



PROVIDING QUALITY CAREER DEVELOPMENT WITHIN YOUTH DEVELOPMENT & LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

INTRODUCTION

“What do you want to do for a living?” This is a question dreaded by many young people. The question assumes that youth have had all the information and experience they need to make an informed decision about their future.

As a youth service professional or someone volunteering his or her time with youth, you might be wondering how you can support youth to think about their futures, and provide them with concrete information to make important career decisions. This practice brief describes how organizations can assess the extent to which they currently provide quality career development opportunities to the youth they serve and identify ways to integrate more career development skills-building into their programs.

Considering that preparing for future employment is an aspect of most youth development and leadership frameworks and models, you may be well on your way to assisting youth with discovering their ca-

reer interests, setting goals, and preparing for a successful future. This brief contains recent and recommended resources that may assist you to expand upon your current efforts.

THE INTERSECTION OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT & LEADERSHIP

Career development connects with the goals of youth development and leadership programs by building youth's competencies for the future. To make the connection clear, let's examine the definitions of career development and youth development and leadership, and a few youth development and leadership frameworks.

Career Development

The career development process involves mastering a combination of self-exploration, career exploration, and career planning and management skills. Work-based learning and other hands-on activities and experiences enable youth to develop and practice these skills. Incorporating career development activities into youth development and leadership programs ensures that youth acquire competencies they need not only to enter and succeed in employment but also to make informed decisions about career pathways, plan how to achieve their career goals, and manage their chosen career throughout life.

Table 1 on Page 3 provides descriptions of the different career development skills and examples of activities that assist youth in building these skills.

Youth Development and Leadership

Youth development is a process that prepares young people to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood through a coordinated, progressive series of activities and experiences that help them to become socially, morally, emotionally, physically, and cognitively competent (Edelman, Gill, Comerford, Larson, & Hare, 2004). While leadership is most commonly associated with influencing others or having authority within a group, young people also exercise a form of leadership as they begin to assume responsibility for leading their own lives. The National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth) uses a two-part definition of youth leadership that recognizes the significance of personal leadership as young people are making the transition from adolescence to adulthood. Youth leadership is (1) "The ability to guide or direct others on a course of action, influence the opinion and behavior of other people, and show the way by going in advance" (Wehmeyer, Agran, & Hughes, 1998); and (2) "the ability to analyze one's own strengths and weaknesses, set personal and vocational goals, and have the self-esteem to carry them out. It includes the ability to identify community resources and use them, not only to live independently but also to establish support networks to participate in community life and to affect positive social change" (Adolescent Employment Readiness Center, Children's Hospital, n.d.).

As this definition points out, the leadership process has intrinsic and extrinsic characteristics.

Continued on Page 4.

Table 1: Career-Development Skills & Skill-Building Activities

Skills	Descriptions	Activities
SELF-EXPLORATION SKILLS	The ability to identify personal interests, skills, and values to better understand oneself and inform decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complete learning style assessments to evaluate one’s optimal approach to learning new information. ● Complete self-reflection exercises and discuss personal strengths, challenges, and preferences. ● Complete skills assessments to determine what skills they already have and how these skills align to different career options.
CAREER EXPLORATION SKILLS	The ability to identify and analyze various career options and interests in terms of what education, training, experience, and competencies are required for success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explore labor market conditions to determine relative availability of various careers, average wages, and benefits of selected jobs. ● Identify additional learning experiences and skills needed for careers of interest. ● Identify secondary and postsecondary courses and/or training required to prepare for career pathways of interest.
CAREER PLANNING & MANAGEMENT SKILLS	Various skills needed to maintain employability and navigate career changes throughout the lifespan. This includes employability skills (i.e., soft skills), career-specific skills, job search skills, personal competencies, and financial literacy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participate in work readiness training including soft skills, professional behavior, and critical thinking skills. ● Engage in financial management activities including financial literacy and benefits planning. ● Create application materials including resumes, letters of recommendation, and cover letters. ● Practice and prepare for interviews through mock interviews. Develop strategies for phone and video interviews.

Continued from Page 2.

In helping youth develop into competent adults who lead, youth programs are simultaneously preparing them to be successful in the workplace. The youth leaders whom your organization assists are gaining competencies necessary to lead their own lives, and influence their community as well as competencies to lead in the workplace. Providing youth with opportunities to develop career competencies is imperative to helping these youth become successful adults.

Youth Development Frameworks

Career development is a fundamental aspect of youth development and leadership. The following youth development frameworks illustrate this. Youth development competencies can be viewed as fitting within several developmental areas. Using a youth development framework created by the Forum for Youth Investment, NCWD/Youth's *Youth Development and Leadership Framework* organizes youth development competencies into the following five developmental areas: **learning**, **connecting**, **thriving**, **working**, and **leading** (Edelman et al., 2004). Within this framework, **working** refers to the development of positive attitudes, skills, and behaviors around occupational and career direction. Outcomes associated with **working** include demonstrated work readiness skills and involvement in meaningful work that offers advancement, satisfaction, and self-sufficiency.

Quality career development activities enable youth to develop these competencies and achieve these youth development outcomes. Through self-exploration, career explora-

tion, and career planning and management skill-building, youth gain work readiness and career-specific skills. Work readiness skills are assessed as youth apply self-exploration skills. Through activities that build career exploration and career planning and management skills, youth learn and practice how to find, keep, and advance in a job that matches their career interests and skills.

Another framework useful to understanding the interrelationship of career development and youth development is the *Foundations for Youth Adult Success: A Developmental Framework* developed by the University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research. This framework identifies work as one of several indicators of success for youth, especially for youth ages 19 to 21 (Nagaoka, Farrington, Ehrlich, & Heath, 2015). The framework emphasizes that youth need a variety of competencies, as well as agency and an integrated identity, in order to function in different settings as adults. These three factors for success are described by Nagaoka and colleagues as “the agency to take an active role in shaping one’s path, the ability to incorporate different aspects of oneself into an integrated identity, and the competencies needed to effectively navigate a range of social contexts” (p. 21). The framework also identifies the following four components as underlying the development of the key factors: self-regulation, knowledge and skills, mindsets, and values. While the authors emphasize that employment is not the only indicator of success among young adults, the competencies that youth gain through the career development process also help them function in different settings, not just the workplace. This framework’s focus on de-

veloping youth's agency aligns closely with the career development process. Nagaoka and colleagues describe having agency as "having the ability to make choices and take an active role in managing one's life path, rather than being solely the product of one's circumstances" (p. 21). Similarly, the career development process described earlier in this brief aims to increase youth's agency with respect to making career-related choices and actively managing their pathway to achieving their career goals.

Restless Development, a youth-led development agency, has put forth a comprehensive vision for youth development, work, and civic engagement. The agency aptly states, "...Young people around the world must grow up to be healthy, educated, employed, and empowered citizens who have financial security, a meaningful stake in governance, and whose rights are respected and upheld" (Restless Development, n.d., p. 4). In order for this to happen, youth need preparation for and access to employment as well as a full range of youth development and leadership opportunities.

Given the shared goal of preparing youth to successfully transition into adulthood, it is important to recognize that engagement in quality career development activities results in a variety of positive youth development outcomes, including the following:

- **Personal goal-setting skills:** Youth learn how to develop career and academic goals and how to establish the short, medium, and long-term action steps needed to pursue their goals.
- **Health and well-being:** Once youth discover their career and life goals, they become more motivated to learn how to manage stress and physical, psychological, and emotional distress as well as seek out more positive social relationships because they realize this is important to helping them achieve their goals.
- **Academic motivation and skills:** As they explore their career interests and options, youth increase their understanding of the value and relevance of formal education to pursuing their career goals. This increases their academic motivation and engagement, which leads to increased academic skills.
- **Leadership skills:** Youth develop leadership by taking the lead in their personal career development process.
- **Social skills and positive relationships:** By working with their family, school, or youth program staff, counselors, mentors, and other significant adults, youth practice communicating and other interpersonal skills while building a support network.
- **Work readiness skills:** Youth receive training and opportunities to practice a wide range of competencies needed to maintain employability and navigate career changes throughout the lifespan. This includes soft skills and career-specific skills, job search skills, financial literacy, and personal competencies (Solberg, Wills, Redmond, & Skaff, 2015).

Career development skill-building activities are a valuable means to increase a wide range of youth development outcomes, including leadership skills. Leadership is, in part, intrinsic, and self-exploration skills are required in order for youth to learn to lead themselves. Possessing self-exploration skills positions young people to be self-aware and to assess their interests and values, leading them to think critically about their futures. “Values motivate how one engages with the world,” affirms Nagaoka and colleagues, “whether it is with a specific behavior or something broader such as an occupation or role” (Nagaoka et al., 2015, pg. 34). Acquiring career exploration skills enables young people to make informed career choices as they become aware of the possibilities and realities of the current job market. With these skills, youth are able to research career options and to understand the academic and skill requirements for their particular field, or fields, of interest. These research skills are transferable and can aid youth when researching other potential opportunities and resources. Learning how to find and analyze the information one needs to make his or her own decisions enhances a young person’s agency and sense of autonomy. Career planning and management skills, overall, help young people become more self-determined, enhancing their ability to make decisions, plan how to achieve goals, and carry out as well as revise their plan. This builds confidence, self-esteem, and a sense of responsibility.

Engaging Youth with Disabilities

As your organization assists all youth to develop their career development skills, it is essential to take into consideration and address additional

needs of youth with disabilities. Whether their disabilities are apparent or not, all youth programs serve some youth with disabilities. While the presence of physical and intellectual disabilities may be obvious to staff, other youth may have learning disabilities, mental health disabilities, or chronic health conditions that aren’t readily visible but still warrant consideration. Youth with any type of disability may require or benefit from accommodations or support to participate in youth programs.

Youth development and leadership programs need to be physically and cognitively accessible for youth with disabilities. Ensuring that programs are cognitively accessible means ensuring that youth with learning and intellectual disabilities, as well as those with lower literacy skills, can understand what’s being communicated verbally, nonverbally, and in written materials. Making programs accessible also means ensuring that youth with any type of disability can engage in the same activities as other youth with or without support or accommodations. Using [universal design for learning](#) principles to select or design program activities will increase the accessibility of your program for all youth.

As a part of their career development, youth with disabilities may need training around some additional skills and topics specific to individuals with disabilities. For example, youth with disabilities who are in high school and receive special education services may need guidance on [advocating for themselves](#) under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) during Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings. Youth may not be aware that they can re-

quest that their career goals be included in their IEP plan.

Youth with disabilities may also need support to [understand their rights](#) under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Obtaining reasonable accommodations in the workplace, post-secondary education, and community settings requires disclosing one's disability and making a request for accommodations. Deciding whether or not to disclose one's disability is a personal decision and requires careful consideration. For this reason, youth with disabilities may need [training and support](#) to learn about making disability disclosure decisions and how to take the steps required to disclose and obtain accommodations or support as needed.

Additionally, youth with disabilities may not be aware that the Federal Government could be a fitting career pathway for them. Executive Order 13548, issued by President Barack Obama in 2010, requires the Federal Government to increase the hiring and retention of people with disabilities; thus, aiming to considerably increase the number of people with disabilities

hired by the Federal Government. People with disabilities can be appointed to Federal jobs non-competitively through a process called [Schedule A](#) (U.S. Office of Personnel Management, n.d.); however, many youth are unaware of the [Schedule A process](#). A Schedule A letter from an approved provider is needed to qualify for and pursue non-competitive employment within the federal government.

As a part of developing financial literacy skills, one of the skills important for career planning and management, youth with disabilities need to develop an understanding of the disability benefits that they receive or could receive, if eligible, and learn how to make decisions for themselves about their benefits as a part of managing their finances. This includes understanding [how earning income can affect eligibility](#) for certain benefits and weighing the advantages and disadvantages of working with respect to their long-term financial well-being. Youth with disabilities also need to learn about the opportunity to use work incentives as they pursue employment. [Work incentives](#) are special rules that allow individuals who receive [Supplemental Security](#)

Table 2: Resources on Disability Rights, Laws, and Opportunities

- [Becoming a Self-Advocate for Your Individualized Education Program \(IEP\)](#)
- [The 411 on Disability Disclosure: A Workbook for Youth with Disabilities](#)
- [Unit 4 of The 411 on Disability Disclosure](#) provides information specific to rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act
- [Disability Employment - Schedule A Hiring](#)
- [The ABCs of Schedule A – Tips for Applicants with Disabilities on Getting Federal Jobs](#)
- [Disability Benefits 101 – Getting Past the Myths: The Truth about Working](#)
- [Social Security Administration - Work Incentives](#)
- [What You Need to Know About Your Supplemental Security Income \(SSI\) When You Turn 18](#)

[Income \(SSI\)](#) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) to work and still receive part of (or all of) their monthly payments and maintain their Medicaid or Medicare.

Youth with disabilities need to be aware of their rights and entitlements under IDEA, ADA, Executive Order 13548, and Schedule A, as well as the opportunities offered by work incentives programs. Often, youth are not informed about these laws and opportunities and, as a result, don't know to ask for the support or to pursue the opportunities available to them. Addressing these topics as a part of career planning and management skills development will increase the likelihood that youth with disabilities will have the additional knowledge and skills they need to secure and succeed in employment. Table 2 provides various resources that youth programs can use to assist youth with disabilities in learning about disability rights, laws, and opportunities.

INTEGRATING MORE CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Whether your organization already includes career development skills-building in your youth programming or you're just starting to consider how to integrate it into your current work, here are some practical things you can do to ensure that youth have high-quality career development opportunities.

Just Getting Started

Organizations can begin incorporating career development skills into programming by helping youth develop their self-exploration skills using informal assessments. Having conversations

with youth about their interests, skills, and values and encouraging them to journal or otherwise document (e.g., video, audio, collage) this information is one simple way to engage youth in self-exploration.

Your program may want to consider a number of online assessments designed to assist youth as they explore their career interests. For example, youth may build career exploration skills and research career fields of interest using free online tools like [Get My Future](#) and [My Next Move](#). Both tools enable youth to self-assess their interests and learn about various industries as well as how to write a resume, get work experience/ job training, and other assistance.

Postsecondary credentials and work-based learning are important aspects of youth career development. Once your organization is aware of the youth's potential career interests, you can invite professionals from postsecondary institutions and college preparation programs to talk with youth about the requirements for obtaining certifications or degrees in their chosen career fields. You can also invite professionals working in the career fields identified by the youth to share what their work day is like and their experiences as professionals.

Implementing soft skills training activities may be a good way to enhance youth's career planning and management skills. Youth programs can contribute significantly to teaching work readiness skills to youth. According to the American Institutes for Research (AIR) (2015), "... employers are looking for employees who possess a broad set of skills that go beyond content knowledge. Afterschool and expanded learning programs already target many of the skills that

employers want and can play an important role in helping close the skills gap between youth from lower income backgrounds and their more affluent peers so that all young people are prepared for the workforce” (p. 6). Soft skills curricula can make it easy for youth program staff to find lessons and activities to incorporate into existing programming.

Two free curricula to consider are the [*Making My Future Work: A College and Career Readiness Program*](#) manual produced by Cleveland State University and funded by the Institute of Education Sciences/U.S. Department of Education, and the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy’s [*Skills to Pay the Bills: Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success*](#).

Enhancing Current Programming

Youth development and leadership organizations that already offer some career development programming can expand what they already offer in a variety of ways. Consider enhancing your program through one or more of the following approaches.

- **Discuss with youth the results of any self-assessments** that they complete to develop their self-exploration skills. Youth may be overwhelmed by the results and could benefit from assistance interpreting what they mean.
- **Try implementing a cohort model** so that youth engage in mutual support as they take part in career development activities. If implementing cohorts does not work for your program, small groups can serve as an option. The goal is

to create a safe space where youth can have honest conversations and exchange feedback with one another regarding their experiences.

- **Take youth on field trips** or tours to further their career exploration skills. This is especially beneficial if youth have already been researching career options and the education and training required. Participating in tours to training programs, colleges, and various places of employment in the community will help youth better evaluate whether or not the careers they are interested in truly align with their goals and preferences. Keep in mind that your community partners may be able to provide insight on the most favorable places to visit.
- **Allow students to job shadow** with staff at your organization as well as at other organizations. Asking community partners and other people that you know personally and professionally to host youth for job shadowing can be a great starting point.
- **Work with youth on building career planning and management skills** through soft skills training, resume writing, and mock interviews.
- **Teach youth how to properly budget, manage credit, and be savvy consumers.** As youth begin to earn their own money, they need to learn how to manage it. Local banks may be willing to provide free financial literacy workshops. There are also lots of free online resources for teaching youth about managing money.

The info brief for youth, [Taking Charge of Your Money: An Introduction to Financial Capability](#), provides an introduction to financial literacy and suggests various free resources to learn more.

- **Include disability disclosure training** or information as a part of your career development activities. Keep in mind, you may have youth with disabilities in your program who have not disclosed their disability. The [411 on Disability Disclosure](#) is a helpful workbook for youth, and the [companion version for adults](#) guides staff on how to talk with youth about making decisions about disclosing a disability.

Additional ways to promote youth's career development within your youth development and leadership programs are described below. The suggested activities are organized according to self-exploration, career exploration, and career planning and management skills.

SELF-EXPLORATION SKILLS ACTIVITIES

- Complete career interest inventories to expand youth's understanding of the wide range of career opportunities they can consider.
- Complete skill assessments to determine what skills they are developing and how these skills align to different career options.
- Engage in value exploration activities to evaluate what is most important to them as they think about their career and life goals. Work value assessments are a useful tool for this.
- Write personal reflections that enable youth to articulate their career and life aspirations.

- Complete learning style assessments to evaluate their best types of learning conditions.
- Engage in activities that help youth identify their personal strengths and areas they want to develop further.

CAREER EXPLORATION ACTIVITIES

- Explore the [16 career clusters and 79 career pathways](#) to learn about the range of careers that are associated with them.
- Write a personal reflection about how one's interests, skills, and values are aligned to three careers they are interested in learning more about.
- Explore the labor market conditions to determine the relative availability of various careers and the average hourly wages and benefits they can expect.
- Identify both two-year and four-year postsecondary options necessary to pursue careers they are interested in pursuing and compare the relative costs of each pathway.
- Identify what additional learning experiences and skills are needed to pursue their career goals.
- Identify what secondary and/or postsecondary courses they need to complete in order to pursue their career interests.

CAREER PLANNING & MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

- Practice job search skills such as using online job search tools and networking.
- Develop a resume.

- Practice writing cover letters.
- Engage in financial literacy activities.
- Gather letters of recommendation.
- Practice interview skills through mock interviews.
- Explore the various financial strategies to afford a postsecondary education.
- Complete a FAFSA (student financial aid) application.
- Identify/Apply for scholarships.
- Develop a list of postsecondary options.
- Visit college campuses to learn about the process of gaining admission and the range of services they can expect to have available.
- Annually reexamine career goals.
- Develop a plan of action that includes short, medium, and long-term goals.
- Realign learning needs and course taking patterns with changes in career goals.
- Interview professionals about their careers, including what they do in their work and how they chose and prepared for their career.
- Engage in job shadowing experiences.
- Engage in civic engagement or service learning projects.
- Gain work experience by volunteering or securing paid and unpaid internships or summer employment.

Remember, your organization is not expected to act alone when assisting youth in developing their career development skills. Partner with other organizations to provide career develop-

ment opportunities and share resources! Offer opportunities for youth who have received training to share the knowledge, skills, and abilities they have garnered through your program with youth at partnering organizations. Remember to involve youth regularly. Give them leadership roles by asking them to plan, coordinate, and facilitate training events and workshops on career development skills to their peers.

ASSESSMENT OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

NCWD/Youth's [*Designing Statewide Career Development Strategies and Programs*](#) describes considerations for determining how well an organization or system is infusing career development skills into programs (vanBruinswaardt, C., Solberg, V. S., & Jarukitisakul, C. 2015). To determine how well you assist youth in increasing their self-exploration skills, consider how well your organization is supporting youth in setting meaningful goals by first identifying and reflecting on their own skills, values, and interests to inform goal-setting. To determine how well you assist youth in increasing career exploration skills, look at what opportunities your organization provides for youth to identify and analyze various career options in terms of what education, training, experience, and competencies are required for success. Also, examine whether and how the organization helps youth learn about a wide range of job opportunities available within career clusters that align with youth's interests. In terms of your organization's support for career planning and management skills, assess how your organization assists youth to

develop various skills needed to maintain employability and navigate lifelong career changes, including employability skills (i.e., soft skills), career-specific skills, job search skills, personal competencies, and financial literacy.

The following organizational assessment tool (see pp. 13 – 15) will enable your organization to determine whether and how you currently provide opportunities for building career development skills and identify some ways to add or strengthen program activities to ensure youth are prepared to make informed decisions about future careers and succeed in employment. As you complete the self-assessment, give your organization credit for both the opportunities that you provide directly and those that you provide through a partnering organization.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

- [Designing Statewide Career Development Strategies & Programs](#)
- [Individualized Career Development Plan](#)
- [Promoting Quality Individualized Learning Plans: A How-to Guide for the High School Years](#)
- [Skills to Pay the Bills: Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success](#) curriculum
- [Using Career Interest Inventories](#)
- [Career Exploration in Action](#)
- [Engaging Youth in Work Experiences](#)
- [By Youth for Youth: Employment](#)
- [Hitting the Open Road After High School: How to Choose Your Own Adventure to Success!](#)

CONCLUSION

Whether you are a volunteer or a paid professional working for a youth development and leadership program, you are likely assisting youth to figure out what is important to them and where they want to be later in life. Incorporating or strengthening activities that build youth's career development skills will ensure that youth in your program are discovering who they are and making informed decisions about future careers. Additionally, your organization can benefit from engaging community partners and together you can empower youth and prepare them to be successful in the many areas of life that matter most to them.

REFERENCES

- Adolescent Employment Readiness Center, Children's Hospital. (n.d.). D.C. Youth Leadership Forum. Washington, DC. Author
- American Institutes for Research. (2015). *Ready for work? How afterschool programs can support employability through social and emotional learning*. Retrieved from <http://www.air.org/resource/ready-work-how-afterschool-programs-can-support-employability-through-social-and-emotional>
- Edelman, A., Gill, P., Comerford, K., Larson, M., and Hare, R. (2004). *Youth development and leadership: A background paper*. Washington, DC: Institute for Educational Leadership, National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth.
- Nagaoka, J., Farrington, C., Ehrlich, S., Heath, R. (2015, June). *Foundations for young adult success*. The University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research.

Continued on Page 16.

ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF QUALITY CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

SCALE—Rate the extent to which you agree with the following statements. 1 = STRONGLY DISAGREE 2 = SOMEWHAT DISAGREE 3 = SOMEWHAT AGREE 4 = STRONGLY AGREE				
1	2	3	4	ORGANIZATIONAL OBJECTIVE 1 Assist Youth to Develop Self-Exploration Skills
				Youth are engaged in identifying what they are good at (e.g. what skills they have) and recognizing their strengths.
				Youth are engaged in identifying their values (e.g. what's most important to them).
				Youth are engaged in identifying their interests and passions, including various careers that are interesting to them.
				Youth are engaged in identifying how they learn best, including understanding their learning style.
				Youth are engaged in setting meaningful goals (e.g. goals that align with their interests and values).
				Youth understand that it is okay if their goals change over time.
1	2	3	4	ORGANIZATIONAL OBJECTIVE 2 Assist Youth to Develop Career Exploration Skills
				Youth are engaged in exploring multiple potential careers to ensure they are aware of many possibilities before they determine their top interests.
				Youth are engaged in identifying the requirements for obtaining careers of interests (Requirements include specific skills, education credentials, training, work experience, etc.).
				Youth are engaged in identifying entry-level jobs that could put them on the path to getting the job they ultimately want.
				Youth talk with professionals about their careers. This may occur through opportunities such as guest speakers, informational interviews, career mentors, career fairs, career camps, and employer engagement as career project advisors.
				Youth have in-person and hands-on experiences in work settings through opportunities such as workplace tours/visits and job shadowing.
				Youth engage in career-related projects or creating career portfolios.

SCALE—Rate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.				
1 = STRONGLY DISAGREE 2 = SOMEWHAT DISAGREE 3 = SOMEWHAT AGREE 4 = STRONGLY AGREE				
1	2	3	4	ORGANIZATIONAL OBJECTIVE 3 Assist Youth to Develop Career Planning & Management Skills
				Youth are engaged in creating individualized plans to achieve their career, postsecondary education, and life goals.
				Youth are engaged in activities that develop soft skills.
				Youth are engaged in discussions about employability skills, including what skills and behaviors employers expect, how to communicate effectively in work situations, and more.
				Youth are engaged in activities that develop skills specific to their career goals (e.g. using specific computer programs, taking care of younger children, designing websites, preparing food, writing press releases).
				Youth are engaged in activities that develop personal competencies (e.g. decision-making, problem-solving, leadership, self-advocacy, and self-management).
				Youth are engaged in activities or training that develop financial literacy.
				Youth with disabilities learn about disability benefits and employment.
				Youth with disabilities learn about their rights and making decisions about disclosing their disability to obtain accommodations or supports.
				Youth with disabilities learn about services and opportunities specifically for individuals with disabilities that assist with obtaining employment, including work incentives, vocational rehabilitation services, and Schedule A for federal employment.
				Youth who have been involved in the justice system learn about criminal background checks by employers or records expungement.
				Youth are engaged in reevaluating their goals and adjusting their individualized plans regularly.

Notes:

REFLECTION ON ORGANIZATION ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Strengths

As you review how you rated your organization on providing career development opportunities for youth (directly or through partnerships), *which activities represent areas of strengths for your organization?*

Areas for Development

As you review how you rated your organization on providing career development opportunities for youth (directly or through partnerships), *which activities represent areas for improvement or further development? What ways might your organization increase career development opportunities for youth?*

Use the results of this assessment to:

- Recognize and promote how your organization provides and supports youth career development.
- Reflect on ways your organization could add or strengthen opportunities for youth to engage in quality career development.
- Identify opportunities to partner with other organizations to provide and/or connect youth with more opportunities for career development.
- Discuss with youth what your organization could do to meet their need for career development opportunities. Solicit their ideas about activities they would like to do and questions they would like to explore about careers and planning for their future.

Continued from Page 12.

Perry, J., President, M., Harmon, J., Mizen, A., Calhoun-Butts, C., Riley, S., Wallace, E., Barto, L., O'Janpa, L., Myers, J., Traylor, M., Trepal, T., Williams, C., Francis, K., Arendt, C. (2014). *Making my future work*. Retrieved from <https://www.csuohio.edu/cehs/mmfw/making-my-future-work-0>

Restless Development. (n.d.). *Nurturing youth leadership in the global south: A mapping of strategies, approaches, challenges and opportunities*. Retrieved from <http://restlessdevelopment.org/file/resdev-youth-leadership-mapping-pdf>

Solberg, V. S., Wills, J., Redmond, K., & Skaff, L. (2014). *Use of individualized learning plans as a promising practice for driving college and career readiness efforts: Findings and recommendations from a multi-method, multi-study effort*. Washington, DC: National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth, Institute for Educational Leadership.

U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy. (n.d.). *Soft skills to pay the bills: Mastering soft skills for workplace success*. Retrieved from <https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills>

U.S. Office of Personnel Management. (n.d.). Disability employment. Retrieved from <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/disability-employment>

vanBruinswaardt, C., Solberg, V. S., & Jarukitisakul, C. (2015). *Designing statewide career development strategies and programs*. Washington, DC: National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth, Institute for Educational Leadership. Retrieved from <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/StateCareerDevelopment>

Wehmeyer, M. L., Agran, M., & Hughes, C. (1998). *Teaching self-determination to students with disabilities: Basic skills for successful transition*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

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. NCWD/Youth is charged with assisting state and local workforce development systems to integrate youth with disabilities into their service strategies. To obtain this publication in an alternate format, please contact the Collaborative at 877-871-0744 toll free or email contact@ncwd-youth.info. This Info Brief was written by Jennifer Thomas, Mindy Larson, V. Scott Solberg, and Judith Martin and is part of a series of publications and newsletters prepared by the NCWD/



Youth. All publications will be posted on the NCWD/Youth website at www.ncwd-youth.info. Please visit our site to sign up to be notified of future publications. This document was developed by the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth, funded by a grant/contract/cooperative agreement from the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy (Number #OD-23804-12-75-4-11). The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Department of Labor. Nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply the endorsement by the U.S. Department of Labor. Individuals may produce any part of this document. Please credit the source and support of federal funds.

NCWD/Youth, 1-877-871-0744 (toll-free); 1-877-871-0665 (TTY toll-free); contact@ncwd-youth.info