

nine to nineteen

- **Youth in Museums and Libraries:
A Practitioner's Guide**



Engaging America's

YYY Youth

...a leadership initiative of the



**INSTITUTE of
Museum and Library
SERVICES**

INSTITUTE OF MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES

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“Young people respond to appropriate structure, positive relationships, and a sense of accomplishment—and in return, they provide talent, creativity, and community connections that enrich libraries and museums.”



Anne-Imelda Radice, Ph.D.
Director, Institute of Museum and
Library Services



Youth Action Committee

The Youth Action Committee is a group of experts convened by IMLS to represent the broad fields of museum and library practice and administration, youth policy and funding, youth development research and practice, media, and government, and to advise on the content and focus of the study. It consisted of the following individuals:

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(continues on next page)

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About This Guide

Structure

The guide is presented in the following sections:

1. What Works for Youth in Museums and Libraries, with chapters on:

- Why Are Museums and Libraries Important to Youth?
- What Do Effective Youth Programs Look Like?
- What Can You Do in Your Community?
- What Role Can Young People Play?
- Strategies for Success: Partner, Evaluate, Sustain

2. Resources for Practitioners: A variety of resources, references, and frameworks that will assist the museum or library practitioner in seeking out valuable lessons.

Background

This guide grew out of the Institute of Museum and Library Services' *Museums and Libraries Engaging America's Youth* initiative and draws on the wide body of research and knowledge from the fields of youth development and informal learning, as well as from the rich experience of museum and library professionals and volunteers.

The specific goals of the initiative are:

- to examine what works
- to share best practices
- to encourage effective programming
- to build bridges with policy makers

To examine what works, IMLS undertook a yearlong study, which consisted of a survey of 400 youth programs for youth aged 9–19 conducted at museums and libraries across the nation that had been supported by IMLS between 1998 and 2003; a series of workshops; and the development of case studies. The study looked at the

practices that contributed to successful and sustainable programs and reports on its findings in the *Museums and Libraries Engaging America's Youth* final report, available at www.imls.gov/pdf/YouthReport.pdf. To meet the initiative's other goals, IMLS is issuing a series of publications and Web resources, and will continue to provide grant funding for innovative youth programs. IMLS will also sponsor convenings for the museum and library practitioner community.

Nine to Nineteen: Youth in Museums and Libraries: A Practitioner's Guide is based on the findings of the study and discussions with the IMLS Youth Action Committee and practitioners about the kind of information needed for planning and implementing effective youth programs. It includes a variety of resources and references to critical works that have been gathered from the fields of youth and community development, education, and informal learning. The guide's primary audience is museum and library practitioners who are building, or wish to build, strong programs to reach and engage youth. It is also intended for community planners, youth development leaders, and educators who want to build bridges across the many types of organizations and institutions that serve youth in our communities.

Photo courtesy of the Newberry Library.



Preface

Contributors

The Institute for Learning Innovation undertook the study for IMLS and conducted the Youth Action workshops in October and November of 2006. Judy Koke and Lynn Dierking, Ph.D., facilitated those meetings, identifying the main issues and leading discussions among the workshop attendees. The Youth Action Committee helped develop content for this guide. Also attending the Youth Action workshops were representatives of IMLS-supported youth programs, including museum and library practitioners, who shared experiences about interacting with youth, and the challenges and triumphs of fundraising and running programs. Nicole Yohalem, Program Director at the Forum for Youth Investment and a member of the Youth Action Committee, has been particularly generous with her time and expertise throughout the initiative.

The workshops were greatly enhanced by the presence of young people who spoke eloquently about their experiences contributing to projects, about youths' largely untapped talents and skills, and about the benefits of including youth in program development and execution. Chase Pickering, Youth Leadership Fellow with the Roots and Shoots program at the Jane Goodall Institute, moderated the panel, which included Kadian Pow and Azita Mamdouhi of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Becky Lockyear of Campus Kitchens, and Joseph Kitchen of City Year Washington DC. Two IMLS Board members played special roles in this initiative—Katherine Berger of Virginia and Ioannis Miaoulis, Ph.D., Director, Museum of Science, Boston. IMLS is grateful to all who contributed their time and expertise.

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Photo by Brenna Hernandez, courtesy of the Shedd Aquarium.

What Works for Youth in Museums and Libraries

Why Are Museums and Libraries Important to Youth?

Youth are a part of our families, our communities, and our future. Youth should also be an integral part of our museums and libraries, which are among the most trusted institutions in the country. Research shows that youth are less likely to engage in risky behaviors when they are connected to community institutions. Many existing programs can tap positive youth development principles to become even stronger.

Museums and libraries are essential partners in ensuring that youth develop skills and receive the social, intellectual, and emotional supports they need to thrive. Specific assets that make museums and libraries essential to positive youth development include:

- **Rich Content**
Museum and library collections, exhibitions, and Web-based resources contain a wealth of valuable resources to enhance learning.

- **Expertise**
Professionals at museums and libraries offer innovative approaches to teaching and learning.
- **Community Trust**
Museums and libraries represent safe community settings with useful facilities open to and trusted by the public.
- **Quality Learning Environments**
Museums and libraries can help optimize and accommodate the strengths and needs of learners by offering hands-on, active opportunities for exploration, skill-building, and enrichment.



Addressing a Community Need

Case Study: Young at Art Children's Museum—Davie, FL

With a splash of paint, the Young at Art Children's Museum transformed three apartments in a homeless shelter into ArtREACH (Reconnecting and Educating Homeless Adolescents through Creativity and Hope), an arts-focused after-school program for homeless children. Five days a week from 2 to 6 p.m., children are bused from nearby schools, fed a snack, and then rotated between three activities: homework assistance led by certified teachers, outdoor recreation, and the arts-based curriculum. The program also offers students counseling and visits to the museum for hands-on arts activities. Locating programs in the

shelter gives children a safe place to go after school, and working parents no longer have to arrange for transportation and after-school care. In response to the program's remarkable impact, the Broward County Children's Services Division awarded ArtREACH a multiyear contract to provide services to homeless children at its original site and to expand into additional sites.

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Grant: 2003 National Leadership Grant

Why Are Museums and Libraries Important to Youth?

- **Leadership Opportunities**

Youth need to develop decision-making and leadership skills and to learn teamwork and collaboration. Museums and libraries offer youth opportunities to teach as well as learn—as guides, mentors, and apprentices.

- **Access to Technology**

Museums and libraries explore cutting-edge uses of technology as learning tools and provide public access to equipment and resources.

- **Career Development**

Through both informal mentoring and structured programs, including volunteerism and youth employment, libraries and museums expose youth to a range of careers.

- **Family/Community Connections**

Museums and libraries have extensive experience involving families and community partners in meaningful ways.



Photo courtesy of Chicago Botanic Garden.

What Do Effective Youth Programs Look Like?

The most effective youth programs are guided by an approach called positive youth development, a framework based on the belief that, given guidance and support from caring adults, all youth can make positive contributions. The approach favors leadership and skill-building opportunities. Positive youth development programs view young people in terms of their potential and its fulfillment. This approach contrasts starkly with “deficit-based” programs that focus narrowly on issues like drug abuse and teen pregnancy prevention.

Today, you need to know what works in youth programming long before you get started! With the competition for scarce funds and the pressure to demonstrate an impact, designing and implementing an effective program is more important than ever.

What have other programs found successful? How did they raise the funds? Who did they partner with? The following practices show that in order to be effective,

programs need to have the support of the entire institution, and in order for institutions to be effective, they need to work with the entire community to serve youth.

IMLS’s study found that at the institutional level, youth programs work best when museums and libraries:

- make serving youth integral to their mission,
- have staff and leadership commitment, and
- are part of a web of community programs.



Ensuring Staff Training and Commitment

Case Study: Pacific Science Center—Seattle, WA

The Pacific Science Center and the Washington Regional Action Project partnered to provide a professional development program for out-of-school time (OST) providers focused on science. The Pacific Science Center conducted workshops, developed science activity kits, provided technical assistance, facilitated electronic networking, and hosted after-school events for OST providers. More than 300 adults received professional development training, learning activity information, or hands-on interactive opportunities to learn more about science through 16-month workshops at various

venues. The project created a model for developing informal science education programs for OST and staff that serve youth underrepresented in science across the state.

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Grant: 2001 National Leadership Grant

What Do Effective Youth Programs Look Like?

At a program level, the most effective youth programs:

- substantively involve youth in program design and decision-making;
- include work or service learning that is meaningful to participants;
- employ, publicly recognize, and/or include other incentives for participants' accomplishments;
- build connections with participants' families and communities;
- partner with community-based organizations and other cultural institutions;
- use an approach supported by the youth development research literature;
- identify and cover gaps in the web of local youth programs;
- identify appropriate outcomes;
- assess and/or evaluate program effectiveness;
- use what's learned to improve the program and strengthen other youth development efforts;

- include long-term, trusting, and supportive relationships among youth, staff, and other adults;
- include staff trained to work with the program's targeted age group or train staff to do so; and
- provide ongoing training and support for staff.

Programs are most likely to be sustainable if they:

- build community awareness of the project's impact on the participants and community;
- partner with community organizations, groups, and businesses;
- incorporate new sources of funding as the programs evolve;
- ensure both the "buy-in" and the continuity of program staff and leadership; and
- are consistent with or integrated into the mission of the organization.

Involving Youth in Design and Decision-Making

Case Study: Dallas Public Libraries—Dallas, TX

High-tech treats entice teens into the Dallas Public Libraries' Teen Center program. Teens can check out dedicated laptops and flash drives, use printers and specialized software for Web site and graphic design, and surf the Internet. The teen-designed centers serve 1,000 low-income youth. For some, it is their only chance to use a computer regularly and build technology skills. Once inside the library, teens attend programs on topics such as health, drugs, etiquette, and applying to college. Center coordinators invite teens to join the Teen Council and share responsibility for suggesting new program topics. Some youth

volunteer at the library, shelving books and helping others find materials. Other teens help people sign up for library cards at community events. Teens and coordinators promote the center on local radio stations. Librarians have had a positive experience with youth and rely on them to troubleshoot computer programs and quiet rowdier groups of teens.

Contact: Sergio Pineda
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Grant: 2002 Grants to States

What Can You Do in Your Community?

Museums and libraries are trusted institutions that know their communities well. That's a good thing, because youth programs are most effective when they are offered by a network of organizations that are aware of the needs of young people. To partner and to serve youth most effectively, find out what your community and its youth need. You may not need a new grant. Ask yourself—how can your institution link with existing community programs? It's possible that you already have a program that could be strengthened through a partnership.

What would attract youth to your museum or library? Who could you partner with to bring the idea of the museum or library to a population that might not have thought of it before? What needs do youth have? How can you get to know them and get on their radar screen?

Assessing the community's needs can be as high- or low-tech as time and resources allow. If you are not sure what kind of positive youth development program is right for your community, use the questions in the following sections to help you choose a focus. Stay open to ideas and opportunities as you collect information.

At the most basic level, you will need to:

- identify a target audience and get to know their needs and interests
- develop a plan for a program
- figure out how to fund it
- learn how to evaluate it
- develop a communications plan

Identify a goal

Start with a general goal, like a desire to serve youth, and then use community input to define a need.

What are your community's priorities? Safe out-of-school environments? Youth health

issues? Diversity? Science learning? Twenty-first century skills?

Can you align your community's needs with your mission? Would an out-of-school technology studio, a peer-to-peer information program, or a performing arts group be a good fit?

Does this idea allow you to include youth in decisions? Does it offer a chance for meaningful work or contribution to the community? How can you provide compensation or recognition?

How can this idea accommodate other practices of successful youth programs?

Know yourself and your institution

What skills can you and your colleagues offer young people? (Don't forget volunteers and interns.)

What are your goals?

What do you want to accomplish? Set specific outcomes.

What resources or programs do you already have that could be developed? What resources will you need?

Who on your staff likes young people? Get them involved!

How can you involve your institution's board members?



Photo courtesy of the Japanese American National Museum.

What Can You Do in Your Community?

Know your community

Identify and assess the community's needs.

What's happening in your community? What are key news stories about youth and what do people worry about?

What's special about your community? Is it urban or rural? What's unique about the geography or its history?

Are there potential partners with assets to maximize success?

What's your community youth demography? Start with or check census data, which you can get to through www.kidscount.org, a national and state-by-state effort to track the status of children in the United States.

What obstacles does your institution have to overcome? Access to public transportation?

Listen to your community

Hold a town meeting.

Invite community leaders (officials, youth service organizations, parents, teachers) to hear what youth need to become strong adults.

What activities and resources do youth, teachers, and parents say they need?

Are there places you might advertise that you might not have thought about?

Who needs to know what you are doing?



Ensuring Sustainability and Building Community Awareness

Case Study: Florida Aquarium—Tampa, FL

The Florida Aquarium reached out to Tampa Bay area home-schooled students with a science program that focused on the Hillsborough River watershed. Led by aquarium, zoo, and nature center instructors, 60 students, ages 11 to 14, attended lecture sessions at the aquarium and made field trips to partner sites, which emphasized hands-on application of classroom content. The From the Source to the Sea program created awareness of natural resources, conservation, and preservation, and built home-school parents' science education teaching skills. The program relied heavily on

parents' involvement to chaperone, provide transportation, and encourage youth as they worked on projects. The Florida Aquarium increases the sustainability of the program through hiring and retaining dedicated staff members, continuing to offer free programs to home-schooled students, and sharing the experience with the educational community.

Contact: Debbi Berger
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Grant: 2003 National Leadership Grant

Involve youth

Ask youth you know what they think are key issues for their peers.

How will you use youth leadership to help the project?

How will youth be involved in the review and evaluation?

How can youth serve as ambassadors?

Look for like-minded organizations and funders

Sometimes private foundations target particular communities or issues. Find out what these are.

Talk to nonprofit organizations about where they get their funding.

See whether local or state arts or humanities councils fund the kinds of programs that you'd like to sponsor.

Engage Youth in Real Work

Case Study: Oakland Museum of California—Oakland, CA

In response to the Latino community's concern about the need to collect and preserve its twentieth century history in the San Francisco area, the Oakland Museum of California created the Latino Community History Program. Mentored by Latino/a historians and anthropologists, 15 low-income, inner-city youth learned to conduct original historical research, collect oral histories from their elders, and identify artifacts and photos for the museum's permanent collection. The youth developed posters for the museum and for traveling and online exhibits. The museum paid the youth historians, which conveyed to them

the value of their work. The youth began to see themselves as contributors and stewards of their community's cultural heritage and community leaders. They gained an increased sense of pride in their community and improved relationships with adults, particularly elders.

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Grant: 1999 National Leadership Grant



What Role Can Young People Play?

If your museum or library still thinks of youth largely as an audience for whom programs need to be developed and delivered, reframe your thinking to move youth to the center of all aspects of your programs: conceptualization, development, recruitment, implementation, evaluation, and building community awareness. When you begin to program “with” as opposed to “for” youth, you will find your institution changed at the core, making youth a resource as well as an audience, sharing their strengths and expertise.

Many excellent resources are available to practitioners interested in more actively engaging youth in the design and implementation of their own programs, many of which are listed in the resources section of this handbook. The *Engaging America's Youth* study identifies some key thoughts about working with, rather than for, youth:

- Be completely honest—youth know immediately when something is false.
- Invite youth into decision-making, but create safe parameters in which those decisions can be made.
- Communicate to youth that in good collaboration, power and decision-making are genuinely shared, but program leaders are still leaders.
- Recognize that it takes time to demonstrate to youth that an institution cares. Time spent building relationships with youth participants may be more important than how many staff participate.

- Start small. Many museums and libraries start with a teen council to suggest and select the kinds of programs youth prefer. These councils, created to support youth programming, often become an integral part of the organization over time.
- Create meaningful opportunities for youth to become responsible global citizens.
- Provide youth sensitivity training and support to help library and museum staffs become more knowledgeable about youth development and behavior, in the same way you help youth learn how to deal with adults.
- Consider financial or other compensation (such as community service hours credit) for youth to show them they are valued.
- Relieve youth of the need to earn necessary income outside of the project.

How can libraries and museums value the youth voice?

The Jane Goodall Institute's Roots and Shoots program encourages youth to become leaders and to bring about positive change for communities, animals, and the environment. The program values the youth voice and has put into place a model that allows young people to genuinely lead and drive the program forward. It can easily be adapted to a museum or library environment.

One replicable feature of the program is the creation of Youth Leadership Councils, which equip youth with the skills and tools necessary to emerge at the forefront of a generation of globally responsible citizens and leaders.

Roots and Shoots offers these tips for museums and libraries interested in starting a teen council. Youth should:

- feel a sense of ownership in initiatives and take part in all aspects of planning, implementation, celebration, and long-term support;
- serve as ambassadors for the institution and participate in events, speaking engagements, and other initiatives;
- be given face time to discuss initiatives with one another and with staff members;
- define for themselves clear, individual goals that ultimately help the institution achieve its goals;
- help recruit and select other council members and fully engage in the application process;

- be viewed as respected advisors to both the senior and junior staff in youth-related strategies and direction;
- receive formal and informal training, direction, and support from staff, ideally from a specific point person; and
- have fun and build lasting relationships.



Establishing Meaningful Relationships with Adults

Chilkoot Indian Association / Haines Borough Public Library—Haines, AK

The Haines Public Library in Haines, Alaska, has harnessed young people's energy and technical know-how to teach computer skills to adults. Through the Dragonfly Project, library staff coach community youth to conduct computer classes for older adults. The library allows participants to build confidence in the use of technology and to gain a sense of accomplishment in a safe environment. Young people build long-lasting relationships with adults in the program and their communities. The project inspires youth, who previously may have been socially or geographically isolated,

to become leaders in their communities. Whether through formal community recognition or informal praise by adult participants, the project enhances youths' self-esteem long after the classes end.

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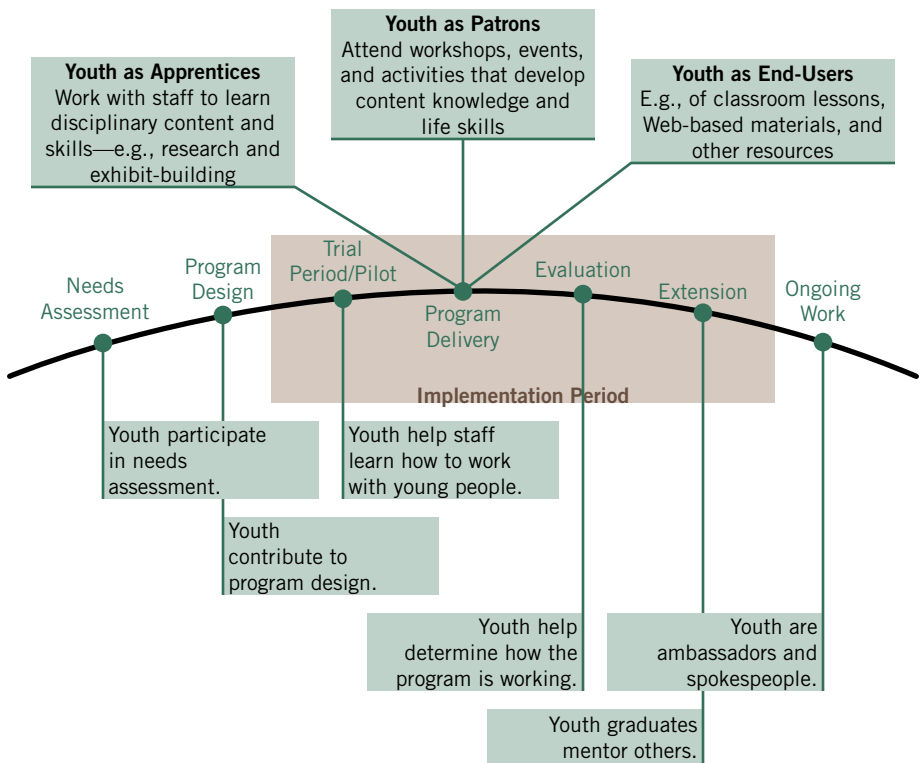
Grant: 2003 Native American Library Services Enhancement Grant

What Role Can Young People Play?

The most effective and strongest youth programs involve youth through the entire program life cycle and in a variety of roles. This diagram shows points along an arc

where youth can be involved, as well as some of the roles that youth can play in a program. Which roles for youth are central to your program?

Youth as True Participants in Museum and Library Programs: Program Arc



Strategies for Success: Partner, Evaluate, Sustain

Why partner?

Partnerships strengthen a museum's or library's community involvement, enrich its capacity, build an enlightened audience, and signal a commitment to youth to everyone in the community. There are many benefits of collaborating, including reaching more youth by pooling resources; making your project more attractive to funders by involving multiple organizations in a community; and working with other community groups rather than competing with them.

Museums and libraries have a healthy history of collaboration with a wide range of institutions, organizations, and agencies. The challenge is to transform traditional ways of doing business so that museums and libraries can engage fully in supporting youth in their communities. What does it take to create a partnership that benefits museums, libraries, youth organizations, social service agencies, parents, teachers, and the whole community? Real community needs can rarely be met by one institution alone. First, identify needs that are real; do an inventory of your own assets; identify the resources that you need to do the program (participants, venue, staff expertise, framework, lesson plan, funds, etc.). Ask yourself—what do you have? What could others bring? Who might have those assets?

IMLS has found that partnerships need to meet a number of conditions to succeed.

- Obtain early commitment from appropriate decision makers in respective organizations.
- Establish early, direct involvement between museum or library staff and the staff of a prospective partner organization.

- Understand the partners' goals for serving youth.
- Create a shared vision for the partnership, and set clear expectations for what both partners hope to achieve.
- Recognize and accommodate the different organizational cultures and structures of museums, libraries, and prospective partners.
- Set realistic, concrete goals through a careful planning process.
- Integrate evaluation and ongoing planning into the partnership.
- Allocate enough human and financial resources.
- Define roles and responsibilities clearly.
- Promote dialogue and open communication; choose benchmarks for success.
- Periodically re-evaluate goals, roles, responsibilities, and resources.
- Provide real benefits that youth and providers of youth services can use.
- Encourage flexibility, creativity, and experimentation.
- Seek family and community involvement.

Photo courtesy of the Saint Paul Public Library.



Strategies for Success: Partner, Evaluate, Sustain

Where can you find potential partners?

- youth groups
- schools and school districts
- colleges and universities
- businesses
- media—public access TV, National Public Radio
- state and local agencies—parks and recreation, child welfare agencies, housing authorities
- sports clubs
- citizen groups—Lions, Kiwanis, Rotary
- parent-teacher organizations

- senior centers
- community technology centers
- chambers of commerce

Many IMLS museum and library grantees have partnered with the following organizations. Use the keyword search in the IMLS online grants database (available at www.imls.gov/search.asp) to find IMLS grantees who have partnered with these organizations.

Big Brothers, Big Sisters: the oldest and largest youth mentoring organization in the United States. www.bbbs.org

Boy Scouts: more than 300 local councils that provide quality youth programs, including cub scouting, boy scouting, and venturing. www.scouting.org

Boys and Girls Clubs: provide a safe place to learn and grow, offering relationships with adult professionals, life-enhancing programs, and character development experiences. www.bgca.org



Being Part of a Web of Community Programs

Case Study: Birmingham Civil Rights Institute—Birmingham, AL

The Birmingham Cultural Alliance Partnership: Making Cultural Connections in Education makes the most of the community's rich cultural and artistic heritage to engage teachers and low-income youth in inventive, hands-on educational activities. Seven museums teamed up with the public library to create interactive experiences for middle-school youth highlighting African-American achievements in science, history, and the arts. At each museum, participants' families attend a closing program that showcases what the youth have learned through activities such as performing in a play or displaying

a quilt. The program actively cultivates in participants and their families a sense that cultural institutions belong to their community and desire to support cultural heritage. Programs are improved based on an ongoing review of community needs and on input from the local school systems and cultural institutions.

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Grant: 2000 National Leadership Grant

Camp Fire USA: one of the nation's leading youth development organizations. Camp Fire USA's outcome-based programs include youth leadership, self-reliance, after-school groups, camping, and environmental education. www.campfire.org

Girl Scouts of the USA: in partnership with committed adult volunteers, girls develop qualities that will serve them all their lives, like leadership, strong values, social conscience, and conviction about their own potential and self-worth. www.girlscouts.org

For a project profile on the Girl Scouts' contribution to IMLS's conservation effort, *Connecting to Collections*, see www.imls.gov/profiles/Jun07.shtm

I Have a Dream: helps children from low-income areas reach their educational and career goals by providing a long-term program of mentoring, tutoring, and enrichment with an assured opportunity for higher education. www.ihad.org

State Education Agency K–12 Service-Learning Network (SEANet): a national network of professionals committed to advancing school-based service-learning initiatives in K–12 schools and school districts all across the country. <http://seanetonline.org>

Youth Service America: A resource center that partners with thousands of organizations committed to increasing the quality and quantity of volunteer opportunities for young people in America, aged 5–25, to serve locally, nationally, and globally. It offers grants and awards as well as providing advocacy, information, and resources. www.YSA.org

How can evaluation work for you?

Evaluation is one of the keys to program success, but most project designers and managers are not evaluators. Nonetheless, every project manager needs to know how to collect and understand information about how a project is going, or how to work with a qualified evaluator or visitor studies specialist. Your choices determine whether evaluation produces a grab-bag or a treasure chest. By focusing on a limited number of meaningful questions, you will be able to prioritize, direct resources, and fine tune the program design. The answers will also help you communicate the value of your program and your institution.

Why evaluate?

- To measure your contribution to audiences and the community;
- To learn what works and what doesn't so you can refine your services midcourse and over the long term;
- To provide accountability to your funders and document success stories for your community partners; and
- To share your experiences so others can learn from your hard work.

What kind of evaluation do you need?

Most grant-makers now require an evaluation component as a condition for funding. Involve youth in thinking strategically about what outcomes should be measured and how the research should be conducted.

Different approaches fit different needs, so consider where you are in a project life cycle, what you want to know, and how you want to use the information.

- In the visioning stage, *front-end evaluation* provides information to validate needs and show what has audience appeal and what makes for effective outreach.

Strategies for Success: Partner, Evaluate, Sustain

- In the development stage, *formative evaluation* tells you which ways of communicating information or creating experiences work best for your audiences.
- For active projects, *process evaluation* shows efficiency, real costs, and productivity.
- In projects to build skills, knowledge, attitudes, or any other change in people's ability or behavior, *outcome evaluation* helps you know (and show) that your program creates intended results.
- In ongoing efforts, *remedial evaluation* identifies what needs upkeep, repair, or replacement.
- Evaluation done at the end of a project, rather than during it, is *summary evaluation*.
- Once a project is over, *impact assessment* looks for changes in institutions or communities.

What should you evaluate?

Evaluation can focus on quantities (which may be outputs), processes, conditions, or results for people (outcomes), or a combination. How do you choose? Ask yourself, your partners, and your expected audience for input:

- What are your goals? What impact or other results do you want to see?
- Does your project have access to in-house evaluation skills, or will you hire a consultant?
- What do and don't you know about your audiences and what they know?



Photo courtesy of the Oxford Free Public Library.

Evaluating

Case Study: Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners—Boston, MA

The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners becomes “best friends” with libraries that receive grants for its ‘Tweens and Teens program. From the moment a library sends its letter of intent in January, the board is in frequent contact. The libraries attend a grant-writing workshop and receive board feedback on the substantial application they will eventually submit in March. About half of the applications don’t receive funding in the first round, so with the board’s help, libraries resubmit their applications in June. The board’s message is consistent: the program objectives must reflect the ‘Tweens/Teens’ point of view,

preferably created with their input. When the grant is awarded in November, the board holds a kick-off training program. Libraries with little or no experience with youth are encouraged to visit and learn from libraries with successful (and mandatory) teen advisory councils. Libraries submit to the board four reports during the two-year program and a fifth report six months after the grant ends.

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Grant: 2006 Grants to States

- Do you know your audiences' preferences for experiences, locations, and people?
- What changes, if any, do you want to create in members of your audience?
- What information will show progress?
- What's realistic to expect, given your program audience, design, and time frame?
- Who are your project's important stakeholders (always include your project audience)?
- What kind and quality of information speaks persuasively to them? Are they most interested in how the community (or your audience, or your field) views your program? By its cost? By human interest, or demonstrated learning?
- What information is needed to address their expectations? What information will tell you how well the program met its goal?
- What can you afford and what are you willing to do?
- If you have a grant or other outside funding, what do funders want to know?

See Resources for Practitioners for some great sources of information for evaluating youth development programs.

How can you sustain your success?

- Develop an improved ability to articulate and publicize how your program is changing the lives of its participants and impacting the greater community.
- As soon as a program is funded for a specific time period, begin to use that funding as an opportunity to heighten visibility of the program and attract new funding sources.
- Engage other staff and decision-makers in both program activities and public relations events to build staff resources.



Incorporating a New Funding Structure

Case Study: Fort Ligonier Association—Ligonier, PA

Fort Ligonier, a private nonprofit museum, restored fort, and historic site, leveraged an IMLS grant to secure permanent funding for its program marking the 250th anniversary of the French and Indian War. The initial grant funded a broad educational package, grade- and age-specific tours and activities, teacher workshops and training, and docent training. The IMLS grant also helped ensure the Fort's participation in a consortium of National Park and state sites, private and local historical associations, and public television and local foundations. The resulting nonprofit group applied for joint funding, marketed the multiple sites, and

disseminated from a central source educational materials related to the French and Indian War. The group has also provided support for staff, shared materials, and allowed member institutions to complete projects on a larger scale than they could do alone. The wider reach of the consortium gives Fort Ligonier more opportunities to communicate the value of its site, leading to more stable funding and benefits for both youth and the general public.

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Grant: 2003 Learning Opportunities Grant



Resources for Practitioners

Frameworks that Work

Successful youth programs draw on a variety of models based on desired results, or on conditions or mechanisms for achieving healthy adulthood. The following examples are based on sound research and real experience. Notice commonalities from model to model, and consider your programs and ideas in the light of these frameworks. What principles do your programs already use, and what could strengthen them further?

1) 4-H

4-H encourages youth to reach their fullest potential while advancing the field of youth development. Administered by the United States Department of Agriculture's Cooperative Extension System, the four H's stand for head, heart, hands, and health. The organization serves more than 9 million members in almost 100,000 clubs in the United States. While the historical 4-H focus was agriculture, the club's purpose has evolved to offer today's youth a variety of activities focused on leadership development. The model below is adapted from Meeting the Needs of Youth, Iowa State University Extension, available at www.national4-hheadquarters.gov/library.

4-H highlights four basic needs of young people:

The Need to Belong—Youth need to know others care about them, and to feel a sense of connection to others in a group. 4-H provides the opportunity to feel physically and emotionally safe in active group participation by:

- helping group members get to know each other;
- creating opportunities for members to interact; and
- finding ways to involve family and community members.

The Need to Master—To develop self-confidence, youth need to feel able to solve problems and meet challenges successfully. 4-H does this by:

- providing project-based learning experiences;
- modeling and teaching that failure and frustration are normal parts of any learning experience; and
- being fair and consistent when enforcing rules and giving feedback.

The Need to be Independent—Youth need to know their decision-making and action can influence people and events. Leadership opportunities help youth become more responsible and understand themselves better. 4-H supports these goals by:

- providing opportunities to lead in simple tasks and to progress to more difficult ones;
- recruiting, training, and supporting young people for increasing responsibilities; and
- avoiding pre-emptive assistance—encouraging young people to overcome obstacles on their own.

The Need to be Generous—Youth need to feel their lives have meaning and purpose. Youth can connect to communities and learn to give back to others through service. 4-H does this by:

- targeting a specific community service project that fits each group's interests and abilities;
- encouraging youth to consider the feelings of others; and
- creating mentoring opportunities where youth can learn from each other.

Frameworks that Work

2) National Research Council

The National Research Council (see Eccles and Gootman (2002) in the General Bibliography, p. 28) conducted a key study that suggests that the following settings and assets facilitate positive youth development. Youth need safe places where they feel secure, supported, and accepted. They will come back to a place that has the right combination of nurture and challenge; they won't return to a place where they don't feel they belong or where they feel threatened. Museums and libraries are well equipped to provide safe, secure, and inviting environments.

The following positive developmental factors and personal and social assets facilitate positive youth development and are adapted from the study.

Positive Factors for Youth Programs

Physical and Psychological Safety— Safe and health-supportive facilities that increase safe peer group interaction and decrease unsafe or confrontational interactions.

Appropriate Structure—Clear boundaries with age-appropriate monitoring; clear and consistent rules and expectations that set safe limits; “firm-enough” control that provides continuity and predictability.

Supportive Relationships—Warmth, connectedness, good communication, caring, support, guidance, secure attachment, and responsiveness.

Opportunities to Belong—Opportunities for meaningful inclusion, regardless of individual differences; social inclusion, social engagement, and integration; opportunities to form socio-cultural identity; support for cultural and cross-cultural competence.

Positive Social Norms—Clear expectations; injunctions; ways of doing things; values and morals; service expectations.

Support for Efficacy and Matterings— Youth-based empowerment practices that support autonomy; opportunities to be taken seriously and to make a real difference in one's community; practices that enable success; opportunities to take responsibility and meaningful challenges; and focus on improvement rather than relative performance levels.

Opportunities to Build Skills— Opportunities to learn physical, intellectual, psychological, emotional, and social skills; exposure to intentional learning experiences; opportunities to learn cultural literacy, media literacy, communication skills, and good habits of mind; preparation for adult employment; and opportunities to develop social and cultural capital.

Integration of Family, School, and Community Efforts—coordination and synergy among family, school, and community.



Photo courtesy of the Johnson County Library.

Positive Personal and Social Assets for Youth Development

Physical development:

- Good health habits
- Good health risk management skills

Intellectual development:

- Knowledge of essential life skills
- Knowledge of essential vocational skills
- School success
- Rational habits of mind—critical thinking and reasoning skills
- In-depth knowledge of more than one culture
- Good decision-making skills
- Knowledge of skills needed to navigate through multiple cultural contexts

Psychological and emotional development:

- Good mental health, including positive self-regard
- Good emotional self-regulation skills
- Good coping skills
- Good conflict resolution skills
- Mastery motivation and positive achievement motivation
- Confidence in one's personal efficacy
- "Planfulness"—planning for the future and future life events
- Sense of personal autonomy/responsibility for self
- Optimism coupled with realism
- Coherent and positive personal and social identity
- Pro-social and culturally sensitive values
- Spirituality or a sense of a "larger" purpose in life
- Strong moral character
- A commitment to good use of time

Social development:

- Connectedness—perceived good relationships and trust with parents, peers, and other adults
- Sense of social place/integration—being connected and valued by larger social networks
- Attachment to pro-social/conventional institutions, such as school, church, nonschool youth programs
- Ability to navigate in multiple cultural contexts
- Commitment to civic engagement

3) Richard Lerner

Richard Lerner (2005) theorizes that young people thrive if they develop behaviors he calls the "five C's" over the course of childhood and early adolescence: competence, connection, character, confidence, and caring/compassion. According to Lerner, a youth with these behaviors is on the path to a sixth C: contribution—to self, family, community, and civil society. It is the sixth C that leads to positive adulthood. These are "C's" that youth programs should address:

- Competence: intellectual ability and social and behavioral skills
- Connection: positive bonds with people and institutions
- Character: integrity and moral centeredness
- Confidence: positive self-regard, a sense of self-efficacy, and courage
- Caring/compassion: humane values, empathy, and a sense of social justice
- Contribution: to self, family, community, and civil society

Frameworks that Work

4) Jay Mancini and Lydia Marek

Mancini and Marek (1998: 8–10) identify qualities that appear to create sustainable programs for at-risk youth and their families. They incorporate these qualities into a sustainability framework. The six major factors for sustaining community-based programs are:

- Vision and leadership
- Collaboration and partnerships
- Community awareness, involvement, and needs
- Demonstrated program impact
- Funding
- Staffing

5) Milbrey McLaughlin

McLaughlin (2000) highlights the important role that community-based youth organizations play in supporting the development of young people. McLaughlin's study looks at what motivates youth to participate in community-based organizations that serve them; it highlights what effective youth-based organizations look like and what youth gain by participating, and provides examples of what communities can do to create and sustain more effective programs for youth. The research describes a framework of four characteristics of successful youth programs:

Youth-centered: They respond to diverse individual talents, skills, and interests; provide personal attention; reach out to the community to recruit a range of participants; and make youth leadership an integral part of the program.

Knowledge-centered: They have a clear focus, provide high-quality content and instruction, embed multiple “hidden curricula” in their activities, and ensure that participating youth have teachers (both adults and peers) from the community.

Assessment-centered: They have cycles of planning, practice, and performance and are based on a written outline or framework. Participants have a sense of structure and accomplishment, as the programs offer feedback and recognition, and take stock of a broad range of competencies.

Community-centered: They create safe, caring communities to support trusting relationships, establishing clear rules, giving participants responsibilities for the program, and providing constant access to adults and community, including links to leaders, jobs, and other institutions.

Initiatives Across the Nation

America's Promise—Alliance for Youth.

Begun in 1997 with the collaboration of five U.S. presidents, America's Promise lays out five necessities for youth in America: caring adults, safe places, a healthy start, an effective education, and opportunities to help others. A study conducted by America's Promise finds there are gaps in what youth hope and expect for themselves and a lack of availability and desirability of some of these promises. www.americaspromise.org

American Library Association, Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA)

advocates, promotes, and strengthens service to young adults as part of the continuum of total library service, and to support those who provide service to this population. For professional development and other resources, go to www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/yalsa.cfm.

American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF),

a nonprofit, nonpartisan professional development organization provides learning opportunities for policy leaders, practitioners, and researchers working on youth and education issues at the national, state, and local levels. www.aypf.org

Forum for Youth Investment, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, is dedicated to helping communities and the nation make sure all young people are Ready by 21—ready for college, work, and life. The Forum organizes its work around key areas including research, leadership, and training. www.forum.fyi.org

Helping America's Youth. The White House's Helping America's Youth initiative is a nationwide effort to raise awareness of the challenges facing youth, particularly at-risk boys, and to motivate caring adults to connect with youth in three key areas: family, school, and community. As the leader of this initiative, First Lady Laura Bush highlights programs that are effectively helping America's young people. www.helpingamericayouth.gov

National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Extra Learning Opportunities.

This center provides guidelines for governors and state governments to support extra learning opportunities (ELOs) in their states. The Center suggests ELOs should be supported because they are useful in bridging school achievement gaps, connect youth to their communities, provide after-school supervision, and help with the development of workforce skills. www.nga.org/center/elo

National Youth Development Information Center (NYDIC) is a “one-stop” Web site for youth workers with interests in any and all of the following areas: funding, programming, research, policy, and job and training opportunities. www.nydic.org

Partnership for 21st Century Skills, a national education-business coalition which is responsible for the Framework for 21st Century Learning, believes youth need to develop communication, problem-solving, interpersonal and self-direction skills; global awareness; financial, economic and business literacy; and entrepreneurial skills to enhance workplace productivity, career options, and civic literacy. www.21stcenturyskills.org

YouthALIVE! Regional Networks. Five networks help museum staff develop the skills and knowledge they need to design and implement successful youth programs. The networks are aligned with the overall mission and goals that guided YouthALIVE!, an initiative of the Association of Science and Technology Centers and the Dewitt-Wallace Reader's Digest Fund from 1991–2001. In addition to sharing best practices and seeking sources of collaborative funding, the networks provide professional development in program design and implementation, staff training, community partnerships, adolescent development, and diversity. www.astc.org/profdev/youth.htm

Funding Resources

Afterschool Alliance has a lengthy section on funding opportunities for after-school programs, including federal, state, and private sources.

www.afterschoolalliance.org/funding.cfm

Annenberg Foundation. The Annenberg Foundation provides support for projects within its grant-making interest areas of education and youth development; arts, culture, and humanities; civic and community; health and human services; and the environment.

www.annenbergfoundation.org

Foundation Center. The center maintains the most comprehensive database on U.S. grant-making, philanthropic, and corporate institutions. It also operates research, education, and training programs designed to advance philanthropy at every level.

www.foundationcenter.org

Grantseeking: How to Find a Funder and Write a Winning Proposal by Larry E. Decker and Virginia A. Decker (1993). This is a detailed road map of sequential activities followed by successful grant-seekers.

The entire grant-seeking process—from generating a good idea through identifying the right funder, writing a winning proposal, and administering the grant—is laid out in detail, with models and examples.

Finding Funding: A Guide to Federal Sources for Out-of-School Time and Community School Initiatives, Revised and Updated, by Heather Clapp Padgett (January 2003). This guide to federal funding sources is designed to help policymakers, program leaders, system-building advocates, and others take advantage of federal funding options. It identifies and summarizes more than 120 federal programs that have the potential to support out-of-school time and community school initiatives, provides information on the structure and amount of federal funding available from these sources, and presents strategies for maximizing federal revenues and using these revenues to create more flexible funding. www.financeproject.org

Evaluation Resources

For additional resources, see the IMLS Web page on evaluation: www.imls.gov/applicants/obe.shtm

The Program Manager's Guide to Evaluation.

Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services. 2003. www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/other_resrch/pm_guide_eval

Community-Based Project Evaluation Guide.

Callor, S., Betts, S., et al. The University of Arizona Institute of Children, Youth & Families. 2001. http://ag.arizona.edu/fcs/cyfernet/cyfar/stst_guide.pdf

Evaluation Handbook. W. K. Kellogg Foundation. 1998. www.wkkf.org/Pubs/Tools/Evaluation/Pub770.pdf

Making Evaluation Integral to Your Asset-Building Initiative: Employing a Theory of Action and Change. Mesaros, W.

Available from the Search Institute at www.search-institute.org/research/knowledge/MakingEvaluationIntegral.html

Harvard Family Research Project's evaluation periodical, **The Evaluation Exchange**, addresses current issues facing program evaluators of all levels, with articles written by the most prominent evaluators in the field. Designed as an ongoing discussion among evaluators, program practitioners, funders, and policymakers, **The Evaluation Exchange** highlights innovative methods and approaches to evaluation, emerging trends in evaluation practice, and practical applications of evaluation theory. It goes out to its subscribers free of charge four times per year. www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/eval.html



Photo courtesy of the New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science.

Out-of-School Resources

The After-School Corporation (TASC) has published a practical guide for after-school staff interested in getting families and parents involved in their programs. Grounded in the experiences of 15 after-school programs in the TASC network, it offers tips and materials for after-school programs to promote parent engagement. www.tascorp.org/publications/catalog/parentengagement

The **Center for Informal Learning and Schools (CILS)** provides professional development for educators at informal science institutions, and convenes science education researchers and practitioners. CILS is a partnership of the Exploratorium in San Francisco, King's College London, and the University of California, Santa Cruz. They are conducting research on the interests, motivations, identities, and capacities of children in order to promote student enthusiasm, knowledge, skills, and persistence in participating in science in and out of school. www.exploratorium.edu/CILS

Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago is a policy research center dedicated to bringing sound information, rigorous analysis, innovative ideas, and an independent multi-disciplinary perspective to policies and programs affecting children, families, and communities. The Center also addresses, services, and supports programs aimed at fostering child and youth development. www.chapinhall.org

Citizen Schools, a nonprofit leader in providing out-of-school learning programs for students in the middle grades, uniquely mobilizes business, civic, and community volunteers to participate in education through hands-on apprenticeships. www.citizenschools.org

The **Harvard Family Research Project** is launching a new concept: complementary learning. They believe that for children and youth to be successful, there must be an array of learning supports around them. These supports, which must reach beyond school, should be linked and work toward consistent learning and developmental outcomes for children from birth through adolescence. Examples of nonschool learning supports include early childhood programs, families, after-school programs, libraries, museums, and other community-based institutions. www.gse.harvard.edu/~hfrp

Museums after school: How museums are reaching kids, partnering with schools, and making a difference. The first issue of *Insight*, which offers lessons learned from the James Irvine Foundation's grant-making programs, is dedicated to understanding how museums can build after-school programs. Based on evaluations of 10 California after-school museum programs, this report describes how two of their grantees implemented after-school programs. It also discusses four issues for effective after-school programs at museums: partnerships with schools, institutional support, programmatic approaches, and financial sustainability. www.irvine.org/assets/pdf/pubs

The **National Institute on Out-of-School Time** at Wellesley College has moved the afterschool field forward through its research, education and training, consultation, and field-building.
www.niost.org

Public Libraries as Partners in Youth Development, a Wallace Foundation publication, reports findings from a national survey of library services for young people and assesses the ways libraries might change to meet the growing needs of children and teens. Its examples of innovative youth-oriented work at several libraries nationwide can offer ideas and inspiration for communities that seek to enhance their libraries as resources for young people during their nonschool hours.
www.wallacefoundation.org/KnowledgeCenter (go to Libraries).

Public Libraries as Partners in Youth Development: Lessons and Voices from the Field is available online at the Urban Libraries Council Web site, www.urbanlibraries.org, and the Forum for Youth Investment Web site, www.forumforyouthinvestment.org.

Quality that Lasts: Building a Framework for the Future of OST calls for quality and sustainability. Recommendations include gathering demand-oriented data from families. www.wallacefoundation.org/KnowledgeCenter (go to Out-of-School Learning).



Photo courtesy of the Vermont Historical Society.

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