CLASP
Center for Law and Social Policy

Making the Juvenile Justice – Workforce System Connection for Re-Entering Young Offenders

A Guide for Local Practice

Linda Harris
Director of Youth Policy
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Survey work by
Charles Modiano, Consultant

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Table of Contents

Foreword i

Introduction 1

Chapter 1. Making the Case for Connecting the Systems 5

Chapter 2. Challenge: Bridging the Systems' Cultures 13

Chapter 3. Challenge: Identifying the Key Program Components to Promote Retention and Reduce Recidivism 23

Chapter 4. Challenge: Making the Workforce and Employer Connections for Youth with Criminal Offenses 33

Chapter 5. Challenge: Managing Performance 37

Chapter 6. Looking Ahead: Challenges that Remain 41

Appendix 1. Youth Offender Public Management Model 43

Appendix 2. Intensive Aftercare Program Model 45

Appendix 3. List of Resources 47

Appendix 4. Profiles 49

- Phoenix Youth and Family Services, Southeast Arkansas 49
- Youth Opportunity Intensive Transition (YOIT), California 50
- Hartford Future Workforce Investment System, Connecticut 51
- Workforce Investment Board SDA-83, Inc., Northeast Louisiana 52
- Youth Opportunity (YO) Boston Youth Offender Program, Massachusetts 54
- Brockton RISE Center, Gateway Project, Massachusetts 55
- Camden Community Connections, New Jersey 56
- HoustonWorks Targeted Youth Offender Initiative, Texas 57

Foreword

As part of its commitment to disconnected youth, the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) has been focusing on communities that have made progress in connecting the different youth-serving systems at some scale. In pursuing this work, CLASP is actively involved with the Communities Collaborating to Reconnect Youth Network, which was formed in January 2006.[1] Most of the participants in the Network represent high-poverty urban or rural communities with high drop out rates, low youth employment rates, and substantial numbers of youth involved in criminal or high-risk behaviors. Communities participating in the Network have been or are interested in establishing comprehensive, systemic approaches to reconnecting out-of-school youth. Most have in place interventions that combine strong case management, education programming, workforce preparation, and support. In most cases, the youth programming is either anchored within the workforce system or is a continuation of the services developed under the federal Youth Opportunity grants, which were funded by the Workforce Investment Act but ended in June 2006.

The Network puts a high priority on expanding the formal connections between youth-serving systems and the justice system to give re-entering offenders access to supportive environments and programmatic services. This was motivated in part by the fact that in these communities, a sizable proportion of the out-of-school youth enrolled in programming had been involved with some part of the justice system. What's more, several communities were successful in making inroads with the juvenile justice system, thus providing substantial opportunity for learning and exchange.

1 More information on the Network can be found at http://www.clasp.org/CCRYN.

Introduction

The importance of successfully re-integrating young offenders into their communities has received increasing attention in recent years. The zero-tolerance policies of the past decade focused more on the detention, adjudication, incarceration, and surveillance of youth than on rehabilitation, aftercare, and re-entry support. Many within the justice system, the human services system, and the community have come to recognize that returning young people to their communities with only marginal investments in their rehabilitation and little support for their positive integration into community life is a recipe for failure. Such practices leave communities less secure and place youth at higher risk for continued involvement in criminal activities and disconnection from the economic and labor market mainstreams.

The Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration jointly sponsored a Taskforce on Employment and Training for Court-Involved Youth. In 2002, they issued a report that provided context and compelling reasons for bridging the two systems.[2] The report noted that:

> "A major developmental task of adolescence is preparing for economic self-sufficiency in adulthood. Successfully meeting this challenge requires youth to develop many related skills. First, youth need to learn how to be productive—how to set a goal and devise and implement an action plan for attaining the goal. Second, youth must develop an array of academic, technical, and social skills to be effective in work environments that are increasingly complex and interdependent. Third, youth must connect to the labor market by investigating and planning to pursue possible career paths."

The report called for a better understanding of the justice system's complex inner workings, and the potential to link with the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) youth system. Through demonstration projects, research grants, and guidance to the field, the Departments of Justice and Labor have made considerable investments in bridging the

2 Taskforce on Employment and Training for Court-Involved Youth. *Employment and Training for Court-Involved Youth.* Jointly sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration and the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. 2002.

two systems, the local community, and other systems to provide aftercare programming for re-entering young offenders. In the early 2000s, two Department of Labor funding streams—the sizable Youth Opportunity grants awarded to 36 communities around the country, and the Young Offender Demonstration grants—sparked real innovation among local workforce areas in serving court-involved youth.

With direction and research support from OJJDP, states across the country have adopted models of Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ), aimed at creating a balance among community safety, restitution, and restoration of the youthful offender.[3] Successful restorative justice approaches require the active engagement of the community and other sectors to make the connections and provide resources to develop positive pathways for these young offenders.

With the passage of the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) in 1998, the workforce system was directed to tap emerging research and evidence on effective interventions to take a more developmental approach to serving high-risk youth. Discussions to date about the upcoming reauthorization of WIA suggest that the program may soon require a substantial increase in services for higher-risk youth, particularly those in public care. In many communities, the workforce system has been somewhat reluctant to enroll substantial numbers of youth with such high-risk profiles. WIA performance is based on attaining employment and formal credentials; there are only very limited ways to adjust the standards or weight to reflect service to a more difficult population. Missing the performance benchmarks can result in loss of funding for an area or vendor. This has created a perception that the workforce system programming is neither well-suited nor intensive enough to meet the needs of youth in the juvenile and adult corrections system—a perception that the communities in this report are working to change.

In several communities, concern about the number of youth who were out-of-school, out-of-work, poorly educated, unskilled, and involved in high-risk or criminal activities led community leaders and local workforce boards to create coalitions to link systems and resources to serve the most challenged youth. Some of these communities were successful in making the **workforce–justice connection**. To develop this guidebook, CLASP drew from the experiences of several of these communities, as well as those who have comprehensive youth programs but have faced difficulties connecting the workforce and justice systems.

It is clear that the first task is convincing members of both systems that the benefits for youth and the community more than justify the challenges of integrating the systems' cultures and missions.

3 OJJDP. *Guide for Implementing the Balanced and Restorative Justice Model.* Available at http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/PUBS/implementing/intro.html.

About This Guide

This guidebook is designed to provide advice from the field to communities interested in pursuing more formal connections—or strengthening existing connections—between the workforce and justice systems. It focuses on specific challenges and how selected communities addressed them. The information was gathered via two surveys and site visits.

The **first survey** asked WIA youth system or Youth Opportunity system representatives to identify the biggest challenges to establishing an ongoing relationship with the juvenile justice system, and to provide guidance from their experiences. The areas covered in this guide were chosen based on these responses.

The **second survey** was then conducted with eight communities—both from within and outside the Communities Collaborating to Reconnect Youth Network—that had experienced some success in addressing these challenges. In six of the communities, **site visits** were conducted to enable more in-depth gathering of perspectives and information (see Table 1). Several individuals were interviewed at each site, including Workforce Investment Board (WIB) directors, project coordinators, job developers, justice and law enforcement liaisons, youth advocates, and Department of Youth Services staff.

TABLE 1: COMMUNITIES STUDIED

COMMUNITY	WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE	STUDY PARTICIPATION
San Diego, CA	San Diego Workforce Partnership	Round 1 survey
Baltimore, MD	Baltimore Office of Employment Development	Round 1 survey
Denver, CO	Denver Division of Workforce Development	Round 1 survey
Oakland, CA	Oakland Private Industry Council	Round 1 survey
Indianapolis, IN	Indianapolis Private Industry Council	Round 1 survey
Southeast Arkansas	Phoenix Youth and Family Services Department of Workforce Services	Round 1 survey Round 2 survey Site visit
Los Angeles, CA	Youth Opportunity Intensive Transition (YOIT) City of Los Angeles Community Development Department	Round 1 survey Round 2 survey Site visit
Boston, MA	Youth Opportunity (YO) Boston Youth Offender Program Mayor's Office of Jobs and Community Services	Round 1 survey Round 2 survey Site visit
Camden, NJ	Camden Community Connections	Round 1 survey Round 2 survey Site visit
Hartford, CT	Hartford Future Workforce Investment System	Round 2 survey
Brockton, MA	Brockton RISE Center, Gateway Project Brockton Area Private Industry Council	Round 2 survey
Northeast Louisiana	Workforce Investment Board SDA-83, Inc. Northeast Louisiana Delta Rural Youth Offender Program	Round 2 survey Site visit
Houston, TX	HoustonWorks Targeted Youth Offender Initiative	Round 2 survey Site visit

Contact information and brief descriptions of the programs in Round 2 are available in Appendix 4.

Challenges Identified

The following areas of challenge were identified in the first round of surveys and addressed in this document.

Challenge #1: Making the Case for Connecting the Systems

Several communities expressed difficulty in elevating the interest of the justice system in a more formal relationship with the WIA youth system. They indicated that despite the fact that they have fairly comprehensive strategies in place for youth in high-risk situations, they have not been successful in getting the justice system to take part in the collaboration. Respondents noted that a substantial proportion of the youth coming through their doors have been or are involved in the justice system; thus, it would be beneficial to have a more formal vehicle for referral and interaction.

Challenge #2: Bridging the Systems' Cultures

Getting the buy-in at the leadership level does not always guarantee harmony at the delivery level. Communities were interested in how to blend the cultures, dispel the misperceptions, and create mutually supportive relationships that focuses on youth.

Challenge #3: Identifying the Key Program Components to Promote Retention and Decrease Recidivism

Recognizing the many issues confronting juveniles as they transition from the justice system, communities were interested in the strategies that diverted young people from returning to the activities and behaviors that got them in trouble. They also sought information on ways to keep young people constructively engaged over a longer period of time.

Challenge #4: Making the Workforce and Employer Connections for Youth with Criminal Offenses

Connecting to employment is a critical part of re-entry. Respondents wanted ideas for increasing employment opportunities and access to high-growth areas of the economy for youth with criminal records.

Challenge #5: Managing Performance

The workforce system and the juvenile justice system measure success by different benchmarks. Having youth with high-risk behaviors presents obvious challenges for both systems. The question is how to blend resources and approaches to maximize the positive outcomes according to both systems' measures.

Chapter 1
The Challenge: Making the Case for Connecting the Systems

Bringing together complicated systems that have different youth-serving philosophies, cultures, and mandates—and in some cases, negative perceptions of each other—may seem a daunting undertaking. Overwhelmed by the obligation to public safety, monitoring, and detention, justice systems often give insufficient attention to the developmental and transitional needs of the youth in their care. While post-release services are intended to provide a balance of intervention and restraint and surveillance, the focus is too often slanted toward the latter two goals. Juvenile offenders' re-entry is greatly enhanced when they are connected to community-based resources and delivery systems that offer the intensity of services needed to redirect their paths. Making such system connections requires that leaders within the justice system are willing to partner in meaningful ways with other youth-serving systems to facilitate the transition. Likewise, youth-serving systems must be willing to adapt their delivery services and strategies to accommodate the needs of the justice system in assuring the adherence to the conditions of release.

"The quality of life of our youth on the street corner is reflective of the quality of life of everyone in that neighborhood and ultimately the quality of life in the community. If the quality of life is visibly deteriorating because we are not reaching those kids, then middle class disappears from your city and if you have not got a middle class then you have a city that is beginning to die and therefore we have that selfish interest. We want to help these kids—not just to help these kids, but to help the city as a whole.

— The Honorable John T. Yunits, Mayor, City of Brockton, Massachusetts

http://www.nlc.org/content/Files/IYEF-Audio-DY-12-18-03.pdf

We asked for input from six communities that have successfully bridged the two systems to support young offenders: Southeast Arkansas, Boston, Hartford, Los Angeles, Northeast Louisiana, and Camden. Each provided advice on what worked best in building the alliances. While the approaches varied, common themes emerged:

- Bridging these two systems was part of a larger vision for youth and the community.
- Success was not immediate; it evolved over time with much nurturing.
- The collaborations require substantial investment in understanding each other's systems.
- It was important to demonstrate success in terms of the numbers of youth who were positively engaged and making progress, and in reduced recidivism—doing so strengthened the bond between the two systems.

Advice from the Field

The main observations from the communities comprise the four sections of this chapter.

1. It takes leadership—both visionary and entrepreneurial.
2. Use facts and figures to make a compelling case.
3. Grow and nurture the partnerships building on success.
4. Find ways to overcome the information-sharing obstacles.

It Takes Leadership—both Visionary and Entrepreneurial

Respondents noted a need for both visionary leadership, which they defined as a person or entity charged with propelling and coordinating the overall effort, and entrepreneurial leadership, or the integration and maintenance of sound business practices and strategies.

On Visionary Leadership

When asked about the key to creating the momentum for the successful partnerships, most respondents pointed to the fact that one organization took the lead in convening stakeholders around a broader vision for youth and in sustaining the momentum to accomplish the mission. While the weight of the mayor or an intermediary can help mobilize community leadership, it was not necessary in all cases. Successful collaborations rallied support around a shared vision. Respondents acknowledged the importance of moving the coordination process beyond just memoranda of understanding—and of cultivating and sustaining relationships over time. Several communities found it useful to have leadership from the workforce system meet with top administrators and leaders in the justice system before organizing meetings with community stakeholders. The buy-in from key parts of the justice system was also important to the success of the collaboration.

Forming and sustaining collaborations is challenging and requires someone to light the spark, create the mandate, and sustain the momentum to withstand the hurdles inherent in any collaborative process. Several communities indicated that mobilizing community leadership and establishing a committed collaborative took at least one year.

Brockton

In Brockton, Massachusetts, the Blue Print Coalition co-chaired by the mayor and the district attorney brought together representatives from the workforce development system, juvenile justice, health and human services, law enforcement, welfare, and education to maximize and coordinate the community efforts and resources to provide for healthy youth development. The coalition set goals for providing all youth with a healthy, safe, and nurturing environment and access to education and opportunities for economic, community service, and civic engagement. This coalition has sustained over the years and has been successful in attracting substantial resources to Brockton, including the Youth Opportunity grant, the Department of Labor's Young Offender Demonstration Project grant, and the state Shannon Grant.

Hartford

In Hartford, Connecticut, the mayor convened a group of leaders to develop the Future Workforce Investment System (FWIS). FWIS is a partnership that includes the mayor's office, Capital Workforce Partners, Hartford Public Schools, Department of Health and Human Services, youth service providers, and employers. FWIS provides the infrastruc-

ture for collaborative planning and fundraising, and defines strategies for both that are based on best practice and 10 priorities set by the partnership. One such priority was improving employment opportunities for justice-involved youth. Because of the broader vision and the collaboration, Hartford has been successful in attracting funding from the Young Offender Demonstration project and subsequently from the Department of Labor's Re-Entry Initiative.

Camden

In Camden, New Jersey, the local WIB partnered with the prosecutor's office to convene the community partnership and hired an independent consultant to facilitate the community-building process. This result was a joint submission by the WIB and prosecutor's office for a federal Young Offender Grant, which was awarded to Camden by the Department of Labor. The partnership has remained intact and serves as the advisory committee to the Camden Community Connections, which has leveraged a second Department of Labor grant to connect youth to high-growth areas of the economy.

Southeast Arkansas

It was the visionary leadership of the director of the Phoenix Youth and Family Services (PYFS) agency that formed collaborative to bring the Youth Opportunity grant to rural Southeast Arkansas. PYFS collaborated with the Workforce Investment Board in Northeast Louisiana to secure a $2 million Rural Youth Offender grant from the Department of Labor.

On "Entrepreneurial" Leadership

Significant effort is required to build and sustain partnerships. These efforts are often seeded with time-limited foundation or governmental funding, and further resource development and sustainability planning often take a back seat to program operations. None of the surveyed sites reported having a single continuous stream of funding; instead, each taps multiple streams. The project director of Camden Community Connections suggested that staying in business requires managers to learn from effective business practices. In addition to high-quality products and services, a successful business knows the market, establishes a good marketing strategy, and creates a business plan and a development plan.

"To be successful we must stop acting like a governmental or social service agency, depending only on the vagaries of a single funding stream. We must be a business! Act like a business, talk like a business, and walk like a business."

— Martha Chavis, Project Director, Camden Community Connections

Most of the successful sites had elements of entrepreneurial leadership, even if they were not expressed in these business terms. These common elements included:

- A well-defined service model sufficiently comprehensive to meet the needs of high-risk youth;
- Effective processes for documenting outcomes, managing quality assurance, and continuous improvement;
- Strong data systems that support efficient data collection and effective tracking and case management and reporting;

Recommendations from the Sites:

MARKETING

Direct service organizations often fail to draw attention to their successes, largely due to marginal budgets and lack of sophistication in communications. The survey respondents made the following recommendations.

1. Engage a publicist with established media relationships and charge him/her with finding opportunities for media exposure, and maintaining effective press lists.
2. Create publicizing efforts such as brochures, marketing materials, a quarterly newsletter, a Website, CDs, and DVDs.
3. Tap external media outlets, including newspapers, radio, public access television, and new media; create effective youth public service announcements.
4. Celebrate all accomplishments and use newsletters and press releases to announce them; circulate these vehicles widely.
5. Host a regular radio show with youth preparing all content (for example, Camden Community Connections has the youth-led production, "This is this your American Dream").
6. Seek people and organizations that may want to conduct a documentary on your project.
7. Equip all partners and stakeholders with sufficient information and feedback on success to enable them to be ambassadors and marketers for the collective partnership.

- Outcomes data to make the case for funding—many programs tout their comprehensiveness but few track outcomes for this population sufficiently to make the case; these communities stressed the importance of producing such data;
- A diverse approach and quick response to funding opportunities; and
- Effective communications and marketing strategies (see Recommendations from the Sites box at left).

Use Facts and Figures to Make a Compelling Case

Most of the communities found that using compelling information on the details and magnitude of the problem or the impact of the intervention helped rally support and momentum for their efforts. Some sites commissioned studies; those with more constrained resources used administrative data analysis to great effect. Both approaches focused attention on the problem and potential solutions, rather than just the coordinating process.

Los Angeles

The Workforce Investment System in Los Angeles and Long Beach, in partnership with the U.S. Conference of Mayors, commissioned a study to examine the plight of local disconnected youth. Northeastern University's Center for Labor Market Studies produced the *One Out of Five* report, which used labor market and demographic data to present the problem facing youth in the labor market in a compelling, easy-to-understand format.[4] Following the release of the report, the Los Angeles WIB convened Crossroads 2005, a two-day conference and policy forum involving 130 experts and local leaders who together produced a set of recommendations for increasing the scale and scope of strategies to boost the workforce participation of young offenders. The recommendations included:

- Increase on-the-job training opportunities for youth offenders;

4 Fogg and Harrington. *One Out of Five: A Report on Out-of-School and Out-of-Work Youth in Los Angeles and Long Beach.* Northeastern University Center for Labor Market Studies. 2004. http://www.ci.la.u

- Advocate for mandated at-risk youth employment components of public works, construction, and other community improvement projects;
- Create incentives for involving at-risk youth in internships, work experience, and civic improvement projects;
- Support educational options that combine academic skills, work experience, a full school day, and concurrent community college enrollment; and
- Expand efforts to prepare youth offenders for positive re-entry while they are still in camp—at minimum, these efforts should address vocational training, the initiation of driving record and warrant cleanup, and payment of restitution and court fees.

This work set the stage for the ongoing collaboration and increased programming for youth in the justice system.

Northeast Louisiana

The rural Monroe, Louisiana, WIB lacked the resources to conduct an external evaluation like that undertaken in Los Angeles. Instead, the Northeast Louisiana Delta Youth Opportunity project director—who had prior experience as a program evaluator—designed and implemented an analysis based on administrative records and surveys. He was able to demonstrate that the offender involvement in the judicial system in the three-parish service area had decreased 33 percent since the implementation of their juvenile justice program. This analysis helped garner support from criminal justice officials and build credibility among community partners and state and federal officials, and was instrumental in attracting sustained buy-in and resources.

Southeast Arkansas

In rural Southeast Arkansas, leadership of the Phoenix Youth and Family Services (PYFS) conducted an analysis and was able to demonstrate that their project could reduce costs and provide better service to young offenders. The analysis showed that while it cost an estimated $100 a day to house a youth in a detention center, it cost only $25 for the same youth to participate in the Arkansas project as a restorative justice alternative. This fact helped garner the support of local law enforcement officials. In 2004, after only 10 years of operation, the Dermott Juvenile Detention Center in rural Southeast Arkansas closed its doors. The local judge credited the intervention of PYFS as the overriding reason for the decrease in the juvenile docket, which ultimately led to the closing of the facility (see Chapter 2). Staff use this information to highlight the effectiveness of their work.

Hartford

Led by the mayor, the Hartford Future Workforce Investment System takes a comprehensive approach to preparing the city's 14- to 24-year-olds to contribute to the local economy.[5] Its program brochure asks, "Why invest in our future workforce?" and

5 Hartford Future Workforce Investment System. *Hartford's Plan for Developing the Workforce of the Future*. January 2006. Available at http://www.capitalworkforce.org/youth_jobs/future_workforce_investment_system.shtml.

responds that, "The cost of prevention programs are a fraction of the cost of treatment programs." Communities that have been successful in leveraging resources not only make the case for community need, but also communicate to other stakeholders why the investment in prevention services makes economic sense. Before contacting state officials, project leadership outsourced a research survey report, *Funding for Hartford Youth Ages 14 to 24*, to identify all local youth allocations and spending. The leadership credits this approach as the main reason they were able to sustain state funding at a time of significant federal budget cuts.

Grow and Nurture the Partnerships, Building on Successes

Funders are more likely to invest in communities where their investment can leverage other resources. Thus, efforts that demonstrate success are better able to sustain momentum, expand their partnerships, increase advocacy for their interventions, and attract other funding. Most responders emphasized the importance of starting at a manageable scale to ensure quality and successful outcomes, and then "ramping up" by building on successes.

The surveys and interviews yielded the following guidance:

- **Be purposeful with the partnerships.** Organizing partnerships and collaborations is challenging and time-consuming. When this effort is directed toward pursuing discretionary funding, designing innovative interventions, or changing the delivery landscape, it provides purpose and creates bonding relationships among partners, which are further reinforced with the award of the grants.
- **Use the initial award as a catalyst for continued resource development.** The awards that catalyzed programmatic activities represented the start of a long-term process in most instances. It is important to both celebrate that success and aggressively identify venues for sustained funding. Most of the surveyed sites are not sustained by a single funding stream, but rather a combination of successive grants that enable ongoing interventions.
- **Use the collaboration to enhance the collective delivery capacity of the partnership.** In many of the communities, the concerted efforts of the collaboration secured resources to strengthen various parts of the system. These resources included direct funding to the WIA program delivery, funding to increase staff support to parts of the justice system, and grants to increase the delivery capacity of community-based providers or to provide technology support to the broader coalition. Successful collaborations strengthen the community's ability to raise funds and integrate delivery.

Find Ways to Overcome the Information-Sharing Obstacles

The communities that were most successful in bringing the two systems together found themselves sharing responsibility for case management and monitoring young offenders. This requires the ability to share case information across systems. Bridging the

information-sharing gap provides increased accountability, credibility, and relationship. The two major obstacles identified by the respondents were: (1) addressing the "confidentiality of records" issue, and (2) finding efficient ways to facilitate the sharing of data.

The confidentiality of records was one of the biggest impediments to collaboration, according to survey respondents. The policies governing the sharing of confidential information are complex—many respondents reported initial difficulty discerning what was governed by *law*, versus policy and/or organizational convention. Several communities voiced suspicions that confidentiality concerns were sometimes raised as an excuse not to collaborate. As relationships grew and cross-system understanding improved, these barriers were overcome and formal protocols and protections for data-sharing were established.

Recommendations from the Sites:

ADDRESSING CONFIDENTIALITY

Survey respondents recommended the following steps to address the challenge of confidentiality.

1. Establish a strong understanding of the confidentiality law (what is possible and what is necessary to provide the protection intended).
2. Create formal agreements defining the protocols for sharing information and data, and include language in all Memoranda of Understanding.
3. Include participant/parent waiver forms in the enrollment process.
4. Have all pertinent staff sign confidentiality agreements.
5. Establish clear procedures governing the sharing and safeguarding of data, and instruct internal staff.

Los Angeles

According to the Assistant General Manager of the Los Angeles City Community Development Department, initial efforts to establish cross-system case management compatibility and efficiency were met with resistance based on the confidentiality of records. A legal expert was brought in to help the partners define the specific information that could be shared, and in what context. The partners were advised that most information can in fact be shared, provided relevant waivers and staff confidentiality agreements are in place. Once these issues were addressed, the Workforce Investment System partnered with the juvenile justice system to collaboratively invest $280,000 to procure and install the web-based Integrated Services Information System (ISIS) to both refer, track, and monitor outcomes of probation-referred youth. In addition to the increased efficiency for both systems, ISIS now allows each youth re-entering the community to be immediately matched to the appropriate programs and services in their geographic area.

Hartford

HartfordConnects is a real-time, Internet-based program management system with data, case management and full outcomes reporting capabilities. The system—developed by Capital Workforce Partners in conjunction with, and funded by, the U.S. Department of Labor under the Youth Opportunity grant (YO! Hartford)—was recently expanded using additional local funding. *HartfordConnects* is used for all Capital Workforce Partners programs and by several other organizations in the Hartford area as well as out-of-state agencies. The system is linked to the Connecticut WIA Business System, which tracks WIA participants. It also provides a secure interface with the Hartford Public Schools student data system.

Chapter 2
Challenge: Bridging the Systems' Cultures

According to those interviewed, collaborative agreements at the leadership level don't always translate immediately to successful communications and interactions at the frontline staff level. Sites involved in these collaborative efforts reported facing several challenges as they sought to bring the two systems together, including:

- Differing youth-serving philosophies and languages at the frontline level;
- The complexity of the relationships among the components of the justice system—courts, detention, probation, and parole—which influence decisions on youths' sentencing, tenure, release, mandates, and surveillance;
- Skepticism on the part of the justice system about the workforce system's ability to effectively service these difficult youth;
- Court mandates, which often impact negatively on the service delivery strategy; and
- The potential for youth to get "lost" in the transition from the pre-release to post-release phase.

"The first thing we said to the judge was: How can we help you? What do you need?"

— Evelyn Givens, Director of Workforce Services, Phoenix Youth and Family Services, Southeast Arkansas

Advice from the Field

Respondents' main observations comprise the five sections of this chapter.

1. Initial relationship-building: "make their jobs simpler."
2. Use the hiring process and staff structure to promote cross-system collaboration.
3. Invest in staff development and joint training.
4. Become a positive influence in the court disposition process.
5. Provide intensive pre-release support to avoid fumbled hand-offs.

Effective transitioning of young offenders from juvenile justice and criminal facilities requires the workforce development staff, probation and parole officers, and the courts to work in sync, according to respondents. Sites indicated that accomplishing this synthesis of activity was beyond the work of a single liaison and required an ongoing set of activities designed to build trust and establish relationships. Thus, in most of these communities the transition of the young offender is not a hand-off, but a mutual agreement on activities and arrangements that accommodate the youth's court disposition, need for surveillance, and personal development needs.

Initial Relationship-Building: "Make Their Jobs Simpler"

Those interviewed indicated that simply making presentations to justice agency frontline staff on their youth programs and services was not sufficient to establish credibility and relationships. Initial relationship-building with probation officers, parole officers, and other justice system frontline staff often required more than just touting a "holistic youth development approach" or list of program services. Many respondents indicated that they were initially viewed as outsiders who did not understand the justice system or the youth within it. They noted that there was a tremendous turn-around once it became apparent that the partnership helped justice staff to better manage their caseload and produce positive outcomes for youth.

Activities that promoted dialogue and interaction between the two systems helped the workforce staff understand the challenges posed by the extremely high caseloads, complex bureaucracy, and high recidivism rates in the justice system. This understanding enabled the workforce development agencies to assist probation, parole, judiciary and other law enforcement officials in managing high caseloads—and often served as a catalyst for initial relationship building. The chart below offers recommendations and lessons learned by sites that addressed this issue and helped youth in the process.

SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES THAT BRIDGE GAPS WITH JUVENILE AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE AGENCIES

STREAMLINED PAPERWORK AND PROCESSES

The first step **Houston** and many other workforce development agencies took was to adapt the documentation process to collect the follow-up information required by probation and parole officials. Houston also prevailed upon the justice staff to augment their data collection to include information needed by their agency. Information is consistently shared to avoid duplication.

POST-RELEASE FOLLOW-UP AND DOCUMENTATION

In **Southeast Arkansas**, Phoenix Family and Youth Services Agency provides:

- A detailed Field Evaluation report to justice officials within five days of release;
- Intensive supervision and tracking—meeting with the young offender at least three times a week—and documentation of activities; and
- Monthly written progress reports to judges.

ON-SITE GROUP MEETINGS TO INCREASE EFFICIENCY OF PROBATION AND PAROLE STAFF

Northeast Louisiana, Camden, Brockton, and **Boston** encourage probation and parole officers to meet youth at the workforce centers. This enables the justice staff to meet with a group of youth at the same time and to hold on-site probation meetings. Giving justice staff an opportunity to see youth engaged in educational and career-related activities also helps build confidence in both the youth's ability to succeed and in the program's ability to deliver effective services.

DOCUMENTATION OF PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENT AS PART OF THE COURT PROCESS

Helping youth create a written record of their activity, progress, and transformation—which they can present in court—helps keep the courts and justice system aware of the impact of the intervention. In **Camden**, **Los Angeles**, and several other sites, staff assist each young offender in maintaining such a portfolio. In Los Angeles, this process is referred to as "creating a positive paper trail."

On the surface, many of these activities appear to add to case managers' workload. Yet when asked about this, the general response from the sites was that these efforts helped streamline processes, led to a higher level of youth engagement and less time spent tracking and dealing with disengaged participants, and produced better outcomes. Many workforce development specialists reported that the investment in many of these practices actually saved time.

Direct Feedback from Personnel in the Justice System

The Northeast Louisiana Workforce Investment Board surveyed a cross-section of the juvenile justice system, including probation and parole officials, a prison warden, an assistant district attorney, a District Court judge, a parish sheriff, and other law enforcement officials. They were asked how the workforce system could best assist the juvenile justice system. Some recommendations included: help reduce the justice case managers' caseloads; provide attendance, participation, and progress reports; have representatives from the justice system serve as mentors or workshop presenters; have justice staff visit and engage in workforce center activities; help youth address issues of anger management and conflict resolution; and develop training directly related to jobs in the justice system.

Use the Hiring Process and Staff Structure to Promote Cross-System Collaboration

A common strategy among all of the communities was hiring individuals who had experience and strong relationships within the justice system, and hiring individuals within the justice system to serve as liaisons.

Northeast Louisiana

The workforce board hired a recently retired state probation official to serve as the project's juvenile justice coordinator. This expedited the formation of a juvenile justice coalition that included judges, sheriffs, city marshals, the district attorney, and the Department of Corrections.

Houston

HoustonWorks structured its project to increase the capacity of its local probation department, parole department, and local anti-gang initiatives by providing each entity with two additional staff. In addition to general responsibilities held by other probation and parole officers, these staff members had the explicit lead task of connecting youth to the workforce system.

Boston

YO Boston hired a liaison with prior work experience with the juvenile justice facility. The project's decision to assign two staff members to work in each of their four local juvenile/criminal justice facilities was described as a "turning point" in the cross-system relationship. Providing space and a welcoming atmosphere at the YO Boston facility for probation and parole staff to meet with young people also contributed to relationship building and trust among the professional staff.

Leadership in Boston's juvenile justice system (Division of Youth Services) identified the following as essential to the successful working relationship with Boston's workforce development system:

- **Location.** The two agencies are in close proximity.
- **Staff Structure**. "Their staff are in our facility building relationships everyday."

- **Communication**. "Not a day goes by that I don't talk to somebody from YO Boston."
- **Commitment**. "They are willing to serve **ALL** of our clients. No one is turned away"
- **Defined Roles**. "There are clear staff expectations on both sides."
- **Staff Hiring Procedure**. "Before YO Boston hired their liaison to coordinate directly with us, she had to pass an interview with our leadership first."

Los Angeles

The Community Development Department's Youth Opportunity System (YOS), acquired funding from the County of Los Angeles Probation Department to form a two-person Youth Opportunity Intensive Transition (YOIT) team to lead relationship-building efforts with the juvenile justice facilities for outreach and marketing of services to probation staff, youth, and parents. YOIT staff also identify best practices and advocate for the inclusion of services and policies designed for adjudicated youth.

Southeast Arkansas

In rural Arkansas, the workforce initiative executive director had previous experience administering a five-county juvenile justice system, which helped establish relationships from the outset. Phoenix Youth and Family Services provides court liaisons for all court sessions, and staff offer pre-release services inside the facility. In addition, all grant proposals are shared with the juvenile courts.

Brockton

The project assigned two juvenile justice liaisons, one assigned to work part-time at the District Courthouse and the other at the "Day Reporting Center," a post-release juvenile justice facility. These liaisons, who were hired by the Brockton RISE Center run by the Brockton Area Private Industry Council, were interviewed and selected by the respective state juvenile justice entities (Appendix 4 provides more detail on RISE).

Invest in Staff Development and Joint Training

Organization liaisons and written protocols alone are not enough to build the relationships needed for effective post-release monitoring and case management. Without other staff development, a turnover in the liaison position(s), for example, could jeopardize the relationships. Respondents reported that they invested in familiarizing frontline staff in each system with the terminology, processes, outcome measures, and requirements of the other. The following primary strategies were suggested.

Monthly Cross-Training

HoustonWorks, Brockton, and others have provided regular cross-trainings for frontline staff on respective institutional language, guidelines, performance measures and data reporting, intake processes, and services for probation, parole, and workforce development. In Houston, training locations were rotated among the departments to give all staff greater familiarity with each other's physical sites, atmosphere, and cultures.

"Walk in Their Shoes"

Camden Community Connections requires its workforce development staff to become "mock probation officers" for a day, while other staff pose as "mock participants" in the probation process. Through this experiential approach, workforce staff get a more comprehensive understanding of probation's role.

Credentialed Training

In Los Angeles, those who complete the YOIT Training Series become certified Intensive Transition Specialists. Training includes two levels of certification, based on 24 hours of class time and 16 hours of field time. Classes cover understanding the YOIT model, working with probation officers and the juvenile justice system, linking the client to education systems, and public speaking/presenting to youth; the 16 hours of field time includes probation client enrollment and probation camp presentation.

Youth Practitioner Academies

The National Youth Development Practitioner's Institute (YDPI)—developed by the National Partnership for Community Leadership, the U.S. Department of Labor, and private foundations—trains frontline staff and leadership. YDPI's original weeklong trainings offered 12 to 16 core courses and were attended by 200 to 300 practitioners; courses included "Working with Youth Returning from Detention" and "Workforce Development for Youth with Prior Convictions."

All sites participating in this report's second round of surveys and site visits sent frontline and managerial staff to be trained at YDPI. At least three sites—Southeast Arkansas, Houston, and Boston—independently contracted with YDPI facilitators to provide additional on-site training.

Become a Positive Influence in Court Dispositions

A commonly cited challenge to collaboration was that fact that court mandates and requirements of probation or parole often run counter to youth's developmental needs. Some respondents indicated that, particularly for older youth, court mandates often called for immediate employment as a condition of probation or parole, making it difficult to provide youth with the pre-employment training or skills development that would lead to better labor market connections and long-term outcomes. Case managers had to work with these youth to develop individual service plans that take into account the conditions of probation or parole. For this reason, several respondents stressed the importance of being engaged prior to release, to plan for the transition and ensure a constant presence in the courts when dispositions are determined.

Many respondents indicated that while it took time to develop relationships and credibility, they were able to gain significant influence over court decisions regarding the terms and conditions of offenders' probation or parole. Some of the suggested strategies to achieve this influence are included on page 18.

- **Let youths' transformations make the case.** Perhaps no influence was stronger on judges than seeing the changes in appearance, attitude, and positive skill development that took place as a result of the interventions.
- **Ask judges how your organization can help them better serve youth.** This was the first step taken by communities such as Southeast Arkansas, Northeast Louisiana, Brockton, and Camden. The WIB Director and project director met with judges, presented ways they could interface, and incorporated suggestions from the judges. In each of these communities, judges now often consider the recommendations from their staff members prior to making final judgments. Communities reported that over time, the court and probation staff developed a good sense of which youth could best benefit from referral to their programs.
- **Involve judges in various program activities**. Some agencies—for example, in Southeast Arkansas—hosted day-long workshops that introduced their programs to the justice community. All community partners were invited, including judges. Other workforce development management staff found it valuable to host informal activities, such as "getting to know you" lunches with judges.
- **Maintain a continual presence in court as advocates for participants**. Some agencies, such as Southeast Arkansas and Camden, had court liaisons acting as youth advocates in court. Brockton's juvenile justice liaison sat in the courtroom during hearings and had judges refer the youth directly to her in the courtroom. Camden reported having the same kind of rapport with judges. This was possible because the programs cultivated the relationships, and made the judges aware of what the program offered.
- M**aintain a continual presence at probation and parole offices**. Success in this area has resulted from, among other approaches: co-location; daily/weekly visitation, as is the case in Boston and Brockton; and more formal quarterly presentations to all staff, as remain common in Camden.
- **Welcome a regular presence of probation and parole staff at the youth center**. In some sites—such as Northeast Louisiana and Camden—probation and parole staff not only visited on a regular basis, but also facilitated their parole/probation officer meetings at the youth center.
- **Create formal agreements or protocols for referral**. The Turning Point Program in Northeast Louisiana developed formal agreements with the youth detailing their agreement to participate in the program. These agreements were considered part of the conditions of their probation or parole. Early in the implementation process, Camden Community Connections devised a well-defined protocol for court referrals and referral forms. They found, however, that having the referral process and forms in place without the continuous presence of staff in the courtrooms yielded few referrals. Thus, written protocols without well-established relationships are likely to be ineffective.
- **Assist youth in documenting their progress in a file to be presented at future court dates.** Los Angeles, Camden, and Boston, in particular, focused the attention of the youth and the staff on creating a positive paper trail that documented youths' participation and accomplishments in both court-mandated and personal development activities.

Provide Intensive Pre-Release Services to Avoid Fumbled Handoffs

According to those interviewed, re-incarceration is more likely related to violations of the conditions of release than to further offenses. Thus, creating immediate connections to caring adult support and engagement in positive activity is critical. Most of the communities agreed that the more intense the pre-release services and programming, the greater the likelihood that young people will show up and remain engaged in activities that keep them from recidivating. Phoenix Youth and Family Services in Southeast Arkansas, YO Boston, Northeast Louisiana WIB, HoustonWorks, and Camden Community Connections all identified pre-release and transition activities. Some of the recommended practices included:

"Phoenix Youth and Family Services are a tremendous benefit to our courts. They are there at every court date! They provide a valuable alternative to detention keeping youth attached with the parent, school, and community. The closing of the Dermott Juvenile Detention Center in 2004 was a direct result of the lowering of juvenile docket due to the effectiveness of their services."

— Judge Theresa French, Juvenile Judge of the 10th Jurisdiction, Arkansas

- **Ideally, begin re-entry planning at entry**. Most sites begin providing services at least three to six months (when applicable) prior to the young person's release, and expressed a desire to increase that starting point to the point of the youth's entry into juvenile corrections for maximum transition benefit.
- **Undertake actions to build trust**. Communities reported that the ability to build a trusting relationship prior to release had the greatest impact on keeping youth engaged and progressing after release. This trust-building process was strengthened with the continual presence of staff inside the detention facilities and their participation in case conferences on release plans.
- **Offer on-site intake, assessment, and individual case management services**. Youth were screened for eligibility for various programs and services, educational assessments and retrieval of records, case files were started well before a youth's release.
- **Offer on-site programming**. Some sites like Brockton and Boston reported that youth outcomes improved significantly when they provided programming within the detention facility—examples included job readiness training, career counseling, life skills, and GED and remedial tutoring.
- **Provide off-site "passes" to services at the workforce development agency**. Houston and Boston achieved great success through this practice (see Boston's Transitional Passes box). The passes expose youth to the new positive environment before they are released from incarceration.

Boston's Transitional Passes

YO Boston provides pre-release "day passes" to youth to attend professional and life skills training or internships three to four days a week. This off-site training introduces youth to the new facility, a professional environment, and the supportive staff members who will aid them in their transition. At first, justice staff accompanied youth all day for security reasons; as trust evolved, the practice changed to dropping off and picking up at the end of the day.

Among the promising results of the transitional passes:

- *Of 92 young participants who have received transitional passes, not one has run away.*
- *A comparative study of 40 youth receiving day passes versus a control group showed a 50 percent drop in re-offending among those receiving passes.*

The remainder of this chapter highlights approaches used in specific communities.

Los Angeles

The Los Angeles YOIT has an Internet-based client data Integrated Services Information System (ISIS) that refers youth being released from probation camps to a WIA youth service provider, based on proximity to the client's residence. Probation officers are trained to utilize the YOIT system to refer and monitor probation youth, ensuring that youth are served immediately upon release. The system was designed to enhance services provided to youthful offenders, by addressing system-wide challenges and establishing communication and collaboration between the probation department and the youth case managers. The YOIT referral system has formed bridges between probation, the city, and more than 50 contracted partners. The process is as follows:

- Probation camp sends referral;
- YOIT ISIS system documents referral and sends e-mail to LA Youth Opportunity Movement/WIA;
- Youth Opportunity Movement/WIA enrolled eligible youth and enters activity notes into ISIS;
- YOIT ISIS system extracts non-confidential information from LA City ISIS; and
- Camp Community Transition Program accesses participant history to determine need for follow up.

Southeast Arkansas

The rural Arkansas PREP program structures its activities based on the three phases of David Altschuler's Intensive Community-Based Aftercare Program (IAP), which requires the engagement of justice and aftercare support staff throughout.[6] Appendix 2 presents the components of the IAP model.

Staff contact starts six months prior to release. Activities during the pre-release and transition stages include:

Pre-release Phase

- Face-to-face contact inside the facility to establish relationships;
- Program overview provided;
- TABE testing for basic skills, Career Scope assessment to determine areas of aptitude and interest, and risk and needs assessment conducted; and
- Post-release plan developed.

6 Altschuler, D.M and T.L. Armstrong. *Intensive Aftercare for High-Risk Juveniles: A Community Care Model.* U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. 1994.

Intensive Transition Phase

- 72-hour notification of release provided;
- Orientation to program and introduction to staff provided and contract signed;
- Face-to-face contact at least three times a week;
- Connection to community supports, as appropriate: health care, child care, housing, substance abuse treatment, etc.;
- Personal, financial, and family situation assessments conducted; assistance to stabilizing situations provided; and
- Referral provided to Stand Up Employee Excellence Workshop, which offers job preparation and swift connection to employment for those with immediate financial obligations.

Boston

Boston conducts intake, assessment, and job preparation activities during pre-release. In addition, each youth faces a re-entry panel twice before release and once at the time of release. Using the "good cop/bad cop" approach, the panel—which comprises probation/parole staff, YO staff, and law enforcement—presents a united front and offers the young offender the choice: "if you want to move in a positive direction with a hopeful future, we are here to help and support you; if you choose to continue with the path of criminal activity, we will send you back. The choice is yours." Staff in Boston reported that upon release, they meet youth at the facility and bring them directly to the center.

"We work with them while in the institution to build relationship and trust. We meet them at the door as they are being released, grab them before they get on the street, and bring them to the center."

— Conny Doty, Director, Jobs and Community Services, Boston

Chapter 3
Challenge: Identifying the Key Program Components to Promote Retention and Decrease Recidivism

Most of the communities defined their approach not as a single program model, but rather a comprehensive support system that partnered with other systems, developed important linkages for referral to community-based resources, and customized a set of programmatic activities and services to meet the offender's complex individual needs. All of the survey responses touched on the importance of adult advocacy in "meeting youth where they are" and helping them to navigate systems and make progress.

While these components are essential to any effective youth intervention, the survey responses illuminated specific issues to consider when dealing with the young offender population.

"You can tell if someone really cares about you or if they are just there for the job."

— Gladys Mungia, youth participant, Los Angeles YOIT

Advice from the Field

Respondents identified five elements as critical to programmatic success, which comprise the sections of this chapter.

1. Establish effective and intensive case management, case planning, and "route counseling."
2. Institute a culture of high expectations and youth achievement.
3. Invest in life skills, soft-skills, and pre-employment preparation.
4. Create strong linkages to education providers.
5. Ensure a well-managed work component.

Establish Effective and Intensive Case Management, Case Planning, and "Route Counseling"

According to responders from several communities, the case management function took on an additional dimension when working with young offenders. While most programs reported that the juvenile offenders were integrated with other youth in the program offerings, the process of developing a service strategy was complicated by the various requirements and mandates associated with their release and parole or probation. Almost all of the communities undertook the following three functions. **Intensive case management** refers to the one-on-one relationship between the youth and a staff person who is responsible for assisting the youth in the development of an individualized service strategy and monitoring and tracking progress. **Case planning** involves a broader set of actors—case

managers, probation or parole staff, parents, and youth—in the structuring of the set of activities most appropriate for the youth. **Route counseling** is directing youth to the specific activity, service, or resource; staff follow up to ensure that youth can get to activities, get enrolled, and remain connected.

Recommendations from the respondents included:

- **Connect with youth as early as possible before release and continuously thereafter to create a bond and establish trust**. This trusting relationship increases the likelihood of continuous engagement after release.
- **Ensure appropriate staff preparation**. Those functioning in this role must be well-trained, able to function well as a part of a team, and understand the many cultures—of the street, diverse ethnicities, and varied institutions—in which they will be dealing.
- **Ensure staff awareness of resources**. Those functioning in this role must be aware of the available resources, familiar with the available services to make sure they are appropriate and high-quality, and have established a personal relationship for making referrals.
- **Make time for "face time."** The service strategy should be designed to allow for multiple opportunities for face-to-face contact between youth and case managers, especially during the initial transition months.
- **Facilitate information-sharing**. Make sure there is an efficient vehicle for the exchange of case information across the partners on the team.

Institute a Culture of High Expectations and Youth Achievement

"Creating a culture of achievement in youth begins with creating a culture of achievement in staff!" according to respondent Martha Chavis, the director of Camden Community Connections. This theme was repeated in several other sites.

All sites emphasized the importance of staff modeling the behaviors, dress, respect, and etiquette that would be expected of the youth when they entered the workplace. It was important to "meet youth where they were" and help them establish goals for themselves. The process of factoring in higher expectations begins at pre-release and is reinforced through the activities in the post-release stage. Respondents recommended several techniques to create a culture of high expectation:

- **Assure that the environment is judgment- and stigma-free.** According to those interviewed, it was important that staff not judge youth or set limited expectations based on where they are coming from or where they had been. Rather, it was staff members' job to expose youth to another set of options and new environments, and prepare them to succeed. This required that staff be well-trained, culturally aware, and able to effectively communicate with this complex population.
- **Be conscious of the gang/street affiliations and make sure that all such trappings are kept outside of the program/center.** The YOIT program in Los

Angeles did an interesting cross-walk identifying the needs that are fulfilled by gang participation—ranging from sense of family, identity, and recognition to friendships and financial gain—and how the program's continuum of support and services could meet those same needs. One of the program's themes is "Nothing changes one's sense of identity in the same way that employment does."

- **Create an environment and expectations that mirror a private work environment.** The communities surveyed noted that on a daily basis, youngsters should have opportunities to practice professional behaviors in a safe environment. Camden's office looks like a business enterprise and adheres to the same basic codes of conduct. There is a system of small fines that both staff and youth pay when they demonstrate behaviors that are inappropriate for the work place.

- **Be consistent**. Several respondents said consistency rather than nurturing was key to producing and reinforcing positive behavioral change. One respondent indicated that their job was to deprogram all the behaviors that get reinforced when youth spend time incarcerated and repeatedly under the jurisdiction of law enforcement and the correctional system.

- **Remind youth of the consequences of a return to criminal behavior**. Boston reported that young offenders are subject to a re-entry panel twice before release and at the time of release. This team of youth advocates, probation/parole officers, and law enforcement repeated a consistent theme reinforcing that there are positive choices and consequences for making the wrong ones.

- **Give youth a vibrant role in program decision-making and delivery.** In Southeast Arkansas, for example, youth advocates are hired as regular staff members and serve as the voice of their peers on the front end of all decisions for this program. They serve as leaders of the peer council (of 10 youth members) to provide input into program decision-making. They also require college students to come back and speak with the younger youth during spring break, summer break, and Christmas break. This group plays an instrumental role in the organization of college tours for younger youth during the summer months.

- **Find groups and individuals to serve as mentors.** Houston has a group of previously incarcerated men who are now successful and who lead effective support-group sessions. Camden enlisted the Firefighters' and the National Black Nurses' Associations and members of the Black Professional Women's Association to sign on as mentors. Arkansas had success in identifying a pool of employers to provide mentoring support to youth at the workplace.

Invest in Life Skills, Soft-Skills, and Pre-Employment Preparation

"These youth often don't realize that the way they walk, the way they sit, how they stare, what they wear, and how they speak may be intimidating in an interview or work situation." This comment from an interviewee in Boston encapsulates a key challenge in preparing these youth for participation in the workforce. All programs offered activities geared to

STRIVE *is a nationally recognized model operating in 21 communities in the United States and abroad. It is designed to help those facing substantial barriers to employment achieve economic independence through work. It includes:*

1. *Four weeks of highly interactive and structured training on personal responsibility, attitude, self-esteem, and soft skills;*
2. *Immediate placement in growth jobs, but without "guarantees," so participants must earn their new-found positions;*
3. *Two years of follow-support and access to services; and*
4. *Career advancement services to allow participants to specialize in a career field, boosting their income.*

changing belief systems and behaviors and equipping these youthful offenders with the skills to comport themselves in the courtroom and in the workplace. Communications and presentation skills are particularly important. Camden recently added the STRIVE employment workshop, which has been nationally recognized for its success in changing "attitudinal" belief systems and behaviors (see box).

On the Duration and Intensity of Preparation

Three different sites reported that they had increased the level of duration and intensity of their pre-employment initiative as their program evolved. After YO Boston increased its training from three to eight weeks, it noticed significant results in the retention of participants after placement. Others reported greater success after adding hands-on experiential workshop sessions.

The content areas most likely to be addressed as part of the life skills component were:

- Decision-making/goal-setting;
- Personal presentation: appearance, dress, hygiene;
- Communication and presentation skills;
- Functioning as part of a team;
- Money management/personal management skills; and
- Conflict resolution/anger management.

Create Strong Linkages to Education Providers

All of the respondents indicated that making the linkages for re-entering offenders to be immediately connected to school or other educational options was critical. Almost all of the youth returned with educational deficits and needed to be connected to an appropriate educational option. For many, retention in school or an educational program was a condition of their probation/parole, but immediate enrollment in the public school system was not always possible. Because the educational profiles of returning offenders were not all the same, sites reported needing multiple options to support an offender's return to traditional school or alternative education environments. Sites used a range of education connections—from tutorial assistance for offenders returning to school to enhanced GED programs and community college linkages—as part of an overall service plan that included work exposure and other developmental activities.

The following paragraphs highlight examples of strong education interventions in the communities we surveyed or visited.

Boston

Boston has a well-established network of community-based alternative education programs. The Community Development and Jobs Agency (the parent agency for YO Boston) purchased 150 slots in these alternative programs, earmarked for offenders, so they would be able to connect youth who were not returning to public school, to the most appropriate education program immediately upon release. Boston Public Schools also has a portfolio of alternative programs. YO Boston entered into a partnership with Boston Public Schools, the Division of Youth Services, and the Commonwealth Program to provide specialized case management services through YO to facilitate the re-entry of young offenders back into the school system. Through early case planning, facilitated record sharing, and shared commitment to assuring a smooth transition, Boston has made progress in creating education linkages for re-entering young offenders.

Hartford

Hartford has had success with a credit retrieval program and Diploma Plus. These programs include non-traditional academic remediation and instruction based on competencies, case management, and work/internship opportunities. The credit retrieval program provides intensive instruction in math, reading, and English to help youth attain high school credit toward a diploma or prepare for the GED. Youth follow a rigorous academic schedule of daily classes enhanced with life skills and job readiness preparation. The Diploma Plus program is part of a larger educational structure within the Hartford Public Schools that offers at-risk youth access to social services, guidance, technology, career exploration and placement, post-secondary preparation and support services. Diploma Plus curriculum is engaging, student-centered, and designed around key competencies. Graduation is determined by proficiency, not by seat time. A portfolio system captures and demonstrates student mastery. Previously funded in large part by a U.S. Department of Labor Youth Opportunities grant, these programs are now supported by the Hartford Public Schools and the Capital Workforce Partners, the local Workforce Investment Board.

Recommendations from the Sites:

MAKING THE EDUCATION CONNECTION

Sites offered general guidance for those seeking to make the educational connections for re-entering offenders.

1. Establish formal relationships and protocols with the educational entities prior to launching your program.
2. Define the process for accessing academic and records to be used in the case planning process prior to release.
3. For youth returning to public school, define how academic and personal support will be provided to assure their progress and retention in school.
4. For older youth and those who can't re-enroll in school identify or create alternative environments that provide academic instruction geared to high school credentialing or GED coupled with work experience or occupational skill development.
5. Make linkages with the post-secondary system to begin early exposure of youth to college options and to develop programs and support for post-secondary transition.

Northeast Louisiana

The Turning Point Program philosophy emphasizes concurrent education and occupational skills training. Under an enhanced GED model, youth engage 12 to 15 hours a week in

academic instruction, both classroom-based and computer-assisted. Youth attend GED classes at either Louisiana Technical College or at the learning labs at Turning Point. They spend a similar amount of time in classroom occupational skill training. Turning Point also partners with the Monroe Chamber of Commerce and the local school systems to provide enrichment courses such as art, foreign language, and others via teleconferencing at the youth centers. These courses are not available through the local school system. ACT/SAT preparation courses are provided through contracts with private firms.

A partnership between Louisiana Delta Community College and the Turning Point initiative gives young people access to college courses at the youth centers (other opportunities to attend college courses require approximately a two-hour drive). Turning Point provides participants financial assistance for tuition.

Los Angeles

Los Angeles brought the LA Trade Tech Junior College inside the probation camp and arranged for high school graduates to begin their college coursework. LA Trade Tech continues coursework once young people leave the detention facility.

Southeast Arkansas

Phoenix Youth and Family Services works in conjunction with schools to enhance educational skills attainment by engaging youth in individual tutoring and enrichment classes. Each of the seven school districts has allowed recruiter/liaisons, employed by PYFS, to be housed on their campuses to bridge communication gaps and ensure a more seamless flow of services for those in-school participants. Tutors are paid to provide an on-site tutoring program since private sector firms such as Huntington or Sylvan Learning Centers are not available in the target area. Youth also attend four weeks of summer enrichment classes during July. Certified Teachers pair with regular tutors to provide intense tutorial services during this four-week period.

GED prep classes are offered at four sites three mornings per week, college/SAT prep is offered weekly at each of the centers. On a quarterly basis, college tours and "college days" are sponsored to provide college and scholarship information to all participants. High school seniors take introductory college courses during the school year for credit hours. If they complete the course with a 2.5 or higher grade point average, a local college-bound program, Upward Bound, will pay for the next six hours in introductory courses during the first summer term. PYFS offers tuition assistance for those youth who are eligible and have met the criteria.

Camden

The academic instruction provided on site at Camden Community Connections is geared toward GED preparation and achieving the SCANS competencies identified for high-growth industries, particularly finance, hospitality, and health care. The program worked with the deans of Camden Community College to arrange for courses—computer literacy and health—to adjudicated youth for college credit. Participants are eligible even if they do not yet have a high school diploma. All youth must supplement coursework with on-site educational activities. Passing the course leads to college enrollment.

Ensure a Well-Managed Work Component

Work activities spanned the continuum from training to community service, internships, paid work experience, and ultimately unsubsidized employment. All communities offered some combination of work activity with several different models of delivery. Work represented the "carrot" to attract the participation of the young offender—it provided the means for restitution, was often a condition of probation, offered a supported environment for developing employability skills, and served as a vehicle for constructive social engagement and skill building.

Most sites limited work experience to 15 to 20 hours a week to allow for other skill-building activities. Work experience and internships were distinguished from community service in that they typically placed youth in jobs or environments that allowed them to develop specific competencies, exposed them to specific occupations or industries, and enhanced their ability to make future contributions to the workplace and to the community.

On Community Service Learning

The OJJDP *Guide to Implementing the Balanced and Restorative Justice Model* defines service learning as "doing worthwhile work in the community, with a purposeful outcome that the offender can recognize."[7] This work meets a real need in and is positively acknowledged by the community, and achieves clear educational outcomes. Service learning aids the development of work skills, social competencies, and reliability that the offender can transfer to compensated work. Community service activities can also provide a more sheltered and supported environment to reinforce social and work skills before exposure to more complicated work situations.

Most of the sites engaged youth in some form of community service learning. They reported using community service as a civic engagement vehicle to constructively re-connect youth to the community, to help the community see these youth as assets, to reinforce the lessons of civic responsibility and "giving back," and to begin the skill development process. Most communities reported that they provided stipends to students who participated in such projects, in recognition of the financial burdens of restitution payments and other court-related fees.

Service Corps models that offer wages for community conservation work, combined with support and often education, have proven to be an effective strategy for impacting labor market outcomes for high-risk youth. Evaluations of Service Corps have found higher rates of employment and higher wages for corps participants, in particular minority male participants, compared to the

"Service as a strategy to re-engage youth, can be a powerful part of a restorative approach to the re-integration of young offenders—building community, building civic spirit, and rebuilding young lives. Planning for a competency-based service experience is key."

— Sally Prouty, President and CEO, National Association of Service and Conservation Corps.

7 Guide for Implementing the Balanced and Restorative Justice Model is available at http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/PUBS/implementing/intro.html.

program's counterparts.[8] A detailed guide for starting a Service Corps, with details on the management considerations is available at http://www.nascc.org/documents/Startinga Corps.pdf.

To ensure effective service learning programs, respondents recommended the following:

- **"Loaded language"— avoid stigmatizing this type of activity when presenting to youth and the community.** A few sites reported that the term community service carries a negative connotation, especially when it is attached to the justice system. The feeling of being assigned to community service as a punishment or the stigma of being part of a community service crew because you committed a crime makes it difficult to use the activity to build self esteem and civic pride. Houston used the term "voluntary work experience," and others referred to service learning.
- **Where possible, integrate the offender population with the other youth participants on service projects.** This leads to decreased stigmatization of the youth and of the program.
- **Identify projects that allow youth to feel a sense of accomplishment and/or belonging.** The types of projects referred to across the communities surveyed include: assisting in nursing homes, tree planting and beautification, helping with fund raising, stocking food banks, serving in community feeding programs, etc.
- **Involve youth throughout**. Respondents noted the importance of involving youth in project identification and planning.
- **Structure the opportunities for learning and skill development**. Communities must do more than assume that these will occur automatically through participation.
- **Pay attention to the logistics of managing the experience to assure safety and security of both the youth and the community.** Boston in particular emphasized that since their program accepts those with serious offenses and there is a neighborhood gang problem, the site must consider which youth are sent to which neighborhoods or assigned to the same crews, transportation to and from projects, and other related threats and hazards. Boston indicated that having law enforcement officers as active partners helped them plan for and minimize potentially volatile situations.

Boston

YO Boston's well-developed four-tier work model has for years provided a gradual transition from a more supported work environment to job placement in the private sector (see Boston Profile in Appendix 4). Boston also had success with the Winter Jobs Program, which engaged young offenders in meaningful work projects on the weekends for $8.00 an hour. The success of that initiative prompted the Mayor to raise funds to expand the program to weekdays during the summer. Scheduled hours often reached into the

8 Jastrzab, Masher, Blomquist, and Orr. *Final Report on the Evaluation of the American Conservations and Youth Service Corps*. ABT Associates. 1996. Available at http://www.abtassociates.com/reports/ccc_youth_0596.pdf.

evening—according to staff, this was a conscious strategy to keep youth constructively occupied and lessen the free time that they had on the streets in the evenings. The Summer Jobs Program for Court-Involved Youth enrolled 224 of the most serious offenders on the theory that keeping them constructively engaged for the summer months would result in reduced incidences of youth violence. According to Conny Doty, Director of Jobs and Community Services, this was the case for the seven-week period that these young offenders were engaged. Additionally, the Boston Police Department and Emergency Medical Services trained and certified 150 of these youth in CPR and first aid—the unfortunate reality is that in many of the situations of violence, these youth will be the first responders.

Chapter 4
Challenge: Making Workforce and Employer Connections for Youth with Criminal Offenses

The prescription for successful business engagement was very similar across all of the communities: (1) develop a business relationship with employers, (2) know the skills and attributes that they are looking for to meet their workforce needs, (3) provide them with high-quality referrals, and (4) follow up to ensure that the referrals work out and employer needs are met. Most of the programs, because they were part of the larger workforce system, reported having an extensive network of employer relationships.

"We approach employers as a business that can provide them with high-quality workers"

— Jaime Campos, Job Development Specialist, HoustonWorks

Respondents felt it important to be able to prepare the young offenders to compete with others in the in the pipeline, without singling them out as a special population. Most respondents did not try to market these young people to employers, or convince them to work with offenders; rather, they focused on the merits of hiring young people who were a good fit. As a result, the job developers who were working to match youth to jobs had to be certain that the youth were adequately prepared. Poor-quality referrals could jeopardize the relationship for the entire organization. All programs reported having a very skilled group of job developers that cultivated employer relationships, both pre- and post-hire, and knew the youth well enough to assure a good match.

Advice from the Field

Several techniques employed by the communities comprise the sections of this chapter.

1. Target growth sectors.
2. Create a small business outreach strategy.
3. Connect with the One-Stops and statewide job network databases.
4. Use "door openers."
5. Consider subsidized internships in the private sector.
6. Host second chance job fairs.

Target Growth Sectors

Camden, Northeast Louisiana, and Southeast Arkansas all developed strategies for targeting high-growth sectors of the economy, and received Department of Labor grants to do so. Pursuant to the grants, each area analyzed local labor market statistics to identify the areas of sustained job growth—health, culinary arts, hospitality, construction (building trades), transportation, and information technology were among the industries targeted.

In addition to the job preparation activities previously noted, these three sites engaged in the following type activities related to connecting youth to high-growth sectors:

- Camden identified and categorized the employers in the three high-growth/high-demand sectors—finance, hospitality, and healthcare—and obtained information on the credentials and SCANS skills[9] for entry-level positions in those industries. The project created workshops and introductory classes for which youth were awarded college credit. It also worked with employers to provide job shadowing, interviewing, mentoring, internships, on-the-job training, and part-time and full-time employment.

- The Turning Point Program in Northeast Louisiana partnered with the Louisiana Technical Colleges to train youth in Nursing Assistants, Automotive Technology, Welding, and Diesel Mechanics. These courses lead to a state-recognized credential. The project also developed training in the building trades, anticipating the increase demand for these skills as part of the Gulf Coast rebuilding effort.

Create a Small Business Outreach Strategy

Camden staff reflected on the fact that big business represented only 10 percent of the open jobs. Thus, they had to develop a strategy to target small and medium-size business—in their case, personal relationship-building and making one-on-one matches. While there are specific job development staff, all staff are expected to talk to employers, understand business needs and hiring requirements, and sell the programs' ability to meet these needs. The project does not expect businesses to hire out of social consciousness; instead, Camden Community Connections invests time in making good matches. The project staff expressed the belief that any employer can be convinced; the key is the quality of the youth's preparation. Youth receive preparation for placement during their eight-week community service component. While the original model called for placing youth in community service, followed by paid work experience and private-sector jobs, the program has been successful in moving youth directly from community service to private-sector jobs, which is the transition that it prefers.

Through its success in connecting hard-to-reach youth to employment, Phoenix Youth and Family Services in rural Southeast Arkansas has developed relationships with over 60 regional employers that recognize its ability to provide qualified young workers who have been appropriately equipped for the work place. This credibility allows PYFS to connect young offenders with appropriate job offerings. Some employers have worked with PYFS to employ youth immediately upon release. Job Counselors are available to the employers to assure that the job experience is mutually beneficial to employer and youth. Many of these employers offer mentoring for youth at the job site.

9 Published and released in June 1991, the SCANS Report skills and competencies were identified by the Secretary of Labor's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills. Updated information is available at http://wdr.doleta.gov/SCANS/.

Connect with the One-Stops and Statewide Job Network Databases

One of the benefits of connecting with the workforce system is the access to a wide array of materials, workshops, assessments, labor market information, training information and referrals, and employer connections. One-Stops provide access to state, regional, and national job banks as well as information on careers and post-secondary training programs. Since these efforts are typically operated within a larger workforce system, most areas had some relationship with their One-Stop Centers. However, the predominant criticism of the One-Stops was that their services focused more on providing immediate outcomes to adult and dislocated workers, and as a result, their environment was not youth-friendly and the services were not always appropriate to the intense needs of these youth.

Houston's young offender program is anchored in the WorkSource One-Stop Centers operated by HoustonWorks. Dedicated staff in each of four centers function as navigators for the youth. The staff indicated that the One-Stop provides access to a rich library of resources and a wide array of opportunities for young offenders. Youth are integrated with the general population and not treated differently. The role of the Youth Offender Demonstration Project (YODP) staff is to prepare individual service plans based on the pre-release assessment and the opportunities and resources of the One-Stop system. Staff also noted that the "WorkInTexas.com" database is invaluable in preparing and connecting youth to employment opportunities.

Camden bridged this gap by scheduling youth in groups in advance to go to the One-Stop Center accompanied by staff. Camden Community Connections staff were able to streamline the WIA enrollment process, facilitate the introduction of these youth to the center's staff and services, establish ongoing relationships, and give these youth access to an array of One-Stop services and connections.

Use "Door Openers"

An employer's first-time "bad hire" of someone with a past record can often unfairly close the door on that company's employment opportunities for all future jobseekers with the same barrier. While a successful job placement can never be guaranteed, this reality places a greater responsibility on making sure that a job developer's first referral to a new company has a minimal chance of failure. Various communities employed the strategy of sending what their pre-employment assessment and preparation process deemed to be their most job-ready individuals to establish a record for quality hires in a new company. In Houston this practice was coined as sending "door openers." Once a successful track record is established, staff can take a chance on making a higher-risk referral. Says one respondent, "If a company then hires five more of our referrals and one of those five individuals does not work out for whatever reason, they will view that circumstance as an aberration, and not the general rule."

Consider Subsidized Internships in the Private Sector

Northeast Louisiana, in connection with a local One-Stop, was able to provide internships in professional environments such as doctors' offices, hospitals, and universities. After the six- to eight-week internships, approximately 20 percent of the youth were able to continue their employment, which was subsidized by the company. Despite the fact that most companies lacked the resources to subsidize continued employment, program staff praised the long-term value of the work experience gained by the youth.

As part of its four-tiered transitional process YO Boston successfully integrated pre-employment training, community service, and internships into eventual private-sector employment. It is important to note that internships required significant resources on the part of agencies. Both Boston and Northeast Louisiana's levels of internships have been significantly affected by the loss of their Youth Opportunity grants.

Arkansas established the Stand Up Employee Excellence Workshop, which offers immediate employment for re-entering youth whose pre-release assessment identifies an urgent financial need for employment. Phoenix Youth and Family Services staff identified a pool of employers who would accept these youth as employees and were willing to serve as mentors. The project's job support specialist is in daily contact with the youth at the workplace and provides support to the employer to address areas of concern. Although the youth start working immediately, they also participate in other activities, in keeping with their individual plan.

Host Second Chance Job Fairs

Houston has found it useful to regularly bring employers on-site for interviews. Each week, employers can be found at Houston WorkSource Centers giving interviews to prospective job seekers. On a monthly basis, HoustonWorks and its partners host "Second Chance Job Fairs" that exclusively target individuals with a prior juvenile or criminal justice conviction. Since jobseekers already know that the employers are open to looking beyond their prior records, these fairs can reduce participant anxiety, which may in turn improve jobseekers' interview performance. A typical Second Chance Job Fair will include approximately 20 employers from various sectors.

Chapter 5
Challenge: Managing Performance

Performance in the WIA system is driven by a fairly complex set of standards that are not adjusted to reflect the difficulties of the individuals enrolled or the intensity of the service strategies that are put in place. There are seven WIA-legislated youth measures—four for older youth (ages 19 to 21) and three for younger youth (ages 14 to 18):

Older Youth

- Entered employment rate
- Job retention rate
- Earnings change
- Credential rate

Younger Youth

- Attainment rate
- Diploma or equivalent rate
- Retention rate in post-secondary education, advanced training, employment

In addition to these measures, the Department of Labor has imposed three common measures that apply to all Department of Labor youth programming: Placement in Employment or Education, Attainment of a Degree or Certificate, and Literacy and Numeracy Gains. While similar in some ways to the WIA measures, they differ in their definitions and the way in which youth are grouped.

Thus, managing performance in the workforce is not just a matter of quality programming. It requires understanding who gets counted against which performance standard, at what point, and the potential performance consequences of engaging youth in activities that have no positive impact on meeting performance. For example, a program working with a re-entering 17-year-old out-of-school youth could be tremendously successful in turning his behavior around, providing him with community service, getting him attached to a part-time job, enabling him to re-enroll in school with a focus on college, and helping him successfully complete the terms of his parole or probation. This would be considered a tremendous success by the program, the justice system, and the community. Yet, most of this would not count in the WIA performance measures for younger youth. Most local WIA youth programs face this dilemma in programming for populations that have complex needs and require multiple service strategies.

Four of the communities in this study offered particularly useful examples of ways to address this challenge: Boston, Camden, Los Angeles, and Northeast Louisiana. Interestingly, they took opposite approaches.

Camden

Camden—which competed successfully for the Department of Labor Youth Offender Demonstration grant and later for the High-Growth Offender grant—chose to assemble non-WIA funding to give itself greater flexibility in serving all youth appropriately. The director of the Camden WIB, which was instrumental in securing the grants for Camden Community Connections, indicated that administrative complexities associated with the performance standards, the eligibility certification, and the procurement requirements made it too burdensome to incorporate WIA funds into the program. Instead, youth coming into Camden Community Connections receive referrals to specific WIA programs and services. Because Camden's staff can address many of the behaviors and barriers before such referral, those enrolled in the WIA programs are more likely to succeed and impact positively on performance.

Boston

YO Boston has a similar rationale for not using WIA funds to support their YO infrastructure, which is devoted exclusively now to assisting young offenders. Boston has had success with their intensive work model that includes transitional jobs, intensive case management and counseling, and other wrap-around services and supports. Using WIA funds to underwrite the cost might necessitate changes in the model and the flow of youth through the various activities. It would also mean diverting funds from much-needed programming in the community. As in Camden, youthful offenders are referred to WIA-funded programs as appropriate in keeping with their individual services strategies. Because Boston's approach has been successful, they have chosen not to re-deploy federal WIA funds.

Los Angeles and Northeast Louisiana

Both sites worked to integrate the post-release activities that are a condition of probation with those designed to meet youths' needs and the WIA performance measures. In both communities, the condition of release was participation in the WIA youth programs/services. Thus, the attention of the WIA program staff and probation staff is on ensuring attendance, retention, and successful completion of the activities identified in their service strategy. When the two systems' expectations were in sync, there was a higher probability of maximizing performance. Perhaps surprisingly, staff felt that mandatory participation produced a higher likelihood for positive outcomes, because of the increased adult involvement and the certain consequences associated with not adhering to the post-release plan of service.

All of the survey communities had rich program interventions, successful relationships with the justice system, and successful funding strategies. Given the difference in approaches, it is useful to understand projects' rationale and performance management strategies. General observations from the survey and site visits included:

- **Helping youth succeed with the justice system mandates and meet the terms of their probation is paramount.** Unequivocally, all programs reported that the highest priority was keeping youth positively engaged, progressing, and meeting the

terms and conditions of their probation or parole. Although this is not rewarded in the WIA performance measurement system, it is the justice system's top priority, and critical to any program's success. Respondents also cited reducing recidivism, arrests, and repeat offenses as important measures for the community stakeholders.

- **Do not let the WIA performance measures unduly influence the design or flow of services.** The key is assuring that youth are matched to the array of supports and services necessary for their success. Success and accountability should be assessed on broader measures than just WIA.
- **The key to managing outcomes on the WIA and Department of Labor common measures is vigilance.** Setting goals for individuals in the appropriate domains for measurement and tracking individual and program progress against those goals on a monthly basis (if not weekly, as is the case in Northeast Louisiana) and making the necessary adjustments.
- **Mandatory participation requirements can be helpful**. According to several sites, mandatory participation as a condition of release can have a positive impact on the WIA retention, completion rates, and outcomes because of the increased attention of the monitoring and case management staff and the intensity of pre-release planning.
- **Build programs using a range of funding**. Diversified funding allows decisions to be made based on the best plan of service, and not the offerings or requirements of a single funding stream.
- **Ensure appropriate outcomes tracking**. Such diversification of funding requires increased sophistication in the ability of the data systems to support the tracking and management of outcomes.

Having systems in place to track the status and outcomes of each youth was as important as being able to benchmark program performance against multiple goals. There appeared to be processes in place on four levels:

"Instead of saying 'we are going to help you find a job,' we say, 'when is your first court date? We are going to help you get off of probation!'"

— Roberta Villa, YOIT Director in Los Angeles

- Measuring the progress of each individual against the goals set for them in their service strategy, which took into account the mandates from the justice system;
- Accountability to the justice system on a programmatic level related to the program's ability to impact, in the aggregate, on the outcomes for re-entering youth;
- Accountability to the community stakeholders who are part of the collaborative effort—Camden, for example, provides the advisory board with quarterly reports on the accomplishments, status, progress, and challenges; YOIT in Los Angeles and the WIB in Northeast Louisiana conduct ongoing analysis and report back to stakeholders; and
- Accountability to the (mostly federal) funding streams that have mandated performance standards.

Chapter 6
Looking Ahead: Challenges that Remain

For all the good work that is being undertaken in all of these communities, most areas experienced ongoing challenges that they were unable to adequately address. We asked respondents to identify these challenges; they are presented below in order of frequency.

1. **Housing**. Many youth are returning to less than adequate housing situations or to home situations that placed them at high risk. The rural areas indicated that there simply are no housing options other than finding individuals who are willing to take the young people in. Urban areas indicated that public housing policies that don't allow those with certain convictions, insufficient capacity in transitional housing programs, and lack of youth-oriented shelter options pose a large problem.

2. **Restitution and Fees**. Finding ways to help youth meet the obligations imposed by the restitution requirements, fees for probation, drug counseling, and other costs imposed by the courts surfaced as an issue in several conversations. Most responders used the structure of stipends or wages to provide financial support to youth—however, such financial supports are costly, and with the loss of federal funding, many reported having to scale back these payments.

3. **Transportation**. This was an issue particularly, but not exclusively, in rural areas. Northeast Louisiana and rural Southeast Arkansas both reported using vans to transport youth to and from opportunities in accessible labor market areas. Staff in Northeast Louisiana stressed that better transportation was needed to both connect young people to labor market options and to expose them to different environments and experiences. Camden indicated that there were many job opportunities and willing employers in Atlantic City, if transportation arrangements could be made.

4. **Drug Treatment and Counseling**. Several areas indicated that drug use among this population was prevalent. Apart from the issues of addiction, this meant that many youth would not be able to pass employer drug screens. Southeast Arkansas and Camden both have on-site drug testing. Camden conducts random tests to identify and address potential substance use before youth enter the workplace.

   Most communities indicated that there were sufficient mental health resources to make referral, however, youth are often reluctant to travel to places where the services are more adult-oriented or where there is a perceived stigma. Having trained mental health professionals and drug counselors as part of the service team on site was seen by some as a preferable option.

5. **Need for Legal Counsel.** Although most of the programs explain to youth the importance of understanding their criminal records, what their rights are, and what employers will see, it is not within staff's purview to provide hands-on support on the mechanics of the legal process. Because of the complexity of some of the situations, some respondents suggested that youth could benefit from access to legal counsel, and expressed an interest in exploring such linkages.

Appendix 1
Youth Offender Public Management Model

In Rounds One and Two of the Youth Offender Demonstration Project (YODP), the Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration tested a range of service delivery strategies within a diverse set of communities in order to identify effective institutional and organizational approaches that other communities could use to help youth offenders, youth gang members, and youth at risk of court involvement. Below is a summary of the organizational attributes of effective practice.

ATTRIBUTE	PATTERNS
1. Created a well-conceived plan	• Clear and focused vision and mission • Realistic and measurable goals and objectives • Involvement of stakeholders during program development and implementation
2. Had previous experience with the juvenile and criminal justice system	• Previous working relationship with juvenile and criminal justice system
3. Collected and maintained data	• Regularly collected and reported program information
4. Developed a community support network	• Involvement of youth and family serving agencies (community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, and public service agencies)
5. Maintained strong grantee involvement	• Actively involved as lead agency, providing direction and coordination for the project • Continuous involvement and support
6. Connected the workforce and justice systems effectively	• Coordination with and utilization of resources from the workforce development and justice systems
7. Leveraged resources through collaborations and partnerships	• Identified and utilized other resources and funding streams
8. Developed a continuous improvement system	• Conducted self-assessment and utilized available technical assistance
9. Shared leadership and information	• Shared decision-making and information with project partners

For more detail see the Youth Offender Public Management Model at http://www.doleta.gov/sga/rfp/rfp03-09_attach.pdf.

Appendix 2
Intensive Aftercare Program Model

The Intensive Aftercare Program (IAP) model assumes that any attempt to lower rates of recidivism among court-involved youth must include intensive intervention strategies that provide social control and services.[10]

The IAP model recommends five principles of programmatic action, which serve as its operational goals:

- Prepare youth for progressively increased responsibility and freedom in the community.
- Facilitate youth-community interaction and involvement.
- Work with the offender and targeted community support systems—families, peers, schools, and employers—to promote constructive interaction and successful reintegration of the youth into the community.
- Develop new resources and support systems where needed.
- Monitor and test the ability of the youth and the community to deal with each other productively.

Data from IAP implementations demonstrate the importance of:

- A consistent approach to family, peer, school, work, and drug-involvement issues by all residential and community-based youth aftercare programs;
- Effective development and implementation of aftercare surveillance to reinforce youth participation in beneficial treatment activities; and
- Diligent provision of overarching case management services, including:
    - Risk assessment and classification to establish youth eligibility;
    - Individual case planning that incorporates family and community perspectives;
    - A mix of intensive surveillance, enhanced services, and links to social networks; and
    - A balance of incentives, graduated consequences, and realistic, enforceable conditions.

10 Altschuler, D.M. and T.L. Armstrong. *Intensive Aftercare for High-Risk Juveniles: A Community Care Model.* U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.1994.

Appendix 3
List of Resources

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Appendix 4
Profiles

The following pages offer more detail on the eight programs that participated in the second survey, six of which also received site visits. The programs are listed alphabetically by state, and contact information is provided for each profile.

Phoenix Youth and Family Services
Department of Workforce Services
Southeast Arkansas

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Toyce Newton, Executive Director

Phoenix Youth and Family Services
310 Alabama Street
Crossett, AR 71635

tnewton@phoenixyouth.com

Background

The Phoenix Youth and Family Services (PYFS) is a social, economic, and community development organization, whose primary mission is to create opportunities for rural and low-income residents across nine counties of Southeast Arkansas. PYFS established the Comprehensive Community-Based Judicial Services program in 1995 to create positive paths for delinquent youth in the Arkansas 10th judicial district. PYFS collaborates with law enforcement agencies, the court system, regional parole and probation, corrections, the Arkansas Division of Youth Services, the school districts, and faith-based groups to provide at-risk youth, ages 10 to 21, with positive alternatives and the tools needed to address their anti-social, violent, and self-destructive behavior.

In 2005 PYFS was awarded $1 million from the Department of Labor for a Rural Youth Offender program to help youth in five of the counties make a satisfactory transition back into the community. This resource funds the successful PREP program, which utilizes the Intensive Aftercare Program (IAP) model, advocated by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, to create a structured environment for offenders re-entering the community.

Key Features

Pre-release connections. At least six months prior to release, PYFS staff meet with the youth to conduct assessments of risks and needs and to begin the relationship building process. Staff meet with youth monthly thereafter to develop a detailed post-release plan, provide an overview of the education and training options, develop young people's independent living and job readiness skills, and identify needs for other services.

Transition phase support. During the first 30 days after release, PYFS staff connect offenders with formal and informal community services and supports. A binding service contract between PYFS and the offender is signed which outlines specifics and requirements for service participation. Staff maintain weekly face-to-face contact during the first 30 days. The intensity of contact is gradually relaxed as time in the program increases. Within two weeks of release, youth begin job readiness training.

Simulated work environment and family involvement. PYFS simulates the work environment to teach and reinforce job skills and appropriate workplace behaviors. Probation

officers conduct their PO meetings on-site and parents are required to be in attendance at these meetings.

Education and training support. GED and Pre-GED preparation is offered three mornings a week, coupled with individual tutorial assistance. College exposure and SAT prep are also offered weekly at the PYFS centers. Occupational training is offered through agreements with local technical colleges in high-growth areas of the local economy, including welding, child development certification, certified nurse's assistants, and heavy equipment operators. Courses range from eight weeks to two full semesters.

Community service. All youth returning from detention/incarceration participate in community service activities on a monthly basis. Staff members have counseling sessions before and after each community service activity to ensure intentional learning takes place and is recognized by youth

Life skills and support. In addition to the formal life skills training curriculum, there are support groups for parenting teens, young fathers, and youth with substance issues. There is heavy emphasis on the role of peers in mentoring, role modeling, and providing input into program decision-making through the peer council. PYFS also uses recreation and cultural exposure as of means of broadening the exposure of youth and developing their talent and leadership skills.

Job placement assistance. The job developers maintain relationships with employers so youth can be placed in employment when they are sufficiently prepared. Job developers follow up on a monthly basis with youth who are employed, to monitor progress and re-connect them to program support if they are not succeeding. PYFS has engaged a pool of employers who have agreed to hire youth immediately upon release and to mentor them. PYFS staff provides intensive case management support to those youth including at least daily face-to-face contact.

A community-wide impact. PYFS saw a notable decline in commitments between the years 2000 and 2004. Moreover, in 2004—after only 10 years of operation—the Dermott Juvenile Detention Center in rural Southeast Arkansas closed its doors. The prosecuting attorney at that time (now juvenile court judge) stated that the impact of PYFS has lead to significant decreases in the juvenile docket and thus contributed to the closure of that facility.

Los Angeles Youth Opportunity Intensive Transition System (YOIT) Los Angeles, California

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Roberta M. Villa, YO Intensive Transition Director

City of Los Angeles Community Development Department
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Los Angeles, CA 90017

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Background

The Los Angeles Youth Opportunities Intensive Transition Program (YOIT) is a juvenile referral mechanism within the City Workforce Investment Act system administered by the City of Los Angeles Community Development Department. YOIT is intended to provide both the city of Los Angeles and the LA County Probation Department with specific

tools to identify and connect incarcerated city juveniles with the WIA-funded community-based job training, work experience, and supplemental education programs. YOIT is funded by California's Juvenile Crime Prevention Initiative through a subcontract with the LA County Probation Department. Workforce preparation programs work with youthful offenders returning to the community and support the transition by providing the intensity of education, work readiness, personal development, and support necessary to secure employment and longer-term career success.

Key Features

Internet-based referral system. YOIT connects youth being released from probation camps to a WIA youth service provider, based on proximity to the client's residence. Probation officers are trained to act as "Intensive Transition Specialists" and utilize the YOIT system to both refer and monitor probation youth, ensuring that youth are served immediately upon release and make adequate progress.

Wide range of programs and resources. Through its expansive network of 18 One-Stop Workforce Centers, 10 WIA "One Source" Youth Opportunity Centers, and three YO sites in the city's empowerment zone, YOIT can tap a range of services for youth.

Conditions of probation complement WIA performance expectations. Conditions of parole as established by the juvenile court are set to be consistent with WIA performance goals, and the probation officers monitor progress. YOIT established a vehicle for communication and collaboration between the probation department and the youth case managers. Probation can mandate youth to participate in programs they might not otherwise attend on their own.

Training and certification of the Workforce Development System contractors. YOIT developed a training series to assist contractors with the enrollment, retention, and completion of successful outcomes for court-involved youth. This included "Creating a Positive Paper Trail" for young offenders, as well as working with the probation and parole offices, schools, and community colleges.

Hartford Future Workforce Investment System
Hartford, Connecticut

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Background

The Future Workforce Investment System (FWIS) is an initiative of Hartford's Mayor Eddie A. Perez, in partnership with the Hartford Public Schools, Capital Workforce Partners, and key stakeholders. It aims to elevate youth ages 14 to 24 as Hartford's most valuable asset, and to engage the entire community in aligning resources to ensure that young people acquire the academic and employment skills they need to be productive members of the region's workforce. Hartford's vision embraces *all* youth—including those who are out of school and those involved with the justice system.

The partnership began with a framework of guiding principles, a vision, long-term goals, key strategies, and short- and long-term action steps. The process from strategic planning

to action was detailed, as were the methods for collecting data and monitoring progress. An early step was securing commitments from agencies and service providers to use a common data system to track outcomes and performance. As a result, FWIS provides a coherent, citywide framework for supporting youth through case management, guidance, and connections to programs and outcomes; the focus is post-secondary success and career-focused employment.

Key Features

Clear objectives. Among its many goals, FWIS established the following focus areas for 2005 through 2007:

- Assure that youth receive valuable work experience and have key work-readiness competencies prior to graduation.
- Strengthen prevention teams in public high schools that connect youth to needed services and to career center staff for career development activities.
- Sustain and expand the successful adult and alternative education options, including the Diploma Plus and Credit Retrieval programs. Key elements of these approaches include competency-based instruction, case management, and work experience/ internships.
- Increase, strengthen, and coordinate opportunities to reconnect adjudicated youth to the community through "work and learn" programs.
- Use *HartfordConnects*—a comprehensive, Internet-based program management system that can link with the Hartford Public Schools data system, and has data, case management, and reporting capabilities—to report FWIS outcomes against baseline conditions, produce a *Hartford Report Card*, set interim benchmarks, and facilitate continuous improvement.

Funding and resources assessment. FWIS effort commissioned a study to document the baseline level of funding from a variety of sources across all youth-serving agencies and organizations. This study helped identify the resources, gaps, and opportunities for better alignment.

Effective fundraising. Capital Workforce Partners was successful in securing several Department of Labor grants to serve young offenders: a $350,000 Young Offender Demonstration grant in 2002; $200,000 for Academic Skills and Workforce Preparation activities in 2003; and a $666,671 grant award to Community Partners in Action to assist ex-offenders with job training, counseling and housing assistance.

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Workforce Investment Board SDA-83, Inc. Northeast Louisiana Delta Rural Youth Offender Program
Northeast Louisiana

Background

The WIB SDA-83, Inc. administers all WIA programs serving seven rural parishes. It also successfully administered a $19.8 million Youth

Opportunity grant from the Department of Labor from July 1, 2000 through June 30, 2006. The Northeast Louisiana Delta Juvenile Offender Program operated as a component of the Youth Opportunity grant. On July 1, 2005, the WIB SDA-83, Inc. was awarded a $938,362 grant from the Department of Labor to continue its work with young offenders; its effort was renamed the "Turning Point" Youth Offender Initiative. The key partners for this initiative are the district attorney, district judges, Louisiana Department of Corrections, Louisiana Office of Youth Development, local school districts, substance abuse and mental health agencies, WIA One-Stop Centers, Northeast Louisiana Delta Youth Opportunity, Brown Development Inc., Louisiana Technical Colleges, and Louisiana Delta Community College.

Key Features

Assessment and intensive case management. Upon referral of youth from justice officials, youth development staff and the program coordinator meet with each youth. An educational assessment and home visit are completed. Youth staff work with each young offender to develop an individual service strategy, taking into account the needs, abilities, and interests of the youth. This plan connects youth to the most appropriate educational option, job readiness training, career pathways activities, occupational skills training, field trips, and college preparatory activities. The Youth Development Specialist monitors the youth's time, attendance, and progress in each of these activities.

Emphasis on education and concurrent occupational skills training. Youth are fully engaged during the week with activities split among GED preparation, occupational skills training, job readiness, and life skills training. Evenings and weekends include community service, arts, and recreational activities. Youth spend at least 12 hours weekly in GED preparation. They have the option of attending classes at the on-site centers or at Louisiana Technical Colleges. Enrichment courses such as art and foreign languages are offered at the centers via teleconferencing. ACT and SAT prep and community college courses are also offered.

Strong collaboration with Louisiana technical colleges. The program established partnerships with four Louisiana technical colleges to provide training opportunities in high-growth/high-demand areas including: network cabling, ship-fitting, welding, LPN and Certified Nursing Assistants, industrial maintenance, automotive technology, diesel mechanics, and office systems technology.

On-site training. Turning Point also offers on-site training in basic carpentry, electrical, and plumbing skills. Courses lead to state-recognized certifications or credentials, expanded work experience opportunities, and long-term placements.

Outcomes measurement. The staff reported that the juvenile justice caseload for the area impacted by the YO Juvenile Justice Component declined for three consecutive years. They also reported a recidivism rate of less than 10 percent for young offenders participating in the initiative. Turning Point aims to have at least 50 percent of youth attain their GED each year, and to have 60 percent of youth transition successfully into full-time employment, long-term training, or post-secondary education.

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Youth Opportunity (YO) Boston
Youth Offender Program
Mayor's Office of Jobs and Community Services
Boston, Massachusetts

Background

The Boston Private Industry Council, in conjunction with the Mayor's Office of Jobs and Community Services has a long history of successful programming for youth in high-risk categories. Approximately half of the 3,732 participants served by the federally funded Youth Opportunity grant (YO Boston), between 2000 and 2005, were court-involved youth. Since July 2005, YO Boston has served exclusively court-involved youth and is sustaining its efforts with the support of a recent $1.3 million state Shannon Anti-Gang grant. Key partners for Boston's justice initiatives include the Boston Private Industry Council, Mayor's Office of Jobs and Community Services, YO Boston, Boston Police Department, Boston Redevelopment Authority, Department of Probation, Suffolk County House of Correction, Boston's Center for Youth and Families, Department of Youth Services, Boston Public Schools, and the Department of Social Services.

Key Features

Intensive pre-release intervention in detention facilities. YO Boston staff meet youth while they are in detention or incarcerated, in order to develop strong, trusting relationships. Staff, youth, and probation/parole staff work together to identify the challenges and develop a plan for the release into the community. YO Boston provides pre-release "day passes" to youth to attend professional and life skills training or internships three to four days a week to introduce youth to the new facility, a professional environment, and the supportive staff members who will aid them in their transition.

Deployment of YO infrastructure for intensive aftercare support. YO Boston provides youth with intensive case management, mentoring, skills development, counseling, education, a positive social environment, and a center that served as a safe comfortable gathering place, and focal point for positive activity. Youth receive help obtaining documentation for work and driving permits, and finding child care assistance, substance abuse treatment groups, and other services. YO Boston offers connections to a network of alternative programs, training in high-demand fields, and introduction to basic computer skills to earn a GED or High School diploma. It also provides college preparation and job placement assistance.

A four-tiered transitional employment services model. Boston's four-tiered employment system helps youth transition from supported community-based employment to competitive private sector employment. The levels in Boston's Transitional Employment System (TES) are:

- **Level I** provides intensive training and coaching on employability skills and team-building for high-risk youth. Participants complete a short-term community service project.

- **Level II** provides a stipend accompanying a community-based internship. Although youth are supported by a weekly employability skills support group, they work more independently in the community than in Level I.
- **Level III** placements may be in an entry-level private-sector job or in occupational skills training programs where Career Specialists provide individualized advice and coaching.
- **Level IV** placements for older youth are in primary labor-market positions in the private sector or long-term occupational skills training programs. Career Specialists provide advice and support to individuals, with a view to bringing them to a point where they can compete independently in the labor market.

Summer and winter jobs programs targeted to serious offenders. Boston also had success with the Winter Jobs Program, which engaged young offenders in meaningful work projects on the weekends for $8.00 an hour. The success of that initiative prompted the city's mayor to raise $300,000 from the private sector to expand the program to weekdays during the summer. Scheduled hours often reached into the evening—according to staff, this was a conscious strategy to keep youth constructively occupied and lessen the free time that they had on the streets in the evenings. The Boston Police Department and Emergency Medical Services trained and certified 150 of these youth in CPR and first aid. They recognized that in many of the situations of violence these youth will be the first responders.

Brockton RISE Center
Gateway Program, Brockton Area Private Industry Council
Brockton, Massachusetts

Background

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The Brockton Area Private Industry Council, Inc. (BAPIC) provides service delivery to youth through the Brockton Reaching Independence through Self Empowerment (RISE) Centers. These two comprehensive, One-Stop centers for youth focus on meeting developmental, job readiness, and educational needs. The Gateway Program, which serves young offenders, is administered by BAPIC and operates from the two RISE Centers. Through these centers, youth—including young offenders—are connected to on-site assessment, educational opportunities, skills training, higher education assistance, case management, job readiness training, job shadowing, internships, leadership development, mentoring, life skills training, cultural and recreational activities.

Brockton began serving court-involved youth as part of the Youth Opportunity grant in 2000, and has been successful in obtaining Department of Labor demonstration funding to continue that focus. Grants have included:

- $600,000 Round 3 Youth Offender Demonstration Project (YODP) to operate in 2003;

- $850,000 in 2004 as one of six sites selected for a YODP impact study; and
- $1.1 million in 2005 for the High-Growth Youth Offender Initiative.

Key partners in the Gateway Initiative include the RISE Youth Opportunity Centers, the Department of Youth Services (Probation), the Day Reporting Center, and CareerWorks, which offers adult One-Stop workforce development services for older youth.

Key Features

Brockton RISE Centers. These serve as a welcoming environment for youth, where they access a variety of workforce, education, and support services customized to fit their individual needs. Gateway enrollees can access the same service path as other youth who request services at one of the RISE centers.

"Diversion Panel." This is an interagency group of youth practitioners that was created by the Plymouth County Juvenile Probation Department and includes representatives from the Department of Youth Services, the Police Department, the Mental Health Agency, and RISE. The Panel meets every week to discuss specific youth with the goal of formulating an integrated service approach for youth to divert them from being incarcerated (or re-incarcerated). Each agency offers service ideas for the specific youth and works jointly with the other agencies to offer a holistic plan of action.

Day Reporting Center (DRC) connection. The DRC is a detention center operated by the Department of Youth Services. Youth who are leaving full-time incarceration report to the center each day as a part of their transition back to the community. The Brockton School System does not typically allow youth who are assigned to the DRC to re-enter high school, so RISE instructors fill this gap by providing educational services for youth along with career counseling and job readiness training. RISE staff meet weekly with DRC staff to discuss youth who are nearing release to continue their link with RISE services.

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Camden Community Connections
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Background

In 2001, the Camden County Workforce Investment Board and the prosecutor's office convened community stakeholders to design a new coordinated approach to serving young offenders. In 2002, Camden received a $1.5 million grant from the Department of Labor to launch Camden Community Connections , which established a continuum of services for justice-involved youth. The approach includes a strong counseling and advocacy component, a well-developed work model, and strong education support model. In 2005, Camden Community Connections was awarded an additional $1 million from the U.S. Department of Labor to prepare young offenders to enter high-growth/high-demand industries.

Key Features

Strong collaboration among key organizations. Twenty-three organizations signed the original memorandum of understanding, including the prosecutor's office, the WIB, the Camden County One Stops, regional and city Chambers of Commerce, juvenile drug court, Camden Police Department, Division of Probation, the Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, and the Camden Community Faith-based Alliance. These organizations went on to form the advisory committee, which meets regularly to fine-tune the service delivery and monitor progress.

Simulated work environment. Camden Community Connections is located in a professional office complex, and every aspect of the office reflects a professional work environment. All workplace rules, dress codes, attendance and lateness policies apply to staff and young people alike. Youth must leave all trappings of "street" life at the front door, and staff nurture the development of appropriate work behaviors through role modeling, sanctions and incentives, and formal workshops.

Strong counseling and advocacy component. In addition to well-trained youth advocates, the program draws upon the therapeutic resources in the community to provide youth and their families with individual and family counseling. Faith organizations are used to provide re-entry support and life skills programming. A STRIVE program model is being implemented to guide youth on personal responsibility, attitude, self-esteem and soft skills. Several professional organizations have been engaged to mentor youth including the Camden City Fire Department, the prosecutor's office, 100 Black Professional Women's Association, and the National Black Nurses Association.

Well-developed work and education model. The Camden Community Connections model is based on progressive exposure to work, beginning with community service, enhanced by work experiences and/or internships, and culminating with placement in the private sector.

Connections with employers in high-growth/high-demand industries. Camden Community Connections works with employers in hospitality, health, and financial services to identify the skills and certifications needed for entry employment and to secure work experiences and placement opportunities

HoustonWorks Targeted Youth Offender Initiative Houston, Texas

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Background

HoustonWorks is the largest operator of workforce centers in the Houston and greater Harris County region and serves over 100,000 people annually through its network of 12 career "WorkSource" centers. In June 2002, HoustonWorks received a $1,331,594 grant to implement the Department of Labor's Youth Offender Demonstration Project (YODP). The initiative was designed to build connections with the justice system that did not previously exist, in order to give

justice-involved youth greater access to education and employment opportunities through WorkSource Career Centers and the Youth Opportunity Centers. HoustonWorks partnered with the Texas Youth Commission, the Gulf Coast Trades Center, Harris County Juvenile Probation, and the Mayor's Anti-Gang Office to build high-quality connections among the systems to connect young offenders to appropriate supports and services.

Key Features

Dedicated inter-organizational staff. HoustonWorks provided funds to partnering justice agencies to hire dedicated staff that then functioned as a team. HoustonWorks also hired a coordinator to convene the team regularly to engage in pre-release planning for each youth, develop joint plans, monitor youths' progress, and participate in cross-training.

In-depth assessment. HoustonWorks uses the Youth At-Risk Developmental Survey to determine the unique needs of each individual. A career assessment and educational assessment is also completed and used to develop an individual service plan. Based on these assessments, youth are connected to support services, including housing assistance, transportation, childcare, medical services, and mental health and/or substance treatment.

Route counseling (case management). Youth are assigned to designated counselors at the WorkSource Centers or the Gulf Coast Trade Center. Based on the assessment and the individual service plan, the counselor connects youth to the appropriate education and training offerings—this may include GED, Occupational Skills Training, Internships, work experience, support groups, and leadership activities. HoustonWorks deploys a deliberate integration model to avoid labeling or further stigmatizing young offenders.

Job readiness and life skills training. The workshops focus heavily on making attitudinal adjustments and deprogramming the behaviors that put youth at risk. Modeling behavior and consistency is an important component. Emphasis has been placed on presentation skills, specifically on how youth can "flip the script" when talking to employers about their past criminal behavior.

Job placement assistance. The program relies heavily on the resources of the WorkSource Centers, including the resource libraries, the employer connections, electronic job bank, and customized job fairs.

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