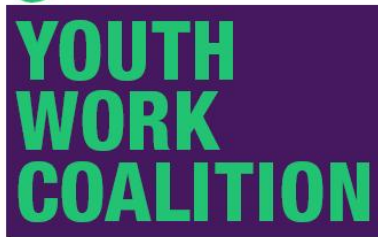


nextgeneration



### Clear Policies for Career Pathways

#### The Next Generation Youth Work Coalition's Anchor Policy Goal and Project for 2007

To kick off its first explicit round of policy work, the Next Generation Youth Work Coalition will work with identified networks/coalitions in seven “early adapter” states and cities across the nation (Baltimore/Maryland, Illinois, Missouri, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, New York City, Vermont), that are already on the leading edge in addressing youth work workforce issues. Each team will identify key leverage points for change within their state or city and progress towards policy change and action.

The Next Generation Youth Work Coalition strongly believes that a flexible and fair career pathways system is one that includes seven key principles:

- **Recognizes competence.** Acknowledges that there are multiple pathways to competence: certificate-based training, academic coursework, life experience and work experience.
- **Rewards competence.** Provides guidelines and financial incentives to employers that reward competence with increased responsibility, compensation and work incentives.
- **Requires competence.** Has standards of workforce quality, and includes efforts to support, sustain and prepare youth workers.
- **Redefines competence.** Provide guidelines that describe position levels by responsibility and connection to direct service; qualifications required including experience, education and certification; knowledge expected; and advancement options, or how to move through and/or up the lattice.
- **Reflects the perspectives of all stakeholders.** Regularly seeks the input of workers, employers, youth, parents, community and funders in building, implementing and reviewing professional development and workforce systems.
- **Relies on the use of public and private dollars.** Ensures the sustainability and scale of the system by leveraging private dollars and linking the system to public funding sources to ensure the creation of a diversified funding base.
- **Reaches all youth workers.** Has the authority to address the needs of all youth workers – full- time and part-time, across age groups and settings.



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States and cities participating in the Clear Policies for Career Pathways project will:

- Assess their current efforts against the seven principles (the assumption is that every state has areas of strength and weakness) and define improvement goals;
- Identify aggressive but realistic opportunities for progress;
- Create a workforce lens that policy makers can bring into their analysis of youth program legislation;
- Champion the cause – share strategies and provide direction for others interested in creating career pathways.

The National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST) and the National Collaboration for Youth (NCY) will take the lead in providing technical assistance to the seven states and localities working closely with the Forum for Youth Investment to keep the project fully integrated in the Next Generation Youth Work Coalition's broader agenda. Specifically, this team will encourage peer sharing of best practices and work to anticipate the states' and localities need for information, examples, coaching, strategies, tools and networking in a variety of areas:

#### ***Stakeholder Engagement***

- Increasing public will;
- Increasing political will;
- Bringing the provider community on board.

#### ***Guidelines and Frameworks***

- Articulating common language between youth work, after-school and school age care;
- Ensuring core competencies or standards are established;
- Providing examples of youth worker positions, titles and roles;
- Addressing the tensions and fluidity of the field and its relationship to related fields such as education, early care, and other human services; and
- Identifying equivalencies for prior experience, education and other preparations.
- Providing a system of support services for youth workers (training, orientation, supervision)

#### ***Infrastructure and Sustainability***

- Ensuring the infrastructure reflects the best knowledge and practices related to incentives, regulations, granting institutions, scholarships, access, and the role of higher education.
- Increasing sustainability, including how to research and advocate for dedicated public support and resources and information about how other states have impacted funding policies; and
- Building on and linking this work to existing initiatives.

#### ***Inclusion***

- Ensuring career pathways have multiple entry points;
- Addressing the needs of both career staff and temporary or “flow-thru” staff (interns, volunteers, college students); and
- Recognizing the role and needs of specialists (art, music, technology).



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