

CHAPTER 8:

Resources to Sustain a HS/HT Program

This chapter addresses the resources needed to plan, initiate, implement, and sustain a HS/HT program and provides tips on how to plan a HS/HT budget and where to look to secure resources to fund the initiative. It stresses the importance of developing a strategic plan to ensure the sustainability of a HS/HT program. The HS/HT program model offers significant flexibility in how the program is supported, administered, and locally implemented. This flexibility is critically important to capitalizing on existing resources at the national, state, and local levels.

The resources needed to establish and operate HS/HT programs have come from a variety of places, including

- grants (public and private),
- federally-funded programs,
- in-kind donations,
- state legislatures, and
- other opportunities that have presented themselves!

The Necessity: Blending and Braiding of Resources and Establishing Partnerships

The success of initiatives, such as HS/HT, designed to improve the coordination and impact of multiple youth-serving organizations depends on strategies that allow funds and resources to be used in flexible, coordinated, and sustainable ways. Strategies that

encourage cross-systems collaboration and promote the blending and braiding of resources have proven to be the most successful in designing a comprehensive HS/HT program that addresses all of the *Guideposts* and supports significant program expansion through local implementation.

Neither schools, nor workforce investment programs, human service agencies, or any other single system alone can pay for and provide the array of services needed to effectively meet the often complex needs of youth with disabilities. When collectively pooled, however, these resources can produce positive outcomes for youth, well beyond the scope of what any single system can hope to mobilize on its own (National Governors Association, 2004).

Before discussing budgeting and funding strategies, it is important to develop a concept of blending and braiding resources. Successful blending and braiding funding strategies require knowledge of eligibility criteria, allowable services, priorities of potential grantors, and more. As with all funding arrangements, the funder's objectives have to be met.

"Blended funding" pools dollars from multiple sources and combines the funds making the sources of the money in some ways indistinguishable. At the point of service delivery (i.e., the actual program site), this may necessitate asking the state government to request waivers for exemption from specific federal

legislative and/or regulatory requirements. However, this is not always a successful strategy. A more successful approach to blending funds from multiple sources at the state level can be found through the state “set-asides” for administrative, research, and development, and for training in all federal grant-in-aid programs. Funding to support a HS/HT state infrastructure, including staffing to facilitate collaboration, coordination, program planning, and staff development functions, all fit within the allowable activities in these set-asides. The demonstrated ability of the HS/HT program model to positively impact post-school outcomes for transition-age youth with disabilities can be a strong motivator for blending resources.

Propose an interagency agreement to multiple state agencies to support full-time dedicated staff and other costs such as training, marketing, and monitoring. Do so by using a modest amount of funds from each of the state set-asides and possibly by tapping their staffing line item as well.

“**Braiding**” is a funding and resource allocation strategy that taps into existing categorical funding streams and uses them to support unified initiatives in as flexible and integrated a manner as possible. Unlike blended funding, the funding streams in a braided funding strategy remain visible and are used in common to produce greater strength, efficiency, and/or effectiveness. Under a braiding strategy, participating agencies can continue to closely track the use of funds in such a manner as to address the reporting requirements and accountability measures of the state or federal agencies administering the funds. As a result, a strategy that relies on braided funding requires significant attention to administrative issues. This generally requires continued accountability for assessing services and adherence to mandated data collection and reporting requirements. In some instances it necessitates the delineation of specific arrangements for the payment of fees to collaborating agencies.

Blending and braiding funding strategies are not mutually exclusive and can work to complement and reinforce each other. Both strategies require

collaboration, coordination, and cooperation across multiple programs, agencies, and systems. The level of collaboration and coordination is not easily achieved unless there is some mechanism to facilitate it, such as an organization acting as an intermediary between the involved agency and service system partners. In localities throughout the country, HS/HT is that intermediary organization.

Exhibit 8.1, “Activities to Facilitate the Blending and/or Braiding of Existing Resources,” highlights some of the activities that HS/HT coordinators can undertake at the state and/or local levels to assist stakeholders in envisioning and potentially adopting funding strategies that rely on the blending and/or braiding of resources.

Support Comes in Many Forms

It takes time and staffing resources to approach different agencies and organizations to solicit support to sustain a HS/HT program. The programs that have been most successful in this regard have had full-time staff at the state level who are resourceful, creative, flexible, and persistent. These people have been strategic about approaching a variety of agencies and programs to talk about the benefits of HS/HT and have been able to translate the benefits of HS/HT into benefits that are valued by these different agencies and programs.

Ultimately, the mix of funding and resources that will sustain a particular HS/HT program will depend on

- the partners of the programs and what they have to offer,
- the organization serving as the fiscal agent for HS/HT,
- the state entity heading the state infrastructure development effort (if different than the fiscal agent),
- the organizations implementing the program on the local level, and
- the staffing structure at both the state and local levels.

Support for HS/HT programs comes in many forms. In addition to the financial support provided by grants and the blending and braiding of funding sources,

programs also rely on many forms of in-kind support. The state agencies heading the state infrastructure for HS/HT have provided significant in-kind contributions to support the program, including donated office space, use of supplies and equipment, fiscal and administrative staff support, telephone, and Internet services, etc.

Similar in-kind support is also found at the local level, as most local sites look to the agency housing the site and/or to local partnerships to support implementation. In addition to the types of in-kind support typically provided at the state level, local partnerships often provide additional in-kind support such as transportation services for youth. The local coordinator's time may also be made available through in-kind support. HS/HT programs may also receive support in the form of free or low-cost services that are made available to youth. Based on the outcomes of community resource mapping exercises, some local sites develop referral mechanisms (both formal and informal) to help youth access services and supports within the community. Many local HS/HT sites rely on local partnerships to support specific program activities (e.g., internships) and special events (e.g., kick-off events and employer appreciation programs).

Budgeting for the State Infrastructure for HS/HT

HS/HT programs with the state infrastructure to support local implementation have taken different approaches to state-level staffing. Some employ minimal part-time staff, while others employ one or two full-time people or a combination of full- and part-time staff. Programs supported by at least one full-time person at the state level, plus some part-time administrative and content advisors, have had the most success in facilitating program expansion and in securing resources from multiple sources to support long-term sustainability.

The importance of having a full-time person at the state level becomes evident when you consider the diverse roles and functions that must be assumed by the state coordinator (see Chapter 7). Even when a full-time position is dedicated to HS/HT, additional staff with specific expertise (e.g., fiscal management, training,

program evaluation, data collection, reporting, etc.) may be needed at the state level. Such part-time positions may be paid positions or provided as in-kind support. When local implementation expands significantly throughout the state, the exponential expansion of the state coordinator's duties will likely necessitate more than one full-time position at the state level.

Table 8.1 provides a tool that can be used to estimate the annual budget for the state infrastructure for a HS/HT program. The first column lists the major categories of expenses associated with supporting a state infrastructure. In designating staffing, remember to estimate the percentage of full-time equivalent (FTE) staff positions needed to support specific activities. The roles and responsibilities of the state coordinator for HS/HT outlined in Chapter 7 should be helpful to estimate the percentage FTEs needed. Remember, activities such as budgeting/fiscal management, curriculum development, conducting program evaluation, data collection and reporting, and designing, developing, and maintaining a website may be the responsibility of the state coordinator, or may require staff support with expertise in those areas. The second column indicates the estimated costs associated with the different categories of expenses, both actual and in-kind. The third column can be used to identify potential sources of funding and in-kind support for each of the categories of expenses. In some situations, the annual budget for the state infrastructure will change significantly from year to year, particularly if the program is successful in expanding to new localities throughout the state.



TABLE 8.1

Budget Worksheet—State Infrastructure for HS/HT

FUNCTION	AMOUNT/ IN-KIND	POTENTIAL SOURCES OF SUPPORT
Personnel (percentage FTEs), including —state coordinator and/or state director —administrative support staff —staff with specific expertise (e.g., fiscal management, program evaluation, marketing, data collection/reporting, etc.)		
Office space to house state-level staff		
Equipment and supplies		
Communications (telephone, fax, Internet, postage)		
Website		
Transportation for staff to —conduct visits to local sites —participate in meetings/conferences —meet with partners/potential partners, service providers, representatives of business and industry, potential funders, etc.		
Curriculum development (i.e., to aid local sites)		
Liability insurance		
Training for local coordinators		
Program evaluation, data collection, reporting		
Miscellaneous expenses (e.g., conference registration fees)		



Budgeting for a Local HS/HT Site

From locality to locality, the organizations housing local HS/HT sites, the mix of collaborating partners, the staffing structure, and in some cases, the mix of services and activities is a function of many different factors. Two examples from the ODEP grantees demonstrate this diversity.

Tech-Now, Inc. in Oklahoma recruits site instructors and aides primarily through the school system and pays each instructor and aide a set stipend for implementing a standardized HS/HT curriculum which is undertaken through a specific number of 90-minute weekly sessions throughout the year. These weekly sessions are supplemented with a statewide competition in the spring and a week-long summer institute.

Florida HS/HT uses a Request for Proposal (RFP) process to identify its local sites. The RFP process is conducted by The Able Trust, the state lead for HS/HT. When the Florida State Legislature appropriated funds to support the expansion of HS/HT to new sites throughout the state, the RFP process was conducted under the direction of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the state agency that functions as the fiscal agent for these state-appropriated funds.

Many local HS/HT sites assume the responsibility to implement activities and curriculum that address every category and most elements of the *Guideposts for Success*. However, some local sites conduct community resource mapping exercises to identify elements of the *Guideposts* that are already available to students with disabilities through other agencies and programs. This information is then used to design HS/HT activities and curriculum that fill in the gaps where elements of the *Guideposts* are not being addressed. Obviously, the approach that is taken will have implications for establishing the budget for a local HS/HT site.

The experiences of HS/HT programs around the country indicate that two aspects of local implementation have significant cost implications: transportation and internships. Securing transportation for students to participate in regularly scheduled meetings, special events, conferences, recreational activities, industry site visits, job shadowing, and internships is one of the biggest challenges facing

HS/HT programs. Planning, executing, and monitoring the internship component of a HS/HT program require both a significant commitment of staff time and program resources.

A successful internship program requires a significant commitment of time and program resources, including

- identifying local employers who are willing to sponsor HS/HT students as interns;
- developing materials (e.g., a handbook, agreements, medical release forms, etc.) to be used by youth participating in internships;
- screening participating youth to ensure a good match between the student and an employer offering an internship;
- ensuring the interested youth have completed any pre-requisites (e.g., participation in an internship orientation program) prior to participation;
- arranging for interested youth to interview with employers;
- assisting students in making the logistical arrangements to participate in an internship;
- monitoring each internship to make sure the needs of both the intern and the employer are being met and being available to intervene if issues arise;
- securing commitments from employers to pay salaries or stipends to HS/HT interns or finding the funding to pay a salary or stipend to youth; and
- dealing with the liability issues associated with high school students participating in internships. (Note: Liability laws and coverage will vary across different jurisdictions, and from company to company depending on the type of work. Consequently, local coordinators will have to research these issues locally.)

Many of the considerations for local implementation outlined in Chapter 7 will also have implications for establishing a budget for a local HS/HT site. It is important to focus on the factors that have cost implications and use the chart in Table 8.2 to estimate the local budget.

TABLE 8.2

Budget Worksheet—Local Site Development

FUNCTION	AMOUNT/ IN-KIND	POTENTIAL SOURCES
Personnel (percentage FTEs), including —local coordinator(s)/site instructor(s) —aide(s) (if used) —support staff —staff with specific expertise (e.g., fiscal management, data collection, etc.)		
Office space to house the local staff Meeting space for program activities		
Equipment (computers and other types of technology for use by staff and youth)		
Communications (telephone, fax, Internet, postage)		
Materials, supplies, printing, copying, etc.		
Assistive technology and reasonable accommodations for participating youth		
Website (if applicable)		
Transportation for youth to participate in —regularly scheduled HS/HT meetings —job shadowing opportunities, industry site visits, special activities/events, etc. —internships (if provided by program)		
Transportation for local staff to —meet with partners/potential partners, school personnel, service providers, representatives of business and industry, etc. —participate in training programs and conferences.		
Curriculum development (if applicable)		
Liability insurance		
Stipends for students (e.g., paid internships)		
Data collection and reporting		
Miscellaneous expenses (e.g., conference registration fees)		

Funding Strategies

An important step in developing a sustainable funding strategy is to bring together program partners, potential partners, and interested stakeholders to brainstorm on different funding opportunities and the basic framework of the overall strategy. A small subgroup of these people should be designated to take responsibility for developing a detailed strategy to secure funding and resources to support the state infrastructure for HS/HT and/or to support local implementation. However, the involvement of the

larger group does not end here. Each partner and stakeholder should be asked to continuously be on the look out for funding opportunities that might support a HS/HT initiative or support individual program components such as tutoring, career assessments, mentoring, internships, etc.

Once an outline for a specific sustainability strategy has been developed and the planning group has brainstormed a list of potential funding sources, it is time to narrow down the options to identify those that are the most likely to produce positive results. Make

sure the sources included in this priority list are willing to fund projects in the designated geographic area. Look at descriptions of any potential funding sources and explore their funding track records. The goal is to identify funding sources such as foundations that have supported projects similar to HS/HT and that award the type of support the project is seeking (e.g., support for programs that reduce the dropout rate). However, do not overlook opportunities that may necessitate putting a particular twist on the HS/HT program model to bring it in line with the objectives of a particular funding source.

Create a prospect list based on your research and your program's needs. Take time to identify an appropriate strategy for approaching each potential funding source on the list. In some cases, you will be responding to an announcement of availability of funding. In other cases, you may be submitting unsolicited proposals.

Be Positioned to Take Advantage of Grant Opportunities

Another important step in any strategy to sustain a HS/HT program is to draft a generic grant proposal that can later be modified and used by both state and local coordinators to respond to different funding opportunities. In developing a generic grant proposal you will need to think through and address a variety of things that are common to most funding announcements. Exhibit 8.2 provides information on the most common elements of a grant proposal, and includes comments specific to how you might approach developing a generic grant proposal.

When responding to grant opportunities, timing is almost always critically important. The response time for grant announcements varies from a few weeks to unspecified dates or open submission. Even in our electronic age, it can take weeks before the word on a related grant opportunity reaches a HS/HT program. If you have a generic proposal on file, you can respond to a grant announcement even when the timeframe is short. In many cases, the state coordinator will assume responsibility for drafting a generic grant proposal that can be used by local sites when needed.

Responding to Specific Grant Opportunities

Increasingly states are establishing interagency

initiatives focusing on youth. These initiatives vary in their scope but all relate to finding more effective ways to support at-risk youth. Many are increasingly addressing the reality that youth with disabilities are overrepresented as wards of the state through the juvenile justice and child welfare systems and that the transition period is particularly problematic. HS/HT programs are well-positioned to be involved in assisting these initiatives.

When actually responding to an announcement of availability of funding, you will need to tailor the generic proposal to address specific requirements in the announcement. In many cases, it is helpful to gather additional background information on the entity sponsoring the competition and on the types of proposals that have been funded in the past.

To the extent that you can, use specific terminology found in the grant announcement. If the announcement talks about working with high school students, use this term rather than another such as transition-age youth. If the announcement talks about enhancing achievement, use this term and then describe how HS/HT enhances student achievement in terms of advancing to the next grade, increasing grade point averages, graduating from high school with a regular diploma, and entering postsecondary education.

Read the grant announcement carefully to make sure you have been thoughtful and thorough in responding to each item and addressing all applicable requirements (e.g., deadlines for submission, page limits, formatting, supporting information such as resumes and letters of support, etc.).

Keep in mind, the HS/HT program model is extremely adaptable and can be an effective strategy in serving any number of at-risk populations. Don't be afraid to draft a proposal that is creative in addressing the initiative being funded and in describing how the staff implementing HS/HT is uniquely qualified to work with the population being targeted. Based on the flexibility found within HS/HT, some programs have been successful in supplementing their HS/HT activities and curriculum with activities designed specifically to address the goals and objectives of a grant announcement that would not typically be considered as a funding source for HS/HT.

When local WIA Youth funds in Gainesville were designated for teen pregnancy prevention programs, Florida HS/HT partnered with the University of Florida’s Rehabilitation Counseling Center and drafted a proposal that incorporated a teen pregnancy prevention component into the HS/HT curriculum and expanded the outreach strategies to target young girls at risk of getting pregnant. The proposal was funded and provided significant support for one of the Gainesville sites.

Favorable Grantee Characteristics

Grant makers (governmental and private) look for a variety of things when reviewing grant proposals. In addition to looking for proposals that respond specifically to the things spelled out in the grant announcement, they also may consider the following criteria:

- Do the goals and objectives of the grant seeker fit the grant maker’s mission? A grant reviewer will immediately reject any proposal that is not in line with the mission of the funding source and the goals and objectives of the grant announcement.
- Is the organization applying for the grant well known in its community/state and is it addressing an existing need within the community/state?
- Does the applicant have a history of funding by other sources, governmental or private?
- Has the applicant demonstrated responsible fiscal management?
- Does the applicant have a strong board of directors or advisory body?
- Does the applicant have access to a cadre of committed volunteers?
- Has the applicant demonstrated that it has a competent staff with appropriate expertise to carry out the proposed project?
- Is the proposed project budget realistic and well-planned?

Exhibit 8.3 provides a list of common reasons why private sector proposals are declined.

Public Funding—Federal

Several federal laws authorize specific programs that provide services and supports for transition-age youth, including some targeted for youth with disabilities. Even when a federally-funded program targets youth with no mention of youth with disabilities, they have a responsibility under the Americans with Disabilities Act and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act to make their services and supports available to individuals with disabilities as a condition of the receipt of federal funding. In addition, some federally-funded programs that provide services and supports for adults with disabilities are often able to serve transition-age youth as an approach to early intervention for adults. Many of the laws authorizing such programs include discretionary authority to fund demonstration projects and promising practices in service delivery. HS/HT programs should always be on the look out for announcements related to the use of these discretionary funds.

Obviously, each federally-funded program has different purposes, supports different services, imposes different eligibility requirements, and is subjected to different data collection and reporting requirements. In addition, different federal laws often include different definitions for the same basic terms such as “disability,” “individual with a disability,” and “youth.” There are even differences in how “employment” is defined as an intended outcome of a federally-funded program. It is important to note, however, that federal funding may never be used for lobbying or fundraising.

Table 8.3 outlines the youth eligibility requirements that apply to selected federally-funded programs and services. Additional details regarding the federal laws authorizing some of the programs as well as other federally-funded programs can be found on the NCWD/Youth website by checking out the “Legislation” section of the “Resources and Publications” page.

TABLE 8.3

Age Requirements for Selected Federally-Funded Programs

PROGRAM	AGE					
	14	16	18	19	21	24
HS/HT	Eligibility starts.					Eligibility ends.
IDEA <i>Note: Eligibility can start as early as birth, but transition services are required at age 16.</i>	Transition planning “may” start at age 14.	Transition plans are required at age 16.			Services stop at age 21 unless specified otherwise in State law.	
WIA	Services start—local youth programs.	Eligible for Job Corps.	Eligible youth ages 18-21 may be concurrently enrolled in adult and youth activities.		Eligibility for most youth services ends.	Eligibility for Job Corps ends at age 24. There is no age limitation for people with disabilities
Ticket to Work			Individuals determined eligible for SSI or SSDI will receive a ticket.			Eligibility for the Ticket program extends to age 64.
Vocational Rehabilitation No firm legislative age trigger	Although most VR agencies do not outreach to youth prior to their junior or senior year in high school, youth may receive vocational assessment, guidance and counseling services, and selected other services if they apply for and are determined eligible for services prior to this.			Additional services and supports are generally available post high school (ages 19-22) for eligible individuals.		

Of the programs listed in Table 8.3, the public VR program has provided the most support for HS/HT to date. In addition to the types of in-kind support described in Chapter 7, VR has also been the primary source of funding for HS/HT in two states (Georgia and South Carolina) and the VR agencies in Maryland, Michigan and Ohio were instrumental in providing the funding to keep HS/HT going after their ODEP grants ended.

When the ODEP funding for Georgia HS/HT ended, the program became a permanent program within the Georgia Department of Labor (GADOL), under the direction of Vocational Rehabilitation, which reports to the Division of Rehabilitation Services. GADOL funds support the state coordinator’s salary, a consultant’s

fee, and one contract person responsible for providing administrative support and technical assistance to the state coordinator and the HS/HT State Advisory Board. The South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department (SCVRD) is the first VR agency to move forward and implement HS/HT on a statewide basis without receiving a grant from any source outside of the state. The primary source of funding for HS/HT in SC is a grant from the Department of Commerce which houses the WIA youth-related program, which is combined with funds from SCVRD. All local HS/HT sites in SC, with the exception of one, are operated out of area SCVRD offices. With the goal of having a HS/HT Employment Specialist housed in all area offices and sub-offices of SCVRD, the HS/HT program has expanded quickly to sites throughout the state.

The state VR agencies in Maryland, Michigan, Ohio and Oklahoma have also explored ways to provide support to continue HS/HT beyond the ODEP funding. In Maryland and Oklahoma, HS/HT sites have been approved as vendors of specific types of VR services for which VR will pay a fee-for-service for participating HS/HT youth. The Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) and the Michigan Commission for the Blind (MCB) have pooled funds to support the state coordinator's position beyond the ODEP grant period. In Ohio, the Rehabilitation Services Commission (RSC) provided interim support to the local sites to keep them in operation for one year beyond the ODEP funding while they explored other ways to sustain the HS/HT program.

The Workforce Investment Act is another potential source of support for a HS/HT program. Several HS/HT programs have leveraged support from regional and local Workforce Investment Boards. For example, the Workforce Development Board of Okaloosa and Walton Counties in Florida administers a HS/HT Department of Juvenile Justice Re-entry Program. The Georgia HS/HT program was successful in getting HS/HT students included in the Georgia Department of Labor's WIA Summer Youth Program, which had over \$1 million in funding for 2006. Youth participating in the program are co-enrolled in WIA, VR, and HS/HT, with shared case management and a written agreement outlining what each program agrees to do. HS/HT was allotted 75 slots for the summer intern program. When more than 110 students expressed an interest, additional slots were given to HS/HT to allow all interested youth the opportunity to participate. A few HS/HT students were offered jobs following the internship.

Another source of federal funding not to be overlooked is the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Title I funds are targeted for students who are low achieving or at risk of not meeting state academic standards and for school-wide programs in schools where not less than forty percent of the students are from low-income families. However, for a school to receive Title I funds, it must be identified as needing improvement based on its failure to meet the state's test score targets and other indicators of adequately yearly progress for two or more consecutive years. Among other things, Title I funds may be used for "supplemental educational

services," which are defined as "tutoring and other supplemental academic enrichment services that are in addition to instruction, provided during the school day, and are of high quality, research-based, and specifically designed to increase the academic achievement of eligible children on required academic assessments and to attain proficiency in meeting the State's academic achievement standards." These services may be offered through public- or private-sector providers that are approved by the state.

There are numerous other federal laws that authorize programs that provide assistance to individuals with disabilities regardless of age that could potentially support a HS/HT initiative or specific components of a HS/HT program. The Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act funds state Councils on Developmental Disabilities (CDDs) that support many different projects and activities addressing the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities in the state. Although individuals of all ages are eligible for the programs and services supported by CDDs, eligibility is limited to individuals who experienced the onset of a disability prior to the age of 22 and whose disability resulted in three or more functional limitations. CDDs fund many different initiatives to support this population. The Oklahoma HS/HT program got its start with a five-year grant from the state CDD.

The Assistive Technology Act is another source of federal funding that is not age-specific or disability specific. In the 2004 reauthorization of the AT Act, Statewide AT Projects were required to focus some of their efforts on coordination of and collaboration with state agencies to facilitate access to assistive technology for transition-age youth. As a result, every Statewide AT Project is now supporting some activity or activities related to transition-age youth.

For more information on federal laws and programs that might be potential sources of funding for specific services and supports outlined in the *Guideposts for Success*, check out the online resources described below.

Online Resources to Consider

Finding Funding: A Guide to Federal Sources for Youth Programs is a comprehensive resource

developed by the Finance Project that outlines strategies for gaining access to and using federal funds, which provides information on 103 funding sources offering supports for youth programs. These programs support a wide range of services and activities for youth that are provided by large and small and public and private organization in diverse settings. Visit http://www.financeproject.org/publications/finding_funding_PM.pdf.

The Guide to Partnership Development for Transition-Age Youth is an online resource that is being developed by NCWD/Youth to assist programs such as HS/HT in securing federal funding to sustain different elements of the program. This valuable resource will crosswalk each component of the *Guideposts* with specific legislative and regulatory provisions found in numerous federal laws to identify potential sources of funding for those specific services and activities. The Guide will be available online at http://www.ncwd-youth.info/resources_&_Publications/partnership_Guides/.

State and Local Funding

As you explore different ways to support your HS/HT program, don't forget to consider state and local funding. When looking at funding from the State Department of Education (SDE), it is important to remember that less than ten percent of education funding comes from the federal government. The remainder is state and local funds.

Several HS/HT programs have been successful in securing funding from the SDE. Tech-Now in Oklahoma received \$173,000 from the SDE to support HS/HT during the 2005-2006 school year. The SDE increased their support to \$200,000 for the 2006-2007 school year. Both Colorado HS/HT and MiConnections have used discretionary funds from the SDE to support local HS/HT sites. However, since discretionary funds are generally time-limited, they are not a good resource to sustain a HS/HT program over time.

In most states, the state legislature sets aside funds within the state budget each year to support specific initiatives, including some youth initiatives and some transition initiatives. You will want to do some research

to see if any such initiatives exist in your state and to determine if they have the potential to support a HS/HT program or specific components of the program. Working in partnership with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), the Florida HS/HT program was successful in getting the state legislature to appropriate \$500,000 from the state budget in FYs 2006, 2007 and 2008 to support HS/HT. These funds were established as a line item within DVR's annual budget and are used to expand local implementation of HS/HT throughout Florida.

When exploring support for local HS/HT sites, don't overlook local programs that may be willing to support specific components of the HS/HT program or specific types of activities such as small scholarships to reward participating youth for outstanding achievement. Consider approaching your local school board, your local community action program, local volunteer programs, etc. While they may not be able to provide significant financial support, small financial contributions help and other types of support, such as use of a volunteer network, may be available.

Private Funding Resources

There are many potential sources of private sector funding that could be sought to support a HS/HT program, e.g., through independent private foundations, community foundations, corporate philanthropy, and service clubs.

Independent Private Foundations are non-governmental, nonprofit organizations with a principle fund or endowment. The foundation is managed by its own trustees and directors to maintain or increase charitable, educational, religious, or other activities serving the public good. Usually, an independent private foundation awards grants, most often to nonprofit organizations, based on announcements soliciting proposals addressing specific initiatives (e.g., programs that increase the number of females pursuing engineering degrees, programs that encourage minorities to enter the STEM careers, programs that decrease the dropout rate, etc.).

The National Science Foundation (NSF) provided funding to support implementation of several of the early HS/HT programs. However, since NSF funds are targeted to support new innovations, they are not a potential source of ongoing funding for a HS/HT program. Consequently, when NSF announced the availability of grants to support initiatives that promoted an increased interest in the STEM careers among middle school students, Tech-Now in Oklahoma submitted an application that proposed to replicate the HS/HT program model in several middle schools. NSF awarded \$103,000 to Tech-Now to implement this innovative program in six middle schools throughout the state.

Community Foundations make funding available to support projects in a defined geographic area. They pool the resources of many donors and also provide a venue to assist smaller foundations in managing their assets and allocating their funds. Community foundations usually have a broad scope and local community focus. Funding is usually granted based on the needs of the local community, which can evolve over time, resulting in changes in the types of programs that are awarded grants over time.

Corporate Philanthropy can be particularly important to HS/HT because of the recent emphasis on the STEM careers. While these philanthropic programs often rely on their governing boards or endowment committees to make funding decisions, some rely on employee committees and local executives to make such decisions. HS/HT program coordinators can get to know the business leaders in the state and/or local community by getting involved with the Chamber of Commerce, the Business Leadership Network, and other entities sponsored by the business community. Established relationships with groups like these can facilitate your access to information about funding opportunities as they arise. You may also discover business leaders who might be willing to make HS/HT a funding priority. In addition, it is through such relationships that some HS/HT programs have found businesses willing to support specific activities, such as kick-off events, through small donations.

There are two ways in which a company or corporation makes contributions to nonprofit programs: through a separate company foundation or through company-sponsored giving programs. Corporate foundations are funded by corporate allocations to the foundation to carry out grant making. The foundation is usually set up as a separate but affiliated organization which may or may not be located at a site within the corporation. Company-sponsored foundations are separate legal entities that usually maintain close ties with the parent company. Corporate foundations must follow the laws and regulations for private foundations, including filing an annual Form 990-PF to the Internal Revenue Services (IRS). While their giving usually reflects the specific interests of the parent company, they may also reflect the particular interests of the corporate leadership or the foundation's governing body. For this reason, their funding priorities may change over time.

Service Clubs or Local Civic Organizations provide community support as well as philanthropy. Often, this philanthropy includes providing funding support to local community programs as well as scholarships and other grants. Scan your community to find clubs and service organizations in your area such as Civitan International, the Elks of the United States, Jaycees, Kiwanis International, Lions Clubs International, and Rotary International.

The Search for Private Funding Sources

An easy way to identify potential funding sources is to conduct a search based on subject area, geographic restrictions, and type of support. When searching by subject, search listings that have expressed an interest in funding programs in a specific field (e.g., secondary and/or postsecondary education; science, math, and/or technology; youth; underserved populations; workforce development, etc.). To do a geographic search, start with a listing of donors that support programs in your city, state, or region. Although some give nationally and even internationally, most funding sources limit their giving to specific geographic areas where they are located or where their affiliates are located. When searching by type of support, search for grants that focus on youth, youth or individuals with disabilities, dropout prevention, encouraging participation in the STEM careers, facilitating entry into postsecondary education, etc. You will also want to

look for grants that fund specific aspects of program development such as seed money, general operating support, or program-specific support.

Online Resources to Consider

The HS/HT Funding Resource Database is a searchable database of primarily private foundations that have been pre-screened for applicability to the HS/HT program, to youth initiatives, and initiatives targeted for underserved populations. The private donor database is searchable by organizational name or geographic area (national or state-specific). Visit www.highschoolhightech.net, click on “Resources,” and scroll down to “Funding Resources.” Click on all resources or request resources by state.

What’s New is a section of NCWD/Youth’s website that is updated constantly to include funding announcements specific to youth projects and other youth initiatives. While many of the announcements here are for smaller grants and awards, you may find them useful to fund specific activities or to acknowledge student achievements. Visit www.ncwd-youth.info/.

The Foundation Center provides a wealth of information to help nonprofit organizations develop successful strategies to secure funding from private sources. It includes a broad overview of how foundations operate, outlines their common industry practices, and highlights trends in philanthropy. It provides online training courses such as step-by-step instructions on how to write a grant, quick tutorials and short courses on topics of interests that are free of charge. Visit <http://foundationcenter.org/sitemap.html>.

Be Strategic

As you think about securing funding to start or expand a HS/HT program, it is important to remember that resources are scarce. Thus, it is extremely important to identify all of the available resources at the federal, state and local levels, including both public and private resources, and to develop a strategic plan for how to secure and use them in the most effective way possible. Due to the nature of their funding, state agencies and federally-funded programs are often restricted on how they can use funds. Take the time to learn about the program and its funding so that you can take advantages of any opportunities that might be beneficial to HS/HT.

When dealing with state agencies and federally-funded programs, you will most likely need to educate the agency about HS/HT and provide evidence of its success in improving outcomes for transition age youth before asking for financial support. It is also important to invest time in developing relationships with key staff. When such relationships are present, people are more likely to think of you when a funding opportunity arises. Remember, developing relationships takes time and energy, and people in key positions can change quickly. However, don’t be discouraged. Experience has shown that persistence pays off.



EXHIBIT 8.1

Activities to Facilitate the Blending and/or Braiding of Existing Resources

Area of Community Need	Potential State-level Intermediary Activities	Potential Local-level Intermediary Activities
<p>Articulating a clear vision for service improvement that reflects agreement on common outcomes for youth and strategies to streamline services</p>	<p>Facilitating ongoing strategic planning for supporting the engagement of multiple stakeholders in the preparation of youth with disabilities for the world of work</p> <p>Providing strong leadership to lay the groundwork for identifying and coordinating financial resources</p>	<p>Facilitating ongoing strategic planning to engage youth service providers, components of the workforce investment system, and employers</p> <p>Convening local leadership (key stakeholders) to establish a clear vision of what services need to be financed or re-organized (a community implementation plan)</p> <p>Providing strong leadership to lay the groundwork for identifying and coordinating financial resources</p>
<p>Developing and sustaining interagency partnerships and collaborations between agencies that fund and deliver youth services and between these agencies and employer groups</p>	<p>Participating in the development of state plans that include waivers allowing blending funds for specific youth initiatives such as HS/HT</p> <p>Training service providers to use various funding streams that operate within distinct systems to support different elements of the <i>Guideposts for Success</i></p> <p>Providing support for training and technical assistance aimed at helping local initiative leaders understand the funding landscape and tackle administrative barriers to coordination</p> <p>Managing specific initiatives that feature interagency partnerships</p> <p>Sustaining commitments for collaborative agreements</p>	<p>Convening local decision-makers for collaborative planning across various agencies and programs</p> <p>Examining how specific local programs can work together to fund particular services/activities</p> <p>Sustaining commitments for local collaborative agreements</p>

Activities to Facilitate the Blending and/or Braiding of Existing Resources

Area of Community Need	Potential State-level Intermediary Activities	Potential Local-level Intermediary Activities
<p>Identifying a range of youth-serving resources</p>	<p>Identifying existing budget assets and gaps in the current use of potential funding sources</p> <p>Identifying and interpreting resources uses, restrictions and reporting requirements</p> <p>Leading the development of grant and funding applications</p>	<p>Identifying budget assets and gaps in their current use of potential funding sources</p> <p>Using resource mapping to identify funding for various services and activities—then, matching funding streams to programmatic goals of the system</p> <p>Identifying and interpreting resources’ uses, restrictions and reporting requirements</p> <p>Leading the development of grant and funding applications</p>
<p>Providing technical assistance and training</p>	<p>Providing cross-training and technical assistance on aspects of youth services, such as job development, service accommodation for disability, etc.</p> <p>Providing support for training and technical assistance for professionals and staff of collaborating agencies and organizations as they perform newly assigned roles</p> <p>Linking providers to important sources of training, technical assistance, and professional networks</p>	<p>Providing cross-training and technical assistance on aspects of youth services, such as job development, service accommodation for disability, etc.</p> <p>Providing support for training and technical assistance for professionals and staff of collaborating agencies and organizations as they perform newly assigned roles</p> <p>Linking providers to important local sources of training, technical assistance, and professional networks</p>

Drafting a Generic Grant Proposal

A grant proposal communicates the case you have built for your program, particularly as it relates to the mission of the organization/foundation sponsoring the grant opportunity and the specific goals and objectives of the grant announcement. Competitive grant announcements go by many different names, including Request for Proposals (RFPs), Solicitation for Grant Applications (SGAs), and Announcement of Availability of Funding. Regardless of the name, the announcement spells out the goals and objectives for the awarding of funds and the intended outcomes the grantee is expected to facilitate. It also outlines the areas that must be covered in the grant application and rates the importance of each area that needs to be addressed with a percentage value that the reviewers will use in evaluating the applications submitted in response to the announcement. Consequently, it is critically important to cover each area identified, paying special attention to areas with the highest ratings for the evaluation plan. The announcement will also identify any special requirements that applicants must meet, such as providing matching funds or collaboration with specific entities. It will also outline any restrictions such as who can and cannot apply for funds. For example, some funding sources will not accept applications from state agencies or from for-profit organizations. Others may be targeted specifically for public entities such as state agencies.

The most common elements of a grant application are outlined below. While it is intended to give an idea of what to include in a grant application, it is critically important to read the entire announcement very carefully and to respond exactly to the particular requirements of the specific announcement.

- A. Executive Summary:** Briefly summarize your program's goals, the project design, and expected outcomes. Most announcements limit the executive summary to one or two pages. In most cases you will not want to draft an executive summary for your generic grant proposal, since this section needs to concisely spell out the goals and objectives of the proposal as it applies to a specific grant announcement and summarizes the program model being proposed and the specific outcomes that the model is expected to accomplish.
- B. Statement of Need:** Document the needs of the population to be served in terms of depth and breadth (e.g., the potential number of students that could benefit from HS/HT), the current lack of services or identified gaps in services, the nature of the problem to be solved (e.g., reduce the dropout rate for youth with disabilities), etc. On the state level, you may want to include a statement of the number of transition-age youth enrolled in special educa-

tion, the estimated dropout rate and/or graduation rate for this population, and any information that might be available regarding the rate of enrollment in postsecondary education for this population and/or the unemployment rate for either this population or for individuals with disabilities in general. For a local grant application, similar statistics for youth with disabilities in a particular school, the local school district, the county or some other local geographic area should either be the basis of this section or be provided to supplement the state data being used to define the need.

- C. Goals and Objectives:** Establish the overarching goals of your HS/HT program and spell out the specific goals that your program can accomplish in quantitative terms. When responding to a specific grant announcement, you will need to spell out a timeline for accomplishing the overarching goals and the specific objectives in terms of the timeframe of the grant award.
- D. Program Design:** Describe the program design or service delivery methods you are proposing to achieve the stated goals and objectives. You will need a detailed but concise description of HS/HT, including the underlying principles, the key program components, the target population, and the intended outcomes. This basic information, which is common to all HS/HT programs, will need to be supplemented with specifics about how the program is actually being implemented in your state or in the designated locality. If you are seeking funding to initiate a new local site, provide a description of how you are planning to implement the program. When you are applying for a grant to support certain aspects of HS/HT or elements of the *Guideposts for Success*, you may need to modify this section to stress specific elements of your program design or to modify the program design consistent with the requirements specified in the grant announcement.
- E. Results/Expected Outcomes:** Highlight the positive outcomes that will be experienced by students participating in your program. If you have existing data that demonstrates positive outcomes for youth participating in HS/HT in your state, in your specific locality, or in a similar locality somewhere else in the state, include that in this section. If appropriate, this section might include a summary of national outcomes for HS/HT to demonstrate the overall success of the program and to show that HS/HT is being implemented in other states and localities. This section will need to be updated when responding to a specific grant opportunity.

F. Organizational Capacity: Describe your organization's or program's qualifications to accomplish the identified objectives, highlighting the program's credibility in terms of past accomplishments in the same or related areas. This section also needs to include a description of material resources (e.g., staffing, office space, equipment, access to support services, etc.) that are available to support the proposed initiative. In the case of an application where the state entity heading the state infrastructure development for HS/HT is the lead in applying for the grant, you will need a statement of organizational capacity as it applies to that agency, highlighting the resources that will be made available for use by the HS/HT program. For a locally initiated grant application, the statement of organizational capacity will focus on the agency or program housing the local site and resources that it will make available for use by HS/HT. It should also highlight any services or supports that will be available to support the local initiative through the state infrastructure. For both state and local applications, you will want to describe any staff expertise that is available to assist the proposed initiative or that will be hired specifically for the proposed initiative.

G. Evaluation Plan: Think through a process for measuring outcomes for individual students and evaluating the overall HS/HT effort. Develop a detailed plan on how you will evaluate the outcome of your efforts, including intermediate steps to ensure the appropriate use of resources, the timely completion of tasks, the modification of the implementation plan, etc. If you think through some of these things ahead of time, you can begin collecting data in light of these measurements and criteria even before you begin applying for grants. This will make it easier to have up-to-date information for the Results section when you are applying for a specific grant.

H. Budget: Prior to responding to a specific grant announcement, it is important to develop a proposed budget that estimates how much funding would be needed to support the state infrastructure and implementation of multiple local sites throughout the state, or an estimate of how much it would take to support the local site that is applying for the grant. Specify costs of the overall initiative, including the costs to be covered with grant funds, any other sources of funding, any in-kind contributions that will be available to support the initiative, and any interagency collaborations providing support for specific aspects of the initiative. If appropriate, specify any resources that the receipt of funds may be able to leverage. Be prepared to modify this budget when actually applying for a grant to address specifications such as maximum grant awards and requirements for matching funds which may or may not include in-kind contributions. Having an idea of general program costs will save considerable time and effort.

I. Future Funding: Since many grant announcements require you to address the sustainability of the initiative beyond the initial grant period, you may need to outline a strategy for securing funding from other sources to continue the project after the grant ends.



Common Reasons Why Private Sector Proposals Are Declined

When crafting a grant proposal, you will want to pay close attention to the criteria that will be used to evaluate applications. In most cases, these criteria are spelled out in the grant announcement along with information on how important each will be in determining the proposals to be funded. In addition, you will want to consider some of the things that the Fundraising School at Indiana University has identified as the most frequently cited reasons private sector proposals are rejected, including the following:

- The project hasn't been documented properly.
- The project doesn't strike the reviewer as significant or doesn't interest him/her.
- The prospective client groups have not been involved in planning and determining the goals of the project.
- The proposal is poorly written, or hard to understand.
- The proposal objectives do not match the objectives of the funding source.
- The proposal budget is not within the range of funding available through the funding agency.
- The proposed project has not been coordinated with other individuals and organizations working in the same area or with the same population.
- The funding source has not been made aware that those individuals submitting the proposal are able to carry out what is proposed; not enough substantiating evidence has been provided.
- Project objectives are too ambitious in scope.
- The proposal writer did not follow guidelines provided by the funding agency.
- There is insufficient evidence that the project can sustain itself beyond the life of the grant.
- The evaluation procedure is inadequate.

These private sector lessons are also applicable when responding to governmental grants.

