Finding Resources to Support Workforce Development Services for Youth

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Introduction

Agrowing focus on youth development nationally is drawing attention to the need for programs that contribute to positive youth outcomes and help youth successfully make the transition to adulthood. Youth workforce development programs are a critical part of the youth services mix, helping to prepare youth for postsecondary education and a job market that increasingly requires and rewards skills and education. These programs are also valuable for school-age youth and those at risk of dropping out. Workforce development programs can help youth explore career options, build connections to the world of work, and gain new technical and vocational skills during school hours or during out-of-school time – creating opportunities to engage youth in constructive activities that promote learning and skill development.

Workforce development services are especially important for vulnerable and disconnected youth. Nearly 5 million youth between the ages of 16 and 24— around 15 percent of this age group—are unemployed and out of school. For some this disconnectedness is a transitional state, but for many it portends serious barriers to success in education and the workplace. Moreover, during the next decade, the youth population between the ages of 18 and 24 is expected to grow by 22 percent.[1] Most of this growth will occur among minority youth and young immigrants, groups more likely than the general youth population to struggle with education and employment.[2]

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[1] Public/Private Ventures, *Serving High-Risk Youth: Lessons from Research and Programming* (Philadelphia, Pa., September 2002), 2, at http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/149_publication.pdf.
[2] T. J. Smith, *Taking Stock: A Review of U.S. Youth Employment Policy and Prospects* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Public/Private Ventures, revised November 2002), 1, at http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/150_publication.pdf.

Although these trends fuel the need for youth workforce development services, funding for youth employment and training has been scaled back during the past few decades. In addition, funding for workforce development services is spread among multiple programs and agencies. This results in a fragmented funding environment. To address this issue, the youth provisions of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) aimed to move this patchwork system toward a more comprehensive approach for serving youth. The legislation establishes a framework for providing youth workforce development services at the local level. Yet funding for the WIA Youth Program is quite limited, and while WIA aims to improve the coordination of resources across youth-serving programs, it doesn't mandate resource sharing.

To overcome these financing challenges and sustain successful youth programs, leaders must identify and access funding from an array of public and private sources. This brief discusses strategies for finding resources to support youth workforce development services and highlights examples of innovative approaches. It seeks to provide program and community leaders, as well as policymakers, with ideas for supporting critical youth workforce development services.

Resource Challenges for Youth Program Providers

Youth program providers face many challenges in trying to support workforce development services.

■ *Limited Federal-State-Local Coordination.* Multiple agencies at all levels of government are involved in funding workforce development services for youth, including labor, education, child welfare, juvenile justice, and human services agencies. The level of coordination among these agencies helps shape the funding environment within which youth program providers operate. Improved coordination can help align funding sources in ways that support providers. In areas where there is a lack of coordination, providers can find it difficult to access resources across different systems.

■ *Insufficient Funding.* Public funding for programs that include workforce development services for youth is often provided through categorical and fragmented funding streams, even though WIA aims to promote a more coordinated system for serving youth. At the federal level, resources for youth employment and training have been scaled back during the past few decades.[3] Federal School-to-Work grants have ended. Congress has not appropriated funds to continue the Youth Opportunity grants program.[4] Even at their highest levels, WIA funding has never been sufficient to meet the needs of all eligible youth. With the elimination of separate funding for summer employment, this situation is even more acute. Additionally, in the philanthropic sector, several major foundations have shifted the focus of their investments to young children, further exacerbating this situation.[5]

■ *Need to Build Effective Partnerships.* Supporting and sustaining workforce development services for youth may depend on whether the agencies that serve youth can build effective partnerships. However, an inadequate policy framework and a categorical and fragmented funding environment for youth services can make it difficult to build partnerships. Furthermore, local WIA dollars are often insufficient to bring potential partners to the table.

■ *Need to Promote Effective Practices.* The practice of youth workforce development has been negatively affected by evaluations showing that some youth programs have not produced positive sustained impacts for large numbers of vulnerable youth.[6] These research findings have played a role in the decline in investments for youth programs.[7] Current efforts, such as the Promising and Effective Practices Network (PEPNet) and Youth Development Practitioner Apprenticeship programs, are helping to disseminate effective practices and upgrade the skills and training of frontline youth workers.[8] These are important steps for improving the quality of programs and generating support for youth workforce development services.

[3] A. M. Sum, *Leaving Young Workers Behind* (Washington, D.C.: National League of Cities, Institute for Youth, Education, & Families, 2003), 13, at http://www.nlc.org/content/Files/IYEF-DY-Leaving%20Work.pdf.

[4] For information on accomplishments and lessons learned from the Youth Opportunity grants initiative, see L. Harris, *Learning from the Youth Opportunity Experience: Building Delivery Capacity in Distressed Communities* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Law and Social Policy, January 2006), at http://www.clasp.org/publications/youthopportunity_report.pdf.

[5] Public/Private Ventures, 2.

[6] It is important to note that evaluation research has also identified youth employment programs such as Job Corps and STRIVE that do show evidence of positive, sustained outcomes for youth. See G. L. Partee, *Preparing Youth for Employment: Principles and Characteristics of Five Leading United States Youth Development Programs* (Washington, D.C.: American Youth Policy Forum, 2003), at http://www.aypf.org/publications/PreparingYouthforEmployment.pdf.

[7] Public/Private Ventures, 7.

[8] For more information on PEPNet, a project of the National Youth Employment Coalition, visit http://nyec.modern signal.net/page.cfm?pageID=110.

Strategies

This brief highlights four strategies that program leaders and policymakers can use to find resources to support workforce development services for youth. These include:

1. **Maximizing federal resources;**
2. **Building public-private partnerships;**
3. **Accessing education dollars; and**
4. **Coordinating resources and services.**

These strategies encourage program leaders to look beyond WIA funds to access and coordinate different funding sources—from federal, state, and local governments as well as from private groups—to support workforce development services for youth. Although each strategy is described separately, the strategies can be combined to improve the funding environment for youth workforce development services. Efforts to coordinate resources, for example, can help program leaders access diverse federal funding sources. Also covered are important considerations for program leaders to think about as they seek to find resources for youth workforce development services.

Workforce Investment Act Youth and Adult Programs

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 sought to improve coordination among federally funded workforce development programs and create a more market-driven workforce system. WIA formula grants to states, the largest single source of federal funds for workforce development,[9] support services for youth, adults, and dislocated workers.[10] While WIA's legislative authorization expired in 2003 and reauthorization is still pending, Congress continues to appropriate funds for WIA programs.

WIA Youth Program
At the heart of youth employment support is the WIA Youth Program. WIA consolidated year-round and summer youth programs into a single formula-funded program that supports services primarily for low-income youth who are between the ages of 14 and 21 and who face barriers to employment. WIA requires 10 program elements to be made available to eligible youth: academic enhancement, alternative secondary school services, summer employment opportunities, work experience, occupational skills training, leadership development, supportive services, adult mentoring, guidance and counseling, and follow-up services. To foster a more comprehensive youth development system, WIA

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9   G. Rubinstein and A. Mayo, *Training Policy in Brief: An Overview of Federal Workforce Development Policies* (Washington, D.C.: The Workforce Alliance, 2006), 9, visit **http://www.workforcealliance.org/**.
10 For more information on WIA programs, visit the U.S. Department of Labor's website at **http://www.doleta.gov/usworkforce/wia/**.

requires local workforce investment boards (WIBs) to establish subgroups, called local youth councils, to coordinate and oversee WIA-funded youth activities. Youth council members include WIB members such as educators and employers with an interest or expertise in youth policy, representatives of youth service and human services agencies, and others. Young people may sit on youth councils.

The U.S. Department of Labor allocates WIA youth funds to state agencies, which are required to pass through 85 percent of these funds to local areas. In fiscal 2006, Congress appropriated $94 million for WIA youth grants. Local workforce investment boards and their youth councils oversee the distribution of WIA youth funds to service providers, which can be community-based organizations, local public agencies, and other entities.[11] These funds are made available to local youth program providers through a competitive contracting process.

WIA Adult Program

The WIA Adult Program provides funds to support various employment and training services. As with WIA youth funds, states pass through 85 percent of adult funds to local areas. Congress appropriated $86 million in fiscal 2006 for WIA adult formula grants to states. Activities funded under WIA include job search and placement, assessments and career planning, basic and occupational training, and supportive services for adults ages 18 and older. Youth ages 18 to 21 may be eligible for dual enrollment in the WIA Adult and Youth Programs.

WIA requires local areas to establish local one-stop career centers through which individuals access services provided by federally funded employment, training, and education programs that are mandatory one-stop system partners. This makes a broader array of federally funded programs available to one-stop customers. Nonprofit and community-based organizations provide workforce services under WIA in several ways, such as by becoming one-stop system partners, delivering workforce development services at one-stop centers, becoming certified as eligible training providers, and serving special populations that face multiple barriers to employment.

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[11] Contact information for state and local workforce investment boards is available from the National Association of Workforce Boards at http://www.nawb.org/asp/wibdir.asp.

1. Maximizing Federal Resources

Federal programs are important sources of funding for workforce development services for youth. WIA funds are a key resource for youth workforce development, but these funds cannot meet the needs of all youth nor are they intended to do so. Funds for youth work-force development can be accessed through a number of other federal programs, depending on the types of services offered and the kinds of youth populations served. Some federal funding programs are youth-focused, while others support services for youth and adults. Some programs focus specifically on workforce development, while others support youth services more broadly. Program and initiative leaders will want to evaluate the potential of different federal programs to fund their activities.

Federal funds can help support three types of workforce development services for which youth program providers are likely to seek funding:

- Educational activities;
- Job skills training; and
- Work experience.

Along with the federal funding sources described in this brief, there are other federal programs that could support youth workforce development services. Further information on federal funding is available from The Finance Project's *Guide to Federal Sources for Workforce Development Initiatives*, which includes 47 programs that could support services for youth, and its *Guide to Federal Funding Sources for the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative and Other Youth Initiatives*, which includes 63 programs that could support services such as employment, education, and training services for vulnerable youth as well as youth more broadly.[12]

Educational Activities

Educational attainment is a critical step toward productive adulthood. Activities that impart basic and vocational skills, help youth complete high school, and help youth pursue postsec-ondary education are key components of youth workforce development services.

Federal funding is important for supporting basic, vocational, and postsecondary education programs as well as activities that help youth complete high school or earn a General Educational Development (GED) certificate. Federal grants to states for adult basic

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[12] See http://www.financeproject.org/Publications/workforcefunding.pdf and http://www.financeproject.org/Publications/jcyoifg.pdf, respectively.

education can provide out-of-school youth older than 16 with opportunities to earn a GED, improve English literacy, and gain workplace literacy skills. States distribute funds for adult education through competitive grants and contracts to local providers, including community colleges, community-based organizations, and local education agencies.[13] Federal programs, such as the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) programs, also make funds available to states that local providers can access for adult basic education. Approximately 1 million youth participate in adult education programs.[14] Federal funds for vocational and technical education under the Perkins Act are provided through grants to states; states then distribute the funds to local secondary and postsecondary institutions. The Chafee Education and Training Vouchers Program for youth aging out of foster care is another federal program that provides funds to states to support education and training activities for eligible youth through individual vouchers.

Federal funds can also support activities, such as tutoring, study skills training, and dropout prevention services, to help youth stay in school. Grants provided to states under TANF, for example, can be used for dropout prevention services. Federal grants to states under the Education for Homeless Children and Youth program can support activities such as tutoring and summer enrichment programs. State education agencies award these funds to local education agencies on a competitive basis.

Postsecondary education is becoming increasingly vital to economic self-sufficiency and success in the labor market. Federal funds are a significant resource for direct financial aid to students as well as for activities that prepare youth for postsecondary education and help them succeed in academic settings. Higher Education Act programs provide the lion's share of federal financial assistance, including the Pell Grant program, the largest source of grant aid for postsecondary education for low-income students. Congress appropriated $13 billion for the Pell Grant program for fiscal 2006. More than 5 million students receive Pell grants, and most families receiving this aid earn less than $35,000 annually.

Many vulnerable youth lack information on financial aid, so youth program operators need to help their participants learn about financial aid opportunities. The YouthBuild Rockford program in Rockford, Illinois, for example, has a partnership with Rock Valley College that

[13] Rubinstein and Mayo, 48.
[14] J. Levin-Epstein and M. Greenberg, eds., *Leave No Youth Behind: Opportunities for Congress to Reach Disconnected Youth* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Law and Social Policy, July 2003), 18, at http://www.clasp.org/publications/Disconnected_Youth.pdf.

brings financial aid experts to the program to offer technical assistance to youth participants who are applying for student loans and grants.[15]

Other federal programs, such as the U.S. Department of Education's TRIO Talent Search, Student Support Services, and Educational Opportunity Centers programs, provide funds to support activities that help youth enroll in postsecondary education and successfully complete programs. Eligible activities include tutoring, career exploration, and academic counseling. Local youth program providers may be eligible to apply directly for funds under the Talent Search and Educational Opportunity Centers programs. Funds under the Student Support Services program are awarded to institutions of higher education.

Job Skills Training

Job skills training can impart valuable skills to help youth prepare for employment or advancement in the labor market. It is particularly important for older youth or those youth no longer in school who need to enter the workforce.

Several federal programs can support job skills training. Some focus specifically on youth, such as the WIA Youth program, the Job Corps program, and the Youthbuild program. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Youthbuild program, for example, makes grants available on a competitive basis to public and nonprofit organizations, including local housing agencies and community-based organizations, to provide vulnerable youth between the ages of 16 and 24 with educational services, training in housing construction, and other services and supports.[16] Other federal programs are not youth-specific but serve older youth along with other adults. Program and initiative leaders should think broadly about federal programs that could support job skills training, recognizing that programs targeted to adults could poten- tially serve older youth, depending on their age and circumstances.[17] The U.S. Department of Labor's Community-Based Job Training Grants, for example, make funds available to community colleges to support training for new and experienced workers in high-growth, high-demand industries. To be eligible for funds, community colleges need to engage workforce, education, and employer partners, which could include youth program providers. Cypress Community College in California partnered with the Long Beach Youth Opportunities Center, among other partners, to provide training in the health care industry.

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[15] M. Thakur and K. Henry, *Financing Alternative Education Pathways: Profiles and Policy* (Washington, D.C.: National Youth Employment Coalition, 2005), 36, visit **http://www.nyec.org/**.

[16] Organizations interested in starting Youthbuild programs can access information and guidance from YouthBuild USA, visit **http://www.youthbuild.org/**.

[17] For more information on federal programs that can support job skills training, see The Finance Project's *Guide to Federal Sources for Workforce Development Initiatives* at **http://www.financeproject.org/Publications/workforcefunding.pdf**.

To help youth access workforce development and job skills training programs, youth program leaders may want to take steps to make one-stop career centers more youth-friendly by, for example, having a youth specialist on site. One-stop operators can consider creating a space for youth in center facilities and allowing youth to customize this space as well as educating one-stop center staff on youth needs, issues, and cultural competency. In addition, youth ages 18 to 21 may be eligible for dual enrollment in WIA Adult and Youth Programs, enabling them to take advantage of individual training accounts available under the Adult Program while receiving guidance and supportive services available under the Youth Program.

Accessing WIA Youth and Adult Funds for Youth Services

Southern New Hampshire Services, Inc.'s Youth Empowerment Program is an employment and training program for youth ages 18 to 21 living in the Manchester area. The program helps students prepare for the GED as well as build occupational skills. It also works on building life skills as a way of empowering youth to become more self-sufficient. The program accesses youth and adult funds for skills training through participants' dual enrollment in the WIA Adult and Youth Programs. WIA Title I adult dollars fund individual training accounts to support occupational skills training as well as fund job placement support and other supportive services not covered by youth funds. WIA Title I youth dollars fund counseling, supportive services, and academic activities.

For more information, see http://snhshome.homestead.com/workforcedevelopment.html.

Job Corps Program

Job Corps is the nation's oldest and largest residential education and job training program for at-risk youth ages 16 to 24. Because of its intensive and comprehensive services, it is also one of the most expensive youth education and training programs. The program serves approximately 70,000 students each year at more than 120 Job Corps centers nationwide. The centers provide academic education, vocational training, residential living, and other services to students. Private companies and nonprofit organizations operate Job Corps centers under contractual agreements with the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). In addition to center operations, contract opportunities exist for outreach and admissions activities and for career transition services such as job placement. The U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Interior also operate Job Corps centers called civilian conservation centers under interagency agreements with DOL. In addition to federal contracting opportunities, Job Corps centers can directly subcontract for products and services such as job placement services. Youth program providers can explore federal contracting opportunities for Job Corps center operations or services, or seek to partner directly with Job Corps centers where subcontracting opportunities exist.

For more information, visit the U.S. Department of Labor's website at http://www.doleta.gov/jobcorps/jc_index.cfm.

Work Experience

Work experience is a key element of youth workforce development. It helps youth explore career options and develop job-related skills as well as provides them with valuable on-the-job experience. Work experience includes activities, such as apprenticeships, internships, summer employment, service- or work-based learning, and other activities, that can occur in the public, private, or nonprofit sectors.

Federal support for work experience activities comes, for example, from TANF and the WIA Youth Program, which provide funds that workforce development programs can use to support work experience, or from programs such as AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve America: School and Community-Based Programs, and the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe program that incorporate a work experience component.[18] The National Guard Youth ChalleNGe program, which operates in 25 states and the commonwealth of Puerto Rico, targets out-of-school youth ages 16 to 18. The program includes supervised work experience in community service and conservation projects along with academic classes, leadership development, life skills activities, and other core components. Learn and Serve programs provide funds to community-based organizations and elementary and secondary schools to develop and offer

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[18] For more information on AmeriCorps and Learn and Serve America, visit the Corporation for National and Community Service at http://www.nationalservice.gov/.

service-learning opportunities for school-age youth. Service learning integrates community service with instruction and can help youth develop vocational, communication, and team-work skills.

Learn and Serve America: School- and Community-Based Programs

The largest source of funding for service-learning, Learn and Serve America grants support a wide variety of education and nonprofit organizations that provide opportunities for youth to engage in community service and gain skills needed for the transition to work while they learn. These grants support over one million students in service-learning projects across the country. Learn and Serve America grants for school-based programs include non-competitive formula grants to State Education Agencies (SEAs) and competitive grants for which SEAs, nonprofit organizations, and other entities can compete. Under the formula grants, SEAs typically subgrant funds to schools and local education agencies that partner with nonprofit organizations to involve young people between the ages of 5 and 17 in a variety of service-learning projects. The competitive grants are awarded to organizations to provide training and technical assistance, evaluate results, and implement local programs. Similarly, Learn and Serve America grants for community-based programs are awarded through a competitive process to nonprofit organizations that operate in two or more states, such as 4-H and the YMCA of the USA, to provide technical assistance and program evaluation as well as to implement local service-learning programs in community and faith-based nonprofit organizations.

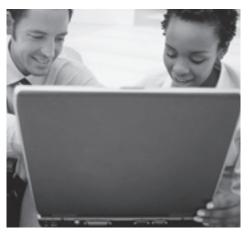For more information, visit http://www.learnandserve.org/about/programs/index.asp.

Considerations

- Building partnerships can afford valuable avenues for accessing federal funds, resources that otherwise might not be available to individual organizations. Some funding opportunities may even require collaboration. Building relationships with potential community partners, such as schools and colleges, one-stop career centers, and human services agencies, can help youth program providers access additional federal resources.

- State and local policies guide or determine how federal funds can be used for youth workforce development services. Program leaders need to keep abreast of policy and regulatory developments affecting federal programs of interest to them. They also need to build relationships with state and local decisionmakers.

- Although a variety of federal programs could support youth workforce development services, program leaders need to evaluate the fit between potential funding sources and a program's mission and services. In addition, they should weigh the costs and benefits of applying for and participating in federal programs. Some federal grants, for example, have an extensive application process or significant reporting requirements. These are important factors to consider in evaluating the feasibility of potential funding sources.

2. Building Public-Private Partnerships

Building partnerships with public and private entities can help expand the base of support for programs, provide leadership and technical resources, and leverage new funding opportunities. For providers of youth workforce development services, building partnerships with employers and with state and local agencies can provide access to private-sector and public-sector resources as well as open new opportunities to serve youth participants.

Partnerships with Employers

Employer resources can help support youth workforce development services, particularly skills training and work experience activities in which employers have a vested interest in order to

prepare and retain their future workforce. Employers can help support skills training programs, for example, through financial assistance as well as through technical assistance, leadership capacity, and other kinds of support. Employer partnerships can also help ensure that training is relevant to industry needs and tied to available job opportunities. Program leaders can engage employers in skills training programs in several ways, such as inviting employers to participate on advisory boards, involving them in curriculum development, and encouraging them to provide training and internship sites.

Engaging Employer Support for Skills Training

Taller Tech is a program of Taller San Jose, an organization in Santa Ana, California, that trains young people with no marketable job skills for employment in the construction industry. This 15-week, paid apprenticeship program incorporates safety awareness and training, industry-related math, construction theory, hands-on experience, adherence to attendance policies, mentoring, job coaching, and leadership development. Taller Tech is guided by an advisory board that includes Orange County's largest builders and developers. Board members advise the program on curriculum, supply in-kind goods and services, and provide ongoing opportunities for the employment of graduates.

For more information, see http://www.tallersanjose.org/programs-tech.html.

Program developers can build partnerships with employers to create work experience opportunities for youth participants through internships, summer employment, and other activities. Employers can even support paid work experience by covering part or all of participants' wages. Many of the communities that received Youth Opportunity grants were successful in getting private-sector internships for in-school and out-of-school youth.[19] In Kansas City, Missouri, for example, Southwestern Bell funded an "e-commerce" program that provided internships in its subsidiaries and in other companies. The power and light company, with a significant share of its workforce reaching retirement age, also funded internships in its organization.[20]

[19] Center for Law and Social Policy, "Connecting Disconnected Youth and Disconnected Systems: Innovative Community Approaches," *CLASP Audio Conference Series* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Law and Social Policy, May 6, 2005), at http://www.clasp.org/audio/ac_transcript_050605__2_.pdf.
[20] Ibid.

UPS School-to-Work Program

The United Parcel Service (UPS) School-to-Work Program provides high school students with educational activities and paid work experience. Participating UPS facilities develop relationships with colleges and nonprofit agencies in their area to create a program that benefits the company as well as the community. Students in the program work 15 to 20 hours per week in a "student shift" from 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. In many of the facilities, UPS partners with local community colleges to offer on-site classes for college credit to students while they are still in high school. Other programs offer college preparation classes. Nearly all facilities involved in the UPS School-to-Work Program incorporate mentoring into their activities. While providing students with education and work experience, the program also fulfills an important business need by providing UPS with a skilled and reliable pool of employees.

For more information, see http://www.community.ups.com/education/school.html.

At the same time, employers may be concerned about the perceived risks of hosting youth in work experience activities. Program leaders should consider taking steps to reduce the risks to employers. These steps could include, for example, providing some job readiness and basic skills training to youth participants and providing frontline support to both youth participants and employers to address problems at the worksite. Programs that are accountable to employers for the youth who are placed in private-sector work experience are more likely to maintain a successful partnership over time.

In addition to steps at the program level that can facilitate employer involvement in youth workforce development programs, policymakers can consider ways to create incentives for employer participation. For example, some states offer tax credits to employers who participate in school-to-work partnerships or apprenticeship programs, which can be a useful tool for encouraging employer involvement.

Offering Tax Credits to Encourage Employer Participation in Work Experience

The Youth Registered Apprenticeship Tax Credit is a state-based tax credit program that provides incentives to Michigan employers to sponsor federally approved registered apprenticeships. The state's School-to-Registered Apprenticeship (STRA) program serves students ages 16 to 19 who are enrolled in high school or a GED preparation program. Students are employed part time, and their structured on-the-job training is combined with classroom work. More than 800 careers qualify for the apprenticeship program, which is available through more than 70 certified sites throughout Michigan. Employers who participate in the program qualify for a tax credit of up to $2,000 annually per apprenticeship that applies to the employer's single business tax. The tax credit covers 50 percent of the wage-related costs of the youth apprentice, including salary, fringes, and other payroll expenses. The tax credit also covers up to 100 percent of the costs of classroom-related instruction paid by the employer. These costs could include college-level courses (e.g., fees, books, and tuition) taken by the student while still in high school.

For more information, see http://www.michigan.gov/mdcd/0,1607,7-122-1680_2788_2792---,00.html.

Partnerships with State and Local Agencies
Building partnerships with state and local agencies, in addition to providing avenues for accessing federal funds, can create opportunities to tap into state and local funds that can support youth workforce development services. For example, many states have customized job training programs financed through general fund appropriations, training funds tied to the Unemployment Insurance program, or other funding mechanisms for training programs.

Depending on the program, funds may be available for training new job entrants as well as incumbent workers. Youth program leaders may find it helpful to reach out to organizations such as economic development agencies and workforce investment boards to create opportunities for youth participation in state-funded job training initiatives.

Cities and counties can also invest resources in skills training and workforce development that could help support training and job placement for youth entering the workforce. Officials in Chicago, Illinois, for example, created a program called TIFWorks that invests tax increment finance dollars in job training and workforce development initiatives. The mayor's workforce development office administers TIFWorks.[21] Program leaders need to build relationships with workforce development stakeholders in city and county governments to gain access to such funding opportunities.

Also at the local level, city and county governments, parks and recreation departments, libraries, school districts, and other public-sector entities may provide financial support for work experience activities for youth or provide direct opportunities for work experience by offering internships, summer employment, and other activities. Several cities provide general funds to help support summer jobs programs. In addition, city governments can offer internships for youth and, in particular, libraries and parks and recreation departments can offer work experience opportunities. Many local libraries have created youth programs that offer services, including internships, summer jobs, and volunteer opportunities, for older youth.[22] Partnerships with these kinds of local entities can expand opportunities to serve youth as well as provide access to potential funding sources.

Considerations

- Youth program providers, particularly those with limited experience in engaging employers, may want to partner with local workforce intermediaries to build their capacity to reach out to employers and respond to business needs. Workforce intermediaries can include workforce investment boards, nonprofit organizations, and even employer associations such as chambers of commerce, some of which have taken on intermediary functions.

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[21] Tax increment financing is a property tax allocation mechanism. City officials designate TIF districts which are geographic locations where tax increment financing can be used. A tax increment is the difference between the amount of property tax revenue generated before a TIF district is created and the amount of property tax revenue generated after the TIF district is created. For more information on TIFWorks, visit **http://egov.cityofchicago.org/**.

[22] J. Quinn, "Where Need Meets Opportunity: Youth Development Programs for Early Teens," *The Future of Children*, vol. 9, no. 2 (fall 1999), 101, at **http://www.futureofchildren.org/usr_doc/vol9no2Art9done.pdf**.

- Program leaders should recognize that employers can bring more than dollars to the table. For example, employer support for youth workforce development services can come in the form of technical assistance, leadership capacity, and the donation of supplies. By engaging employers' expertise and leadership capacity in youth workforce development programs, providers may be better able to offer services that are relevant to business needs and to access opportunities in the labor market.

- Partnerships with businesses offer opportunities to leverage employer resources. To encourage business involvement, program leaders can structure partnerships to reduce the risks for employers and to help businesses meet their current and future workforce needs.

- Every community has public and private organizations to which program leaders can turn for support. In seeking to build partnerships with public or private entities, it is important to identify those that benefit from, or have a stake in, youth workforce development and to frame youth workforce development initiatives in ways that respond to the needs or goals of potential partners.[23] For example, a youth-focused workforce development initiative can be promoted as a strategy to build vocational skills as well as a deterrent to juvenile crime and teen pregnancy—important concerns to city officials.

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[23] See, for example, the Forum for Youth Investment's Ready by 21 Framework at **http://www.forumforyouth investment.org/.**

3. Accessing Education Dollars

State and local education dollars can provide a stable source of funding to youth programs that support workforce development, particularly those that provide alternative education pathways, those that blend academic and workforce development services, and those that integrate school-to-work activities.

Programs that provide school-to-work activities to youth may be able to access state or local education funds to help support these activities. Some states are trying to build or sustain school-to-work initiatives as federal school-to-work funding has ended. In Massachusetts, for example, Connecting Activities (CA) is an initiative of the state education department that aims to drive and sustain the statewide school-to-career system. CA provides paid worksite learning experiences that are connected to classroom teaching for high school students participating in school-to-career initiatives, with priority given to those who are academically at risk. State officials have allocated funds to CA since 1998. Funds flow through local workforce investment boards and pay for staff to recruit employers, prepare and place students in work-based learning, and structure those experiences. State funds leverage dollars that employers pay in student wages. In fiscal 2005, $4.1 million in state funds leveraged nearly $35 million in employer-paid wages.[24]

Partnerships with local schools or school districts can provide access to local education dollars to help support school-to-work activities, as is the case with The Workplace Learning Connection in Iowa. This initiative combines school funds with other local government funds and business funds to finance school-to-work activities for students.

Accessing Funds At the Local Level to Support School-to-Work Activities

The Workplace Learning Connection, a nonprofit organization, is located in east central Iowa. It serves as an intermediary among schools, businesses, and communities to provide career education and school-to-work activities to students in elementary, middle, and high schools. The organization serves seven counties and 33 school districts, providing activities such as internships, job shadows, career days, and the Teacher@Work professional development program. The Workplace Learning Connection receives financial support

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[24] For more information, visit http://www.doe.mass.edu/stc/connect/.

from its major stakeholder groups—government, businesses, and school districts—which helps create a stable funding base. To support activities, the organization has negotiated a per-pupil fee of $3.00 per middle school student and $5.00 per high school student with the school districts it serves; it provides programs to elementary schools on a fee-for-service basis. Partner businesses match school district contributions in each county served. The organization also receives county economic or community development funds from county boards of supervisors on a four-cents-per-capita basis, according to population data from the 2000 census.

For more information, see http://www.kirkwood.edu/site/index.php?d=127.

For youth who have dropped out of school or who are struggling in traditional academic settings, alternative education pathways, including some charter schools, offer important options for providing youth with academic instruction along with other kinds of services, such as counseling and workforce development services. State and local education dollars and, more specifically, per-pupil based funding, can be used to support alternative education programs that offer academic and workforce development services to at-risk and out-of-school youth.[25] Together with other government and private funds, these dollars could help create a diversified funding portfolio.

Some states have enacted special statutes to allow education dollars to follow vulnerable students to alternative education programs run by nonprofit agencies. For example, Minnesota and Wisconsin have "children-at-risk" statutes that allow state education dollars to

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[25] J. R. Allum, *Funding Alternative Education Pathways: A Review of the Literature* (Washington, D.C.: National Youth Employment Coalition, February 2005), at http://nyec.modernsignal.net/content/education/Final_Alternative_Education_Literature_Review.pdf.

follow vulnerable youth to alternative education environments.[26] Some YouthBuild
and Youth Corps programs have established charter schools to enhance services for
participating youth[27] and create a stable funding source. The Latin American Youth Center
(LAYC) in Washington, D.C., a longtime federal YouthBuild grantee, recently changed its
YouthBuild program into a charter alternative school. This transition will enable LAYC to
improve the sustainability of its YouthBuild program and provide more educational services
to participants.[28]

Using the Charter School Model to Provide Education and Workforce Development Activities

Improved Solutions for Urban Systems (ISUS) in Dayton, Ohio, was founded as a non-
profit organization in 1992 to give out-of-school youth a second chance at achieving
academic credentials and gaining job skills along with work experience.[29] ISUS began with
a construction certificate program that engaged youth participants in building inner-city
homes. In 1999, ISUS began to create high schools chartered by the Ohio Department of
Education that blend counseling, core academics, service learning, and industry-recognized
certification. The ISUS charter schools focus on several key industry areas, including
construction, health care, and computer and manufacturing technologies. The schools
receive average daily attendance (ADA) funding from the state education department.
Although ADA is a critical source of funding, these funds cover less than half the cost of
serving students. ISUS accesses additional funds from other sources, including vocational
education funds (Perkins), juvenile justice resources, and private sources such as founda-
tions and corporations.

For more information, visit http://www.isusinc.com/.

Considerations

- In building partnerships with local education institutions, youth program leaders have
  to frame their workforce development activities in ways that can support the needs
  and goals of these institutions. Schools and school districts, for example, face strong
  pressures to improve student performance, potentially creating partnership opportuni-
  ties for youth programs that offer tutoring, mentoring, study skills training, and other
  activities that can improve student outcomes. Youth programs engaged in school

[26] A. Steinberg and C. Almeida, *The Dropout Crisis: Promising Approaches in Prevention and Recovery* (Boston, Mass.:
       Jobs for the Future, June 2004), 8, at **http://www.jff.org/jff/PDFDocuments/dropoutcrisis.pdf**.
[27] Smith, 28.
[28] To learn more about LAYC's YouthBuild Public Charter School, see **http://www.layc-dc.org/charterschools/
       youthbuild.html**.
[29] A full profile is available from Thakur and Henry, 52–56.

dropout recovery may be able to help schools recapture per-pupil funding. Program leaders need to think creatively about how to promote their services to educational and other community organizations.

■ Program leaders must understand the flow of state and local education dollars into communities and take steps to build partnerships with local education institutions, such as schools, school districts, and community colleges, to access education funds to serve youth program participants.

■ The charter school model is an innovative approach to providing and financing workforce development services for youth. Program leaders considering this approach should educate themselves about state and local laws and policies on charter school startup or conversion. They need to recognize that a diverse portfolio of public and private funds often is required to finance and sustain charter schools, with education dollars accounting for just one part of the funding mix.

4. Coordinating Resources and Services

Given the wide range of programs with the potential to support youth workforce development services, efforts focused on better coordinating and aligning resources and services hold great promise for improving the funding climate for youth programs. Local leaders can use several strategies to better coordinate and align resources and services.

■ *Engage in resource mapping and community planning activities.* Mapping community resources can help leaders identify local youth-serving organizations and their programs, gaps and duplication that exist in the service delivery system, youth funding streams that flow into the community, and resources that could be leveraged.[30] Community-wide planning creates opportunities to engage key stakeholders and look at systems issues affecting youth services.

■ *Develop a shared vision or common standards for youth workforce development services or youth programming more broadly.* A common vision or standards helps create a framework for youth programs that can promote collaboration, buy-in, and resource alignment.[31] Leaders of youth-serving organizations in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania,

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[30] Sources for resource mapping tools include Helping America's Youth, (see http://www.helpingamericas youth.org/assessment.htm) and the Academy for Educational Development (see http://www.communityyouthmapping.org/Youth/).

[31] Resources such as the PEPNet Standards for Quality Youth Programs (see http://nyec.modernsignal.net/ page.cfm?pageID=116) can help leaders to think about standards for youth programs.

Developing A Coordinated Youth Workforce Development System in Hartford

In recent years, leaders in Hartford, Connecticut, received several sizable U.S. Department of Labor discretionary grants, including a Youth Opportunity grant and a Youth Access/ Youth Offenders Grant. These resources provided support for developing and testing new strategies to improve employment outcomes among Hartford's youth. They also spurred the growth of new partnerships. To ensure the key partnerships and services that were developed would be sustained beyond time-limited grant funding, Hartford leaders developed an infrastructure to support collaborative planning and fundraising. This effort, the Future Workforce Investment System, includes the leaders of Hartford Public Schools; Capital Workforce Partners, the capital area workforce development board; the United Way; the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving; the mayor's office; the city's health and human services department; the local board of education; business leaders; and several local community-based organizations. Together, they have articulated 10 shared priorities for youth in Hartford and developed a coordinated system of referring, serving, and tracking data on youth across separate systems and agencies. They have also leveraged a diverse base of resources to support their work, including WIA dollars, funding from the city of Hartford and Hartford Public Schools, and private support that includes funds from the United Way and the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving.

Contact: Rachel Rivera, Capital Workforce Partners, 860-522-1111, ext. 323.

including the youth council, developed standards for the city's youth programs that the city adopted in 2001. These core standards aim to align Philadelphia's youth programs with common principles and program elements that promote positive youth outcomes; improve the capacity and quality of the city's out-of-school time and youth workforce development programs; and promote a city-wide understanding of, and expectation for quality in, the programs and services delivered to Philadelphia children and youth.[32]

■ *Use the contracting process to promote collaboration and resource leveraging.*
   Youth council members can structure the contracting process to encourage or require partnerships and the leveraging of other funding sources. The Chemung Schuyler Steuben Workforce Development Youth Council in Corning, New York, for example, has required youth program providers to respond to a request for proposal (RFP) as partners, not as single providers. The Baltimore City (Maryland) Workforce Investment Board Youth Council RFP for youth workforce development services includes an expectation that programs will leverage resources and in-kind contributions. Evidence of leveraging resources is one of the criteria for evaluating proposals.

[32] A description of the core standards is available from the Philadelphia Youth Network. See http://www.pyninc.org/downloads/PDF/core_standards_10-01.pdf.

- ***Think strategically about youth council membership.*** Youth councils or other coordinating bodies afford local youth workforce development leaders with the opportunity to engage key stakeholders in efforts to build and support services and systems for youth. High-profile local business leaders, high-level government officials, and influential stakeholders in key systems that serve youth, such as the education system, can bring to youth councils valuable connections, resources, and the ability to leverage funds beyond WIA. Engaging such stakeholders, however, requires framing youth workforce development activities in ways that address stakeholder and community needs.

- ***Maximize the potential flexibility of funding sources that can support youth workforce development.*** Local leaders can explore whether there is flexibility in available funding sources that could be leveraged to help support youth workforce development services. WIA funds, for example, can support multiple youth workforce development activities. Likewise, TANF may provide a source of flexible funding. In Philadelphia, for example, TANF funds were used to augment WIA funds to provide summer education and work experience to youth. County general funds and resources from the business community can also provide flexible sources of funding. Federal, state, and local policies determine the flexibility of public funding sources.

Many of these local coordination activities have parallel state-level coordination activities that can also help coordinate the workforce development system for youth. State-level coordination activities include creating a coordinating body, establishing goals or outcomes for youth-serving programs and systems, developing a youth budget, and strengthening state planning activities for youth.

- ***Create a state-level coordinating body.*** A state-level youth council, a state youth policy organization, or other type of coordinating body can help align programs and resources at the state level as well as support local youth workforce development systems.

- ***Establish policy goals or desired outcomes for programs and systems that serve youth.*** State-level goals or outcomes can provide a framework to help youth-serving programs and systems coordinate their efforts.

- *Create a youth budget.* This type of budget provides a mechanism to document a state's investment in youth across different programs and systems. Examining funding in this way can inform policymakers on the services available to support youth as well as provide guidance on how to fill in the gaps and better align investments.[33]

- *Strengthen state planning activities for youth.* State workforce development leaders need to involve other programs and systems in the planning process to improve coordination among those serving youth. In addition, state officials can encourage greater coordination in local planning. Oregon, for example, passed legislation in 1999 that calls for locally driven planning for youth policy that promotes a comprehensive strategy for serving youth. County-based planning then informs the work of the five state agencies that affect programs for children, youth, and families.[34]

Local leaders need to recognize and encourage coordination efforts at the state level as well as those at the local level. Leaders should seek to participate in coordination activities in order to maximize the resources available to serve youth in their programs and communities.

Considerations

- Local officials and program leaders can consider ways that youth can participate in efforts to align and coordinate resources. For example, some youth councils have engaged youth in conducting surveys for resource mapping initiatives. Youth can also play an advocacy role before local or state youth policy bodies to lend an important voice as consumers of services. Moreover, engaging youth in coordination efforts creates opportunities for youth leadership development.

- Local leaders exploring opportunities to create greater flexibility in available funding sources will need to work closely with other state and local policymakers and administrators. Leaders are likely to be more successful if they join with other stakeholders to build a broad coalition or collaborative.

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[33] For more information on youth budgets, see T. Ferber, E. Gaines, and C. Goodman, *Positive Youth Development: State Strategies* (Washington, D.C.: National Conference of State Legislatures, October 2005), 9, at **http://www.forumfyi. org/Files//strengtheningyouthpolicy.pdf** and M. Flynn-Khan, T. Ferber, E. Gaines, & K. Pittman, *Adding It Up: A Guide to Developing A Children, Youth and Families Budget* (Washington, D.C.: The Forum for Youth Investment, Impact Strategies, Inc., 2006), forthcoming.

[34] Ferber et al., 8–9.

Conclusion

Workforce development services are more critical than ever to prepare youth for a competitive labor market that favors those with skills, education, and job readiness. The Workforce Investment Act creates a framework for providing youth workforce development services, but program leaders need to find resources beyond WIA to support and sustain their activities. By exploring the potential of a diverse array of funding sources to finance youth programs, by building partnerships with various stakeholders in the community, and by thinking strategically about the use of existing resources, program leaders can take steps to access different funding sources to support youth workforce development services in their community. State and local leaders can support these efforts by taking steps to improve the coordination and alignment of youth funding sources and programs.

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