



**Making the Case-**

## **Establishing the Benefits**

**Y**outh Development training and technical assistance resource centers help increase the effectiveness of local youth organizations and, thereby, the youth they serve. Their expansive view of the field is beyond that of a single organization. They act as a broker to provide both broad reach and sharp focus on key youth development issues. Such organizations can:

### **Save Time and Money**

#### **Training is targeted and economical.**

Youth development training and technical assistance resource centers provide cost effective training across organizational lines and tap into the highest quality materials available nationally. Rather than having multiple organizations create curricula and provide such training independently, the Centers package innovative, state-of-the-art training, information sharing, and networking opportunities for a vast array of organizations and individuals.

#### **Relevant literature is digested, synthesized and analyzed.**

Information on youth development is growing exponentially. Training and technical assistance resource centers synthesize and analyze information and provide quality control of what goes to the community via newsletters, website links, articles, electronic dialogue, and libraries. This saves time for individual programs and youth workers, and assures that they get state-of-the-art resources.

## **Improve Effectiveness**

### **Technical assistance and support is a key organizational effectiveness strategy.**

Centers provide technical assistance in order to strengthen and deepen organizations, institutions, and systems capacity to more effectively provide services. They offer, not only training, but work with executives, boards of directors, and staff to embrace change, think strategically, create flexible systems, and improve policies, procedures and operations of the entire organization.

### **Integrate youth development practices and principles infuse youth programming.**

Training and technical assistance resource centers provide innovation with proven best practices to help organizations integrate youth development practices into existing programs and services. Using creative, yet established methods of learning—training, assessments, peer learning communities, coaching, and practice laboratories—training and technical assistance resource centers work within a community, a services system, and/or organization to support developmentally based youth programming.

## **Inspire Change and Innovation**

### **Work in partnership, not isolation.**

Youth development training and technical assistance resource centers generate new ideas, strategies and programs through linking and connecting people, institutions, coalitions, and initiatives for discussion and debate. They build on existing linkages among and between already established local, state, regional, and national organizations to promote common understanding and support the importance of youth development. Bridging these youth serving entities helps to forge partnerships on key initiatives, and creates networks for widespread adoption of youth development principles and practices.

### **Youth development is made relevant to wider audiences and partners.**

Youth development principles and practices are the foundation of all training and technical assistance, provided. A prevention approach to keep behaviors or acts from happening or existing, while important, influences the way policy makers and practitioners direct time and resources. Instead, training and technical assistance resource centers interact with leaders in the prevention field to gain their support for a youth development approach that focuses on preparing young people to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood by addressing their broader developmental needs. They are positioned as neutral conveners and reach all sectors of the youth serving community—faith based providers, workforce development, education,—to help stakeholders understand, gain access to, and integrate principles of positive youth development.

## **Produce Results**

### **Methods of effective practice are fostered.**

Funders and policy makers expect accountability and measurable outcomes in order to confirm and improve the quality of youth services, and to evaluate their costs and benefits. Training and technical assistance resource centers “open a dialogue between researchers and practitioners to foster and share new kinds of expertise and information.”<sup>\*</sup> Then, they share and synthesize assessment data, sponsor research that links policy to practice, provide local organizations with training and concrete tools for measuring outcomes and engage the organizations in being accountable. Training and technical assistance resource centers use the data to advocate for funding and policies that will benefit all organizations serving youth.

### **Youth and adults are meaningfully engaged.**

Training and technical assistance resource centers provide an example of the ways to effectively involve youth as leaders and partners. Through learning and reflection on their own successes and challenges, Centers build organizational and program capacities to employ youth-adult partnerships, and train youth and youth workers in effective and appropriate practices.

## **Increase Clout**

### **Attention and recognition is brought to the field.**

Whether it is through vigorous advocacy in partnership with local organizations and individuals or less visibly behind the scenes, youth development training and technical assistance and resource centers are responsible for bringing attention and recognition to the importance of our youth. While individual organizations provide critical youth development services and activities, each one by itself is not influential enough to broaden the support and understanding of developmentally based practices. Nor is it their mission. Centers often have the stature, neutrality, and the facilitative skills to bring all players to the table to respond to emerging policy issues and to influence positive approaches and healthy outcomes for young people.

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<sup>\*</sup> *Local Intermediary Organizations: Connecting the Dots for Children, Youth, and Families; New Ways to Work with Jobs for the Future*, the American Youth Policy Forum, the AED, Center for Youth Development and Policy Research, the Coalition for Community Schools and the Finance Project, 2002. Found at: <http://www.intermediarynetwork.org/connectdots.html>.