

Youth Workforce Development System Framework

I. Introduction

Beginning in June 2011, staff from Worksystems, Inc. (WSI) and Portland Development Commission (PDC) came together in a series of facilitated meetings to explore the possibilities of increased coordination and communication between our organizations around our respective investments in youth workforce development for disconnected, low-income youth. As a result of our discussions, PDC and WSI came to the conclusion that an alignment of our investments and programmatic efforts would result in: 1) continued high quality, intensive support for youth to achieve meaningful work and educational outcomes, 2) efficiencies for service providers and youth, and 3) a systems approach that can better leverage other investments to improve work and educational outcomes. The purpose of this document is to provide background information about the reasoning for the alignment and to describe the elements of the aligned youth workforce development system.

WSI and PDC intend to issue a request for proposals for qualified organizations to deliver services under this new system in February 2012. Input on this framework document will be gathered at a community meeting on **January 6, 2012 at Worksystems (1618 SW First Ave, Suite 450, Portland) from 9-11am** and **via email until January 13, 2012 at youth-framework@worksystems.org**. All feedback will be reviewed by the PDC and WSI team developing the request for proposals.

II. Background and Context

For years, Worksystems and Portland Development Commission have funded many of the same organizations to provide similar services to help low-income, disconnected youth meet a variety of work and educational outcomes. This year we each funded approximately \$1.2 million in contracts. Funded organizations have operated under separate contracts with separate reporting, separate rules, and without the benefit of a common vision or common outcomes to guide them. Coordination at the funder level has been minimal. As a result, communication with local partners, business and other funders has been hampered. Youth not attached to funded providers have had limited access to services. All the while, resources for disconnected youth programs have been declining in the face of growing need. In our region alone, 20,000 youth aged 16-21 are eligible for services through this funding.

Both organizations were interested in addressing this situation. The declining resource environment provided urgency to our discussions. We found we were both seeking increased efficiencies, coordinated communication with local partners and business, a greater ability to bring resources into the region, and a common, elevating vision. We agreed that these changes were achievable and that our joint leadership was needed to make it happen. In the end, Worksystems and Portland Development Commission decided to align our youth investments to create a single youth system

focused on a common goal. We want to build a system that will bring greater benefit to the youth of the region and ensure the greatest impact of our resources in the community.

The team then set about crafting a framework for the new Youth Workforce Development System for the City of Portland, Multnomah and Washington Counties. We drew on conversations with other local funders and stakeholders, national research on best practices, discussions with local workforce boards in other cities, program reviews of currently funded providers, and related ongoing initiatives including Portland's Cradle 2 Career. The resulting structure allows us to leverage our current strengths and build something new that expands on lessons learned from both programs.

III. Collective Impact

Along with many in the funding community across the country, we are particularly energized by the notion of collective impact—an emerging approach to addressing social issues. Collective impact is characterized by centralized infrastructure, a dedicated staff, and a structured process that leads to a common agenda, shared measurement, continuous communication, and mutually reinforcing activities¹. We developed the framework with that aspiration in mind—to stimulate a collective impact response. Collective impact requires a backbone organization to convene partners and provide leadership. The Youth Council for Multnomah County, Washington County, and the City of Portland will serve as the Youth System's collective impact body. With representatives from the City of Portland, Portland Development Commission, both Counties, the K-12 system, community colleges, and the private sector, the Council will champion the new system and help to build on the initial efforts of Worksystems and Portland Development Commission. Its role will be to align other public system and funding partner resources and guide investments in the Youth System.

The framework is outlined below. We ask you to review it closely and provide feedback to us about what you think will work and what may need to be reconsidered. We commit to collecting and reviewing your feedback as we evolve the framework in preparation for the upcoming procurement.

IV. New Youth Workforce Development Framework

A. Guiding principles

These principles guided us in creating the new framework and will guide future investments in the Youth System.

Equity: We are committed to providing access to services for low-income youth who are disconnected from mainstream high school and for other low-income, barriered youth across the region. We seek to serve culturally and geographically diverse populations. We also want to make sure that services are delivered in areas close to the need.

Relationship-Based and Youth-Centered: We know the importance of providing opportunities for youth to build trusting relationships with adults who believe youth are worthwhile and have high expectations

for them. We want to build a system that recognizes that one-size does not fit all but stresses high standards for each individual.

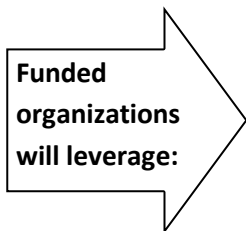
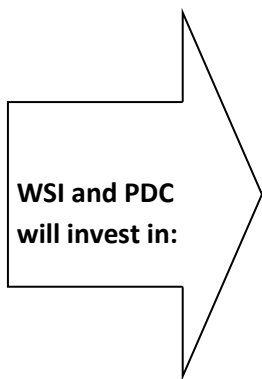
Continuous Quality Improvement: We support practices that are effective and proven to work. We believe that high quality programming leads to the best outcomes for youth. We will continuously review how the system is working and make changes as needed—and we seek a similar engagement in quality improvement from our funded partners.

Sustainability: Alignment of public system and other funding and leveraged partners around a single youth system best positions us for competitive funding. It also allows us to bring greater visibility and credibility to the work we do, creating a stronger case for business support and involvement.

B. Goal

Young adult who has a career pathway job or is on a trajectory to complete post-secondary education with the life skills necessary to stay on course.

Youth Workforce Development System



Target Enrollment Group: Low-income youth disconnected from mainstream high school and other low-income, barriered youth ages 16-21	
Service Areas / Strategies	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Service Coordination</u>: case management, support services, life skill development, financial education, peer support, work readiness training, career exploration, work-based learning, work placement, post-secondary preparation, transition and retention. <u>System-Wide Work-based Learning Coordination</u>: internship/work experience development and management, employer liaison, employer of record, WorkSource Portland Metro navigation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secondary Credential Basic Skills Proficiency Persistence/Progress in a Job or College
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Academic supports and remediation</u> required for youth to complete their high school diploma or GED and post-secondary prep. 	

C. Features of the Youth Workforce Development System

Under the new system, PDC designated funds for youth workforce development and Workforce Investment Act Youth funds will be administered by WSI. The system will have:

- One application and enrollment process for youth
- Common definitions and standards for services
- Common funding methodology
- Common outcome expectations
- One data entry system
- One reporting process

Under the new system, we will fund multiple contracts for Service Coordination. Funded organizations will provide case management, work readiness training, support services, post-secondary preparation, work-based learning, work and college placement, follow-up and other services to help youth reach the goal. Organizations are expected to leverage educational programming that provides academic supports and remediation needed for youth to complete their high school diploma or GED as applicable and make basic skill gains.

We are adding a system-wide coordination function for Work-based Learning. Building on Worksystems' success with the SummerWorks model, we will fund one or two contracts to develop and administer paid work experience and internships, and support youth and business throughout their placement to ensure a positive experience for all parties. In addition this contractor will coordinate career events and activities. These resources will be available to all system enrolled youth. The addition of this resource is intended to increase the number and variety of meaningful career exploration activities and work experience opportunities available year-round to enrolled youth. To support this structure, we will deploy a Worksystems staff to outreach to employers and bring employer resources to bear for the Youth System.

Organizations funded to provide Service Coordination will have a number of options for connecting youth to work-based learning opportunities. They can access paid work experience and internships through the System Contractor. Under this option, administration of the work experience, payroll, monitoring, and communication with the employer will be handled by the System Contractor. The referring youth program is responsible for ensuring that the youth is prepared and supporting the youth while they are engaged. Recognizing that some organizations have strong relationships with individual employers, youth programs may also generate work experience opportunities on their own. In these instances, the System Contractor will be a resource to assist programs with employer of record and other supports. Funded programs may also generate and administer unpaid work experiences and work experiences in which wages are covered by other funds without using the System Contractor. Long-term and career work placements continue to be the responsibility of the Service Coordination agency that works with a youth.

With partner input, we have started work to identify a core set of work readiness competencies that youth need to be successful. All funded organizations will deliver Work Readiness Training around these competencies. Training can be customized by individual programs to meet the unique needs of their youth. As we build the system, we will continue to look for opportunities to collaborate around best practices in other service areas.

D. Indicators of Progress Toward Goal

The goal is for youth to have a career pathway job or be on a trajectory to complete post-secondary education and have the life skills necessary to stay on course. We envision developing an Indicator Checklist where funded programs can identify a subset of indicators that have been met to demonstrate how each youth is progressing. These indicators could be met while a youth is engaged in intensive program services or during a period of follow-up. The length of time that a youth stays in the program will depend on progress toward the goal rather than a specified time period. Examples of indicators we are considering are:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Progression on a career plan | <input type="checkbox"/> Post-secondary education placement with a job |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prosperity Planner exit budget meets planned goals | <input type="checkbox"/> Postsecondary certificate earned or on a pathway |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unsubsidized work experience | <input type="checkbox"/> Completed a bridge program with industry focus |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Basic Skills gains | <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrated life/independence skills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Earned GED/High School diploma | <input type="checkbox"/> Basic Needs Met |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Entry level job on a career pathway | |

V. Role and Responsibilities

Worksystems Inc. will:

- Co-invest in and coordinate the Youth Workforce Development System
- Engage other funders in alignment of resources
- Engage employers and bring employer resources to bear for youth
- Facilitate adoption of best practices
- Monitor and evaluate program quality
- Track and report shared measures and outcomes with the community
- Provide a regular forum for program level staff to share with and learn from peers
- Provide opportunities for program level staff to develop professional skills
- Convene and facilitate the Youth Council
- Collaborate with PDC on Request for Proposals and selection process

Portland Development Commission will:

- Co-invest in and provide policy oversight for the Youth Workforce Development System
- Participate in the Youth Council
- Collaborate with WSI on Request For Proposals and selection process
- Oversee City funds invested in system and monitor compliance with funding requirements
- Meet quarterly with Worksystems to review progress and issues
- Offer access to Joint Services to system enrolled youth

Funded Partners will:

- Actively contribute to collaborative service model
- Commit to collaborative system development
- Access subsidized work-based learning opportunities from centralized contract
- Ensure that leveraged educational programming prepares youth for entrance into regular college courses
- Actively contribute to developing and leveraging opportunities for the system and take advantage of opportunities provided by the system
- Commit to continuous program improvement through customer and staff feedback, program evaluation, and joint problem-solving
- Create access for barriered youth from other disconnected youth-serving systems

ⁱ Kania, John, & Kramer, Mark. (Winter 2011). Collective Impact. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*.