

Los Angeles YouthSource Centers

Goal: Infuse a youth-centered approach to assessment and referral to services to reengage youth who have dropped out of high school and assist youth who have graduated high school but are not currently employed.

About YouthSource Centers: To reach this goal, the City of Los Angeles's Economic and Workforce Development Department (EWDD) and Workforce Investment Board (WIB), and the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) work in partnership to reengage youth who have dropped out of high school and assist youth who have graduated high school but are not yet enrolled in postsecondary education or in the workforce. Based out of YouthSource Centers operated by the city, collaboration partners provide academic advising, employment training programs, and other services to youth.

Collaboration Model: In 2009, YouthSource Centers began partnering with LAUSD to conduct targeted outreach to students who had dropped out of school or were at risk for dropping out. Together, they identified a comprehensive strategy to:

- *Co-locate LAUSD Pupil Services and Attendance (PSA) counselors at YouthSource Centers* — counselors are funded evenly by both EWDD/WIB and LAUSD to allow access at the Centers to school district data in compliance with privacy laws.
- *Conduct outreach activities to identify youth for services* — PSA counselors educate school staff who work with high-risk students, communicate with school police, make phone calls and conduct home visits, and host an annual Student Recovery Day with the support of 1,000 volunteers to connect with youth that might benefit from services.
- *Infuse a youth-centered approach to assessment and referral to services* — every youth who enters a Center receives a comprehensive educational and psychosocial assessment.

Promising Practices used in the collaboration:

- *Use data to facilitate change* — Partners used data to make the case for urgent action and funding to improve school attendance and job participation; they again used data on dropout rates to plan the locations of more YouthSource Centers.
- *Find creative solutions to complex systemic challenges* — YouthSource Center staff engage in collaborative service planning and delivery while complying with federal policy restricting access to student-level data. YouthSource Centers have two separate data systems, one of which is intended for PSA counselors so that they alone can access students' confidential educational and attendance records. Youth sign consent forms that allow counselors to discuss the case with colleagues for service planning.
- *Making continuous improvements and addressing sustainability* — Through open and rapid communication between the systems and staff, and a focus on performance standards and quality principles, continuous quality improvement processes help to retain staff and sustain the larger partnership.

Smart investments that benefit youth

In its first year of implementation (2012-2013):

- 8,534 young adults used the YouthSource Centers.
- 5,394 young adults received academic advisement from an LAUSD counselor.
- 972 high school dropouts were successfully recovered and returned to school.

Lessons Learned by the collaboration: In the midst of a climate of significant spending cuts and pressure from some stakeholders to articulate the benefit of co-investing between two large systems, collaboration leaders had to overcome resistance by using data and focusing on the most important goals.

Read more at youth.gov/collaboration-profiles/los-angeles-youthsource-centers