Powerful Partnerships

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

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

Powerful Partnerships

	TRAINING GOALS

- Understand the role partnership development plays in your WIA youth effort.
- Learn the "Six Elements of Partnership Success."
- Develop strategies to build and improve relationships and linkages between youth-serving organizations.

IN THIS PACKET

The Partnership Puzzle

Walk down a street and you see evidence of partnerships at every turn. Business partnerships, marriages, food cooperatives, community health networks – partnerships are everywhere. So, it's no surprise that the Workforce Investment Act would require partnerships, linkages, and collaboration in the name of youth workforce development.

WHERE DO YOU SEE PARTNERSHIP PRACTICES AT WORK IN WIA?
- In your Workforce Board, Youth Council or Advisory Group
- Among One-Stop partners
- Between WIA youth providers and referring agencies
- With educational institutions
- Between young people and adults
- Among local, regional, and state organizations and agencies

PARTNERSHIP STRATEGIES WORK BECAUSE THEY CAN:
- Ensure that young people find services that best match their goals.
- Bring increased resolve and power to youth services.
- Help organizations target resources and expertise more effectively.
- Forge relationships that help increase visibility of an issue and identify available resources.
- Give you leverage to tackle deeply-rooted or complex issues facing youth.
- Create a system out of isolated programs and services.
- Confirm a broader vision for youth development.

PARTNERSHIP STRATEGIES ARE CHALLENGING BECAUSE THEY:
- Confirm that all relationships are challenging, even one between two people!
- Are between organizations, not just people.
- Ask people to work across traditional organizational lines.

- Involve organizations with different interests, goals, resources, and operating procedures.
- Don't develop according to a blueprint and set pace.

New partnership relationships begin every day. In the private sector, especially, they are highly negotiated deals that revolve around very concrete interests. You "enter into an agreement" with Company X because it will: make you money, open a new market, brand your product, allow you to launch a new joint product, etc. Paper is drawn up and reviewed on both sides. Every last detail isn't set, and challenges surely lie ahead, but the framework for the relationship is clear.

PARNERSHIP PRACTICES ARE POTENTIALLY MORE CHALLENGING FOR WORKFORCE BOARDS AND YOUTH ADVISORY GROUPS BECAUSE THEY ARE:
- Mandated; in other cases, only encouraged.
- Not just one-to-one – they include multiple partners.
- Organic – they often grow out of the work.
- Less formal (or the degree of formality ranges considerably).
- Made up of private, public, and not-for-profit organizations; small and large.
- Not 'staffed.' You don't have the equivalent of a business development or partnership development director.
- Meant for the long-term, not just for short-term projects or ventures.

This training packet introduces six pieces – or elements – of the partnership puzzle. You can apply them on a small or large scale. Use them to assess and strengthen your Workforce Board or Youth Council (both are partnership efforts by nature) or focus outward on the relationships required to create a strong network of youth service providers.

Six Elements of Partnership Success

Time to connect your "stuff"!

Workforce partnership efforts invite community leaders, employers, youth development professionals and others to piece together a puzzle of relationships, interests, resources, and programs. Oh, the challenge of it! You not only have to assemble the pieces, you have to draw the box cover – the picture you want to create. Partnership efforts also provide an enormous amount of fun: new bonds and connections, strong management skills, meaningful work, and much more.

While there is no "box cover" or blueprint you can follow, there are patterns in the evolution of highly successful partnership efforts. Here are six elements you can use to focus your effort.

Element One: New Thinking

Scan the activities in your community that currently prepare young people for the future and you will compile a long list of "stuff." Walk around and talk with people – especially youth and employers – and you quickly recognize that most of the programs on your list operate in relative isolation. Many don't know about, let alone coordinate with, others.

- Do schools and after-school programs share information about learning goals, curriculum, and student needs?
- Do mentors know what employment, co-op, and internship opportunities are available to young people?
- Are employers barraged by dozens of organizations, including schools, seeking resources, participation and assistance?
- Does an entirely new program pop up every time there's a new grant or funding award?

All are telltale signs that there is very little "system" in the system of support available to youth.

The first key element of partnership success is to fully integrate two important ideas into the way you approach youth services. They will compel you forward into partnership strategies that work.

Idea #1: Think system and all youth from the start: all programs, all adults, all youth, and all resources.

Think about the network of youth providers and how you operate and cooperate as a whole – longstanding youth organizations and legislated categorical programs alike – to serve young people in your community.

Working together for all youth doesn't mean that staff from all youth-serving organizations and employers should form one large organization and gather in a room on a monthly basis to plan and evaluate services (although that would be something to see!). Realistically, there are goals and values, politics, resource realities, geographic issues, and a host of other characteristics that distinguish organizations.

It DOES mean that you have at least one big interest in common – all youth – whether you directly serve ALL youth or not. You may not direct your resources and expertise at a particular age group or type of student, but you definitely know who does.

take action!
new thinking

Convene community leaders who care about young people and have a vested interest in their success. Call the "collaboration question" – ask them to survey the numerous programs and activities that focus on education and workforce preparation in the community and discuss how to improve linkages.
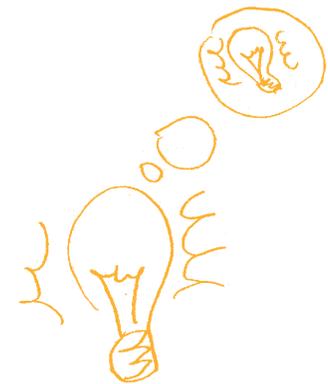
Why am I here? Why would I stay?

Idea #2 You must be just as committed to building relationships that work as programs that work.

Community-based expertise in building programs is generally first-rate. Most people can get their minds and hands around a program. Organizational relationship building – system building – is tougher stuff, especially when it's not just you and one other organization; it's one-to-many.

If you can't get everybody in the same room on a continuing basis, you have to nurture relationships that do the equivalent. If everyone did make it to the same room, here are functions you would see them working to cover:

- Understanding various organizations, programs and the services they offer
- Coordinating employer participation
- Identifying referral and case management processes
- Analyzing gaps or weaknesses in services or types of youth served
- Identifying strategies to resolve common issues like transportation, health, etc.
- Determining support needed from community, regional, and state leaders
- Evaluating and maximizing resource development opportunities
- Marketing a single youth system vision to the community

ELEMENT TWO: PARTNER SELF-INTEREST

The idea of creating a comprehensive system of youth services, held together by strong inter-organizational collaboration, is very compelling. Many youth providers and employers give a resounding "yes!" when asked if they envision such a thing.

They can't, however, immediately picture what creating such a system will mean for them. It soon becomes clear: it means work, time and staff commitments, resources, and more! Then, they wonder if it's worth it to them...

"WHY AM I HERE?"
Exactly the right question, often asked too late.

This is the second important element of partnership success: design your effort around partner interests and short and long-term results that match them.

A sneaker company and a soft drink company don't partner simply because they both think sports are great. They sit in a room together and hash out the specific advantages each hopes to gain from the relationship.

The same should go for community-based partnership efforts. The vision for your effort MUST grow out of frank conversations about each partner's interests. As a result, you clarify expectations up front and learn important information about what makes each of you tick.

Even after years of partnership, "return on investment," and "win-win" rhetoric, people sometimes struggle to articulate their interests. Youth services staff and leaders are very nice, kind-hearted, committed people – exactly the type to struggle. They often involve themselves in youth efforts because they LOVE young people. That IS their interest, pure and simple. The cause is their vision.

And here you come, suggesting that interests may not be so simple.

It's important to remember that interests usually aren't bad or good. They just are. Knowing them gives everyone incredible insight into what people NEED to get out

take action!
partner self-interest

With potential partners (as a group or one-on-one), boldly have the "interest conversation." What does each partner need to get on an ongoing basis to stay engaged in your effort? How will you evaluate to make sure the work you do together delivers those results?

of their investment. You would be hard-pressed to meet a person or organization, the nicest and most noble among them, that doesn't have a good mix of interests.

For example:
• Resource needs
• Effective use of my time
• Public relations and community visibility
• Political muscle
• Leadership experience – career advancement

Remember, interests change. You can't just identify them once, tap them into stone tablets, and leave it at that. Employers have different hiring interests during boom and bust economies. Educational partners can be deeply affected by leadership changes and educational improvement, policy and funding shifts. Community-based organizations can be very entrepreneurial – any new programs and services they develop undoubtedly mean new interests

Fold the "interest conversation" into your work. Let interests shape strategic plans, evaluation practices, and specific partnership activities. You know your partnership effort will endure – through changing funding and policy conditions – when both youth and partner interests are met.

Here are questions that get people talking about their interests

SHORT-TERM	LONG-TERM
What does the leadership of your organization care most about now?	How would a more coordinated youth system benefit your organization? How would you want it to help you?
What are your current priorities?	What would make this effort work for your organization?
What do you personally hope to gain as a result of your participation? What would frighten you off?	What does your organization hope to gain over the longer term?
Given your level of investment, what results would you need to see in the short term?	Given your level of investment, what results would you need to see over the longer term?
If this effort could do one thing that benefited your organization in the near future, what would it be?	What are some of your organization's longer-term strategic goals or hopes?

What does it look and act like when it's working?

ELEMENT THREE: A VISION OF RESULTS

With a far better understanding of who is at your table and why, you're ready to articulate a vision that can hold you together – a vision that will deliver the results you want. This is the third element of partnership success.

Most partnership groups write a vision or mission statement. It's often a perfunctory writing exercise. However, it's one thing to hammer out a vision statement, quite another to actually visualize the system that will work for youth and you, as partners.

So, before writing your vision, grab markers, paper, and your partners, and try drawing it. Visioning is more like painting anyway. What will your community's "youth system" look like if you create it? What does it do for youth? For partners?

As with painting, you may end up with a picture that is impressionistic, even abstract. You think you know what the picture represents...but plenty is left to the imagination, and a person standing next to you might see something very different. Precisely the lead-in you need to "paint" more realistic details:

- What do lines drawn between organizations (a common illustration) really signify?
- What does it actually look like when youth organizations coordinate?
- If I'm a youth, what would I experience in this system? An employer? A youth provider?
- What would a day feel like compared to now?

Once a clear picture emerges, draw the system that currently exists and the system as it might be two years from now, five years out, and so on. Storyboard the path

to the future you envision. Even the most rudimentary drawings, done with the crudest of artistic skill, provide a powerful way for people to articulate where they want to go, why, how they might get there, and what the journey might be like.

ELEMENT FOUR: FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

Helping young people prepare for their future is ...not a new idea! Dozens, if not hundreds, of community organizations exist to do just this. Communities have a substantial amount of youth "stuff" (programs, services, and providers).

The challenge is to create a coherent system out of it all. Only a collaborative effort could handle the task. The fourth element of partnership success is to:

Know your "stuff!" In other words, study the landscape of activities, services, and expertise currently available in the community.

Assess current activities to identify collaboratively what is working well, what is not, where programs intersect and complement, what is truly redundant, and where the big service delivery gaps are.

Make informed decisions about how best to align, connect, enhance, change, fix, grow, reorganize, and/or eliminate services.

Asset or resource mapping is the term people associate with this process, and the last 5-8 years have seen a buzz of mapping activity. In general, you identify the of your ideal youth system: what types of services and support would it offer and to whom? You then profile organizations in your community in order to understand

take action!
vision of results

Ask potential partners to visualize what a successful system would look like. Do this graphically, in words, or some combination. Next, describe what the community's "system" looks like now. Use the drawings as the basis for identifying partnership goals and next steps.

take action!
foundation building blocks

Create an opportunity for partners and community youth providers to profile their organizations and collaboratively identify potential building blocks, intersections, duplication, and gaps. Use this 'map' to evaluate services and practices and gaps in more detail.

What pieces do we already have? What are our gaps?

them and identify the existing and potential "assets" they represent for the system.

The process can be simple or quite sophisticated. Some communities:

- Have youth themselves map services
- Create online databases that profile area services
- Use GIS technology (geographic information systems) to organize and display data geographically

You'll find mapping tools in this packet, or, for a more in-depth look, use the "Community Resource Mapping: Knowing Your Youth Services Landscape" packet in this training series.

The real challenge of mapping is that it must be ongoing. Many organizations initially take up mapping with great zeal. They profile the resources in their community, create an organizational directory, and then stop after that first crop of data.

Mapping is a (learned!) partnership behavior, not a one-time data gathering event. You should share mapping data, use it actively to make decisions, add to it, keep it up-to-date, and revisit it. More importantly, you should use "micro mapping" methods whenever staff members from different partner organizations meet to strategize or plan. Talking about your youth referral process? Perfect time to find out how many providers use referral forms, what they cover, and whether or not you can develop a common form.

ELEMENT FIVE: INFRASTRUCTURE

Early-stage partnership efforts often fall into a common trap. Many, especially those driven by a grant or funding opportunity,

"organize" on paper long before partners actually sit in a room together, let alone agree on their role and work. Alternatively, they quickly create committees that generally match themes of the effort or interests of members.

As a result, many collaborative endeavors create organizational structure before they understand the functions they need to perform together. Form before function. They build a house only to find they need a boat.

Powerful partnership efforts have backbone – but not necessarily bureaucracy, hierarchy or even, initially, a formal organizational structure. They do have infrastructure to support functions they identify as critical to achieving their goals.

Here then is your biggest challenge, and, not surprisingly, the fifth element of partnership success!

Understand the difference between organizational structure and partnership infrastructure.

Identify the important functions your group needs to perform.

Equip representatives of your effort to mobilize people within their organizations and networks to fulfill those functions.

Infrastructure, broadly defined, is the combination of people, resources, systems, and organizational relationships you can use to accomplish your goals. In the case of a partnership effort, bits and pieces of your potential infrastructure lie scattered around the community – across organizational lines and up, down, and inside organizations themselves. Your initial core of committed partners has an important role to play: figure out how best to tap into the depth and breadth of that latent infrastructure.

take action!
infrastructure

Find the "Infrastructure That Works" tool at the end of this packet. Assess the "functional fitness" of your partnership effort. Where is your group strong? What functions aren't getting the attention they need? Who else should you involve to help you successfully address gaps?

What functions do we need to perform together?

A simple but powerful approach to infrastructure development is to identify the critical leadership, planning, and implementation functions your group needs to perform in order to get work done or grease gears so that it can be done by others.

- Which functions do you need staff in partner organizations to do?
- How will you make partnership work part of their job description?
- Who has the authority or relationship to change or update roles and responsibilities?

As a group, you don't directly command or control organizations or staff in them. You don't sit hierarchically above them and can't order people to do this, that, and the other. Individual partners can, or know people who can, however!

Infrastructure That Works

LEADERSHIP FUNCTIONS	PLANNING FUNCTIONS	IMPLEMENTATION FUNCTIONS
• Ensure Creation of Vision • Market Vision • Recruit Critical Partners • Assign Staff • Ensure Resources Available • Determine Operating Structure • Approve Implementation Plans or Propose Improvement • Clear Blocks / Barriers • Ensure Policy Development and Changes • Ensure Expansion	• Create Implementation Plans or Revise Based on Proposed Improvements • Secure Needed Resources • Become Chairs of Implementation Teams • Recruit Implementers • Orient and Supervise Implementation Work • Target and Solve Problems / Barriers • Report to Leaders • Advocate for Policy Changes • Endorse Expansion	• Form Implementation Teams • Design and Implement Strategies • Propose Improvements Based on Evaluation Results • Identify Resource Needs • Recruit More Implementation Team Members • Identify Problems / Barriers • Identify Needed Policy Changes • Design and Implement Improvement Strategies

How do we introduce day-to-day collaborative behavior?

ELEMENT SIX: COLLABORATIVE IMPLEMENTATION

Collaboration is all the rage. Who wouldn't want to collaborate on behalf of youth? Yet, true collaborative action is an elusive practice.

Your partners will outline strategies, make decisions, assign tasks, and start work. It is particularly at that moment – the "start work" moment – that a few distinct patterns emerge:

- **Divide and Conquer:** Each organization tackles stated group goals on its own. Partners come together to catch up periodically, then disperse, and each organization more or less goes its own way.
- **Partner Representatives Do the Work:** People designated to represent partner organizations – the people who attend meetings – do all the work for their organization more or less alone.
- **Staff Do the Work:** Paid staff (in this case, your Workforce Board or Youth Council staff) are expected to carry out the bulk of assignments.

Not much organizational collaboration to speak of, really. A bit of collaboration perhaps, a hint of coordination at most!

This brings you to the sixth element of partnership success, one that goes hand-in-hand with infrastructure development: Identify specific ways for people across organizations to work together – to "do business" collaboratively.

Find the "From Cooperation to Collaboration" chart at the end of this packet to get a better sense of behaviors you might see at different stages of partnership development. Pay particular attention to the following five implementation areas. These are the moments you can use to nurture and

spread the spirit and practice of collaboration through your effort.

COLLABORATIVE PLANNING, DECISION-MAKING, AND COMMUNICATION

Typically, you see collaborative planning and decision-making among workforce board or council members. However, you don't see much ripple effect. For example, staff members from one provider organization invite staff from another to brainstorm solutions for a common issue, i.e., case management, referral practices, mentor recruitment.

Create opportunities for people from different levels within partner organizations to plan together or share expertise as others plan. Work groups that focus on a specific task, research question, event or activity work well. Find real work and involve people who will benefit most from it. If a plan or decision does come from one partner or person, circulate it to other partners for input or endorsement.

Encourage decision by consensus. Even as you do, acknowledge that interests will eventually collide or compete. It's not a question of if people will disagree, only a matter of when and how partners will manage those moments. Interest-based negotiation strategies tend to work best in these situations. Look for a list of helpful negotiation resources at the end of this chapter.

take action!
collaborative implementation

Look for the "From Cooperation to Collaboration" chart and activities at the end of this chapter. When and how can people collaborate in the day-to-day life and work of your partnership effort? What can leaders do together? Provider staff?

COLLABORATIVE RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT

Here is a common scenario: an organization has access to funds – a grant, state or federal funding – but there is a condition. The money must go to a partnership effort, so people hasten to the table to plan their initiative. However, once the funds come in, "partner" organizations want their piece. Hundreds of partnerships form to "split up the check" or to "get the money out the door." Your effort should be about "splitting up the work" and "targeting the right resources to the right doors."

Money. Staff. Time. Facilities. Equipment. Employment positions. New funding opportunities. View these and other partner resources as part of a potential "integrated resource base" available to support partnership goals. What does resource collaboration look like? Partners don't all throw their money into one pot, of course. They DO:

• Look at internal funding and budgeting priorities to identify how existing resources can best support the work.
• Scan their networks for new resource opportunities.
• Acknowledge the value of non-monetary resources.

COLLABORATIVE YOUTH STRATEGIES

Visit organizations involved in a nominal or "paper partnership" and watch how services are delivered to youth. In too many instances, you wouldn't know that a collaborative effort even exists. Each organization runs its program, with its methods and tools. One person handles WIA funds and goes to WIA meetings.

WIA youth service elements are MADE for collaboration. Providers are finding that they can't deliver WIA's comprehensive package of youth elements unless they collaborate on:

• Case management, referral, and Individual Service Strategy (ISS) planning methods
• Tools
• Employer/mentor involvement
• Staff development
• Follow-up
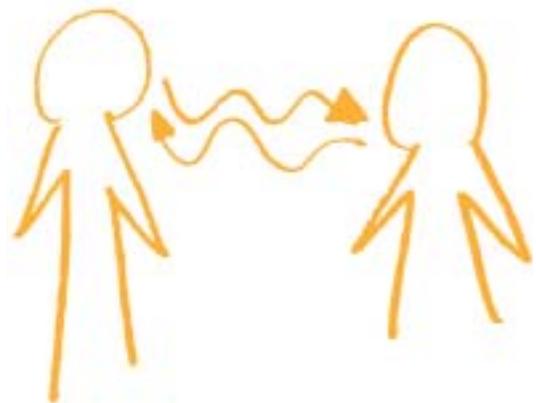
COLLABORATIVE EVALUATION

It's relatively easy to evaluate a program. Partnership efforts, on the other hand, are a different matter. Compare evaluating programs to tic-tac-toe and evaluation in collaborative ventures to three-dimensional tic-tac-toe.

To start, policy and funding initiatives often frame program performance outcomes, not:

- Interim measures
- Partnership performance outcomes – standards key partnership movers and shakers use to measure the effectiveness of their own actions and collaborative behavior
- Results that meet short and longer-term partner interests

There are also quirky and not-so-quirky evaluation and accountability behaviors to overcome:

- Partners set activities and programs in motion but rarely sit as a group to evaluate in detail what is working and isn't and why. The knowledge remains buried in isolated places (heads) in partner organizations or in required reports submitted to funding powers that be. Alternatively, the information is digested internally, within one organization, but not served up to all.
- Partners are hesitant to put their noses too deeply into another partner's programmatic business.
- Partnership efforts fund or support a weak program because there is nothing better around (or don't fund it again, but why is left largely unspoken).
- Organizations often have their own performance criteria and tools, designed locally or nationally.
- And, of course, political realities and relationships almost always figure in the mix.

Despite the challenge – and because of it – evaluation is exactly where you want to spawn collaborative behaviors wherever and whenever you can. Involve partners and provider staff in creating methods and tools that fit program and collaboratively defined partner needs.

- Are you working to build up mentoring and work-based learning opportunities? Then have your group's lead partners give themselves a performance target related to new partner outreach.
- Interested in collecting feedback from youth participants? Convene provider staff and look at existing feedback tools and how WIA elements could be incorporated.
- Tracking earnings gains? Ask employers for suggestions on how best to do it.

For a more in-depth look at collaborative evaluation, use the Evaluating Your Effort packet in this training series.

Activity One: New Thinking - Your Stuff List

Goal
- Understand the rich array of youth service organizations and youth activities in your community.

Materials
- Flip chart paper, colored markers, masking tape

Time
- 15 minutes

Instructions

1. In groups of 4-5 people, brainstorm a list of all the organizations, institutions, programs, projects, people, etc., involved in youth development in your community. Ask a group member with good ears, a quick hand, and legible handwriting to record all ideas on a piece of flip chart paper as group members call them out.

2. Count the number of items on your list and write the number at the top of your flip chart paper.

3. Have a different group member read your list to the full group – out loud and as fast as possible.

4. Compare lists and discuss!

   - How many items did groups have on their list?
   - Were all the groups and organizations familiar to everyone?
   - How are the groups connected? How much coordination or collaboration currently occurs? Between which groups?

Notes on Our Youth Stuff...

The Partnership Puzzle

two:
self
interest

three:
vision
of results

four:
foundation
building
blocks

one:
new
thinking

six:
collaborative
implementation

five:
infrastructure
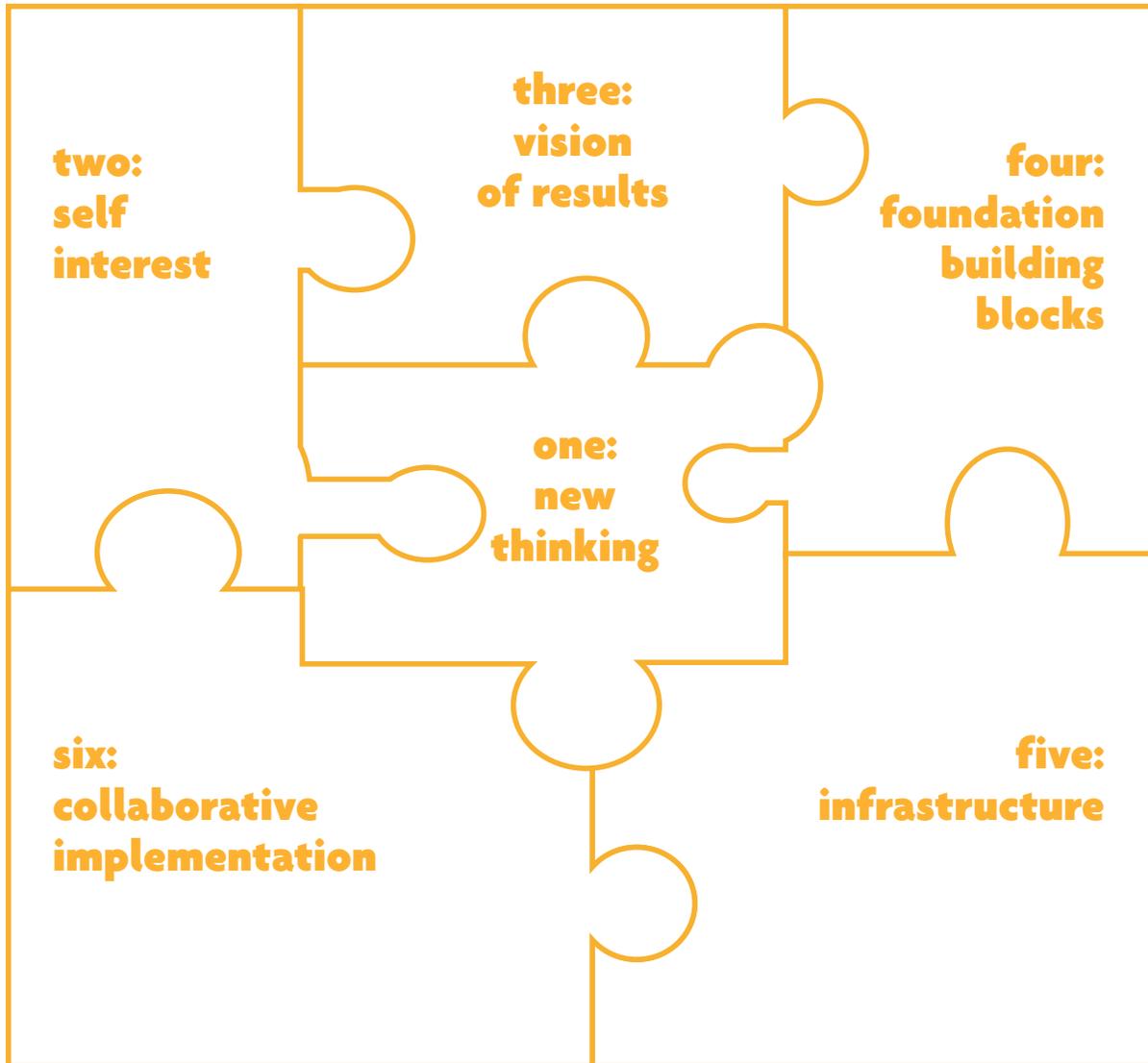
12 Characteristics of Sustainable Partnership Efforts

Partnership efforts are an art. Even still, there are characteristics and patterns you frequently see in highly successful, sustainable efforts. Look for them at the outset and as your work evolves.

1. The ongoing support and involvement of community leaders as expressed by their willingness to commit to the partnership effort large quantities of their most precious resource – TIME.

2. A clear sense among all partners of the personal and institutional interests of each member, as well as how these are being advanced by the collaborative effort.

3. A defined purpose for the partners that is visionary regarding a shared future, yet realistic in that it is achievable and addresses the interests of each partner.

4. A broad-based management team with capable change agents as members.

5. Clearly defined means of empowering staff that work on the front lines -- if they don't own the strategies to be implemented, the work simply won't move forward.

6. The existence of new rules for making decisions – consensus is the primary method, rather than voting by majority, which splits people into winners and losers and undermines group ownership.

7. Careful attention to community assets, things that are worthy of support and emulation. The most effective partnership efforts focus on the question "What is working and how can we build upon it?"

8. Strategies selected to reach goals are based on both research and best practice in the community.

9. Viewing the community's resource base as unified and integrated, with each partner's human, material, and financial resources open to information and influence by other partners.

10. The use of formal, written, signed agreements that contain measurable, achievable outcomes as a device to focus partners – the most sustainable efforts, moreover, build in success in the early stages.

11. An ongoing process to acknowledge and reward each partner and the investments they make – investments often considered above and beyond the call of duty before institutional change occurs in the form of permanently changed business practices.

12. Constant attention to generating ownership by anticipating new challenges that necessitate membership changes or expanded involvement.

Activity Two: Putting Partner Interests on the Table

Goal
- Allow partners and potential partners to discuss and articulate their interest in a youth investment system and what they would need to see results from their participation.

Materials
- Putting Interests on the Table Worksheet and/or flip chart paper, colored markers, and masking tape
- Partner Interest Examples Handout

Time
- 30 minutes

Instructions

For this activity, ask people to sit in groups by organization (program or agency) OR by affinity group (small employers, large employers, after-school youth programs, youth, parents, etc.).

1. With your group, discuss what your organization needs from its investment in a comprehensive youth system. Keep notes!

2. Next, identify your top two needs (interests), one for the short term and one for the long term.

3. List your group's top interests on a piece of flip chart paper. Ask one group member to read your list to the full group.

4. Compare interests across groups and discuss!

   - What kinds of interests appear on the lists? Where did groups overlap?
   - How might your initiative address some of the short and long-term interests (practically speaking!)?

Notes on My Group's Interests...

Putting Interests on the Table - Worksheet

Partner / Partner Type	Short-Interests – Quick Wins!	Long-Term Interests – Futute Returns
My Organization		
School or School District		
Employer		
Organized Labor		
Community-Based Youth Organization		
College or University		
Former Youth Program Participants		
One-Stop Center		
Other Education or Training Program		
After-School Program		

Partner Interests – Examples

School District

Long
Improved college/further training rate; lower dropout rates
Short
Better scores on state assesments tests for under performing students

Business

Long
Trained workforce; reduced hiring cost
Short
Youth qualified for summer job positions; customers

Youth and Parents

Long
Educational degree; high wage job
Short
Better school performance; knowledge of available work opportunities

College or University

Long
Increased student enrollment; deeper resource base
Short
Broader awareness of institution's educational and training offerings; access to partners

Youth Service System

Organized Labor - Unions

Long
High wage jobs; membership
Short
Support for apprenticeship and other training programs

Community-Based Youth Program

Long
Community visibility; financial support
Short
Increased youth participation; coordination with school

Elected Official

Long
Re-election; bond issue support
Short
Awareness of activities and issues in district; networking oppportinties

One-Stop Center

Long
Successful client job and training placements
Short
Awareness of adult and youth services; qualified providers; referral resources

Activity Three: Can You Picture It? Vision of Results

Goal
- Envision the type of system you would need in order to meet partner interests.
- Compare your future vision with what you currently have in place.

Materials
- Can You Picture it? Drawing Sheet and/or flip chart paper, colored markers, and masking tape

Time
- 20-30 minutes

Instructions

1. With your group and your "Stuff List" from Activity One, draw a picture (NO words) that describes the comprehensive youth investment system you envision. Make sure to discuss how this vision meets partner interests.

2. Next, draw a picture of the current landscape in your community.

3. Post your drawings so that others can see them.

4. Tour the room to see what other groups drew. At least one member of your group should stay with your pictures to help with interpretation! Change places at some point so they can tour as well.

5. Discuss your observations and points that came up as your group drew:

   - How does your future vision compare with what you currently have in place?
   - Specifically, how does the picture you drew address the interests groups outlined earlier during Activity Two?
   - How abstract or far off is your vision? Can you see interim milestones?

Can You Picture It? A Vision of Results

Future Youth System Vision
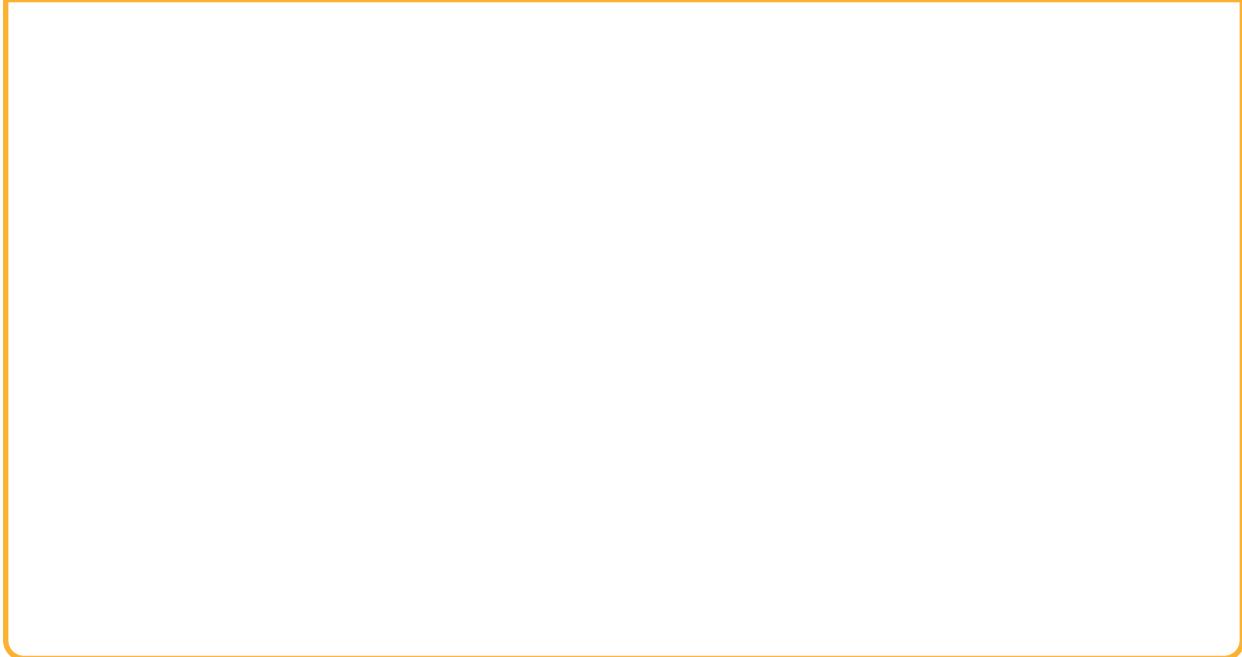
Current Landscape

Activity Four: Identifying Foundation Building Blocks

Goal
- Learn about the expertise and resources organizations in your community could bring to the "youth investment table."
- Identify specific areas of potential or increased coordination and collaboration.

Materials
- My Organization's Profile Worksheet
- Comparing Organizations Worksheet – 4'X6' wall copy
- Analyzing Our Resource Map Worksheet – 4'X6' wall copy
- Resource Base For Partnership Activities Handout
- Flip chart paper, markers, and masking tape

Time
- 30-45 minutes preparation
- 30-45 minutes mapping at session
- 30-45 minutes analyzing map and identifying priority action items
- 45-90 minutes developing specific action plan

Instructions

1. Review aspects or elements you want to profile and compare across organizations (your "organization profile"). What do you need to know about each other to maximize opportunities for collaboration?

2. Each organization participating in your session or meeting should complete the My Organization's Profile worksheet and bring copies. Encourage a lead person at the organization to meet with other staff members to complete the profile.

3. Once at the session, review your profile with representatives from your organization. Update it if needed.

4. Place the two 4'x6' worksheets on a wall, side by side, Comparing Organizations first (on the left).

5. Add your group's information to the Comparing Organizations worksheet. Let group members take turns working on different elements of the map.

6. When organizations are done, review the map. What do you see?

   - What patterns do you see?
   - What are the points of intersection between groups?
   - Where is there overlap or duplication?

7. List the main implications you see and discuss how your partners might address them. Identify your priority items and next steps.

My Organization's Profile – Worksheet

Mission or Purpose	
Clients/Youth Served	
Programs & Services	
WIA & Youth Element Activities & Expertise	
Main Youth Outcomes You Track	
Partners & Relationships	
Resource Streams	
Other	

Comparing Organizations - Worksheet

	Partner or Program	Partner or Program	Partner or Program
Mission or Purpose			
Clients/Youth Served			
Programs & Services			
WIA & Youth Element Activities & Expertise			
Main Youth Outcomes You Track			
Partners & Relationships			
Resource Streams			
Other			

Analyzing Our Resource Map - Worksheet

	Overlap	Gaps	Implications	Action Steps
Mission or Purpose				
Clients/Youth Served				
Programs & Services				
WIA & Youth Element Activities & Expertise				
Main Youth Outcomes You Track				
Partners & Relationships				
Resource Streams				
Other				

Resource Base for Partnership Activities

PEOPLE

IDEAS
EFFECTIVE PRACTICES
EXPERTISE
AUTHORITY
ENDORSEMENT
ACCESS
TIME

MATERIALS

SUPPLIES
SPACE
MACHINERY
TRANSPORTATION
OTHER GOODS/SERVICES

MONEY

DIRECT FUNDING
RESTRICTED FUNDING
MATCHING FUNDS
LEVERAGED FUNDS
NEW GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

Activity Five: Your Functional Fitness – Partnership Infrastructure

Goal
- Explore the functions partners in a dynamic partnership effort perform.
- Identify areas where your partnership effort is strong and areas that need attention.

Materials
- Infrastructure That Works Handout
- Your Functional Fitness Worksheet

Time
- 30-45 minutes

Instructions

1. Review the list of functions on the Infrastructure That Works handout.

2. With your group, discuss the critical leadership, planning and implementation functions you and your partners currently address.

3. Next, flag functions that need attention. Discuss them!

- How would you more effectively address functions that need attention? Does anyone else need to be involved? Who?
- Does your current organizational structure help people organize in a way that makes sense given the functions you need to cover? What is working? What needs adjustment?

4. Create a list of high priority changes and adjustments and devise a plan to address them!

Infrastructure That Works

leadership functions

- ENSURE CREATION OF VISION
- MARKET VISION
- RECRUIT CRITICAL PARTNERS
- ASSIGN STAFF
- ENSURE RESOURCES AVAILABLE
- DETERMINE OPERATING STRUCTURE
- APPROVE IMPLEMENTATION PLANS OR PROPOSE IMPROVEMENT
- CLEAR BLOCKS / BARRIERS
- ENSURE POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGES
- ENSURE EXPANSION

planning functions

- CREATE IMPLEMENTATION PLANS OR REVISE BASED ON PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS
- SECURE NEEDED RESOURCES
- BECOME CHAIRS OF IMPLEMENTATION TEAMS
- RECRUIT IMPLEMENTERS
- ORIENT AND SUPERVISE IMPLEMENTATION WORK
- TARGET AND SOLVE PROBLEMS / BARRIERS
- REPORT TO LEADERS
- ADVOCATE FOR POLICY CHANGES
- ENDORSE EXPANSION

implementation functions

- FORM IMPLEMENTATION TEAMS
- DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT STRATEGIES
- PROPOSE IMPROVEMENTS BASED ON EVALUATION RESULTS
- IDENTIFY RESOURCE NEEDS
- RECRUIT MORE IMPLEMENTATION TEAM MEMBERS
- IDENTIFY PROBLEMS / BARRIERS
- IDENTIFY NEEDED POLICY CHANGES
- DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES

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Your Functional Fitness - Worksheet

	Leadership	Planning	Implementation
FUNCTIONS WE COVER			
FUNCTIONS THAT NEED ATTENTION			
WHO WE SHOULD ENGAGE TO ADDRESS FUNCTIONAL GAPS			

Activity Six: How We Do Business – Collaborative Implementation

Goal
- Understand the stages that lead to collaboration.
- Identify day-to-day examples of collaborative behavior and what collaboration would look like in your partnership effort.

Materials
- How We Do Business Worksheet
- From Cooperation to Collaboration Handout

Time
- 30-45 minutes

Instructions

1. For each major "business" area, discuss what it would look like if people from different levels in your organizations were collaborating. Jot down specific examples of what you want to see.

2. Using your examples, identify one goal for your partnership work for each area.

From Cooperation to Collaboration

	Getting Started COOPERATION	Moving Right Along COORDINATION	Building Systems COLLABORATION
GOVERNANCE AND DECISION-MAKING	• Given vision, limited representation of necessary partners • Partners describe their own activities • Executives approve plans without input from managers and staff • Partners take individual credit/benefits; obstacles/problems not discussed	• Additional partners engaged • Partners discuss each other's activities • Executives seek plan input and approval from managers and staff • Partners share credit/benefits; obstacles/problems discussed and responsibility assigned to individuals	• Given vision, all necessary partners are present • Partners have equal influence during deliberations and reach consensus • Partners share credit/benefits as well as ownership of obstacles/problems • Tasks part of job descriptions
COMMUNICATION AND ACTION-PLANNING	• Indirect communications at executive level • Minimal planning (partners respond to requests)	• Task-specific communication involving different staff levels • Partners involved in short-term planning	• Open, regular, and direct communication both within and between all staff levels • Long-range planning of activities at multiple levels
RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT	• Limited to financial contributions (partners are philanthropists) • Individual bases considered separate	• Partners discuss human, material, and financial resources available; use to support specific activities • Some coordinated resource development (employer participation, grant opportunities, etc.)	• All resources available (long-term investment strategy) • Partners work collaboratively to identify, leverage, and target resources
IMPLEMENTATION OF YOUTH STRATEGIES	• Single isolated events, "projects" and "programs" • Staff members do all the work (partners advise/attend)	• Short-term goals • Partners avoid duplication of efforts; coordinate in key areas of overlap • Staff and partners participate in the work	• Partners committed to shared vision • Large-scale integrated activities • Partners do the work (staff members act as facilitators)
EVALUATION – CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT	• Outcomes focus on process • No measurement of results • No lessons available for future use • Partner interests unknown	• Outcomes focus on service delivery • Quantity of effort measured • Lessons discussed but not utilized for improvement • Partner interest discussed	• Outcomes focus on institutional change ("rules, roles, and relationships") • Efforts measured and analyzed using partner interests as guide • Lessons used to eliminate, refine, or expand future joint strategies

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How We Do Business - Worksheet

If we were collaborating at multiple levels, we would see...

Decision-Making

Communication

Resource Development

Youth Service Delivery

Evaluation – Improvement

EXAMPLES FROM THE FIELD

The YOUTH ADVISORY GROUP OF THE EAST TEXAS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD, TEXAS, hosts regular conferences for regional youth service professionals so that they can plan collaborative projects. Projects, which leverage resources from a variety of sources, have included: development of an after-school program model, production of a video to help parents recognize risks facing their children and find resources to help, an information campaign to encourage postsecondary participation, a directory of businesses that provide guest speakers and workplace learning experiences for youth, and a new project on health awareness.

PROJECT LIFT-OFF OPPORTUNITY FUND IN SEATTLE, WASHINGTON, is a collaborative effort between the City of Seattle, King County, and private grant makers. The Fund provides a mechanism that public and private organizations use to pool resources – create a "shared portfolio" – that can then be allocated to advance collaborative youth goals. The City of Seattle and the King County Children & Family Commission match some of the funds provided, $1 for every $2 given.

Many adult boards involve youth or have special youth advisory committees. The YOUTH COMMISSION OF HAMPTON, VIRGINIA goes a few steps further. The Commission, made up of 20 high school aged members, doesn't just advise, they administer the city's $45,000+ youth activities budget. Each year they oversee the proposal and award process that allocates the funds to projects developed by youth. The Commission also provides representatives to other city boards, adult commissions, and advisory groups, writes the recommendations for the youth component of Hampton's Comprehensive plan, and helps develop projects that improve youth services (for example, the city-wide bikeway system). And you won't see youth only on committees. Youth serve as interns or volunteers in 12 departments of city government, from public works to police.

The THREE RIVERS WORKFORCE BOARD, PENNSYLVANIA, hosted a Faith and Community Works to look at the role faith-based and community-based organizations play in workforce and economic development efforts. Regional employers and leaders gave updates on current and future workforce needs and community economic activity. Organizational representatives then discussed ways they provide (or could provide) career development services or referral resources to their clients. As part of the summit, they received information on publicly funded resources and area career-related service providers that could help them. The summit is part of a broader effort to map and survey FBO's and CBO's – to learn about services and referral patterns – and build TalentPittsburgh, an online database of area training and service providers.

In Arizona, two organizations, Teen Lifeline and Not My Kid, are leading an effort to develop a new model for non-profit collaboration. PARTNERS, INC., or Partnership for Adolescent Resources through Training Networking Education Referrals and Support, is a "management service organization" (M.S.O.) – a new organization designed to "further the distinct administrative or programmatic ends of two or more organizations" (and stretch tight dollars!) Under the structure, eight teen service organizations are housed in one location, share common office space, a call center, and other resources, but also have their own space.

The PANHANDLE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD, TEXAS, is part of Panhandle Twenty/20, a regional collaborative process focused on future livability and economic, health care, educational development linked to demographic changes in Panhandle counties. The Board's youth team members work with various task forces to incorporate WIA youth elements and to look at who has access to good services and who doesn't.

Youth Councils in PHILADELPHIA, HARTFORD, and elsewhere give extra points during their RFP process – or award additional funds – to service providers who demonstrate that they are actively partnering with other providers to offer WIA services.

RESOURCES

Partnerships & Collaboration
- In It for the Long Haul: Community Partnerships Making a Difference (pdf). Pew Partnership for Civic Change.
  http://www.pew-partnership.org/pdf/Long_Haul-summary.pdf
- Co-ordination, Collaboration and Co-operation: The Challenges of Working Together on Unemployment and Poverty (pdf) Vivian Hutchinson. Jobs Research Trust.
  http://www.jobsletter.org.nz/pdf/ccc99.pdf or http://www.jobsletter.org.nz/vivian/ccc99.htm
- The Conductor-less Orchestra. Harvey Seifter. Leader to Leader, No. 21, Summer 2001.
  http://www.drucker.org/leaderbooks/L2L/summer2001/seifter.html
- At the Table. Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development/The Tides Center
  http://www.atthetable.org/resources.asp
- Establishing a Nonprofit Organization. Foundation Center
  http://fdncenter.org/learn/classroom/establish/index.html
- Evaluation of the Transition to Comprehensive Youth Services under the Workforce Investment Act (pdf). U.S. Department of Labor/Employment and Training Administration/Office, May 2002. Jobs for the Future and the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development
  http://www.doleta.gov/youth_services/pdf/transition_2002.pdf
- The Collaboration Challenge. Austin, James E. Jossey-Bass, April 2000.
- Meeting the Collaboration Challenge Workbook: Developing Strategic Alliances between Nonprofit Organizations and Businesses. Drucker Foundation for Nonprofit Management. Jossey-Bass, May 2002.
- Renz, David O. "Getting in the Game: The Work of the Board in Collaboration." Nonprofit Quarterly, vol. 8 (Fall 2001): p. 49-50.
- Clients on Board: Profiles of Effective Governance. National Assembly of Health & Human Service Organizations

Resource Mapping
- Mapping Community Capacity. McKnight, John L. and Kretzmann, John. Chicago: Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research at Northwestern University, 1990. http://www.northwestern.edu/ipr/publications/community/mcc.html
- National Community Youth Mapping. Center for Youth Development and Policy Research
  http://www.communityyouthmapping.org/
- Raise Your Voice: Community Resource Mapping Guide. Campus Compact
  http://www.actionforchange.org/mapping/history.html

Learning from Others
- PEPNet Online Index to Effective Practices. National Youth Employment Coalition.
  http://www.nyec.org/pepnet/practices.htm
- How to Ignite Youth Council Development (pdf). National Youth Employment Coalition
  http://www.wdcspokane.com/About/reports/Guidebook Final 2-25-03.doc.pdf
- Kellogg Youth Initiative Partnerships, 1987 - 1997. Summary Lessons Learned from the Crucial First Decade of Positive Youth Development through Community-Based Programming
  http://www.wkkf.org/Knowledgebase/Pubs/ResourceOverview.aspx?CID=163&ID=3174
- Case Study of the Month. Alliance for Non Profit Management
  http://www.allianceonline.org/casestudy.html
- Celebrating Results across the Nation: Solutions for America. Pew Partnership for Civic Change
  http://www.pew-partnership.org/programs/solutionsForAmerica/index.html
- Wanted Solutions for America: What We Know Works (pdf). Pew Partnership for Civic Change, 2001.
  http://www.pew-partnership.org/pdf/what_works/what_works_all.pdf

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