from staff and students. Board members were invited to participate in special events, such as the annual graduation ceremony, and a day-long “retreat” that included identifying future priorities and directions.
- ▶ The Houston, Texas, CIS program helped ensure involvement of board members by assigning each board member to a school. Board members were encouraged to become involved at that site, for example, by serving as a tutor or mentor or sponsoring special events such as a holiday party. At a minimum, they were asked to visit their site at least twice a year and to have periodic telephone contact with their school’s CIS project manager to learn about current activities.

**Seek in-kind contributions, including reassigned staff and pro bono services.**

In-kind contributions from businesses and other organizations are a rich source of support for CIS programs. From office equipment to tote bags, businesses and other organizations can advance the mission of a program. Every in-kind resource obtained reduces the need to raise funds to purchase that resource.

- ▶ In Columbia, South Carolina, the local utility rented a building to the CIS office for a token rent of \$5 per year. It also provided the building housing one of the alternative school sites for \$1 per year and spent about \$50,000 renovating that space for use as a school. Local corporations also provided various kinds of equipment and furnishings to this program.
- ▶ In New York City, the corporate partner of MCA, Goldman, Sachs & Co., funded the first-year salary of the project coordinator and donated most of the program’s furniture and equipment, including a copy machine and several computers. The firm also produced school brochures and provided business cards, stationery, and other supplies.

Some in-kind donations may be targeted directly to youth and families rather than as program resources.

- ▶ For example, in Seattle, Washington, COSTCO provided backpacks with school supplies to students at seven schools, donated snacks for class parties, and hosted a Thanksgiving dinner for about 300 students. In addition, each of twenty company warehouses “adopted” CIS families during the Christmas holidays, providing gifts and food.

School districts commonly provide space for CIS programs in schools and, in some cases, separate wings of schools or entire buildings for CIS “academies.” Staff for CIS programs, from principals and teachers to social workers and counselors, are another common form of in-kind contribution among the programs

studied. Many programs have at least one such staff member, in keeping with the CIS philosophy of repositioning staff from social service agencies to schools to promote better access to youth in need of services. Such repositioned staff can be considered an in-kind contribution only if the agency providing them continues to pay their salaries. In some cases, salaries of such staff are paid, in whole or part, by the CIS program due to the financial constraints of agencies providing the staff.

Another source of in-kind contributions, pro bono services, can come from both the public and the private sectors. They are provided by professionals such as doctors, nurses, and counselors. Some programs obtain pro bono professional services in lieu of repositioned staff for some functions.

- ▶ In Griffin-Spaulding, Georgia, a doctor came to the CIS academy one half-day per week to provide health counseling and referrals to clinics or other health services.
- ▶ In High Point, North Carolina, and Palm Beach County, Florida, local opticians provided students with eye examinations and glasses.
- ▶ In Seattle, Washington, Boeing Company provided “executives on loan” to facilitate partnership development.

### **Be responsive to the goals and information needs of funders.**

Agencies that provide grants or other support usually expect some feedback about what was done with their funds and, to the extent possible, what was achieved with them. The latter can be tricky, since some program outcomes may not occur in the short run. Reporting program outcomes is discussed in greater detail in chapter 6.

Large funding agencies usually have rules and special formats for reporting, and they may require specific accounting practices to justify expenditures under a particular grant. Sophisticated financial and data systems to address funders' requirements may be beyond the scope of small programs. Larger programs that receive funds from numerous sources with varying reporting requirements can more readily address funding agencies' reporting needs.

- ▶ Houston, Texas' MIS was initially designed to meet reporting requirements of funding sources, including data on the amount, type, and duration of CIS services provided to students. These data could be reported by type of student (race, ethnicity, gender), family background, service provider, or school site. Reports to funders generally included student outcome information such as retention in school and graduation rates.
- ▶ The Palm Beach County, Florida, CIS tracked a variety of student and family demographic data, service delivery indicators, staff and volunteer activities, and project highlights (e.g., field trips, community service involvement) through an extensive set of records. School-based staff kept logs of contacts with students. Other records captured program activities and aggregate student or project information, such as the number of students enrolled and total home visits conducted. Much of the required record keeping evolved to comply with documentation requirements of the program's grant from the Children's Service Council.

Program staff should make an effort to inform major funders about what is being done with their support. This communication is particularly important when funders are local businesses or organizations, which expect more personal contact. Contact might be in the form of periodic briefings (in person or over the telephone), visits to see programs in operation, and inclusion of funders on newsletter mailing lists. Program directors should document problems encountered and how they were addressed to assure funders that the program receives appropriate oversight.

### **Put a human face on fund-raising efforts.**

Use pictures and videos of program clients and activities to heighten potential funders' understanding and interest. Better yet, funders benefit from in-person contact with participants who can provide first-hand knowledge of the need for the program and testimonials of program benefits.

### **Use special events to raise funds.**

Special events, from charity balls to sporting events, are commonly used as fund-raisers by a variety of nonprofit organizations. CIS programs in a number of communities successfully use periodic special events to raise funds. Events can be large, high-profile activities, or smaller, community-focused events.

- ▶ The Palm Beach County, Florida, CIS used several fund-raisers per year for more than eight years, including three annual golf tournaments and a celebrity tennis tournament that included such champions as Billy Jean King and Chris Evert Lloyd. These events generally raised \$20,000 to \$25,000 each. Businesses and organizations contributed time and resources to these events by sponsoring and underwriting activities, donating prizes, purchasing tickets, and participating in the events. PBCIS also tried a new fund-raising concept each year, such as partnering with the school district to host a community barbecue.
- ▶ The Downtown Seattle Association sponsored a "Christmas Carousel" in the downtown shopping area each year and allowed volunteers and staff of various nonprofit organizations to operate the ride while collecting funds for their organizations. Seattle CIS volunteers raised \$48,000 during the 1993 holiday period this way.
- ▶ Adams County, Colorado, hired a professional development consultant to focus its fund-raising efforts. At his recommendation, the program held a luncheon to create awareness, raise funds, recruit leadership support, and develop interest and commitment, both personal and financial. Local organizations and businesses purchased tickets for tables, and more than 250 individuals attended. Keynote speakers made presentations after being briefed on the program's mission and value to the community. Presenters included the chief of police and a mother whose family received a variety of CIS support after staff identified a domestic violence problem. Seating was arranged so at least one board member or other knowledgeable CIS champion was at each table, where they could keep discussions focused on CIS and answer questions posed

by tablemates. Pledge cards were available, and more than \$21,000 was raised at the luncheon; in-kind donations and other forms of support were also promised.

### **Acknowledge supporters.**

Recognition of supporters, particularly major donors, is always important. Personal thank-you calls and letters from program directors should be mandatory, along with recognition of members' efforts at board meetings. Periodic public acknowledgment of funders is also a good idea. Events associated with the program, such as annual holiday parties, picnics, or graduation ceremonies, can provide a good forum. Funders can be listed in special-events programs and newsletters.

- ▶ The Austin, Texas, CIS program acknowledged the local school district's substantial support by hosting an annual "school district appreciation" luncheon for key school district staff, school board members, and principals of schools with CIS programs. CIS program staff and board members also attended, and CIS staff from the respective schools provided testimonials about the help provided by school staff. Similarly, the Houston, Texas, CIS program held periodic recognition events, such as breakfasts to acknowledge principals and agency partners.
- ▶ Thank-you letters were sent out to speakers and corporate sponsors immediately after the Adams County, Colorado, luncheon, and advertisements were placed in local newspapers thanking corporate sponsors for their support. The program considered laminating the advertisements and sending them to corporate sponsors so they could be displayed.

## **MARKETING**

Marketing and publicity can support fund-raising, at least at the local level, by increasing awareness of a program and its accomplishments. Fund-raising is easier when potential funders are familiar with a program they are asked to support, particularly if the program has a positive image. Similarly, marketing can help attract corporate and organizational partners, board members, and volunteers, as well as generate public awareness and support.

### **Use publicity and the media to generate public awareness and support.**

A number of CIS programs actively use publicity to generate public awareness and support.

- ▶ The CIS director of community relations in Columbia, South Carolina, regularly wrote brief press releases about CIS for the local media. Topics included annual graduation stories, visiting dignitaries (e.g., the governor, a U.S. senator, Barbara Bush), student receipt of scholarships and

awards, and student involvement in special projects or events. The program occasionally used other forms of publicity, such as a billboard with a picture of the first graduating class.

- ▶ Corporate partners in Seattle, Washington, assisted CIS with marketing. Fox affiliate KCPQ-TV provided expertise in putting together presentations and public service announcements and gave booth space and entertainment at a CIS marketing event, Kids Fun Fair. Boeing Company provided the assistance of a public relations firm to help enhance CIS's visibility and image.
- ▶ In the early stages of developing their program, Houston, Texas, CIS staff appeared on local television talk shows and community-oriented programming to increase public and media awareness of CIS. This exposure helped establish media relationships that facilitated future coverage.

### **Become actively involved in community service and activities.**

CIS staff and student involvement in various local efforts and committees has helped build support and promote awareness of programs in several communities. Student involvement in community service can help correct the image many community members have of at-risk youth as well as promote program visibility.

- ▶ The Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, CIS project permitted students to earn an elective credit for working a specified number of hours as volunteers in hospitals, libraries, the YMCA, the YWCA, or their school's day care center.
- ▶ Friday mornings were set aside so CIS students could participate in community service in Columbia, South Carolina. Students and teachers selected a group of agencies at which community services were performed. One group "adopted a highway" and kept it litter-free; a sign advertised this effort.
- ▶ Houston, Texas, CIS staff served on numerous committees in the community and were active in a wide range of efforts, all of which helped foster awareness of the program.

Another approach to involvement in community activities is through participation in community fairs, particularly those focused on program-related areas, such as health or youth fairs.

### **Use newsletters to keep in touch with the community.**

Newsletters are commonly used as a form of marketing, not just a means to communicate upcoming events. They can be used to polish a program's public image and to advertise its accomplishments. The various constituencies served by a program—youth and families, partner agencies such as schools and social service agencies, funders and potential funders, and community residents—should be kept in mind when deciding on newsletter content and distribution.

With the growing ease of desktop publishing software, a good-looking newsletter can be created without a lot of expense or effort. However, newsletter production might best be handled as a donated service by a corporate or organizational partner, particularly for smaller programs with little staff time to spare for marketing. Actual distribution (mailings or bulk deliveries to key locations) may be more expensive than some programs can afford; again, this is a good task for a partner organization to perform.



# 6

## Monitoring Program Outcomes to Improve Accountability

One key program responsibility is monitoring program performance, particularly program outcomes. Programs typically collect and report data on the number of clients served (which reflects program workload), or the amount of services provided (which really reflects program outputs). However, an area that is often neglected, particularly by small service-providing agencies, is monitoring or measuring program outcomes. Accountability for program outcomes requires measurement of results in terms of changes in client conditions or other circumstances external to the program. Programs should measure factors that reflect progress toward achieving their mission and objectives. For example, programs aimed at reducing high-risk behavior might measure changes in youth attitudes about pro- and anti-social behaviors, as well as their actual involvement in, or avoidance of, activities such as truancy, teen pregnancy, or law-breaking.

Monitoring program outcomes has been the focus of increased attention in recent years. For example, CIS has increased its emphasis on measuring program outcomes as part of its training and has developed standard forms for community-level programs to use in their periodic reports to the national CIS organization. United Way of America recently implemented a strategic plan that includes measuring outcomes of health and human services agencies, and considering them in funding allocation decisions. United Way developed a training manual to assist member agencies in implementing outcome measurement as part of this initiative.

This chapter focuses on measuring and reporting program outcomes (results). Outcome measurement enables programs to demonstrate what they have accomplished, enhancing their accountability to their constituencies, and helping maintain credibility and support. Outcome information can be used to:

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Material in this chapter draws heavily on several publications prepared by Urban Institute staff, primarily: Outcome Measurement for Thai Government Programs, H. Hatry, S. B. Rossman, and G. Barbour, Washington, DC: Urban Institute, 1996; Guide to Program Outcome Measurement for the U.S. Department of Education, H. Hatry and M. Kopczynski, Washington, DC: Urban Institute, 1997; and Measuring Program Outcomes: A Practical Approach, United Way of America, 1996.



1. help program managers track how the program is doing, guide improvements in specific services or program components that may not be working well, and learn from components that are working well;
2. help program staff focus on achieving client-oriented results and setting priorities;
3. demonstrate accountability to current supporters of funds or other resources who require various kinds of information about program performance;
4. justify requests for funding/resources from current or new sources, or for changes in policy to facilitate achievement of program goals; and
5. inform the general public and program clients, which may translate into support that can be used for fund raising.

Details on technical elements of outcome measurement—such as data collection and analysis, constructing and conducting surveys—are beyond the scope of this report. The “Resources” section lists works that provide greater detail on various aspects of outcome measurement.

## IDENTIFYING OUTCOMES

Programs may choose to start their outcome monitoring efforts with a relatively small number of activities, and include more as they gain experience. In general, it is best to start by measuring outcomes for larger or more important services. However, there may be strategic reasons for selecting particular aspects of the program for outcome measurement. For example, a particular service, such as prevention education or after-school programming, may be in danger of losing its funding or the staff assigned to provide it. Demonstrating what that activity is accomplishing may convince current resource providers to continue support, or be useful in attracting new funding. Similarly, an organization may wish to expand a service, but lack resources to do so; demonstrating outcomes specifically associated with that service may help generate resources for that expansion.

Initially, programs should decide who will be involved in identifying outcomes and outcome indicators. Some organizations establish a working group or committee for this purpose, which brings a diversity of opinions and perspectives that is not only helpful in identifying appropriate indicators, but also in clarifying thinking about the program’s mission and services. Participants in such committees might include the program director and other key staff (for very small programs, all staff might be included), and representation from key stakeholders, such as partner agencies, the board of directors, the school district, and the school(s) in which the program is located. Outside expertise might also be used to assist in this process.

- ▶ The Jacksonville, Florida, CIS program created a subcommittee of its board of directors to develop that program’s initial outcome indicators. The committee included a staff member from the sheriff’s research

department who was familiar with indicators associated with at-risk youth. The program's executive director and the director of one of the school programs also served on the committee.

- ▶ The Wichita/Sedgwick County, Kansas, CIS program used a consultant—a professor from the community psychology program of a local university—to assist in developing its outcome indicators. A committee comprised of staff from the community-level office, directors of CIS programs at several schools, and graduate-student interns from the community psychology program participated in this process.

Two early steps in identifying outcomes for a program are:

1. “doing your homework” in the sense of identifying the outcomes used for program monitoring by similar programs, as well as the outcomes key stakeholders want or expect to be monitored; and
2. constructing a logic model to identify outcomes that can reasonably be expected to flow from program services.

It is helpful to take both steps as part of the process of identifying outcomes, regardless of the order in which this is done.

**Do your homework: identify outcomes used by similar programs.**

A good starting point for identifying outcomes is to review the outcomes measured and reported by similar programs. If your program is part of a national organization or network, its national leadership may already be providing suggestions for outcome measures, as CIS does. Alternatively, other programs in the network may be able to provide suggestions or refer you to other organizations that can serve as examples or provide advice.

- ▶ The national CIS organization recently revised its uniform reporting system for collecting data from local CIS programs, which are asked to provide periodic reports to the national office at the end of the fall and spring semesters, and an end-of-year report. Representatives from local and state CIS programs and the national office were brought together to help identify the data to be collected for these reports. The reports include data about program operations, such as budget, personnel, and other resources, and services provided, as well as on the schools and students served. One major modification to the report is inclusion of student outcome indicators for both CIS-enrolled students and the student body of schools that have CIS programs. The outcome data collected include: average number of students in attendance on a typical school day; number of dropouts; number of students promoted; number of high school graduates; and number of disciplinary actions (in- and out-of-school suspensions and expulsions).

Some CIS state offices have also developed reporting systems for use by programs in their state. The Texas CIS program has had a reporting system for several years, and local CIS programs in Texas are required to use it because they

receive state funds channeled through the Texas CIS office. The North Carolina CIS program recently introduced a data collection and monitoring system for use by programs in its state (discussed below).

While reviewing the outcomes monitored by similar programs is a good starting point, caution should be exercised before adopting them. First, be sure to compare such measures with your own program's services. Other programs may measure outcomes related to services your program does not provide. Conversely, other programs may not provide all the services your program offers, so additional outcome measures may be needed.

- ▶ The director of the Wichita/Sedgwick County, Kansas, CIS program noted that their program reviewed outcome measures used by other CIS programs, and adopted several basic measures used by the Charlotte, North Carolina, CIS program. However, because the Wichita program emphasizes referring youth for health services, indicators related to health/mental health were added when Wichita staff developed outcome measures for their own program.

Outcome measures adopted from other programs should not be used without first obtaining a full understanding of how the measures are defined and how the data for them should be collected. This is particularly important when data are obtained through use of relatively complex instruments. In some cases, training may be needed to appropriately use such instruments.

- ▶ CIS programs wishing to use the Student Success Profile (SSP) developed for North Carolina CIS programs must send at least one staff member to attend a one-day workshop provided by training professionals. The training is intended to promote skills in administering the SSP, interpreting and applying results, and using data to document program needs and student outcomes.

### **Construct logic models for key programs.**

Logic models (also called outcome sequence charts) are often used to help identify outcomes. Logic models visually depict the hypothesized sequence of events leading to end outcomes. They are essentially flow charts that show cause-and-effect relationships between program activities and outcomes. Logic models can help program staff "ground truth" the relationship between program activities and outcomes. For example, if a particular program is providing after-school recreational activities, but its goal is to improve students' academic performance, a logic model should illustrate that improved academic performance does not flow from its services. In this case, it would be advisable for the program to add tutoring to its mix of services.

One benefit of logic models is that they help program staff identify and understand the relationship between intermediate (short-term) and end (long-term) outcomes. This is particularly important because services aimed at high-risk youth cannot expect, realistically, to resolve all client problems in a short time. Also, some outcomes are cumulative, so it is important for the program to capture early indicators of success while awaiting longer-term results (for

example, retention of students in school year by year for those who are not yet eligible for graduation). Exhibit 6-1 illustrates a logic model for a tutoring/homework assistance program illustrating both types of outcomes.

**Intermediate (short-term) outcomes** are early indicators of change expected to lead to the end outcomes desired, and are, themselves, worthwhile. There may be several stages of intermediate outcomes. The initial intermediate outcome may be the number of participants voluntarily completing a program, for example, while a second intermediate outcome might be those who improved their behavior in ways that should lead to a desired end outcome. Because intermediate outcomes usually occur before end outcomes, they provide timely information to help managers guide their programs.

**End (long-term) outcomes** are the desired results of the program. There may be several stages of end outcomes. Some may occur shortly after completion of a program's activities, others may occur years later. For example, the ultimate outcome of a program for middle-school students may be completion of high school, which cannot be ascertained for several years. An earlier stage of end outcome in this case is promotion from one grade level to the next.

It is possible to construct a single logic model for a whole program that reflects multiple services provided and desired outcomes associated with each. However, it may be beneficial to develop separate logic models for distinct programs or program components, such as substance abuse prevention, tutoring, or job skills, since their desired outcomes often differ considerably.

In constructing logic models, it may be useful to review materials that identify the program's objectives, such as the organization's mission statement, and other program materials that describe intended results or objectives, such as annual reports, program descriptions or brochures, strategic plans, and funding applications. Discussions or interviews can also be conducted for this purpose. Program staff and volunteers who work directly with participants also can provide insights about program accomplishments. Talking with program participants in individual interviews, as a "focus group," or even informally may identify outcomes of importance to customers. Brainstorming with staff and key stakeholders also can be used to develop insights about the program's desired outcomes.

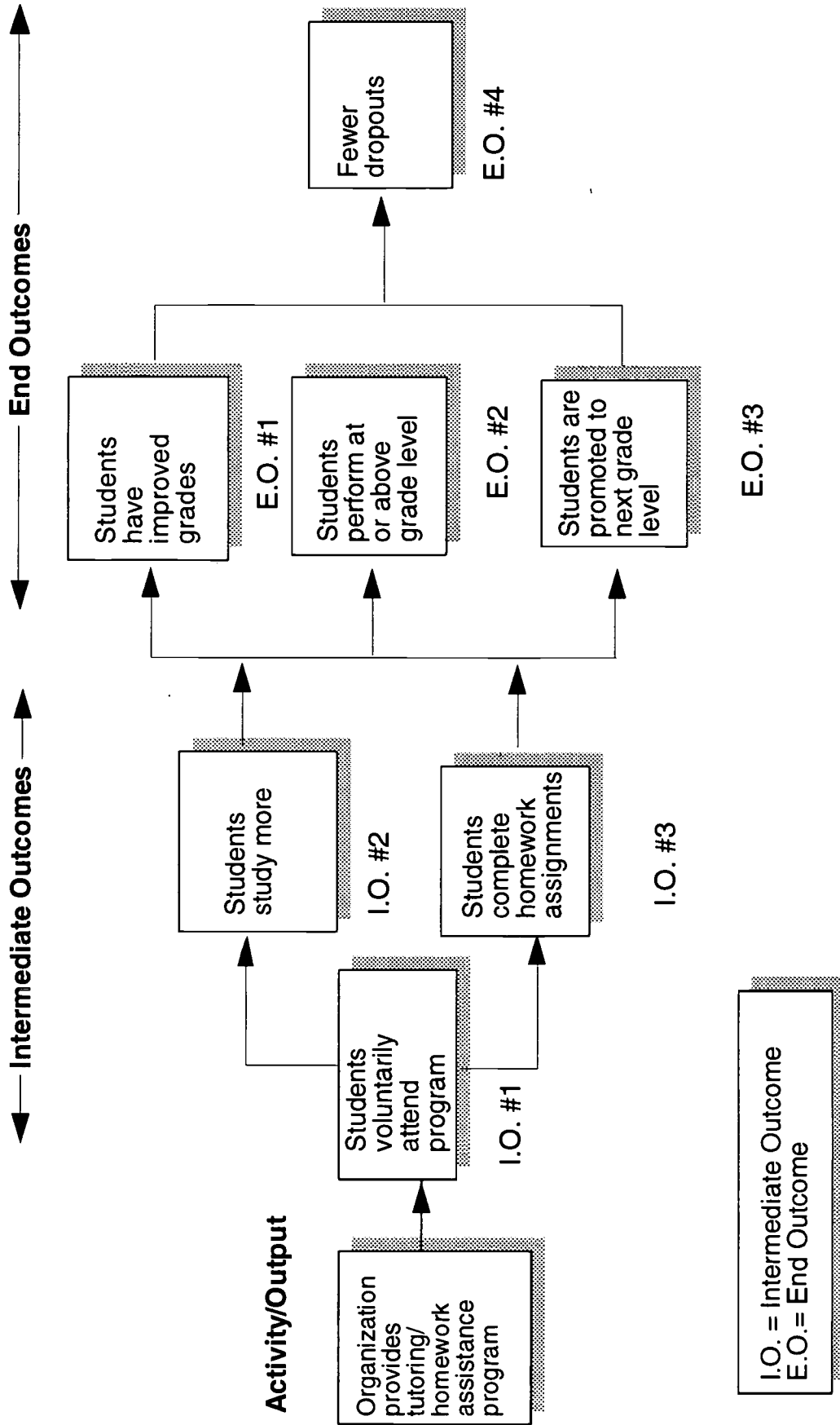
### Select outcome indicators.

Once outcomes have been identified, the next step is to identify one or more outcome indicators for each of them.

**Outcome indicators** are measures (specific data items defined in numerical terms) used to track achievement in outcome categories, such as the number or percent of participants completing high school.

Outcome indicators specify what is to be measured, and identify the specific statistics or numerical formats that will be used to monitor progress toward achieving outcomes. Common numerical formats are the number or percent falling

**EXHIBIT 6-1.**  
**Logic Model Illustrating Activities and Outcomes for**  
**Tutoring/Homework Assistance Programs**



within the indicator category (such as the number or percent of high school graduates). Indicators for the tutoring program shown in the logic model include the number of students attending the program, the number or percent of students studying more, completing more homework assignments, receiving improved grades, performing at or above grade level, and being promoted to the next grade level, and reduction in the dropout rate.

Things to consider when selecting potential indicators include:

1. Relevance to the mission/objectives of the program and to the outcome which it is supposed to help measure.
2. Importance of what is measured (relatively unimportant indicators can be eliminated).
3. Duplication or overlap with other indicators. Often more than one indicator can be used for an outcome. For example, school attendance can be measured by the number of days present in school or the number of days of absenteeism. Programs should select the most appropriate definition, taking into account how information is reported in the data sources they will draw on.
4. Understandability and specificity of the indicator.
5. The extent of the program's control or influence over the indicator. Most programs have only partial control over indicators, particularly those for end outcomes. In general, the longer term an outcome is, the less influence a program is likely to have over it. However, important indicators should be included as long as the program has some influence over them.
6. Feasibility and cost of collecting the indicator data.

Some organizations use a few global measures that are considered to be outcomes of a variety of program activities, such as those used for the CIS reporting form discussed above (for example, the number of students promoted, high school graduates, dropouts, and disciplinary actions). For various reasons, it is not always possible to use a desired indicator, and alternative measures may have to be identified.

- ▶ The Wichita/Sedgwick County, Kansas, CIS program originally planned to use grade point averages (GPAs) as a basic outcome indicator. Staff discovered this was not feasible because the numerous schools and school districts served by the program do not all use grades. Some schools are ungraded, and some use pass/fail systems instead of numerical or letter grades. Thus, the program uses scores on standardized tests (MAT 7 reading and math tests) as well as promotion to next grade level, as an academic indicator. (Note: promotion to the next grade level would not be a meaningful outcome indicator in schools that have social promotion policies, which prevent retention in grade due to poor academic performance.) The program also developed a survey to obtain teacher feedback about student improvement in various areas.

Some organizations identify several intermediate and end outcomes for different programs.

- ▶ The Jacksonville, Florida, CIS program identified short- and long-term indicators for its two primary types of programming, the work skills program, which operates in three vocational school sites, and the dropout prevention program, which operates in twenty regular school sites (see Exhibit 6-2). This reporting approach was adopted because one of the program's key funders requires reporting in terms of short- and long-term outcomes. Previously, the program had collected information on the outcomes now identified as short-term indicators (which are measured over the course of one year).

One interesting feature of Jacksonville's outcome monitoring approach is that the program also identifies specific objectives (numerical targets) for each indicator; for example, "85% of students will remain in the Full Time Vocational Training Program and pass their vocational courses."

As mentioned earlier, some programs track and report indicators other than outcomes, for various reasons.

- ▶ CIS' national reporting forms include information about personnel, including personnel employed by other organizations who are repositioned or assigned to CIS, and volunteers. This information is seen as reflecting brokering of existing resources, while numbers of personnel and hours worked demonstrate program size and capacity to serve youth and families. The dollar value of hours worked is seen as demonstrating the contribution CIS makes to schools and the community. The form similarly requests data on financial and in-kind resources brokered by CIS, since such donations are seen as indicators of the contribution made to schools, students, and families.
- ▶ The Wichita/Sedgwick County, Kansas, CIS program collects and reports data on outcome indicators commonly used by programs for at-risk youth, such as promotion, remaining in school, average daily attendance, and suspensions and expulsions. It also reports on what might be viewed as process indicators, such as linking students to agency resources or health benefits, or receiving support from tutors, mentors, or interns (see items 4 and 9 in Exhibit 6-3). Participation of parents or guardians in parent-teacher conferences is used as an indicator of parental involvement.

## OBTAINING DATA

Key factors to consider in selecting data sources and collection methods include the following:

1. Is the data source likely to provide useful, reliable information related to the outcome?

## EXHIBIT 6-2

### Intermediate and End Outcome Indicators Used by Communities in Schools of Jacksonville, Florida (1996–97)

#### Dropout Prevention Program

##### *Intermediate (short-term) indicators*

Percent of students enrolled in CIS who remain in school or graduate.

Percent of students enrolled in CIS who are promoted to the next grade level.

Percent of students enrolled in CIS who maintain a legislatively defined non-truant status.

Percent of students enrolled in CIS who report that CIS made a positive impact on their school experience.

Percent of enrolled female students, ages 10 through 17, who do not become pregnant or give birth during program enrollment.

Percent of CIS students placed in the program for academic reasons who improve their grade point average by at least .5 on a 4.0 scale compared to the previous year.

##### *End (long-term) indicators*

Percent of students completing the program who graduate from high school four years after 9th grade enrollment.

Percent of students completing the program who maintain a legislatively defined non-truant status from program completion through high school graduation

Percent of enrolled female students, ages 10 through 17, who do not give birth from program completion through high school or GED completion.

#### Work Skills Program

##### *Intermediate (short-term) indicators*

Percent of students who remain in the Full Time Vocational Training Program and pass their vocational courses.

Percent of students who demonstrate mastery of employability skills and work maturity skills on the computer-assisted instruction module.

Percent of students who achieve a proficiency level of 2 or higher on the SCANS Workplace Competencies.

Percent of Performance-Based Diploma students who earn a vocational certificate, pass the GED, HSCT, and earn a diploma.

Percent of enrolled female students, ages 10 through 17, who do not become pregnant or give birth during program enrollment.

##### *End (long-term) indicators*

Percent of participants, ages 19 and 20, who completed the program and are not full-time students.

Percent of participants who maintain employment at a level that meets their basic needs of food, shelter, and clothing for two years.

Percent of enrolled female students, ages 10 through 17, who do not give birth from program completion through high school or GED completion.

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**EXHIBIT 6-3**  
**1996–1997 Program Measures**  
**Communities in Schools of Wichita/Sedgwick**  
**County, Kansas**

1. As of June 1997, 95% of CIS students who began the school year were still in school. (This represents a decrease from 98% the previous year.)
2. 75% of CIS students met their goals from their individualized action plans. (This represents an increase from 72% the previous year.)
3. Average daily attendance for CIS students was 89%. (This represents an increase from 83% the previous year.)
4. 95% of CIS students received support from a tutor, mentor, or intern. (This represents an increase from 89% the previous year.)
5. 90% of CIS students' parents/guardians attended parent/teacher conferences. (This represents an increase from 85% the previous year.)
6. 80% of CIS students' parents/guardians participated in a parenting program or school activity. (This represents an increase from 73% the previous year.)
7. 83% of CIS students were not reported as being suspended or expelled during the school year. (This represents a decrease from 84% the previous year.)
8. 92% of CIS students were promoted to the next grade. (This represents a decrease from 96% the previous year.)
9. 86% of CIS students with identified needs were linked with agency resources during the school year. (This was not measured the previous year.)
10. 93% of CIS students in need of a health benefit program who qualified for one were enrolled in one. (This was not measured the previous year.)
11. 97% of CIS students in need of follow-up care after vision, hearing, or dental screening received it. (This was not measured the previous year.)

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2. Is the data collection method feasible in terms of time, administration procedures, and cost?

3. Will the resulting information be credible to the appropriate audiences?

While cost is always an important consideration, it should not be the dominant criterion in choosing data collection procedures. There may be ways to reduce the cost of what appears to be an expensive method. Staff of board-member corporations, school districts, or local universities can develop surveys and analyze data as a pro bono service. Volunteers can administer surveys. Such options should be explored before deciding not to use an otherwise desirable source of data. In addition, it is always possible to phase in additional data collection procedures over time, starting with simpler methods, and adding more complex and costly ones in the future.

## Official records as sources of data.

A program's own records are the most frequently used data source, because the records are already available; staff are familiar with them and can access them; and this is generally a low-cost data collection option. To provide the range of indicators desired, however, program records often must be supplemented by records from other agencies. School records are one of the most common sources of data, in part because the objectives of many programs for at-risk youth address school-related behaviors. Other sources of data for outcomes related to at-risk youth are the records of courts, law enforcement agencies, and other social service agencies. Some programs also obtain data through surveys (interviews or questionnaires) of participants or others affected by program activities.

Initial attempts to use records data (from your own program or other agencies) often bring a variety of problems to light. It is not uncommon to find that data "required" in official records are not routinely entered, due to other demands on staff. The information that is recorded is not always useful for outcome measurement. For example, records do not always include information on frequency and duration of services provided, client characteristics related to difficulty of achieving outcomes, and whether services to which a client was referred were actually received. Due to concerns about confidentiality or the absence of interagency agreements for sharing information, program records often do not reflect such outcomes as juvenile encounters with the justice system and abuse or neglect.

Recordkeeping practices may require modification to make official records more useful for future outcome measurement. Measures of desired outcomes not currently collected should be added. Specific guidance and training on how to record data may be needed. Such changes are more feasible if the records involved are those of your own program, although other agencies, particularly those that are partners in collaborative efforts, may be willing to modify their data collection or recordkeeping practices.

## Information sharing and confidentiality.

Information-sharing agreements are used by a number of programs to ensure that they can obtain data on outcomes kept in records of other agencies. Most agencies are unwilling to provide their data to anyone other than their own employees unless there is some form of agreement about the nature of the data to be provided and the uses to which the data will be put.

- ▶ SafeFutures initiatives commonly have Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with each agency providing services for SafeFutures. In addition to specifying the nature of service provision involved, MOUs often spell out other aspects of collaboration, including information sharing. Imperial County, California's MOUs specify that agencies will provide data for use in evaluating the local initiative, for example.
- ▶ The Jacksonville, Florida, CIS program signs an interagency agreement with the Duval County School Board (DCSB) each year. The DCSB agrees to share information with CIS on student achievement and behavioral and attendance history of CIS participants for the purposes of assessment, treatment, and evaluation. In turn, CIS agrees to ensure that information disseminated carries an appropriate warning regarding the

reliability, confidentiality, and control of further dissemination, and to share information on CIS participants and status in the CIS program with the DCSB. Both parties agree to comply with various laws, rules, and procedures related to records use, security, dissemination, retention, and destruction, and to maintain confidentiality of information as required by law.

- ▶ The Troup County, Georgia, CIS program has an agreement with the local school system that it will use school data for tracking and monitoring, and that it will not publicize individual data. In addition, CIS must have parental consent to obtain data.

Some programs are readily able to access other agencies' data, and some are even able to access data through their computerized data systems, because of their partnerships or due to staffing arrangements under which some program staff are actually employees of other agencies, and thus can access their data.

- ▶ The Jacksonville, Florida, CIS program has developed a sound partnership with the Duval County School Board. CIS has involved the school system in program governance from the program's inception by including the Superintendent of Schools and a school board member on its board of directors. Because of this partnership, CIS has been granted direct access to the school system's computerized Student Information Management System. To augment this data, CIS case managers manually collect data on CIS students in their schools on a quarterly basis for the CIS database.
- ▶ The Troup County, Georgia, CIS program is organized in such a way that its staff are all employed by other agencies, which enables access to data from those agencies. For example, the program director is employed by the Division of Family and Children's Services, and can access its data on CIS students; case managers are employed by the Department of Human Resources and can access its data; the administrative assistant is a school system employee who can access computerized school system records; and teachers assigned to CIS classes can access school-level data. The school system serves as the fiscal agent for the program, and the CIS office is located in its administrative building, further facilitating access to school data.

Many agencies, particularly school districts, require a signed parental consent form before they will release data. CIS programs often use a multi-purpose consent form that includes permission to participate in the program and various activities (such as field trips and referral to agencies for specific services), as well as consent to obtain information for monitoring or evaluation purposes. As is the case for other materials sent to parents, consent forms should be available in the primary languages spoken by area residents.

- ▶ The parental consent form used by the High Point, North Carolina, CIS program includes consent for interviews, tests, and questionnaires of students for program evaluation, release of confidential information (financial questions, grades, etc.) to CIS, and inclusion of their child in

media coverage of CIS programs (interviews, photos, etc.). Space is provided on the consent form for parents to identify specific activities in which they do not wish their child to participate.

### Use surveys as sources of data.

Surveys are extremely useful for collecting information that is not readily available from program records or other sources, such as changes in attitude or behavior. Students in a tutoring program can be surveyed about whether they are studying more or completing more homework assignments. Students in a substance-abuse education program might be surveyed about their attitudes toward drugs, as well as about actual use of drugs. Surveys can be used to obtain information on longer-term outcomes that occur after participation in the program ends, such as employment or educational involvement after graduation from high school.

- ▶ The High Point, North Carolina, CIS program has a policy of making 30- and 60-day follow-up telephone calls to graduates. Although a survey instrument is not used, information about employment status and enrollment in or plans for higher education, and so forth is obtained informally.

Surveys can be designed to identify changes in attitude or behavior by asking the same series of questions upon entry to a program and at a later date, or at the termination of participation in the program. Such surveys are referred to as “pre” and “post” surveys.

- ▶ The national CIS organization recently developed a series of surveys for use in an evaluation of the CIS-JROTC partnership academies. One of the survey instruments asks students to rate themselves on a scale of one (poor) to four (great) on a variety of behaviors, relationships, and attributes (see Exhibit 6-4 for selected questions from this survey). The survey is intended to be administered at the beginning and end of the school year.
- ▶ The North Carolina CIS program recently introduced a data collection and reporting system centered around a student survey developed by faculty of the School of Social Work at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The Student Success Profile (SSP) includes two groups of questions targeted to middle and high school students. One group focuses on the social environment, such as neighborhood, schools, friends, and family; the other addresses student self-perception in the areas of social support, self-confidence, school behavior, and general well-being.
- ▶ The SafeFutures program in Imperial County, California, plans to survey students in county high schools annually as part of its program evaluation efforts. The survey will include questions related to community risk and resiliency factors. Survey data will be assessed to determine whether students' perceptions in the target area improve over time, compared to data from students in the rest of the county.

### EXHIBIT 6-4

#### Selected Survey Questions used in Communities in Schools evaluation of CIS-JROTC academies

	Your Score Now			
	1	2	3	4
	Poor	O.K.	Good	Great
a. Going to class				
b. Being prepared for class				
c. Getting good grades				
d. Getting along with teachers				
e. Getting along with parents				
f. Getting along with peers				
g. Having self-control				
h. Staying out of trouble				
i. Learning how to solve conflicts				
j. Avoiding drug use				
k. Avoiding alcohol use				

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- ▶ In St. Louis, Missouri, the local SafeFutures evaluators plan to administer an annual adolescent socialization survey to students in target-area middle schools. The survey includes a variety of questions related to self-perception and self-esteem, family and peer relationships, involvement in school activities, receipt of services from schools, participation in community programs, perceptions of neighborhood safety, delinquent behavior, and involvement with the juvenile justice system. Consistent with SafeFutures' focus on gang prevention and intervention, the survey also includes a series of questions related to gang involvement.

Surveys are also the primary way to obtain information about participant satisfaction with services. Participants can be asked about overall satisfaction with a program and about specific characteristics, such as convenience of location or hours of service, or helpfulness of staff. Such surveys should also ask for reasons for any poor service ratings and recommendations for improving services. Programs may also want to survey the general public to obtain information about awareness of the program, why non-users are not participating, and community perceptions regarding the program.

- ▶ Students in the Jacksonville, Florida, CIS program are surveyed at the end of each school year using a brief instrument that includes questions about customer satisfaction and perceived impacts of the program (see Exhibit 6-5). This survey also asks students to identify their most and least favorite CIS activities and the program features they felt helped them the most (checklists of program features and activities are provided for this purpose).

**EXHIBIT 6-5**  
**Selected Questions from**  
**Duval County Public Schools**  
**Communities in Schools (CIS) Student Survey**

1. Do you feel you have benefited from participating in the CIS program?  
 Yes     No
2. Do you enjoy being in CIS?  
 Yes     No
3. Do you feel CIS has helped you make better grades overall at school?  
 Yes     No
4. Has being in CIS helped to improve your attendance in school?  
 Yes     No
5. Would you recommend CIS to your friends?  
 Yes     No

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Surveys also may be used to assess attitudes, knowledge, behavioral change, or other attributes associated with participation in a particular program component or activity, such as a course or workshop.

- ▶ Students in the Jacksonville, Florida, CIS program participated in a Violence Prevention Project offered by the national CIS organization during the 1994-95 school year. The 13-week course covered such topics as conflict resolution, anger control, and mediation techniques. A follow-up survey administered a month after participation included questions about whether students believed they could better control their anger as a result of the training; whether they could now find better ways than fighting to solve conflicts; and whether they could do a better job of helping their friends avoid fights.

Parents or teachers may be surveyed to obtain information about behavioral changes they observe, such as relationships with family members, study habits at home, changes in completion of homework assignments, or behavior in class.

- ▶ The Wichita/Sedgwick County, Kansas, CIS program surveys teachers at the end of each school year for their assessment of changes observed in CIS students (see Exhibit 6-6). The program summarizes and reports the percentage of responses in various change categories (improved, no change, worsened) for various characteristics (such as reading skills, math skills, problems in the classroom, and health and human services) for each school served.

Although surveys can provide a wealth of information, there are complexities involved in developing them. For example, surveys must avoid questions that are unclear or that lead to biased or ambiguous responses. Surveys designed

## EXHIBIT 6-6

### Communities in Schools of Wichita/Sedgwick County, Kansas

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Communities in Schools has provided services to the above-named student this year. In which of the areas have you noticed ANY CHANGES since the beginning of the school year or since his/her referral (whichever is more recent)? If an area was not checked as an area of concern previously, but there has been an obvious positive or negative change, please check it on this form. Please fill out the form as follows:

+	=	improved
o	=	not changed
-	=	worsened
NA or a blank	=	problem has not or does not exist

## 1) Academic Achievement

Written Communication Skills  
 Reading Skills  
 Math Skills  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

## 2) Problems in the Classroom or with Peers:

Hyperactiveness  
 Acts of Aggression and Anti-Social Behavior  
 Attention Span  
 Social Skills  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

## 3) Health and Human Services Needs:

Acts Withdrawn  
 Acts Depressed  
 Student's Personal Hygiene  
 Self-Esteem  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

## 4) Possible Strengths/Weaknesses:

Creativeness (What Area?) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cooperative  
 Completes Assigned Tasks  
 Listening Skills  
 Communication Skills  
 Coordination  
 Interactions with Authority Figures/Adults  
 Uses Leadership Qualities in a Positive Manner  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

**YOUR INPUT IS VALUABLE TO US. THANK YOU.**  
**Please return by XXX**

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for children must use age-appropriate language and concepts. Surveys should be translated into the various languages spoken by intended respondents, and cultural considerations should be taken into account in selecting wording. Decisions also should be made about survey administration, including whether the survey will be administered in written form or by interviews and whether it will be administered by mail, over the telephone, in person (at home, or in a public place, such as the school or the program's facility), or by a combination of methods.

Given these complexities, it is generally advisable to obtain the assistance of professionals (perhaps on a pro bono basis) to develop and administer surveys that involve more than a few simple questions, unless the program has, or can access, individuals experienced in designing surveys. School districts or human services agencies may have research and evaluation departments whose staff can provide such assistance, as may corporations represented on the program's board of directors. It may also be possible to adopt surveys used by other, similar organizations, or to use their questions as a starting point to develop a survey for your own program. In addition, existing validated instruments related to various conditions and attitudes, such as self-esteem, parenting skills, and family functioning, may be useful for some programs.

- ▶ The Jacksonville, Florida, CIS program obtained the assistance of the school district's research and evaluation office in developing a survey for CIS students (shown in Exhibit 6-5). The research and evaluation office also plays a major role in administration of the survey each year. It sends the surveys to CIS teachers, who administer it to CIS students in their classes. Completed surveys are returned to the research and evaluation office, which compiles the data and provides it to CIS.

### **Establish data collection procedures.**

Since data are likely to be collected by different people in different locations and types of agencies (program staff, schools, service agencies), it is important to use common data collection practices. It is helpful to develop a list or guidebook of data collection tips that includes definitions and instructions to ensure that data are collected according to procedures and that the procedures are uniformly applied. If large numbers of individuals are involved in data collection, structured training should be provided, particularly if there are complex issues involved in the data to be collected.

- ▶ The national CIS organization developed an extensive handbook to accompany its revised reporting system for local programs. The handbook includes definitions of terms, instructions on how to calculate various types of data (estimates, averages, etc.), time periods to be used for reporting certain types of data, and so forth. It provides explicit instructions for filling out the various forms, suggestions for accessing school data, and tips on how data can be used.

Before data collection begins, it is appropriate to pilot-test data collection procedures and instruments to identify potential problems. Have data collectors complete any forms used, and have surveys completed by a group similar to the intended respondents, such as students who do not participate in the pro-



gram but are in the same grade level as those who will complete the survey. Ask pretest participants for feedback about the wording of questions, adequacy of response categories, clarity of instructions, and format. Review completed forms and instruments to determine whether respondents are following instructions, enough space has been provided, and all questions are being answered.

It is also advisable to develop quality control procedures, such as spot-checking the various types of data, data collection practices, and data entry. Data should be proofread, and data that are inconsistent with similar or related data or those from prior time periods should be checked. It is also a good idea to conduct an in-depth review after the first use of a new data collection system, in order to identify any modifications that may be needed.

When collecting data from other agencies' records, try to minimize the extent of intrusion caused by data collection. As pointed out in the handbook for CIS' local reporting system, programs should avoid having several people request the same kind of information at different times, even if it is for different students. It is better to have a coordinated approach to collecting data, and to request all data needed at one time. The ideal data collection approach would be for the school, school district, or other agency to flag students enrolled in the program in their database, and provide a report on them to the program (or download the data for the program's database). In contrast, the most time-consuming method of collecting data from other agencies is copying it manually. In cases where schools will not provide direct access to their data, an alternative approach is to have students bring their report cards to designated staff members, who can copy information relevant for the outcome indicators used into the student's file or the program's database.

Avoid collecting data from other agencies at times that are particularly busy for their staff. Check with agencies to identify times of the year or month that are predictably busy because of report production, budget preparation, and so forth, and schedule your data collection to avoid such times, if at all possible.

Procedures to protect confidentiality and rights of participants should be part of any data collection effort. As noted previously, obtaining signed consent forms from parents/caregivers allowing the program to collect and use data about their child is common practice. Similarly, programs often require that those collecting, analyzing, or otherwise having contact with data sign pledges of confidentiality, agreeing that they will keep such information confidential. Training for data collectors should underscore the sensitivity of the data and describe practices to protect confidentiality. Procedures to protect data, such as keeping records or surveys in locked files and using identification numbers rather than names, should also be developed.

Plans to maintain information over time should be developed. Sometimes programs, particularly small, non-profit agencies, fail to keep records on previous students. In some cases, this occurs when program directors leave their positions and take records with them or discard them. Records also may be lost when program offices change location, or they may be discarded to make room for current data. Some incoming program directors have discovered that there are insufficient records to identify former program participants and track their current status in school or conduct a follow-up survey.

## REPORTING AND USING OUTCOME DATA

### Present data in ways that facilitate its use.

Data can be transformed into useful information through use of (1) breakouts of outcome data for each indicator (or for key indicators), (2) comparisons of program data to other (“benchmark”) data, (3) explanatory information related to findings, and (4) clear, understandable formats.

Data breakouts (disaggregation) by key characteristics help make data more useful to program managers, since they help pinpoint where the program is doing well or poorly. Relevant breakouts also make data more meaningful. Common breakout categories include:

1. geographic location, such as cities, neighborhoods, or zip codes;
2. organizational unit/project, such as different schools or facilities in which the project is located;
3. client characteristics, such as age, school grade, gender, income, race/ethnicity, length of program participation, language, or other special status; and
4. case level of difficulty.

Level-of-difficulty breakouts address the fact that programs have cases that vary considerably in difficulty. A program (or component) with a more difficult workload can be expected to have a harder time achieving desired outcomes. For example, it is easier for a program to obtain the outcome of “promotion to the next grade level” for students whose grades are at or above average than for those whose grades are well below average. Other level-of-difficulty categories that may be relevant for some program outcomes include substance abuse history and juvenile justice system involvement. Reporting breakouts by difficulty effectively eliminates the temptation for service delivery staff to “cream” or “skim,” attracting or admitting only the easier-to-help clients, while discouraging those who are more difficult to help. The best way to identify categories of difficulty is through discussions with staff who are knowledgeable about the program and the variations in client workload characteristics. In identifying level-of-difficulty breakouts, care should be taken to define a relatively small number of categories in terms of specific characteristics for which information will be available.

- ▶ The Jacksonville, Florida, CIS program uses an approach similar to level-of-difficulty breakouts in reporting its data. It separately reports the number of students referred to the program for academic and attendance reasons, and reports both the number and percent of each group who improved academically and in attendance. These data are broken out by school, as are Jacksonville’s aggregate data on the number and percent of students promoted, and number of dropouts.

Comparison of program outcome data with other outcome data, whether internal to the program or from external sources—often referred to as benchmarking—helps programs identify where they are or are not succeeding. This information can be used to redirect efforts and resources to improve performance where needed. Selected comparative data might be publicly reported to provide stakeholders or the community with a better understanding of the program’s accomplishments, or demonstrate where improvements are likely to be

sought. Comparing current to previous performance is one of the most common forms of benchmarking. In cases where programs establish performance targets (such as “90 percent of students will be promoted to the next grade level”), comparison of outcomes against targets is appropriate. Comparing outcomes for clients against those for similar non-clients is also a common way to present outcome data. For example, promotion rates for program participants in a given school can be compared to the overall rate in that school.

- ▶ For its 1995-96 evaluation report, the Jacksonville, Florida, CIS program constructed a comparison group similar to CIS students to compare such data as promotion and dropout rates. The comparison group consisted of a random sample of students enrolled in schools that had a CIS program, and who were considered eligible for participation in a dropout prevention program because they had a grade point average of less than 2.0, but who were not participating in such programs.

Some programs use both breakouts and comparisons in reporting their data.

- ▶ The High Point, North Carolina, CIS program regularly includes student outcome data in its annual report (see Exhibit 6-7). They use breakouts, presenting data for each of the three schools in which the program is located, and benchmarks, comparing CIS student outcome data (such as attendance rates) to the overall school rate.

Presentation of data should not be neglected. Data should be clear and understandable; it is also helpful to make reports user-friendly and attention-grabbing through use of visually attractive, easy-to-understand tables, charts, and diagrams. With the increase in user-friendly computer software, program staff no longer need to be “experts” to develop bar charts, pie charts, and other graphic devices to display data. Tables also can be made more accessible by attractive formatting. Mapping, although more complex, is a dramatic tool to illustrate geographic distribution of a problem, resource, or outcome, but is not applicable to all situations.

- ▶ The Jacksonville, Florida, CIS program has contracted with a local university to analyze and report its annual data, to help ensure that data are presented clearly and objectively. Exhibit 6-8 illustrates the bar-chart format used in these reports to present data comparing outcomes of CIS participants to comparison-group students. Bar charts also are used to compare outcomes at different school levels, and to show changes in outcomes, such as promotion rates, over time.

Explanatory information should be provided in conjunction with outcome data. Outcomes that are measured and reported attract attention; therefore, program managers should provide some explanation of program context, particularly when outcomes are not as good as desired, or when there is a dramatic change in either a positive or negative direction.

- ▶ In its year-end report to a major funding agency, the Jacksonville, Florida, CIS program includes a variety of explanatory information. Its 1996-97 report, for example, notes that the 22-percent dropout rate for CIS students in a specific type of academic program must be consid-

**EXHIBIT 6-7**  
**Example of Presentation of Breakouts and Comparative Data**  
**Communities in Schools of High Point, North Carolina**

1995–1996 Student Outcomes  
 (257 Students Served)

<b>Central High School</b>		<b>Oak Hill Elementary School</b>	
Total Served	159	Total Served	51
Students Remaining in School or Graduated	92%	Promoted at Year-End	100%
Promoted at Year-End	84%	ANNUAL ATTENDANCE RATE	
ANNUAL ATTENDANCE RATE		CIS Extended Day Students	98%
CIS Students Only	93%	Entire School	N/A
Entire School	93%	No. of Volunteer Partners	30
No. of Volunteer Partners	91	TOTALS	
<b>Ferndale Middle School</b>		Students Remaining in School*	95%
Total Served	47	Students Promoted	93%
Students Remaining in School Promoted at Year-End	98%	Annual Attendance Rate	94%
	96%	Volunteer Partners	143
ANNUAL ATTENDANCE RATE			
CIS Students Only	92%		
Entire School	92%		
No. of Volunteer Partners	22		

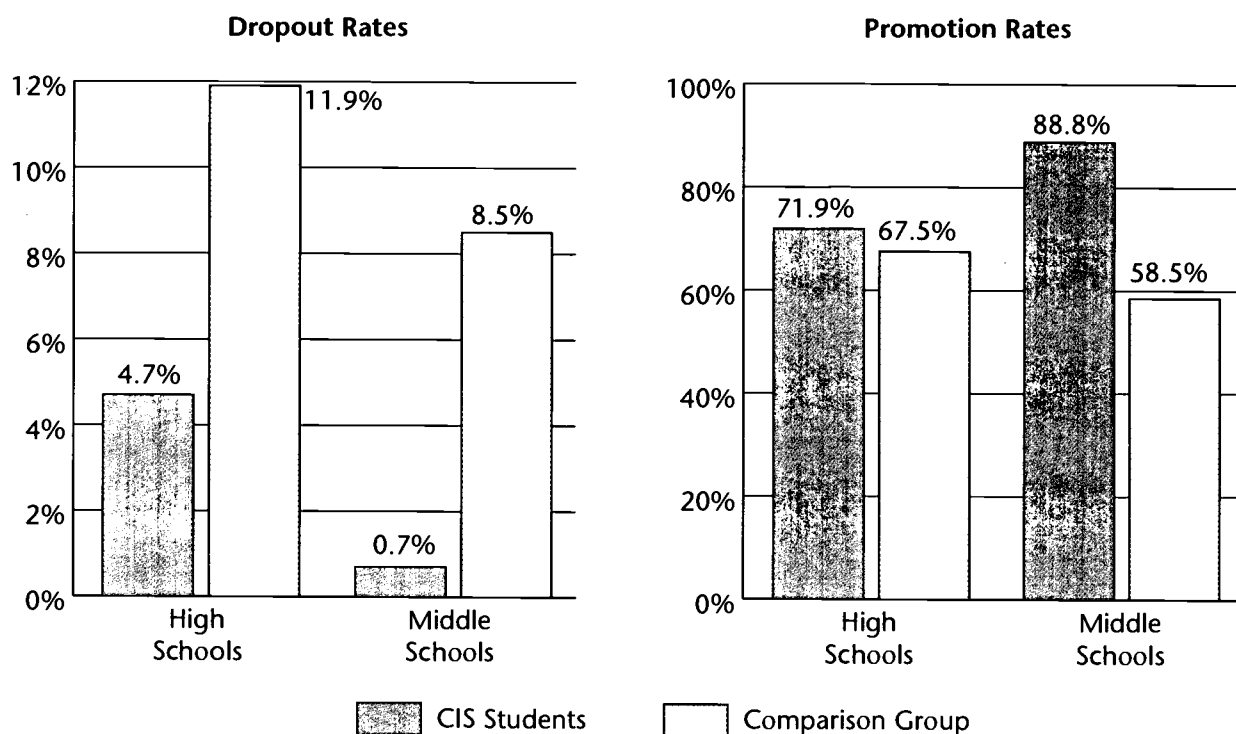
\*This represents only the middle and high school sites.

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ered in the context of the dropout rate for the overall population of those programs, which has been 40 percent to 60 percent on average per year.

Internal and external factors that affect outcomes should be included in explanatory information. For example, the program may have more clients at a higher level of difficulty (an external factor) than in the past, or changes in policies or practices of other institutions may have occurred. If a school district adopts more stringent policies for promotion, “number of students promoted” may be lower than in a previous reporting period. Similarly, imposition of a “get tough” policy on the part of the police may result in higher arrest rates. Internal factors that may affect outcomes include the amount of resources, including funds, staff, and volunteers, available to provide services, and high staff turnover.

### EXHIBIT 6-8 Presentation of Comparative Data 1995-1996 Dropout and Promotion Rates Communities in Schools of Jacksonville, Florida



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Changes in service delivery practices, such as adoption of a different curriculum for a substance abuse prevention program, or a switch from individual to group tutoring, are other internal factors that may influence outcomes.

#### Use data to strengthen your program.

Outcome data can be used for internal and external purposes. Internally, outcome findings can provide guidance to staff, particularly in terms of areas that need improvement, or lessons that can be learned from services or units that appear to be working particularly well. Breakouts of data by program units that provide essentially the same service to the same type of customer enable managers to compare outcomes of each unit against the one with the best performance, and may indicate where guidance, resources, training, or a different service delivery approach are needed. Such information also may motivate other units to better performance. Comparisons of outcomes for different client

groups help managers identify where changes may be needed to achieve better performance. For example, a program might discover that outcomes are better for boys than for girls, leading to changes in services for girls.

A good way to use outcome information is to hold “how are we doing” meetings after each outcome report, during which managers and staff discuss where the program has done well and not so well, and why; and what can be done to improve results in the future. Since outcome data do not tell you what caused the result, these meetings should focus on exploring why the outcomes were as reported. In some cases, programs may undertake more detailed studies, such as program evaluations, to obtain a better understanding of the “whys.”

Outcome data can be used to support planning, prepare budgets and justify resource allocation, and develop or modify services or interventions.

- ▶ Data from the Student Success Profile (SSP) survey developed for the North Carolina CIS program are intended to be used in two ways. Individual responses are used to create an individual student profile used for planning service delivery and as a baseline for tracking progress over time (through administration of the same survey at a later date). Student responses are also aggregated at the school site or community level to create a group profile, which compares CIS students to a nationally representative sample of students at the same school level. Group profiles can be used to identify school- or community-level needs, select interventions, guide program efforts, and document changes associated with CIS interventions (after re-administration of the survey). It is expected that group profiles will be used to initiate dialogues at the community level about changes needed to address issues identified in the survey, such as high percentages of students reporting that they feel unsafe at school or in their neighborhoods.

External uses for outcome data include providing information to the general public, stakeholders, funders, potential funders, and potential participants or referral sources. One mechanism for reporting outcome data is a program’s annual report, which is often used for several of these purposes. Selected outcome data also might be included in program brochures or recruiting material. Press releases can be used to announce accomplishments to the general public. Data collected on a more frequent basis may be informally reported at meetings of the program’s board of directors, and/or conveyed to key stakeholders, such as school district leadership.

Outcome data may also support requests for continued support from funders, by demonstrating a program’s achievements, particularly when comparative data is available to illustrate differences between program participants and non-participants. Such data also may be used to argue for resources to expand programs to serve additional youth.

Data other than outcome indicators also may be used in seeking external support.

- ▶ In its handbook for local program reporting, the CIS national organization points out that identifying resources (funds, reassigned staff, or volunteers) obtained from one sector can be a powerful tool for leveraging resources from another sector. Resources brokered by CIS can also be an

indicator of the contribution the program makes to schools, students, and families involved, and so can be used when seeking continued or additional support for the program.

Ultimately, the various uses of outcome information should benefit youth by enabling programs to modify services in order to better address their needs and to generate resources to continue providing services.

# Resources



## ORGANIZATIONS AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Child & Family Policy Center and  
National Center for Service  
Integration  
218 Sixth Avenue  
Fleming Building, Suite 1021  
Des Moines, IA 50309  
(515) 280-9027  
[HN2228@handsnet.org](mailto:HN2228@handsnet.org)

Communities in Schools, Inc.  
1199 North Fairfax, Suite 300  
Alexandria, VA 22314-1436  
(703) 519-8999  
<http://www.cisnet.org>

The Foundation Center  
79 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10003  
(212) 620-4230

Intercultural Development Research  
Association  
5835 Callaghan Road, Suite 350  
San Antonio, TX 78228  
(210) 684-8180  
<http://www.idra.org>

Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse  
P.O. Box 6000  
Rockville, MD 20849-6000  
(800) 638-8736  
<http://www.ncjrs.org/ojjhome.htm>

National Dropout Prevention  
Center/Network!  
205 Martin Street  
Clemson University  
Clemson, SC 29634-0726  
(864) 656-2599  
<http://www.dropoutprevention.org>

National School Safety Center  
4165 Thousand Oaks Boulevard,  
Suite 290  
Westlake Village, CA 91362  
(805) 373-9977  
<http://www.nsscl.org>

One to One/The National Mentoring  
Partnership  
2801 M Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20007  
(202) 338-3844  
<http://www.mentoring.org>

U.S. Department of Education  
Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program  
600 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Portals Building, Room 604  
Washington, D.C. 20202-6123  
(202) 260-3954  
<http://www.ed.gov/DrugFree>

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