

## Elements of a Comprehensive Youth-Serving System

Intermediaries bring local programs, initiatives, and institutions together to eliminate the duplication of services, maximize the impacts of multiple funding sources, and implement long-range plans to improve outcomes for the youth they serve. They connect employers and workplace partners, schools and training organizations, social services and community organizations, and families and neighborhoods to serve the needs of young people as they prepare for life as adults. The main elements are outlined below and in the accompanying diagram

### **Academic Achievement**

In a comprehensive youth serving system, all youth are engaged in their learning in classrooms at all levels of our education and training systems. Teachers, faculty and other practitioners hold high expectations for the youth they serve and apply instructional strategies that address the learning styles of each individual student. Curricula are designed to support standards-based academic achievement, while also linking content to contextualized and relevant learning experiences that prepare youth for future educational and technical skills success. Programs and services support high academic standards, and workplace/community experiences encourage academic excellence. Educators utilize a variety of strategies to support young people's educational success, specifically tailoring approaches to address individual learning styles and developmental needs. When young people complete their educations, whether at the high school or college level, they are prepared for success in their career and life, and understand the range of options before them.

The following characteristics describe a community that is successfully addressing the element of Academic Achievement:

*All youth are engaged in their learning in the classroom*

- Adults promote high academic and technical success
- Workplace experiences support classroom learning
- Multiple educational approaches address individual needs
- Standards-based alternatives are available at all levels of education

**Result: All Youth are Educated and Ready to Learn**

### **Career Development**

In a comprehensive youth-serving system, all youth are engaged in learning in the workplace and in the community. Early and ongoing exposure to career and employment opportunities is provided to young people through their school and community-based programs. Youth participate in quality work-based activities that support what they are learning in the classroom, beginning as early as the elementary school level, and continuing throughout their high school and post-secondary experiences. Schools and community-based organizations have strong partnerships with government, local businesses, and other workplace partners, who provide relevant and meaningful learning experiences for young people. These experiences address the individual needs of each young person and help youth understand and prepare for their career options.

## Elements of a Comprehensive Youth-Serving System (continued)

The following characteristics describe a community that is successfully addressing the element of Career Development:

*All youth are engaged in learning in the workplace and in the community*

- Early employment exposure and experiences are provided
- Quality work-based learning opportunities are in place
- Community and workplace partners provide work and learning opportunities
- Classroom learning supports career development

**Result: All Youth are Experienced and Ready for Careers**

### Community Services and Support

In a comprehensive youth-serving system, all youth receive individualized services and community support. All youth have safe and stable living arrangements, and receive support from caring adults who see to their physical, developmental, and emotional needs. Youth experience strong and enduring peer relationships and connections to at least one adult who will support them throughout their lives. Young people are prepared for adulthood, having experienced and practiced the life skills necessary to live independently, and youth have access to a full range of culturally competent social services and supports to address their needs.

The following characteristics describe a community that is successfully addressing the element of Community Services and Support:

*All youth receive individualized services and community support*

- All youth have safe and stable living arrangements
- All youth have strong and enduring adult and peer connections
- All youth receive life skills training and practice
- A full range of social services is available

**Result: All Youth are Connected to Adults, Peers, and Services**

### Youth Leadership

In a comprehensive youth-serving system, youth are visible and active in leadership roles. They participate in decisions about their lives and play active roles in designing their individual service strategies. They provide a voice that drives policy and decision-making. Adults encourage and support youth in leadership roles within their organizations and institutions, and opportunities for youth leadership are leveraged within communities and connected to broader, systemic change. As a result, youth grow up confident and ready for life.

The following characteristics describe a community that is successfully addressing the element of Youth Leadership:

*Youth are visible and active in leadership roles*

- Youth actively participate in decisions about their lives
- Youth voices drive policy and decision-making
- Youth are encouraged and supported in leadership roles
- Youth leadership opportunities are leveraged and connected

**Result: All Youth are Confident and Ready for Life**

## Elements of a Comprehensive Youth-Serving System (continued)

### **Comprehensive Youth Development Approach**

In a comprehensive youth serving system, a formal network provides the foundation for an equitable and coordinated system that meets the needs of youth. Institutions and organizations that support young people apply a youth development approach in all their activities and services. Community leaders are engaged in efforts to support the lives of youth and promote effective collaboration between and among systems. Activities are intentionally sequenced and coordinated, resources are leveraged, and a connected, operational infrastructure is in place.

The following characteristics describe a community that is successfully addressing the element of a Comprehensive Youth Development Approach:

*A formal network provides the foundation for an equitable and coordinated system*

- All activities embody a youth development approach
- Individualized, youth-centered plans guide programs and services
- Engaged community leadership supports collaboration
- Adequate resources are available and leveraged
- A quality system is responsive to individual and cultural differences
- The community publicly supports a focus on youth issues

**Result: A Connected, Operational Infrastructure Supports Youth Success**