

YOUTH WORK COALITION

May 2007

THE GOAL of the Next Generation Youth Work Coalition is to help achieve its vision of a strong, valued youth work profession through documentation, education and communications activities and by serving as a locus for joint action and collaboration within the field. We believe this entails progress in five key areas:

- Standards and competencies
- Professional development and training resources
- Learning delivery systems
- Career ladders and compensation guidelines
- Research and evaluation systems

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The Next Generation Youth Work Coalition brings together individuals and organizations dedicated to developing a strong, diverse youth work workforce that is stable, prepared, supported and committed to the well-being and empowerment of young people.

Join Our Efforts

Help us prioritize the work of the Next Generation Youth Work Coalition. Take just 10-15 minutes to complete the survey. Copy and paste the link or go to: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=83693726810>

Thank you for your ongoing support and interest in the Next Generation Youth Work Coalition. With the commitment of many organizations and individuals, we have been able to accomplish a lot in the last year, including a major study focused on front-line youth workers that yielded important new information about the youth development and after-school workforce.

Last November, local, state and national experts came together to discuss that data and created an action agenda that individuals and organizations can use to meet the Next Generation Youth Work Coalition's vision of a stable, prepared, supported and committed workforce. This issue of the bulletin highlights promising strategies underway across the country that advance various aspects of the action agenda.

Given the growing interest and momentum in the field, we would like to formally acknowledge membership in the Coalition. By formally acknowledging our growing ranks, we can increase the visibility of this work in the field and further engage and give credit to those of you who are interested in supporting this cause and participating in the work.

Why join?

- Be part of a growing base linked by principles and vision and benefit from the collective power that individuals or organizations working alone lack.
- Be identified (as an individual or organization) on key Coalition documents and advocacy efforts, lending support to the cause and getting credit for work you are doing to strengthen the youth work workforce.
- Receive quarterly bulletins that keep you abreast of workforce issues and action.
- Access tools including a workforce survey, research summaries, power point presentations and other advocacy resources designed to help you plan and jumpstart conversations and action about workforce development.
- Be eligible to apply for pass-through funding when available.
- Have a role in determining the direction and priorities of this national field building effort!

Organizations (direct service, capacity building, policy or research working at the local, state or national levels) and individuals can join the Coalition. For more information or to join, go to: <http://www.nydic.org/nydic/staffing/workforce/nextgen.htm>

YOUTH WORK VOICE

From Maryland to Minnesota

Delroy Calhoun, Center Director, *Loring Nicollet-Bethlehem Community Centers, Inc.*

There has been a flurry of activity here in Minnesota since our return from the Baltimore Coalition meeting in November. Youth Community Connections, 4-H, McKnight Foundation, and twin cities officials are all working hard to increase the number and quality of opportunities for our youth. Most of these efforts have been underway for some time. What's new is the leadership and energy that was stimulated by the time spent with our colleagues at the conference. And, there is a real effort now to coordinate the enthusiasm.

One project that is a direct result of what we learned in Baltimore is Youth Community Connection's work on youth worker core assets. The field support group has developed the main characteristics of a youth worker and has already held several focused conversations with area providers and intermediaries to discuss and refine the list.

These discussions have been fruitful and timely as we providers are gearing up for the summer and the search for youth workers at all levels is in the air. Many of us are now reviewing our job descriptions and our recruitment efforts with an eye on the assets and it seems that some of our youth worker education sources are talking about how to respond.

Though most of the work is rightly aimed at the long term health of the field, it is obvious that we are already seeing the impact of turning focused attention on those front-line youth workers who really make things work.

Thanks to all of you at Next Generation for all your work and foresight.

PROMISING DEVELOPMENTS

T-FELAS

In March 2007, Senator Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts and Richard Burr (R-North Carolina) introduced the Teaching Fellows for Expanded Learning and After-School Act (T-FELAS). The initiative would create a 10,000-member national corps of recent college grads who would lead after-school programs and work in school classrooms during the morning. In addition to expanding learning and enrichment opportunities for disadvantaged children and youth, T-FELAS would create a new professional pathway for young educators—one that bridges the school day and after-school along with the philosophies of youth development and education.

For more information on T-Felas, go to:

<http://www.nassembly.org/nassembly/policy/currentleg.htm>

The Pathways Project

The California School-Age Consortium (CalSAC) is working with programs, community colleges, county workforce investment boards and youth employment agencies to build the pipeline for child and youth development workers in California in order to meet the workforce demands created by a massive after-school expansion created by Proposition 49 in the 2006-2007 state budget. One of these efforts, the Pathways Project, targets WIA eligible youth ages 18-24. Young adults participate in a Bridge Program at a local community college that provides basic coursework, skills-specific training for working in after-school programs, post-secondary counseling to support their transition to post-secondary education and work, and the development of an individualized education and career plan. While working part-time in an after-school program, these young adults are enrolled in a career path program at the community college that leads to a degree/certificate in education, social services, or other fields.

For more information see www.calsac.org

Collaborative for Building After-School Systems (CBASS)

With support from Atlantic Philanthropies, the Collaborative for Building After-School Systems (CBASS) is a partnership of six after-school intermediary organizations that are working together to bring quality after-school programs to scale. Workforce development is one of their priorities: their goal in this area is to ensure that the Out-of-School Time workforce has the capacity and capability needed to deliver quality services to all children and youth who want and need them. A CBASS subcommittee, co-led by Rebekha Atnafou, Director of The After-School Institute, and Lucy Friedman, President of The After-School Corporation (TASC), will review work related to workforce issues in the field (e.g. compensation, training) already underway, identify promising practices in CBASS partner cities and elsewhere, and available research on costs associated with these efforts. They will convene a taskforce of stakeholders

YOUTH WORK WORKFORCE GOALS

Stable:

Reduce turnover by improving recruitment, increasing rewards, expanding career paths.

Prepared:

Increase preparation by providing multiple opportunities and delivery systems.

Supported:

Increase job satisfaction and performance by addressing needs for recognition, supervision, training and professional development and work/life balance.

Committed:

Increase youth benefits by making the values, principles and goals of youth work clear and rewarding those who demonstrate them regularly in practice.

to review findings and issue policy recommendations for building the capacity and CBASS cities. For more information contact Jason Angell, CBASS Program Director, at 212-547-6928 or Jangell@tascorp.org.

Career Pathways and Next Generation Youth Work Coalition

Cornerstones for Kids has once again agreed to support the work of the Next Generation Youth Work Coalition. To kick off its first explicit round of policy work, the 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 building career pathways for youth workers. Each team will identify key leverage points within their state or city and work toward policy change and action related to career pathways, with the goal of building systems that: recognize competence; reward competence; require competence; redefine competence; reflect the perspectives of all stakeholders; rely on the use of public and private dollars and reaches all youth workers. In addition, the Coalition will continue to build momentum on youth work workforce issues more broadly, before and advance the Coalition’s agenda and visibility. For a two-page description of the Career Pathways work go to: <http://www.nydic.org/nydic/staffing/workforce/documents/ClearPoliciesforCareerPathway.doc> For the broader Coalition work contact Nicole Yohalem at nicole@forumfyi.org or Pam Garza at pam@nassembly.org.

New research paints a sharper picture of who they are, what they do and what they want.

Portrait of the American Youth Worker was the cover story in *Youth Today* for their March 2007 edition. Partick Boyle does an excellent job of outlining the Next Generation Youth Work Coalition and NAA studies with quotes from national and local representatives. Watch for more articles on the youth work workforce including one on part-time youth workers.

http://www.youthtoday.org/youthtoday/Mar07/YT_Mar2007.pdf

NOTABLE REPORTS

Youth Workers in the Lowcountry, South Carolina

The Community Foundation of the Lowcountry and Clemson University’s Institute on Family and Neighborhood Life partnered to conduct a survey of front-line youth workers and program directors in the Lowcountry area. While the samples do not permit generalizations about the overall workforce, our South Carolina partners did use the Next Gen survey instruments which means their findings provide a useful comparison point in understanding the experiences of rural youth workers as compared to the broader sample surveyed by the Coalition. The reports are available online at www.cornerstones4kids.org.

Understanding the 4-H Workforce: Staffing, Structures and Salaries

National 4-H Headquarters recently conducted a study on the 4-H workforce. The study, funded by National 4-H Council, provides baseline data about 4-H staffing structures and salary ranges across the United States. Program leaders from all 50 states responded to the survey. It offers a compelling picture of the current workforce in 4-H and provides some significant recommendations as the largest youth development organization in the United States works to strengthen its capacity. For the Executive Summary go to: <http://www.national4-hheadquarters.gov/library/StaffingSummaryExec07.pdf> or for the full report go to: <http://www.national4-hheadquarters.gov/library/StaffingSurveyFinal07.pdf>

OTHER FIELDS AND COUNTRIES

History of Professions and Future of Youth Work

Last spring, Nicole Yohalem and Ellen Gannett talked with Gary Sykes, Professor of Education Policy at Michigan State University, about the history of “professions” and potential lessons for thinking about the future of youth work.

Talk with us about some of the challenges in efforts to professionalize teaching.

GS: One of the challenges in teaching is that there is almost no differentiation within the field the way there is among health professionals, for example. As a field of practice it is almost entirely flat. The 20 year veteran teacher has virtually no additional authority or perks, position or rank over the others. There are team leader or department chairs, but that barely differentiates teaching at all.

There have been waves of experiments to introduce career distinctions into the teaching ranks (like the master teacher concept), but by and large they're all gone. The occupation doesn't seem to be amenable to it. The biggest factor is sheer demand for teachers. In that sense it's a little like nurses. You need lots of them, which means society can't afford to pay them all that well, and you can't afford to get terribly picky about who goes into teaching. If you did, and you increased entry qualifications and elevated the costs of entry, you'd dry up the supply.

What doctors were successful at doing was insisting on high and complicated standards, never mind the fact that there have never been enough doctors in rural America or urban areas. When you look at physicians per 1,000 people, you'd see that in Boston suburbs there's something like one doctor for every 1,000 people, but in the inner-city it's more like 10,000. So there's been a price paid for high entry standards and qualifications, namely inequitable access to medical services. One needs to think not simply about general patterns but also about equity consequences, which typically bring into the account distributional issues and issues of access to quality.

One might argue the finest move anybody ever made in respect to teaching was Andrew Carnegie setting up TIAA-CREF. That had a huge effect. It created conditions that stabilized and allowed for people to think about teaching as a career because it took care of a big problem—all of these people at the end of all these years had no money at all. So another way of thinking is not through credentials, training and staged entry but through the economics of the field, and what kinds of interventions on that side might actually have real long-term benefits. When it's not the market that's setting prices but government agencies, you bump up against taxes. In other countries with much better developed social services you can count on the fact that they've got higher tax rates. Those societies have accepted that. So thinking on the economic side, in the way that Carnegie did—was tremendously clever.

How important are the current social and political contexts to efforts to professionalize within the social services?

GS: It may be that the professional model, with all its bells and whistles and trappings, is a thing of the past. A famous sociologist, Harold Wilensky, wrote a paper called the *Professionalization of Everyone*. It points out that the splendid accomplishments of the legal and medical fields created a desire on the part of every practice under the sun, from plumbers to social workers to accountants, to professionalize. In some sense, the magic and mystery of professionalism is no longer nearly as powerful as it was in the progressive era. Put differently, just about every single organized group in the US has suffered an enormous erosion of trust on the part of the public. It doesn't matter whether your polling questions ask about the church, corporate America, higher education, or the law. We've seen a gradual erosion of trust. And professionalism rests on trust. So the historical circumstances in which a professional project could unfold just aren't present today as they were in the heyday of the movement in the 1920s and 1930s. It's difficult to imagine a sort of classic professional strategy being likely to succeed right now. New strategies, perhaps variants on the classic, need to be invented, that may be better suited to the times.

One field I've found interesting where you can see the advantages and disadvantages of professionalization, is social work. You get really relatively modest training in universities, either undergraduate or graduate, and then you're expected to arrange an apprenticeship with some master where you're ostensibly under their watchful eye for a certain number of hours as you begin your practice. Once that person certifies that you've been practicing successfully, you then become licensed as a full professional. So it relies to a large degree on the accumulation of experience. You let others be the judge.

What are some key questions to think about in our efforts to strengthen the youth work workforce?

GS: How do we know what you're requiring of people really equates to effectiveness in practice? Are you good at screening people out and identifying people to keep in, so you're not making either kind of mistake? In a field that's still developing and that lacks a strong research-based knowledge base, this is really tough. I'm faced with that every day, in a department of education administration. The notion is that you would learn how to be a school principal at a university, from people who for the most part, have never been one.

Another key question is about staging entry. How do you move people from complete novice to fully accomplished professional, and how do you mark those stages in the trajectory? In the law there's almost no such thing. Law schools, the elite ones in particular, refuse to pay attention to practice. They are magnificently indifferent to whether students pass the bar. They don't consider it their job to teach students about the work of lawyering. You learn how to think like a lawyer. This is very different than in medicine, where you go on rounds to learn the practice.

Reports from Schools

Improving the Quality of Teachers

Excellence in the Classroom focuses on improving the quality of teachers as a critical move towards closing the achievement gap. The volume concludes that good teachers make a difference. According to the fifteen leading scholars who contributed to the journal, the most promising way to improve teacher quality is to broaden entry requirements, identify and promote effective teachers, provide additional pay to successful teachers who work in challenging schools, and promote meaningful professional development. To get the report go to:

http://www.futureofchildren.org/pubs-info2825/pubs-info_show.htm?doc_id=468970 (Vol. 17, No. 1). Accompanying the journal is an Executive Summary at http://www.futureofchildren.org/usr_doc/TeachersSummary.pdf and a Policy Brief at http://www.futureofchildren.org/usr_doc/FOC_Brief_Spring2007.pdf

Improve Teacher Retention

Districts spend thousands of dollars to recruit, hire, and train new teachers. Then, after a year or two, they have to repeat the process because those same teachers have left their jobs. How much does this cost? In terms of money, it's been estimated that each teacher who is recruited, trained, and lost can cost districts up to \$50,000. Disruptions in teaching and learning and negative effects on morale are among other costs that can be even more devastating, writes Hal Portner in American School Board Journal. One proven way to improve teacher retention as well as the quality of teaching and learning is through the provision and support of a comprehensive, coherent, and sustained induction and mentoring program. This article in the American School Board Journal offers five compelling reasons to support induction and mentoring programs, and suggests decisive actions that school boards can take to that end.

<http://www.asbj.com/2005/10/1005ASBJportner.pdf>

Check out the new URL!!!!
Go to nextgencoalition.org—it works!

Definition of a Youth Worker

A youth worker is an individual who works with and on behalf of youth to facilitate their personal, social, and educational development and enable them to gain a voice, influence, and place in society as they make the transition from dependence to independence.

the next generation **YOUTH WORK COALITION BULLETIN**

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