

Youth Service Professionals' Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities Initiative

To improve direct services to youth, the Youth Service Professionals' Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (YSP/KSA) Initiative seeks to strengthen youth professionals' competencies. The interactive, day-long training sessions address the knowledge, skills, and abilities youth service professionals need to better connect all youth, including youth with disabilities, to workforce, educational, and independent living opportunities.

Enhance Staff Performance!
Improve Youth Outcomes!
New Training Opportunities Available!

YSP/KSA Training Modules

1 – Knowledge of the Field: *This Work That We Do*



Learning about the field's history, relevant laws, and youth's rights; exploring the role of youth service professionals as related to confidentiality, professional codes of conduct, and appropriate interpersonal boundaries.

2 – Communication with Youth: *The Helping Relationship*



Advocating for, motivating, recruiting, and engaging youth; developing awareness of diversity, disability, and youth culture; and learning about the issues and trends affecting youth.

3 – Assessment and Individualized Planning: *Charting a Course with Youth*



Assessing youth's strengths, interests, and needs; learning about and using available assessments; and using assessments to help youth make informed choices about goals and career paths.

4 – Relationship to Family: *Working Together*



Engaging families to support youth in transition; understanding diverse family situations; exploring perceptions of families in youth programming; designing programs that are welcoming to families; and developing mechanisms for families to guide program structure.

5 – Career Exploration and Workforce Preparation: *Youth Opening the Door to the World of Work*



Building youth's basic work readiness and job search skills; providing youth with accurate information about jobs and the job market; and engaging employers to support youth's career development.

6 – Community Resources: *Weaving a Web for Youth*



Identifying and mapping community resources; building collaborative partnerships with community organizations; and connecting youth to community institutions, resources, and supportive adults.

7 – Employer Relations: *Beyond the Handshake*



Developing and enhancing partnerships with employers; connecting work-ready youth to employers; providing ongoing support in employers' hiring and retention efforts; and engaging employers in program design.

8 – Program Design, Delivery, and Administration: *It's All in the Design*



Understanding the design and implementation of quality youth programs, including supporting all youth; engaging key stakeholders; and collecting data and reporting outcomes.



Other YSP/KSA Resources

The following YSP/KSA resources are free and available online at www.ncwd-youth.info/professional-development.

- **KSA Background Paper** – a research paper with information on the foundation, development, and history of the KSAs.
- **KSA Assessment for Professionals** – a tool to identify strengths and areas for improvement of youth service professionals.
- **KSA Professional Development Plan** – a tool for organizations and systems to assess youth service professionals' KSAs and to create a professional development agenda based on those findings.
- **KSA “Why Professional Development?” Info Brief (Issue 19)** – an overview of how professional development benefits the workforce development system, youth, and the community.
- **KSA Online Study Guide** – an online resource that allows the user to select a specific competency area and access objectives, activities, demonstrations of learning, and resources to strengthen that competency.



Why Professional Development?

- **Professional development** is linked to increased job satisfaction, more youth involvement, better practice, and improved youth outcomes.
- **Youth Service Professionals** can use the KSAs to identify their own strengths and areas for improvement and to create a professional development plan.
- **Administrators, Managers, and Program Directors** can use the KSAs to hire and promote staff, as well as to assess and address their organization's professional development needs.
- **Policymakers** can use the KSAs to improve youth outcomes, to promote the professional development of practitioners, and to develop RFPs that strengthen programs.
- **The National Association of Workforce Development Professionals** adopted the KSAs as the basis for the Youth Services Endorsement to their Certified Workforce Development Professional Credential.

NCWD/Youth's Youth Service Professionals' Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities Initiative – led by the Institute for Educational Leadership, National Youth Employment Coalition, and National Association of Workforce Development Professionals – is supported by the Office of Disability Employment Policy of the U.S. Department of Labor (Grant #OD-16519-07-75-4-11).