

PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS FOR YOUTH AT HIGH RISK

PROVIDING YOUTH AT HIGH RISK WITH PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS

Youth exposed to two or more risk factors (e.g., homelessness, truancy, gang involvement) are faced with a compounded risk of failure, and they need tailored and holistic support to achieve sustained life success. Low-income urban youth, overwhelmingly African-American or Latino, are disproportionately exposed

to these risk factors. Creating pathways to success for youth at high risk requires that organizations adopt specific practices and provide foundational youth development services that meet youth where they are and enable them to benefit from academic and workforce programs.

SOCIAL ISSUE OVERVIEW: WHY CREATING PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS FOR YOUTH AT HIGH RISK MATTERS

FIGURE 1: YOUTH RISK FACTORS

- Pregnancy or parenthood
- Homelessness
- Parental incarceration
- Court involvement
- Truancy or school drop out
- Gang involvement
- Chronic substance abuse
- Academically off track
- Victims or perpetrators of violence or abuse
- Clinical depression or other mental health condition/illness

Source: : United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley espouses the entire list of risk factors; the High Risk Youth Network of the Boston Capacity Tank considers those above the line to be most influential

In Massachusetts, 64,000 youth between ages 18 and 24 are neither working nor enrolled in school or a vocational program;¹ 12,000 of them live in Boston.² Furthermore, youth from minority racial and ethnic backgrounds tend to be disproportionately affected by the systemic factors that lead to youth disengagement. In Massachusetts, African-American youth are twice as likely as white, non-Latino youth to be unenrolled in school and unemployed; Latino youth are three times more likely than their white, non-Latino counterparts to be disengaged.³

Youth not engaged in education or employment often face negative life outcomes. The risk factors highlighted in Figure 1⁴ have been shown to correlate negatively to educational success, employment, and economic self-reliance. Furthermore, youth who exhibit two or more of these risk factors are considered to be at high risk and face a compounded risk of failure.⁵ Because these risk factors are related and often co-occur, youth who face two or more risk factors are the norm rather than the exception.⁶

The following statistics highlight the co-occurrence of risk factors that can damage a youth's chance for success.

- **Teen parenthood** accounts for one in every four cases of school dropouts, according to a poll of high school dropouts commissioned by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.⁷
- **Homeless** youth report extremely low school enrollment rates (17%).⁸
- **Children of an incarcerated parent** are five times more likely than their peers to drop out of school⁹ and four times more likely to become drug users as adults.¹⁰
- Only 12% of youth **involved in the justice system** graduate or obtain a GED in young adulthood, and they are seven times more likely to depend on welfare than youth who were not justice involved.¹¹
- 65% of youth who drop out have had a pattern of absenteeism and have been referred to a **truancy officer**.¹²
- Youth who **drop out of high school** are three and a half times more likely than those who graduate to be arrested and eight times more likely to be in jail or prison.¹³
- Many dropouts have been **chronic substance abusers** during their time in school,¹⁴ often using drugs to manage anxiety around school failure.

While economic circumstances alone will not prevent youth from thriving as adults, youth who live in economically disadvantaged households and communities often are more likely to be exposed to the risk factors and negative behaviors that can hurt their chances of success. In Massachusetts, 265,411 children under age 18 live in households that require public assistance to make ends meet;¹⁵ 36,314 of them live in the city of Boston.¹⁶ Furthermore, minority youth are disproportionately represented in these groups: African-Americans are nearly three times as likely and Latinos are four times as likely as white non-Latinos to live in poverty in Massachusetts.¹⁷

U.S. youth who receive public assistance

23%

MA youth who receive public assistance

19%

Boston youth who receive public assistance

33%

Source: United States Census Bureau, "American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates: Children Characteristics." Showing data from 2009.

APPROACHES TO CREATE PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS

Many youth at high risk are disconnected from the systems designed to support them. “Second-chance” services either do not exist within existing systems, such as K-12 schools, or the quality of comprehensive and coordinated services is vastly inconsistent. These youth depend on relationships with community organizations to guide them to the appropriate services. These organizations are able to foster trusted relationships because they offer great flexibility in their program design and can be nimble with service delivery. In addition, nonprofit organizations are able to collaborate closely with a number of agencies providing complementary services to ensure the needs of youth at high risk are addressed from a comprehensive approach. Thus, these organizations play a unique and critical role in building a strong, stable foundation for youth.

Creating pathways to success for youth at high risk requires a tailored and holistic approach that must be delivered seamlessly by organizations and their networks. While different combinations of risk factors – as well as a range of skills and ages – require varied services, 13 organizational practices characterize agencies/programs that are highly effective in serving youth at high risk. Organizations that demonstrate these practices, regardless of the specific services they provide, are poised to effectively address the baseline challenges that youth at high risk often share and remain flexible to offer them other complementary services that their individual circumstances may require.

ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICES

The 13 practices listed below are representative of high-performing youth-serving organizations, regardless of the organization’s core programs. Demonstrating these practices is critical for organizations to effectively reengage youth at high risk and meet their specific needs. Successful organizations strive to adopt and implement as many of these practices as possible.

Practice	Why this matters	Sample application(s)
Seamlessly integrate services	<p>Fragmented service delivery is a major challenge for youth at high risk, and ironically, fragmentation tends to increase when unified service delivery is needed most. The further removed a youth is from traditional systems, such as the K-12 system, the less likely he or she is to have a single point of access for the many services he or she may need.</p> <p>High-performing organizations aim to provide youth with a seamless experience that allows them to connect with the services they need. Effective organizations create seamless service delivery through a closely-monitored referral network or by building their own internal capacity to serve youth with very different needs.</p>	<p>Common intake process at a multi-service organization to automatically address multiple needs</p> <p>Partner organizations deliver complementary services on-site or in close geographic proximity, reducing travel and points of contact</p>
Provide year-round enrollment opportunities	Youth at high risk may require intensive recruiting and relationship building before they are ready to commit to a program. However, once they are ready to begin, high-performing organizations are ready to work with them. These organizations recognize that the window of opportunity may close if a youth becomes disinterested while waiting for the next program cycle, and therefore, they provide constant opportunities for enrollment throughout the year.	<p>One-on-one intensive support to integrate into in-progress group-based program</p> <p>Frequent program start dates throughout the year</p>
Build programs around the likelihood of interruptions	Youth at high risk face a strong likelihood of relapsing or facing other externally driven interruptions to their progress, especially in the early stages of engagement; high-performing organizations design their programs to account for this possibility. Rather than expel youth who fail once, twice, or even more often, effective organizations work with youth to overcome interruptions. Furthermore, effective organizations are prepared to engage in relentless outreach to bring youth back into their programs if youth face an interruption to their progress.	<p>Policy of nonexpulsion for youth who relapse or fail to complete program in standard time</p> <p>Relentless outreach to reengage dropouts</p>
Conduct an in-depth assessment to develop individualized plans	Effective organizations conduct an in-depth assessment of participants’ skills and needs to develop achievable, individualized plans. Because organizations work with youth at different levels of readiness to engage (e.g., youth who are pulled out of a gang), formal assessment at intake may not always be possible, and organizations may assess youth on a more ongoing basis through multiple interactions.	<p>Thorough intake process assesses multiple areas of challenges and skills</p> <p>Specially trained staff begin youth assessment prior to formal intake process</p>
Encourage youth ownership of their own success	High-performing organizations work with youth to identify their goals and aspirations to build a sustainable plan that incorporates those goals realistically and incrementally rather than imposing a particular pathway. In the context of a safe, stable relationship, programs build in short-term incentives and rewards within the program structure that help youth learn the consequences for their behavior, positive and negative. Furthermore, effective organizations also create opportunities for youth to advocate for systemic changes that enable them to achieve these individualized plans.	<p>Flexible plans that are based on youth interests and aspirations</p> <p>Youth advocacy activities</p>

Practice	Why this matters	Sample application(s)
Train all staff to establish deep, meaningful relationships with youth	The means through which all effective organizations provide outcomes-producing value to youth at high risk is a stable adult relationship. Many youth lack an adult role model or a healthy relationship with an adult in their lives. While many organizations have specific staff who are dedicated to working closely with youth as mentors (e.g., case managers, street workers), high-performing organizations ensure that all staff that interact with youth are trained to establish these meaningful relationships, as it is often unpredictable as to whom a youth will open up to and seek to connect with.	Annual relationship-building training for all staff who interact with youth Hire staff with relatable backgrounds for youth participants
Ensure cultural competence	Low-income and minority urban youth face major systematic barriers that often push them to become youth at high risk. Effective organizations acknowledge the overrepresentation of minorities among youth at high risk and work to ensure they are culturally competent in their programming and staffing strategies. These organizations are then able to create an authentic bond to reengage youth who have become skeptical and wary of the formal institutions that have failed them.	Hire staff from the local community Program content includes cultural elements that authentically resonate with participants
Stay informed about youth participants' activities outside of the organization	Effective organizations know how a young person is doing inside their program and keep informed of outside situations that may impact his or her success. Awareness of home (e.g., housing instability), school (e.g., grades or other testing cycles), and community situations (e.g., return of key player in local gang), helps organizations foresee and prevent relapse.	Close partnerships with key agencies (e.g., police department, school system, other community organizations) Formalized involvement of parents or guardians
Are involved with youth long term	Effective organizations recognize that youth at high risk need long-term support. Not only do these youth need to overcome an initial phase when relapse is likely, but they also face such a high level of adversity that they may return for support even after they "graduate" from a program.	Formal programming options for at least eight months Informal, periodic outreach post-program Alumni networks
Provide or connect participants to intensive and ongoing case management	High-performing organizations are prepared to connect youth to intensive case management, either through internal services or through strong, transparent partnerships	Trained case manager on staff MOUs with case management partner to share critical participant data
Have the capacity for crisis intervention	Effective organizations are equipped with the staff and readily accessible resources to help youth successfully navigate crises.	Trained crisis management staff 24-hour crisis hotline made available to youth
Incorporate policy and advocacy work into the organization's social impact model	Legislative and funding policies play a critical role in which services are delivered to youth and how they are delivered. As organizations become proven providers of effective services for youth, high performers incorporate policy and advocacy as part of their model for impact.	Advocacy department that keeps abreast of key policies and organizes efforts Train participants as self-advocates Advocacy-focused alliances
Espouse performance measurement	Organizations that foster a culture of improvement are poised to truly focus on what works empirically. Tracking program performance enables organizations to reinvest confidently in their most successful programs and services.	Use formal performance measurement system Track and report on long-term performance

Organizations that espouse these practices usually provide activities that can be categorized as developmental or achievement services. These achievement services can be further subdivided into workforce and academic focus areas. While achievement services provide key opportunities for youth to develop hard skills and accomplish milestones that are necessary to compete in today's global economy, developmental services enable youth to reach milestones toward personal and social development, creating the foundation of soft skills on which youth can then build their academic and workforce competencies. These services may also encompass prevention activities that promote healthy behaviors and lifestyle choices. Many developmental services are designed to reengage youth, which is the first critical step toward progress for youth at high risk. Only after youth have reengaged through these initial and ongoing integrated services can they fully benefit from achievement services. Developmental and achievement services represent key opportunities to connect youth at high risk with pathways to success, and an individual youth's progression along each of these pathways can be measured through short-term indicators and long-term goals.

A visual representation of the 13 organizational practices, services by focus area, and outcomes by focus area is shown on page 4. *For additional detail on the services presented, see the appendix.*

Organizational Practices

1. Seamlessly integrate services
2. Provide year-round enrollment opportunities
3. Build programs around the likelihood of interruptions
4. Conduct an in-depth assessment to develop individualized plans
5. Encourage youth ownership of their own success
6. Train all staff to establish deep, meaningful relationships with youth
7. Ensure cultural competence
8. Stay informed about participants' activities outside of the program
9. Involved with youth long term
10. Provide or connect participants to intensive and ongoing case management
11. Provide crisis intervention
12. Incorporate policy and advocacy work into social impact model
13. Espouse performance measurement

Developmental Services

- Life skills
- Social justice activities
- Mentoring
- Organized sports
- Civic engagement
- Community service
- Youth leadership development
- Special interest clubs (e.g., culture, arts, dance)
- Prevention services (e.g., substance abuse, STD, and pregnancy prevention education)
- Conflict resolution

Developmental Outcomes

- Improvement in ability to accept advice from adults
- Increase in healthy adult and peer relationships
- Positive changes in mind-set/beliefs
- Improvement in ability to mitigate risk factors
- Applies problem solving and critical thinking skills to improve decision making
- Decrease in violent and/or criminal behaviors
- Perceives self as accountable for own actions and for the consequences on others
- Sets short-term and long-term goals, understands steps necessary to reach goals
- Decrease in substance abuse, STDs, and unwanted pregnancy
- Improvement in ability to resolve conflicts constructively

Achievement Services

Workforce Development Services

- Transitional jobs
- Prevocational and vocational skills training
- Work-based learning
- Career-focused community service
- Job search counseling

Academic Services

- GED and pre-GED services
- Dropout outreach and recovery
- Alternative education
- Credit recovery
- Test preparation
- Academic enrichment/tutoring
- Academic counseling/coaching
- Financial aid assistance
- Postsecondary education counseling and exploration

Achievement Outcomes

Workforce Development Outcomes

- Achievement of certifications or credentials
- Completion of internship
- Completion of transitional employment or other "starter jobs"
- Placement in employment
- Increase in wages, hours, or benefits

Academic Outcomes

- Increase in attendance and decrease in truancy
- Increase in active participation
- Improvement in grades
- High school graduation or GED completion
- Enrollment in next phase of education

Youth reengage

Long-Term Success Goals

Academic:

Enrollment in and successful completion of associate's or bachelor's degree or an industry-recognized apprenticeship program

Workforce:

Obtain and retain employment that provides family-supporting wages, benefits, and career ladders

Developmental:

Develops self efficacy toward positive relationships, goals, and achievements

Establishes long-term, positive and trusting relationships with peers and adults

Seeks to improve the community's conditions

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Investing in organizations and networks that create pathways to success for youth at high risk presents investors with a significant opportunity for impact. Effective organizations have the potential to drastically improve the livelihood and well-being of youth and their families and produce significant benefits for society and government. These benefits include reducing and reversing the high direct and indirect costs associated with negative outcomes such as juvenile crime, unemployment, low academic attainment, and dependence on social services. Strong youth programming also enables communities to thrive as youth become more engaged civically. Sustained investment has been shown to result in a return on investment of \$10.51 for every dollar spent.¹⁸

The returns on investment for developmental and achievement services can similarly be segmented into the following categories:

DEVELOPMENTAL

- The negative community impact associated with disconnected youth is disruptive and costly for communities, leading to loss of life, community trauma and withdrawal, increased health care costs, decreased property values, and disruptions of key services. Eliminating youth violence could create savings in excess of \$158 billion each year.¹⁹
- An immediate, positive community impact is associated with youth who have reconnected with hope to a pathway to success: family, neighborhood, and community bonds are strengthened. Healthy youth bring excitement and vitality to their community.
- The long-term returns for youth development cannot be overstated -- significant positive consequences exist for the next generation of young people, as parental success is a strong predictor of children's achievement, college enrollment rates, and future income. Each individual young person who recaptures his/her unique value, promise, potential, and contribution is a priceless return.

ACHIEVEMENT

Academic

- If just one-third of dropouts were to earn a high school diploma, national savings on food stamps, housing assistance, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) would amount to \$10.8 billion annually.²⁰
- In Massachusetts alone, those who graduated with the class of 2010 will collectively earn \$88 million more in an average year compared with the likely earnings of their peers without a high school diploma.
- Other, broader investigations of the impact of working to create pathways to success for youth at high risk on the U.S. economy indicate that closing the U.S. school achievement gap would raise the nation's gross domestic product by at least \$400 billion.²¹

Workforce

- Unemployment is associated with criminal activity, and effective programming that helps youth earn academic credentials and find stable employment has the potential to save \$46,000 per year for every individual who stays out of jail in Massachusetts.²²
- Increased employment and productivity lead to increased tax revenues and increased spending in communities where youth employees live and work.²³
- A 2008 evaluation of the Job Corps youth workforce and education program conducted by the University of Texas found a \$1.63 return on each dollar invested within the first five-year period following the program; the return had grown to \$2.08 per dollar in the second five-year period.²⁴

CREATING PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS FOR YOUTH AT HIGH RISK

- Requires a greater initial investment
- Demands holistic, intensive, and seamlessly coordinated services
- Relies on organizations' ability to relentlessly work with youth through progress interruptions to the point of reengagement
- Enables reengaged youth to reach development and achievement milestones on the path toward long-term success
- Provides opportunities for success to the youth who need it most, those who have been left behind
- Creates lessons for the field that can prevent failure for youth at all risk levels

INVESTMENT RECOMMENDATION

Donors interested in ensuring that youth who face two or more risk factors receive developmental, academic, and workforce support should begin by identifying organizations that meet the 13 practices outlined in this report.

Funders should focus on organizations and service networks that have the capacity to engage youth in crafting tailored pathways to success that account for an individual's unique skills, goals, and challenges, as well as seamlessly provide the services needed for them to progress. Effective organizations will be deeply committed to serving this particular population of youth, training staff in youth relationship building and crisis intervention, designing programs around the likelihood of interruptions, fostering a culture of self-improvement through regular performance measurement, and providing year-round enrollment opportunities. Furthermore, the strongest performers are collaborative and incorporate policy and advocacy to create broader systemic change.

Funders should provide unrestricted or flexible funding to organizations that successfully engage youth at high risk, demonstrate the recommended core practices and hold themselves accountable to achieve increasing levels of development and achievement outcomes. Ideally, funders can provide long-term, multiyear funding so that organizations obtain the financial stability to plan, grow, and innovate their programs. Organizations may use funds for a wide range of activities that include delivering programs, building the organization's infrastructure and capacity, partnering with providers of complementary services, and spreading best practices in their field. Many organizations will use funds to support specific growth goals outlined in a strategic plan, perhaps seeking to increase the number of beneficiaries in their programs or replicate their model to additional locations. Organizations may seek to implement a more rigorous data-tracking mechanism to improve program effectiveness or add a new effective practice. Other common quality improvements include staff training, hiring new staff or expanding the social service offerings available to program participants.

TAKE ACTION

In addition to providing funding support to high-performing organizations, donors and funders can take other actions to support organizations helping youth connect with pathways to success.

Advocate for Policy Changes

- **Urge your representative** to support national or statewide campaigns for coordinated service delivery. For example, the Federal Youth Coordination Act would create a Federal Youth Development Council to facilitate interagency collaboration, coordinate federal research, and identify and replicate model programs.
- **Support city and state policies that fund alternative educational pathways** and the schools that can offer such pathways (e.g., charter and vocational schools) to close the achievement gap that disproportionately affects minority and low-income urban youth.
- **Oppose federal and state cuts** to youth development funds, which affect the budgets of organizations working with youth at high risk. Such cuts can limit an organization's ability to provide the high touch service necessary to serve the youth at high risk population.

Make it Personal

- **Improve your understanding** of the challenges facing youth with multiple risk factors through direct involvement:
 - **Volunteer** with an organization working on youth development, tutor struggling young people, offer job expertise to youth entering the workforce, or help an understaffed organization with events and programming.
 - **Hire** youth or encourage your workplace to partner with youth workforce development programs to provide internships or job shadowing opportunities.
 - **Leverage your networks** and connect friends and relatives working in related institutions. For example, connect a friend on the local school board with a neighbor who works for a youth development organization.
 - Particularly helpful connections would be between the court system, school system, local government, employers, and local community organizations
- **Educate yourself** on the youth issues in your area -- what services are available to struggling youth? What are local graduation rates? Get a comprehensive understanding of how current systems are or are not serving youth effectively.

Raise Awareness

- **Educate others** with your new knowledge; discuss why it is so important to fund programs for this population of youth, raising awareness of the greater systemic barriers to success that low-income and minority youth face, particularly those living in urban centers. Emphasize the benefits to the individual youth and his or her community of investing in and generally supporting organizations and networks serving youth at high risk.
- **Help spread best practices** by learning what it takes to truly achieve success for youth faced with the highest level of risk and supporting outcome-driven organizations that are deeply committed to this population of youth.

APPENDIX: PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS FOR YOUTH AT HIGH RISK

The matrix below lists and defines the core services that were identified as most promising or proven in each service category:

Developmental Services	
Life skills	Life skills programs include workshops or long-term programs that aim to prepare youth to manage various life situations. Common programs may include parenting, emotional literacy, healthy relationships, and financial capability.
Social justice activities	Through community organizing and political activism, youth mobilize local resources to confront issues that affect their lives. These initiatives may increase individual involvement, strengthen personal confidence, and improve leadership development.
Mentoring	Formal mentoring programs match youth with responsible adults who make a long-term commitment to provide youth with personalized guidance and support. Research suggests that by establishing trusting and consistent relationships with adult role models, youth develop improved educational, behavioral, and social-emotional outcomes.
Organized Sports	Organized team sports provide youth with a positive social outlet (an alternative social network) during unsupervised after-school or weekend hours. They also build character and skills that are important for academic and workforce success, such as timeliness and general reliability, teamwork, and leadership.
Civic engagement	These organizations seek to engage youth as change-makers on their own behalf. They teach leadership, increase youth commitment to positively contributing to their communities, and improve their openness to working within existing systems.
Community service	By engaging in community service, youth can develop a commitment to contribute positively to their communities. Community service also enables youth facing multiple challenges to look beyond their own needs and what they may perceive to be deficiencies to see the skills they can share or their assets.
Special interest clubs	Special interest clubs may include arts- or culture-focused activities such as dance, painting, theater, martial arts, and most other common interests that serve as group activities. Like youth sports leagues, they build essential skills for sustained life success and provide a positive social outlet during critical times.
Prevention Services	These programs may target one or multiple youth intervention issues such as substance abuse or sex education. Programs often incorporate multiple strategies such as educational training, case management, and information campaigns to promote healthy behaviors and lifestyle choices.
Conflict Resolution	Conflict resolution programs help youth resolve interpersonal disputes through nonviolence. These programs focus on helping youth develop critical problem-solving skills through effective listening, communication, and self-discipline.
Achievement Services	
Academic Services	
GED and pre-GED services	An alternative to high school graduation, the General Education Development (GED) test allows youth to gain a high school equivalent credential, improves earnings potential compared with high school dropouts, and positions youth to continue onto further education if and when appropriate. Pre-GED services include basic skills such as numeracy and literacy.
Dropout outreach and recovery	Dropout outreach and recovery involves outreach to dropouts and those in imminent danger of dropping out to provide alternative pathways to graduation. A robust dropout outreach and recovery strategy should not only focus on reintegrating students into the school system, but also on preparing the system to receive students who have struggled to succeed in a traditional academic framework in the past.

Alternative education	The traditional school system does not meet the needs of every student, and this problem is exacerbated for those students facing unusually high levels of risk. Alternative models of education can provide benefits such as smaller class sizes, coaches or case managers, more accommodating class schedules, competency-based instruction, accelerated credit recovery, and access to social services. While this strategy can take many different forms, there are three primary models: alternative programming within a traditional school, stand-alone schools, and programming at community organizations or college sites.
Credit recovery	Individualized solutions for youth to recover lost academic credit in an accelerated time frame help students to graduate on time and minimize their incentives to drop out. Programs typically allow students to earn credit without having to retake entire classes with younger students.
Test preparation	Passing entrance or credentialing tests can be a major roadblock for youth in their progression toward academic success. Programs may focus on preparing youth for examinations such as the Standardized Aptitude Test (SAT), an admissions test used by four-year colleges; the Accuplacer, an academic placement assessment used by community colleges; or the Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE), a diagnostic test commonly used by employers, vocational, or technical schools to measure basic skills competency.
Academic enrichment/ tutoring	Academic enrichment and tutoring can be relevant for youth facing two or more risk factors who show moderate to high academic success. It serves to strengthen their skills further and set them up for college success.
Academic counseling/ coaching	Students often do not have the necessary understanding of the academic system and what they need to do to succeed within it. Academic counselors or coaches that help students navigate the system by providing counseling early on can help increase positive academic outcomes.
Financial aid assistance	Financial aid programs with an academic goal build awareness in students and their families about educational costs. They may give students extensive support in identifying, applying for, and receiving financial aid, helping students maximize aid from all sources.
Postsecondary education counseling and exploration	Improves youths' academic aspirations by broadening their understanding of the opportunities available to them and linking academic achievement and future career opportunities. Furthermore, this type of service may also focus on providing students with the tools to adapt more easily to the college environment and help them build self-esteem and develop confidence.
Workforce Services	
Transitional jobs	These programs primarily serve individuals who have little to no consistent work experience by placing them in paid jobs that will strengthen their employment history as well as teach basic employability skills.
Prevocational and vocational skills training	Provides participants with concrete skills to improve their eligibility for employment in a particular industry. Programs may provide a comprehensive, occupation-driven curriculum that includes practical application of skills learned, pregraduation internships and work opportunities, and training to obtain licenses or certifications required for employment. Many have partnerships with community colleges to enable participants to also earn college credit.
Work-based learning	A brokered internship, apprenticeship or part-time job is often the first experience youth have in the job market, and they provide rich learning opportunities for in-school and out-of-school youth. These experiences provide youth with employable soft skills (e.g., reliability, professionalism, communication) and job-specific or "technical" skills, as well as opportunities for youth to develop positive relationships with adult supervisors.
Career-focused community service	Community service focused on a particular career or marketable skill set is one additional way to teach job skills, while simultaneously deepening an individual's commitment to his or her community.
Job search counseling and placement	Many workforce development programs can provide youth with advising related to the job search. This service may include skills and interests assessments, as well as direct support in finding job openings and developing application materials.

The following developmental and achievement outcomes were consistently cited by experts to measure progress and success:

Developmental Outcomes	Achievement Outcomes	
	Academic	Workforce
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Increased self efficacy (confidence and competence) ■ Improvement in ability to accept advice from adults ■ Increase in healthy adult and peer relationships ■ Positive changes in mind-set/beliefs ■ Improvement in ability to mitigate risk factors ■ Improvement in decision making through application of problem solving and critical thinking skills ■ Decrease in violent and/or criminal behaviors ■ Increased accountability for own actions and the consequences on others ■ Increased self-esteem, perceiving self as valuable and valued by family/community ■ Increased ability to set short-term and long-term goals, understanding steps necessary to reach goals ■ Decrease in substance abuse, STDs, and unwanted pregnancy ■ Improvement in ability to resolve conflicts constructively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Increase in attendance and decrease in truancy ■ Increase in active participation (i.e., does homework and asks or answers questions) ■ Improvement in grades ■ High school graduation or GED completion ■ Enrollment in next phase of education (depends on start level) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Achievement of certifications or credentials ■ Completion of internship ■ Completion of transitional employment or other “starter” jobs ■ Placement in employment ■ Increase in wages earned, hours worked, or benefits received

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