

BUILDING, DEVELOPING, AND GOING TO SCALE:
GRANT FUNDED PROGRAMS FOR YOUTH IN TRANSITION

A TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TOOL FOR NAVIGATING THE ROAD TO WORK

MODULE 6

SUSTAINING AND EXPANDING EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

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National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth

“The significant problems that we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when they were created.”

– Albert Einstein

MODULE 6:

Sustaining and Expanding Effective Practices

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The National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth) is composed of partners with expertise in disability, education, employment, and workforce development issues. NCWD/Youth is housed at the Institute for Educational Leadership in Washington, DC. The Collaborative is charged with assisting state and local workforce development systems to integrate youth with disabilities into their service strategies.

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Information on the Collaborative can be found at
<http://www.ncwd-youth.info/>.

Information about the Office of Disability Employment Policy can be found at
<http://www.dol.gov/odep/>.

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (DOL/ODEP) has embarked on an ambitious youth-focused research initiative. Its primary purpose is to improve outcomes for youth with disabilities who are transitioning into workplace settings. Currently, the outcomes are poor, and have been so for some time.

The ODEP youth initiative presents states and local communities with an opportunity to reverse this trend for youth with disabilities. These grants, combined with ODEP's funded technical assistance, can help non-profit public and private entities build a system of care for transitioning youth.

The rationale for this initiative is well justified. The outcomes for youth with disabilities continue to be unsatisfactory, in almost all areas. There is little likelihood that they will find meaningful employment as they begin the transition process. More disturbing, the lack of an organized system of support continues to hamper their chances of success. Numerous studies report problems addressing the transition needs of youth with disabilities through interagency collaboration and cooperation. Indeed, all ODEP grantees are no doubt aware that the following problems exist in many state and local systems:

- Lack of shared student information across agencies
- Lack of follow-up data on program recipients that could be used to improve efficiency and effectiveness
- Deficient interagency agreements
- Difficulty in predicting needed post-secondary services
- Minimized role for parents and student in decision-making
- Inefficient and ineffective management practices

Grantees should also understand that their participation in these initiatives are coming at a time when both government and philanthropic organizations are focusing their attention on the broader arena of "transition." Although each of the

ODEP's Mission

The Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) provides national leadership by developing and influencing disability-related employment policy as well as practice affecting the employment of people with disabilities.

Its vision is a world in which people with disabilities have unlimited employment opportunities.

ODEP serves as a catalyst for change through:

- Developing evidence-based employment solutions
- Delivering authoritative and credible data on employment of people with disabilities
- Guiding economic and social policy
- Building collaborative networks

ODEP youth projects have different emphases, they all share one thing in common: the charge to organize their work around evidence-based system neutral guiding principles and guideposts that help youth-serving institutions improve the transition process. For many youth at risk, entry into the new economy is nearly impossible. This includes young people leaving foster care, youth who are returning from juvenile justice facilities, and those who have chronic mental health concerns. There is an acknowledgement, based on credible evidence, that the discreet systems for these populations working in isolation are simply not effective. Further, the overlap between these high risk populations and youth with disabilities is considerable. In that sense, the grantees who are participating in the ODEP initiative are part of a much larger national process examining how the challenges for youth in transition can become opportunities. That implies that as a field of practice, the grantees, in collaboration with their state partners, can move towards a more comprehensive understanding of service delivery approaches, policy changes, funding strategies and desired outcomes.

The reality is that no one organization ever "owns" the transition responsibility. Multiple agencies are responsible for parts of the transition process. Success requires building cross-agency partnerships—based upon the guideposts—to affect multiple delivery systems.

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Like most well-intended reform initiatives, ODEP's youth initiative has created a high level of excitement, especially among veteran service providers. The initial reports from the grantees regarding their progress are very positive. Though it is still too early to identify any specific effective practices, there are undoubtedly several promising approaches. Although one common element of these approaches is that they are mostly centered on direct services, the key point is that agencies, intermediaries, and workforce development systems will need to craft new collaborative arrangements that include representation by human services, employers, business, education, vocational rehabilitation and young people. Again, this becomes especially relevant in light of a broader, national level of attention.

Grantees, currently or in the near future, will be approaching the critical stage of determining how to take their work to scale, how to build strategic collaborative relationships, how to blend and braid resources, and how to sustain their work past the grant

period. This document is being prepared as a technical assistance tool for grantees and their sub-grantees. It is part of an overall strategy to support the work of grantees entering these critical stages.

These modules reflect a combination of established practices from human systems and educational reform, successful business models, and responses to insightful questions raised by ODEP's grantees. Even though their original purpose was to support the efforts of the ODEP's grantees, the information contained in the modules have utility for anyone involved in workforce development system, state agencies working with youth in transition, policy makers and any public or private funders interested in innovative, collaborative youth development efforts. The modules are not meant to provide a step-by-step approach, nor should they imply any linear process. Instead they offer a straightforward overview of the complex and deliberate interactions and coordination needed to effectively fulfill our collective responsibility to improve the well-being of youth with disabilities.

SUSTAINING AND EXPANDING EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

It is probably still too early in the process to identify any effective practices among specific youth-transition projects. Indeed, it sometimes takes several years before the field recognizes an approach that has a consistently documented record of effectiveness. But there are several examples of “promising approaches” which perhaps, after a few more years will become the field’s “effective practices.” For now, the most practical definition of a sustainable “effective practice” is that it is measurably effective for youth, functionally feasible for the agency, and satisfactorily meets the needs of the employer.

A number of promising approaches geared toward transitioning youth are worth noting. On its website at <http://www.NICHCY.org>, the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities identifies several resources for the support of promising approaches. These resources are noteworthy since this area of service delivery is an emerging one, with the lessons of success still tentative. Organizations such as the Institute for Educational Leadership, and those groups listed on the above-mentioned website, have a broader perspective on the use of resources, improved management practices, and the coordination of education and vocational rehabilitation.

There are also several established “effective practices” models that are highlighted that *do* fit the practical definition, but *do not* deal solely with transitioning youth. Nonetheless, two of the four programs highlighted below, have more than ten years of service history with children and youth as well as similar methods of targeting specific populations of children—and *all* of the programs employ coordinated service and funding approaches. (See *Appendix* for more detailed descriptions of and contact information for each of these initiatives).

- **Beacon Schools (Non-Transition Model)** promote the goals and principles of youth development, and the organizations and individuals that believe in them by developing youth centers that were part of a comprehensive local anti-drug and crime strategy.

EFFECTIVE PRACTICES RESOURCE:

PEPNet is a system and an information base for identifying and promoting what works in youth employment and development. Youth programs, policy makers, funders, and other youth professionals including Workforce Investment Boards, are using PEPNet to learn about and promote effective practices for youth. To find out more about PEPNet visit <http://www.nyec.org/pepnet>

The initiative’s team took the best of what was known, pitched it in common sense language and planned for rapid but sustainable growth. While the quality of Beacon Schools varies from center to center, the number would not be over 100 if these centers had to be established, funded, and evaluated one at a time. The Beacon model started in New York and now exists in several other cities began with the premise that the school is the center of family activities in a community. The success of the model has been predicated upon the blending of flexible private and public funding, the support of formal and informal organizations and families, a creative outreach strategy, an outcome-driven orientation and clear, understandable data which has given locally elected officials on both sides of the aisle an opportunity to support the initiative. Also, the Beacon Schools have made excellent use of technical assistance because even though there is local energy, there is not always local capacity.

- **The Annie E. Casey Foundation School-to-Career Partnership Program** may be too new to describe as an “effective practice,” but has certainly established itself as a promising approach. From the earliest stages of development, the program has emphasized a holistic approach to supporting youth by improving and enhancing access to services, mentoring and financial literacy resources that contribute to the young person’s success. The School-to-Career program targets youth between the ages 14 and 23 who are currently in, are transitioning out of, or were for-

merly in a state child welfare foster care system. Through financial and technical resources provided to grantee organizations, the Foundation helps to develop and implement appropriate interventions for youth in foster care and alumni, who contribute to their ability to learn, work, save and pursue entrepreneurship in order to attain economic success as they transition to adulthood. The focus on economic success is predicated on the belief that such success leads to future success in a number of fundamental aspects of adult life, including housing, employment, family stability, safety, health and social well-being. The School-to-Career program was launched in Baltimore in 1998 as a partnership between AECF, United Parcel Service (UPS), Living Classrooms Foundation and the Maryland Department of Human Resources to demonstrate that vulnerable youth, if given opportunities, can successfully transition to jobs at UPS. Since

its inception, the program has expanded to Hartford, New York City, Oakland, Portland (Maine), Providence, San Antonio and San Diego.

- **Our Piece of the Pie (OPP)** is a locally-oriented program started in Hartford, CT in 1995 to help youth who were dropping out of high school develop the skills needed to finish school and obtain work. The program uses youth businesses, tiers of older mentors, and role models to motivate youth to learn life skills, employment skills and entrepreneurial and business skills. Participating youth learn the relevance of learning and staying in school and the importance work experience plays in achieving personal career goals. Youth learn how the world of work operates and become successful employees and entrepreneurs. When the young people complete their youth business experience, OPP helps them find part-time work placements, linked to their career

QUICK TIP

Making Your Youth Initiative An Effective Practice

1. The projects should reflect a successful collaboration of labor, human service, education, vocational rehabilitation, employers and youth. More specifically their success will most likely be related to an alignment of policies, once they have created a shared vision for youth in transition, an agreement on a service strategy, and an evaluation process, which has actually begun to measure the outcomes for young people. The National Transition Alliance for Youth with Disabilities has used similar elements to describe promising approaches and over the past several years, the Alliance has been tracking the progress of projects in states such as Rhode Island, New Mexico and Maryland. The Alliance website is worth visiting at: <http://www.dssc.org/nta>.
2. Successful service delivery approaches—usually managed by multiple initiative partners—will typically emphasize the program’s goals rather than merely follow categorical funding streams.
3. Initiative partners engaged in effective practices approaches cannot allow themselves to be tied to categorical funding streams but should consciously use a flexible core of dollars to build their programs from funding sources, which generally included public and private partners.
4. Partners should use these flexible cores of dollars to adhere to their initiative’s core principles and advance an agenda of innovation. In the case of youth-oriented initiative grantees, this will mean emphasizing the guideposts of each grant project and stepping away from the many definitions of disability.
5. Initiatives should always be finding ways to engage the consumers of the services. In the instance of this grant project, it would be the young people and employers.
6. Partners are committed to the notion that youth need to participate in a program that builds their sense of competence usefulness and self-determination; in other words, the appropriate environment of youth development.

interests. The initiative serves primarily local residents, ages 14-21 years old. Its universal populations are in-school and out-of-school youth; its special populations are those in foster care or the juvenile justice system. In 2001, 229 youth participated in the youth businesses and another 470 were served with a variety of employment training opportunities. Several national youth development organizations have identified OPP's effective practices. Though this model has not been taken to scale in the state of Connecticut, OPP is an example of sustaining an effective practice.

- The Olds Home Visitation Project (Non Transition Model) is a prenatal and early childhood nurse home visitation program, developed by David Olds and his colleagues and designed to improve first time mothers' pregnancy outcomes by reducing prenatal risks,

improving early childhood health and development and improving personal development of at-risk mothers. The focus is on low-income, first-time mothers. Trained and experienced nurses make home visits every one to two weeks during pregnancy and continue visits until a child is two years old. The nurse home visitors involve family members and friends in the program, helping them use additional community health and human services. The Olds Model is over 20 years old and has established a stellar reputation among health and human service professionals. Equally as important however, has been the strength of its reputation among foundations, hospitals, corporations, and legislators. They understand the value of child abuse prevention services, which are folded into a non-threatening public health approach.

WHY LOOK AT EFFECTIVE PRACTICES?

It is important to be attuned to these promising approaches and learn from the best practice models because any local partners, even those who are committed to the notion of a sustainable project with blended resources, cannot apply a scattered set of approaches. The willingness of these diverse partners to “blend and braid” their individual dollars is dependent upon the deployment of evidence-based approaches. Government funders and foundations will be more likely to pool resources only if they understand that there is an upside to the approach. Entering into any agreement to blend funds is dependent upon the ability to convince other partners that a similar approach has worked successfully in another jurisdiction. Equally important, these promising approaches and effective practices provide the participants with guidelines for measuring and maintaining quality of services. The application of an effective practice model or promising approach should be specified in the preparation of a Memorandum of Understanding.

In a nutshell, once established, effective practices and promising approaches have several features that contribute to the sustainability of initiatives:

1. Non-categorical, flexible funding from a variety of public and private sources
2. A clear communication strategy about the initiative
3. An organized and systemic mechanism for showing results and project data
4. Securing support from “both sides of the aisle” and non-traditional partners
5. Replication or ability to duplicate in a number of sites over a period of time
6. Regulatory and policy changes or waivers when necessary
7. Movement towards access of service and away from eligibility and entitlements
8. Consumer involvement

EFFECTIVE PRACTICE: STRATEGIES FOR GRANTEES

Effective practices in youth services programs generally have three things in common:

- 1. They are multi-system in their approach**
- 2. They emphasize quality improvement and program flexibility**
- 3. They utilize an intermediary to maintain consistency of approach**

Strategy # 1: Identify the effective practices that already exist in your youth service program and isolate the effective practices. Then encourage your intermediaries to nurture these effective practices through successful collaborative partnerships, which promote shared service delivery, efficient resource utilization and system-wide problem solving.

Strategy # 2: With employers, the role of the grantees and intermediaries is more supportive and educational. The pathway to effective practice is for the grantee to help the employer understand what to do and how to do it, along with the assumption that there is someone off site of the job who is attending to the ongoing challenges faced by the young person.

Strategy # 3: The intermediaries in their role of promoting effective practices among the ODEP grantees, should engage the critical partners, develop quality standards, develop mechanisms for leveraging resources and sharing of resources and establish mechanisms for accountability to the model.

Strategy # 4: Look to the collaborative partnerships as a best practice that can eliminate service gaps, avoidance of service duplication, and reduction of turf. Partnerships can cultivate sustainable, integrated systems instead of competing components of service. Given the population of young people, and their families, this flexible approach is more likely to result in a best practice.

*Adapted from: Collaboration, Partnerships, and Leadership, by Paula D. Kohler, PhD. Western Michigan University.
See <http://ici.umn.edu/ncset/publications>*

CONCLUSION

This document is the last of six modules designed to support the many professionals, advocates, young people and policy makers who are working to improve the outcomes for youth with disabilities. These modules contain the experiences and strategies employed by many individuals and organizations who have tried to alter the traditional approaches to the workforce development system, human services and education. In this latest effort, the ODEP youth initiative has provided communities with the resources and the technical assistance they need to create successful collaborations. Combining these resources with the existing enthusiasm and capacity at the local level, the grantees have a well-timed opportunity to enhance dramatically the level of support for youth with disabilities. Moreover, the success of this initiative will become a harbinger for other projects designed to serve at risk young people in transition including foster youth who are exiting the child welfare system, young people re-entering their communities from the juvenile justice system, and youth who have dropped out of school. Though much is done every day on their behalf, the well-being of these populations is still at unacceptable levels. The ODEP grantees can share the lessons learned and effective practices with these other sectors, while simultaneously breaking new ground for young people with disabilities. Given the prevalence of disability in the aforementioned at risk populations, it is fair to assume that many of these youth are youth with disabilities whose collective possibilities and strengths should inspire us to be as creative as possible.

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APPENDIX

Beacon Schools

The strategy that led to the success of the Beacon School Programs opted to promote the goals and principles of youth development, and the organizations and individuals that believe in them. Youth centers were seen as a part of a comprehensive anti-drug and crime strategy for the city. Ten centers were proposed, but substance abuse prevention was not specifically promised. Former Division for Youth Services Commissioner Richard Murphy's team took the best of what is known, pitched it in common sense language and planned for rapid but sustainable growth. And, while the quality of Beacon Schools varies from center to center, the number would not be over 100 if these centers had to be established, funded and evaluated one at a time.

The Beacons are a place, a philosophy and a process located in public schools. The Beacon model, which started in New York and now exists in several other cities, starts with the premise that the school is the center of family activities in a community. The success of the model has been predicated upon the blending of flexible private and public funding, the support of formal and informal organizations and families, a creative outreach strategy, an outcome-driven orientation and clear, understandable data which has given elected officials on both sides of the aisle an opportunity to support the Beacons. Also, the Beacons have made excellent use of technical assistance because even though there is local energy, there is not always local capacity. The Beacons have been organized and intentional with a core set of standards and values for all sites.

Sustainability:

Building, Developing and Going-to-Scale

Building Sustainability-Means improved community inputs. Increases in safe and stimulating places for young people to go, possibilities to try and people to talk to in neighborhoods where the streets were the only after-school alternatives. Funding of the Beacon Schools does not hinge on promised reductions in youth crime and drug use. It also means maintaining political prowess – positioning, and additional public

systems funding and integration, remain goals and political diligence never lets up--at city hall, in the school buildings, in the communities. Beacon Schools engage the public with parents and the press seen as the ultimate sanctioners. The brand name, simple goals and one-per district plan give the Beacons political capital and allow the media to monitor, parents to advocate and the public to rally around the community-based schools and programs. What Beacon did NOT do, is as instructive, had New York's Division of Youth Services simply let 40 contracts for substance and delinquency prevention go to 40 Community Based Organizations, the political prognosis would have probably been terminal.

Developing Sustainability – Public and private institutions, namely schools, Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and the Department of Youth began and continued working as partners. The institutions committed to broad-based development were the key players. Private foundations came in as quiet partners to support training, technical assistance and evaluation. The community came in to shape the programming. Social services, child welfare, law enforcement and health were brought in once the tone was set. There existed, from the beginning, a process of community engagement. Young people, parents, residents, community associations and councils were engaged in planning. The blueprints were filled in by the community. And, there existed, from the start, professional preparation; principles, practices, planning. The Community Based Organizations brought uneven capacity and different visions to the task. Preparation was seen as critical for the development of a group of centers with different administrators but a common philosophy and feel.

Going-to-Scale – This occurs when there is a continued well-balanced partnership with no single partner wielding excessive power. Schools provide space. Community Based Organizations provide the staffing and basic programming. Department of Youth and Community Development provide management and funding. The Youth Development Institute at the Fund for the City of New York coordinate privately funded technical assistance and evaluation. Expansion also

means keeping up expedited pacing in 1991 there were ten Beacon Schools, in 1996 there were 40, in 1998 there were 78 and as of 2003, there are over 100. Going to scale means starting big enough to capture attention across school districts. In addition, strategic placement helped the program's "going to scale" efforts--by placing positively pitched programming in the worst neighborhoods this helped the political process to work for expansion. Coupled with evaluation data showing extraordinary achievements in both the communities and students and families involved, parents in less distressed neighborhoods began to clamor for Beacons and expansion occurred.

For more information, go to:

<http://www.ncsl.org.uk/mediastore/image2/kpool-evidence-hargreaves.pdf>

<http://www.wallacefunds.org/WE/GrantsPrograms>

<http://www.aed.org/scs>

<http://www.forumforyouthinvestment.org/yt-strategicsuccess.htm>

<http://www.aypf.org/forumbriefs/2003/fb022103.htm>

The Annie E. Casey Foundation School-to-Career Partnership Program

Though it might be too early to describe it as a “best practice”, the **School-to-Career Partnership** has certainly established itself as a promising approach. Besides meeting the standards for a promising approach, the School-to-Career Partnership Program has been impressive in a number of other ways. From the earliest stages of development, the program has emphasized a holistic approach to supporting youth. It has improved and enhanced the access to services, mentoring and financial literacy resources which contribute to the young person’s success. The goals go beyond employment, even though job placement and retention are the primary resources of success.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation’s School-to-Career Partnership program is founded on the belief that youth aging out of foster care should be afforded opportunities to achieve economic success as a result of policies, practices and programs that promote their full participation into the social and economic mainstream. The School-to-Career program was launched in Baltimore in 1998 as a partnership between AECF,

United Parcel Service (UPS), Living Classrooms Foundation and the Maryland Department of Human Resources to demonstrate that vulnerable youth, if given opportunities, can successfully transition to jobs at UPS. Since its inception, the program has expanded to Hartford, New York City, Oakland, Portland (Maine), Providence, San Antonio and San Diego. The School-to-Career sites in Baltimore, New York City and Oakland are funded through the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The remaining sites operate under the auspices of the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative.

The School-to-Career program targets youth between the ages 14 and 23 who are currently in, are transitioning out of, or were formerly in a state child welfare foster care system. Through financial and technical resources provided to grantee organizations, the Foundation helps to develop and implement appropriate interventions for youth in foster care and alumni, who contribute to their ability to learn, work, save and pursue entrepreneurship in order to attain economic success as they transition to adulthood. The focus on economic success is predicated on the belief that economic success is a predictive measure of future success in a number of fundamental aspects of adult life, including housing, employment, family stability, safety, health and social well-being. The School-to-Career economic success framework espouses educational attainment, workforce development, personal financial education, asset accumulation and entrepreneurship.

Common Program Elements and Local Flexibility

The eight School-to-Career Partnership sites have adopted a common program design that provides core services to program participants, including outreach and recruitment; intake and orientation; assessment; life skills and job readiness training; job development and job placement; post placement retention and career advancement. Although these core services focus on workforce development, School-to-Career sites also provide assistance with educational attainment, financial literacy, asset development and entrepreneurship. Moreover, each site has the flexibility to configure these core services according to participants’ specific needs and available resources.

Outcomes

In 2003, the School-to-Career program was successful in assisting 328 young people to obtain employment. Youth have been placed in jobs with national and regional employers including United Parcel Service, Sears, Toys-R-Us, Wal-Mart, Radio Shack, Marriott, Home Depot, Auto Zone, CVS Pharmacy and U-Haul. Of the 328 young people placed in jobs in 2003, 74% of them retained employment at December 31st of that year. In addition, approximately two-thirds (67%) of these youth were still employed as of July 30, 2004. Youth earned an average hourly wage of \$7.94, with some youth earning as much as \$15.00 to \$16.00 per hour. In 2003, 61% of our youth worked part-time for approximately 24 hours per week. Fifty-two percent received full benefits, while 9% received partial benefits.

During the first seven months of 2004, 166 School-to-Career participants were successfully placed in jobs. The program added several new employers including Southwest Airlines, Rite Aid, Zales Jewelers, Sea World, Stop & Shop, Hollywood Video and others. Of the 166 young people placed in jobs through July of this year, 83% have retained employment. Program participants earned an average wage of \$8.08, slightly above the average wage earned in 2003; two youth earn as much as \$18.00 to \$20.00 per hour. Almost half of the youth worked part-time (48%) for an average of 28 hours per week. The remaining youth either worked full-time (34%), or held temporary or seasonal jobs (20%). Forty-one percent received full benefits, while 17% received partial benefits.

From the perspective of systems-building, the School-to-Career Partnership Program has brought together several non-traditional partners who each had a desire to do good (provide employment opportunities for disadvantaged youth), and to do well (employers, young people and non-profit agencies all benefit personally from the program). It is a “dual customer” model with an emphasis on meeting the needs of both employers and youth. Wisely, it has closely monitored the program using data as a quality improvement goal. As a result the employers, youth, and the agencies can attend to periodic challenges before they become major obstacles.

Information on the School-to-Career Partnership Program from Brian Lyght at The Annie E. Casey Foundation

Our Piece of the Pie

Our Piece of the Pie (OPP), a program of Southend Community Services, was started in 1995 to help youth of Hartford--of which over 50% were dropping out of high school--obtain the skills needed to finish school and obtain work. The initiative serves primarily Hartford residents, ages 14-21 years old. Its universal populations are in-school and out-of-school youth; its special populations are those in foster care or the juvenile justice system. In 2001, 229 youth participated in the youth businesses and another 470 were served with a variety of employment training opportunities. The program uses youth businesses, tiers of older mentors and role models to motivate youth to learn life skills, employment skills and entrepreneurial and business skills. Participating youth learn the relevance of learning and staying in school and the importance work experience plays in achieving personal career goals. Youth learn how the world of work operates and become successful employees and entrepreneurs. When the young people complete their youth business experience, OPP helps them find part-time work placements, linked to their career interests.

Building Sustainability means surveying youth to find several work areas in which youth had a high interest—working with youth, working with the elderly, professional office skills, and having their own business. Most youth also indicated they were intimidated with the job search process and needed more help. This resulted in formulating a youth business incubator model built on youth development principles--the model: a focus on youth interests; management by an adult entrepreneur; creation and sale of products and services needed by the community; and, maintaining responsibility for developing its own business plan for sustainability.

Developing Sustainability means looking for community characteristics that would make change possible and pursuing initial programs in those communities. OPP founders looked for four key qualities:

1. A strong regional economy
2. Private resources that could be reinvested in children and families

3. Effective civic organizations, existing community building efforts
4. Experience in implementing a range of activities focused around families

This also meant developing collaboration with the Connecticut Department of Labor and Department of Children and Families in order to replicate its youth business prototype across the state. Having successfully done so, in 2000 OPP began implementing its model statewide as the Governor’s Youth Business Pilot to help youth in the juvenile justice system and in foster care transition into the community and the workforce. OPP continues to develop community and business support around each of its youth businesses, with customers, advisors, and funders drawn from the local public and private sector. Each youth business is supported by an adult advisory or steering committee. These groups include members of the local business community, youth role models who are often former graduates of one of the businesses, OPP support staff, and professional staff from agencies that have youth participating in the business. The committee guides youth businesses with operations and continuous improvement strategies. Mentors are also used as role models and include retired business executives, college interns, program graduates, and working professionals.

Going-to-Scale means continuing to use technical assistance from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Academy for Educational Development, the Connecticut State Departments of Labor and Children and families to improve OPP’s data management capacity and its capacity to track youth outcomes. Outcomes are the evidence of success and form the basis for “going-to-scale.” The results are encouraging: 96 percent of the over 500 youth served in fiscal year 2000-2001 were in school, working, or participating in OPP’s after-school programs after participating in business incubator or employment and training components. 72 percent to 87 percent of youth reported learning “a good deal” about how to communicate more effectively, act appropriately in a work situation, complete tasks, work as part of a team, and understand what behavior is expected at work. One hundred percent of the youth surveyed indicated they would like to continue their involvement with the OPP program. 75 percent of businesses involved reported

that youth were on time, arrived ready for work, worked well with others, and communicated effectively with supervisors and co-workers. One business partner credits the collaboration with the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s “Making Connections” initiative with helping OPP develop in a number of ways. “Making Connections has really helped us build our capacity to grow,” said the business partner. “With their technical assistance we have doubled in size and are now partnering with other programs in the community involving senior citizens and parents. They’ve also helped us to focus on tracking our outcomes to further build the credibility of what we are doing.” Source: http://www.hartford2000.org/Documents/MC_Newsletters/01Fall01.pdf

For more information, go to:

<http://www.nyec.org/pepnet/awardees/opp.htm>

The Olds Home Visitation Project

The Prenatal and Early Childhood Nurse Home Visitation Program, developed by David Olds and his colleagues, was designed to improve first time mothers' pregnancy outcomes by reducing prenatal risks, improving early childhood health and development and improving personal development of at-risk mothers. The focus is on low-income, first-time mothers. Eligible women are identified through referrals from health clinics, hospitals, doctors’ offices, schools and facilities serving low-income women. Trained and experienced nurses make home visits every 1 to 2 weeks during pregnancy and continue visits until a child is 2 years old. They focus simultaneously on the mother’s personal health and development, environmental health and quality of care-giving for the infant or toddler and make specific assessments of maternal, child, and family functioning to engage families in setting and pursuing goals. Nurse home visitors involve family members and friends in the program, helping them use additional community health and human services. Each full-time nurse home visitor carries a maximum caseload of 25 families and is supported by a supervisor who provides guidance and oversees program implementation. This model is over 20 years old and has established a stellar reputation among health and human service professionals. Equally as important however, has been

the strength of its reputation among foundations, hospitals, corporations and legislators. They understand the value of child abuse prevention services which are folded into a non-threatening public health approach.

Sustainability: Building, Developing, and Going-to-Scale

Building Sustainability – Begins by initiating a planning process--usually in the form of a task force. The task force ideally includes a blend of policy makers, community leaders, and individuals who have a knowledge of home visitation service delivery and represent the rural community, local elected officials, medical, education, children and family service providers, faith community, Indian tribal communities, juvenile and criminal justice system, State child protective/child welfare, social service providers, child/family advocates and voluntary organizations. As part of the building process, the task force is itself tasked with reviewing, analyzing and evaluating the best outcome-based visitation models, proposing an implementation plan and budget, and promoting and supporting fundraising efforts. The task force also identifies shared values and beliefs regarding home visitation, philosophy and values, community engagement, data and information, best practices, and finances. They also locate home visitation models which fit local needs and research the programs to find out about target populations, eligibility criteria, goals and objectives, services provided, sources of funding, program budget, cost per client, cost savings realized, staffing requirements, training, outcomes and evaluation results. Finally, the task force rates the best programs, set up meetings with representatives of the programs, ask questions and vote to select which of the highest rated programs will be used, adapted and adopted in their community.

Developing Sustainability – Lies in proceeding with implementation in an incremental manner, coordinating the Home Visitation System via one organization (or consortium) designated as the “hub” for community service coordination and identifying basic characteristics of the visitation service system with local services that are complementary to the Home Visitation model. Most successful localities have

formed a resource development consortium to further develop and implement their home visitation resource development plan. Ideally, the composition of the consortium broadly represents different perspectives and expertise of resource development and home visitation service delivery--with the minimum core group membership including a local chapter of a national non-profit or charity, a private non-profit provider, the local public health and social services departments, a community network, a local business representative, a group health cooperative and the state department of health.

Going-to-Scale – Happens when enough convincing data has been collected proving the effectiveness of the Project. Evaluations that show the program is serving high risk clients and improving birth outcomes as intended may be done by internal review or funder review and some are quite comprehensive extending to multiyear evaluations. Evaluations have examined cost of services, coverage of target populations, intensity of home visitation and parental satisfaction. The number of positive impacts directly associated with the Project have helped make the case for continuing the Projects nationwide and encouraged different localities to take it "to scale." For example, a number of evaluations found that women at risk of mental health problems were more likely to receive mental health treatment, and children in families with mental health problems were identified and treated earlier. The breast-feeding rate for Project families was between 10 and 15% higher than non-Project families and Project children were found to have one more well-baby visit on average than children before the inception of the program. Information on the increasing cost-efficiency of the Projects also bodes well for continued sustainability and expansion: in most localities the Projects are increasingly cost-efficient, reducing the cost per visit over a three-year period by almost 60%.

For more information, go to:

<http://www.ojdp.ncjrs.org/titlev/pub.html>

<http://www.financeprojectinfo.org/win/promising/pr-enatalandearlychildhood.htm>

http://www.pcf.org/peninsula_partnership/pdfs/HomeVisitingReport.pdf

<http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/health/welcome.html>