



THE EXCHANGE

News from FYSB and the Youth Services Field

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LINKING EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT FOR BRIGHTER FUTURES

When Terry Simmons, a career coach in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, sits down with young people in the local transitional living program, he wants to do more than help them get a job. He wants them to think about the future.

“I tell them, ‘It’s OK to get your GED, and it’s OK to work part-time at Wendy’s, but what are you going to do long term?’” he says. He encourages them to consider post-secondary education, to plan for a career.

Simmons knows that taking the long view isn’t easy for young people, especially those used to surviving from day to day like the runaway and homeless youth he works with at the transitional living program, which receives funding from the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) and is jointly run by Baton Rouge Alliance for Transitional Living and Youth Oasis. But he also knows that education and employment are keys to a successful transition to adulthood for any young person.

As part of their quest to put youth on the road to self-sufficiency and independence, FYSB’s runaway and homeless youth programs, particularly Transitional Living Program grantees, provide education and employment assistance to the young people they serve.

Education is the first step. A number of the realities associated with homelessness, such as lack of a permanent address, school records, transportation, and necessities such as appropriate clothing and school supplies, have impeded runaway and homeless youths’ ability to attend school. But recent amendments to the Federal law governing access to public education for homeless youth have made going to school easier for many young people, youth workers say.

At the same time, runaway and homeless youth may have missed years of school. They may suffer from developmental disorders and emotional or mental health problems. They may have difficulty adjusting to the structured environment of traditional schools. Often, these young people need special attention and a more flexible approach to education, and they benefit from alternative schools, night schools, or programs which prepare them for the General Educational Development credential, or GED, which can substitute for a high school diploma.



All names of young people have been changed in this publication.

Graduating high school or receiving a GED marks a huge accomplishment for runaway and homeless youth. But preparing young people for life and work doesn't stop there.

Though a high school diploma used to mean the holder was "work ready," possessing the skills necessary to acquire and hold an entry-level job, expectations for first-time employees have risen, says Kate O'Sullivan, director of quality initiatives at the National Youth Employment Coalition in Washington, DC. With many jobs focused on service and technology, employers demand greater job and interpersonal skills from entry-level workers.

Even if young people receive a high school diploma or its equivalent, without post-secondary experience, they

are still "stuck in the same low-wage job market," says Dennis Enix, executive director of Safe Place Services at the YMCA of Greater Louisville in Louisville, Kentucky. Add to that the fact that employment rates for young workers reached record lows in 2004 and 2005, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Center for Labor Market Studies.

Given that backdrop, programs that prepare young people for employment, both by teaching them nontechnical skills such as communication and teamwork and by training them in job-specific skills, are more important than ever.

Youth employment programs use a combination of hands-on learning and adult support to acquaint young people with the practical knowledge and skills

they need for the work world. Youth also learn budgeting, financial planning, and other life skills that help them to stay afloat on their own.

These efforts, O'Sullivan says, result in a huge gain for society, because meaningfully employed young people are less likely to commit crimes or become adolescent parents and more likely to become self-sufficient. "If you can give some investment and some comprehensive supports now so they can become self-sufficient, it's so much more cost effective," she says.

Because the end product, as Simmons and other youth workers know, is not just a young person with an education and a job, but a young person with a future. ■

OPENING SCHOOL DOORS FOR RUNAWAY AND HOMELESS YOUTH



Kelly Fleming remembers a time, just a few years ago, when enrolling one of her clients in a new school—or keeping the youth in his or her school of origin—meant lots of legwork. Fleming, director of youth services at Mohawk Valley Community Action Agency, a Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) grantee in central New York, and her staff often had to meet with

school officials, make phone calls to the local department of education, and submit requests to the youth's old school for immunization and education records. Sometimes, weeks passed before a young person was back in the classroom.

But things have changed. Last fall, Fleming says, "we didn't have to have a single meeting with a school to enforce a child's rights."

Other youth service providers around the country echo Fleming's assertion that—though challenges remain—accessing public school education has become easier for runaway and homeless youth since the 2001 reauthorization of a Federal law that mandates immediate access to public schools for homeless youth, whether or not they live with a parent or guardian.

Part of the No Child Left Behind Act, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Improvement Act of 2001 gives unaccompanied youth, those young people who do not live with a legal guardian, the right to stay at the

schools they have been attending or to move to schools serving the neighborhoods where they currently live, depending on their "best interest" (as defined by the law) and the feasibility of remaining at the original school.

The McKinney-Vento Act, which went into effect in July 2002, also requires that all school districts appoint a liaison to advocate on behalf of homeless children and youth and their families and work with local service providers to ensure youth have access to school and to social services. In addition, each State must have a Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth responsible for ensuring that public schools throughout the State understand and comply with the law.

In 2003, the Runaway, Homeless and Missing Children Protection Act, which reauthorized the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, included a provision regarding runaway and homeless youth program coordination with the McKinney-Vento Act. Youth-serving agencies that receive Basic Center and

Transitional Living Program funding from FYSB must work closely with school district homeless liaisons to ensure that runaway and homeless youth understand the educational services available to them.

Removing Barriers

By requiring schools to allow students to attend even if they do not have permanent addresses, immunization and school records, or identification such as birth certificates, the McKinney-Vento Act has helped school districts make progress removing barriers for homeless and unaccompanied youth.

“When [the McKinney-Vento Act] went under No Child Left Behind, all kinds of doors opened up for us,” says M. Gay Thomas, Virginia Beach City Public Schools’ liaison to homeless students since 1997. “Before, there were guidelines, there were recommendations. Now, it’s ‘We must’ ... It’s made a tremendous difference.”

Still, schools may have more questions about unaccompanied youth than youth with families, says Barbara Duffield, policy director for the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth. “When kids don’t have legal guardians, schools want to know ‘What if they get hurt? What about extracurricular activities? What about liability? Why are they on their own?’”

She adds, “Some school administrators have difficulty understanding the scary concept of a kid needing to leave home because it’s not a safe place for them.”

Thomas acknowledges that school administrators are more likely to respond proactively and call her in response to a disaster, such as the many students displaced by Hurricane Katrina last year, than they are to identify a single unaccompanied youth. But, she says, “Once we’ve confirmed

that [students are] homeless, my schools know we need to immediately enroll them. Then we work on the services they need.”

To verify a young person’s homelessness, Thomas and another staff member interview the young person as well as teachers, service providers, and other adults familiar with the youth’s situation.



The McKinney-Vento Act has helped school districts make progress removing barriers for homeless and unaccompanied youth.

Procedures for enrolling youth differ from State to State and among school districts. Some allow young people to enroll themselves or have the school district homeless liaison handle enrollment, while others use caregiver forms to allow adult caregivers, including service providers, to enroll youth.

In addition to mandating immediate enrollment, the McKinney-Vento Act requires school districts to provide transportation for young people who wish to attend their original schools. Virginia Beach Public Schools does this in a number of ways: by transporting youth via regular bus routes when possible, by providing gas vouchers, and occasionally by hiring taxis. Among the district’s expenditures to ensure education for homeless young people, “This is our most costly endeavor,” Thomas says.

Lee Trevithick, executive director of Cocoon House, a FYSB grantee in Everett, Washington, says that youth housed by his agency often choose to attend their home school, which might be 40 to 50 miles away. “A lot of them do that even if it means getting up at 4 in the morning,” Trevithick says. “The connections and support systems at their home school make them want to remain there.”

After enrolling an unaccompanied youth, Thomas’s department works to get the young person a physical exam, free or for a reduced fee, at the local health department and helps the youth obtain school records and get a birth certificate issued.

The district also helps with other obstacles faced by homeless youth. “Sometimes they don’t have clothing adequate for school,” Thomas says. Using funds authorized by McKinney-Vento, schools can purchase emergency clothing for homeless children and youth. Virginia Beach Public Schools also solicits donations of clothing and gift certificates to help young people dress for school.

In addition, Thomas and B.J. McGrath, a full-time school social worker, coordinate referrals to other services, such as housing and health care.

Finding Alternatives

Some homeless advocates and youth service providers worry that traditional public schools don’t have the expertise or flexibility to successfully teach young people who have drifted in and out of schools because of homelessness or because their families move frequently.

“Our kids don’t adapt well to the traditional classroom,” Trevithick says. Until 2001, Cocoon House addressed that concern by running its own school staffed by local school district teachers. The school closed its doors because of provisions in the McKinney-Vento Act prohibiting school districts from segregating students, either in schools or in classrooms, on the basis of their homelessness. (Four counties—San Joaquin County, Orange County, and San Diego County, California, and Maricopa County, Arizona—received exemptions allowing them to continue to run existing schools for homeless children and youth.)

Though establishing schools at homeless shelters violates the McKinney-Vento Act, school districts can sponsor “supplemental services,” such as tutoring and afterschool programs for homeless young people, at schools and at shelters. (In fact, school districts are required to use a portion of the funds they receive under Title I, Part A, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act, to provide educationally related support services to youth in shelters and other locations where disadvantaged youth may live.)

And alternative schools that serve a range of young people based on educational needs not related to housing status can help young people unaccustomed to the structure of traditional schools, Duffield and Trevithick say. Many districts also offer night programs for young people who work full-time to support themselves.

Working Together

Both youth service professionals and homeless education advocates emphasize the need for schools and service providers to work together to ensure that school remains a stable element in the often chaotic lives of runaway and homeless youth.

“There needs to be a relationship between service providers and schools so schools know when youth will be showing up,” says Diana Bowman, director of the National Center for Homeless Education, a clearinghouse funded by the U.S. Department of Education.

The relationship Bowman refers to is a two-way street. Sheila Morrison, service coordinator at the Centers for Youth and Families, a FYSB grantee in Little Rock, Arkansas, keeps track of youth in mental health facilities who are referred to her shelter. She sends

UNDERSTANDING THE MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS ASSISTANCE IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2001

Originally authorized as the McKinney Homeless Assistance Act in 1987, this law was most recently reauthorized as part of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The McKinney-Vento Act:

- ◆ Defines homeless children and youth as individuals without a fixed, regular, adequate nighttime residence. This definition includes, among others, young people living in emergency or transitional shelters, cars, parks, public spaces, bus or train stations, or abandoned buildings, and youth awaiting foster care placement.
- ◆ Establishes the right of children and youth experiencing homelessness to access the same public education provided to other children, to continue in the school they attended before they became homeless and to receive transportation to that school, and to enroll in school without delay. Schools cannot require proof of residency that might prevent or delay enrollment, and students have the right to attend classes while the school arranges for transfer of records required for enrollment.
- ◆ Mandates the presence of a liaison for homeless children and youth in each school district across the Nation. The liaison advocates on behalf of homeless youth and their families and works with local service providers to ensure youth have access to school and to social services.
- ◆ Requires every State to have a Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth responsible for ensuring the understanding of and compliance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act in public schools throughout the State.
- ◆ Prohibits school districts from segregating students experiencing homelessness in shelter classrooms, separate schools, or separate programs within a school. No public funds can support separate education for homeless students, for any period of time. However, supplemental services such as after-school tutoring or mentoring can be provided at a shelter, using McKinney-Vento, Title I, Part A, or other public funds.
- ◆ Is supported by the Runaway, Homeless and Missing Children Protection Act of 2003, which reauthorized the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act. Youth-serving agencies that receive Basic Center and Transitional Living Program funding from the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) must work closely with school district homeless liaisons to ensure that runaway and homeless youth understand the educational services available to them.

Resources on the McKinney-Vento Act

Family and Youth Services Bureau, Information Memorandum on RHY program coordination with the McKinney-Vento School Act: www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/content/aboutfysb/documents.htm

U.S. Department of Education: www.ed.gov/programs/homeless/index.html

National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth: www.naehcy.org

National Center for Homeless Education: www.serve.org/nche

National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty: www.nlchp.org

paperwork to the schools two weeks before the young people are discharged to the shelter, so that everything is in order when a youth shows up at the school's doors.

In Virginia Beach, McGrath reaches out to service providers by attending local homeless coalition meetings.

"She's developed a good relationship with service providers," Thomas says, "so they know what is needed."

Thomas also keeps educators aware of the issues homeless youth face, chatting with principals, offering trainings for teachers and administrators, and meeting with guidance counselors once

or twice a year to remind them of the services available to homeless youth.

For Thomas, turning away a young person is not an option. "I'm going to err on the side of getting the student the education," she says. "If they're going to come to school, I'm going to educate them." ■

THE GED: A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

At 18, Simon knew all about Medicaid but had less than 2 years of high school education.

As a sophomore, he had dropped out of school to care for his sick grandmother and work part-time at the local Jiffy Lube. When his grandmother died, he couldn't afford to pay her real estate taxes. He lost her house—and his home—and eventually entered the transitional living program at Aunt Martha's Youth Service Center, a Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) grantee serving counties in northeastern Illinois.

To staff at Aunt Martha's, Simon seemed like a good candidate for the General Educational Development tests, commonly called the GED. But Simon didn't think he needed a GED credential because he already had a job. Plus, he'd heard the test was hard, that no one passed it on the first try. Aunt



Martha's staff members turned him around. "We told him, 'You can change oil all your life,'" says Kyla Williams, division manager for comprehensive services at Aunt Martha's. "That's OK. But how about owning your own Jiffy Lube?"

Less than 3 months later, Simon passed the GED tests, which allowed him to enroll in Jiffy Lube's management training program.

Simon's story is not exactly typical—most young people take longer to prepare for the tests—but it illustrates an important point. Youth service providers say that for young people like Simon who've missed several years of school and don't see themselves going back, the GED is often a good option, one that can lead to other educational and career opportunities.

A credential used in lieu of a high school diploma, the GED consists of five tests designed to measure whether students have the level of academic ability normally acquired in high school.

"Typically, if we have a youth who has been out of high school for more than 2 years, we go the GED route," Williams says.

The GED Versus High School

The GED's value compared to a traditional high school degree has long been debated. Some studies show that GED credential holders earn less than those who graduated high school. Many youth service providers agree that a high school diploma is preferable.

"We always encourage traditional education first," says Kelly Fleming, director of youth services at Mohawk Valley Community Action Agency, a FYSB grantee in central New York. "There are just so many more opportunities than with the GED," she explains, citing sports, music, arts, and

guidance counseling as some of the things high school can offer to students.

By going to high school, students also meet a wider group of young people than they might interact with in an alternative school or GED program, says Lee Trevithick, executive director of Cocoon House, a FYSB grantee in Everett, Washington. Extracurricular activities, he says, "are great opportunities to develop youth leadership skills and connect with diverse peers and teachers."

Still, for some older youth, going back to high school can be a burden in a number of ways, and in those circumstances, Fleming says, the GED may be a better choice for young people.

"For instance, if they're older, and they've been out of school for a number of years, and it's going to be really awkward socially, or they have an apartment and bills and need to keep a job," she says. "Going to school would mean losing their job and shelter."

Plus, many public high schools won't accept a 16-year-old freshman, Williams says, and many require students to graduate by age 21. That means that the GED is sometimes the only option for older homeless youth with very few or no high school credits.

"A lot of our youth, by the time they come to our transitional living program, are 18, 19, 20 years old and

way behind,” says Pat Holterman-Hommes, senior vice president of youth programs at Youth in Need, a FYSB grantee in St. Charles, Missouri. “We help youth weigh their options and make their own decisions . . . I would say for many of our youth GED is the best choice, just because they’re so behind. They would be 21 or 22 at graduation, and for most, that isn’t a realistic or attractive option.”

In addition, runaway and homeless youth often have a history of bad experiences in school. “Some of them have such an aversion to school,” Trevithick says. “You could send them to the best school in the world and they wouldn’t benefit from it because their early educational experiences were so poor.”

For those young people who just can’t function in the structured environment of a traditional school, a couple of hours a day of GED instruction, along with counseling and support from caring adults, can be a better fit than having to sit in a classroom all day.



With the help of a tutor, young people study for the GED at Aunt Martha’s Youth Service Center.

Preparing for the Tests

Once a young person has decided to prepare for the GED tests, service providers say, the next step is to assess what level of preparation they need. (Educational assessment may already have been done as part of the program’s initial intake process.) At Aunt Martha’s, youth take a computerized “modulated,” or more basic, version of the tests. How well the young person does helps staff to determine how much he or she needs to learn before taking the actual tests, Williams says.

Next, students need help adjusting to the rigors of preparing for an exam. “Most of them have been out of school for a long time, so they need help getting acclimated to studying and interpreting what they read,” Williams says. Often, students need help building their reasoning skills as well as learning material.



For young people who’ve missed several years of school, the GED is often a good option.

Williams notes that like many standardized tests, the GED contains some cultural bias. “Some of the language in the tests—African American and Latino youth aren’t spoken to that way,” Williams says, which can lead to biased test results. That means non-native English speakers and young

people from minority groups need to be prepared for unfamiliar language and concepts. In addition, Williams says, young people often come across textbook examples that are not relevant to them. To overcome that problem, Williams and her staff might talk about speeding tickets to help young people understand a math equation, or use made-up acronyms to help them remember a historical incident. “We make sure it’s relational, something they can take with them,” she says.

“They really don’t like a lot of history,” Williams says of the youth her program serves. “They like math, science, things that are more creative. They don’t like learn and repeat.”

Though Aunt Martha’s refers youth to offsite GED training centers, staff spend an hour or more a day working

THE GENERAL EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT TESTS

History

The tests were originally developed in 1942 for World War II veterans reentering civilian life. The GED Testing Service of the American Council on Education, a nonprofit organization in Washington, DC, updated the tests in 1978, 1988, and 2002 to reflect changing priorities and assumptions about how to assess proficiency in the areas of knowledge that the tests measure.

Administration

Three groups jointly administer the GED testing program:

- ◆ The GED Testing Service
- ◆ Participating State, provincial, or territorial governments

Resources on the GED

Office of Vocational and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education: www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovac/pi/hs/ged.html
 GED Testing Service, American Council on Education: www.acenet.edu
 America’s Literacy Directory: www.literacydirectory.org

- ◆ Official GED Testing Centers in communities across the country and the world

Test Areas

Language Arts, Writing (two parts)
 Social Studies
 Science
 Language Arts, Reading
 Mathematics

Standardization

The tests are standardized using a national stratified random sample of graduating high school seniors, tested in the spring of their senior year. The performance of these seniors determines how well test-takers need to do to earn a GED credential.

with clients on GED preparation, in addition to the time the young people spend in the centers. The extra attention keeps young people on track, Williams says. “At the GED center they’re told, ‘It’ll take you a year,’” she explains. “They get frustrated. A lot of homeless youth don’t have that long-term vision. That’s why everyday sessions are important.”

“If we left them to their own devices, they’d spend a lot of time spinning their wheels in these programs,” she adds.

Unlike Aunt Martha’s, Larkin Street Youth Services, a FYSB grantee in San Francisco, offers onsite GED preparation. Instruction is set up for different learning styles, says Andrew Niklaus, director of education and employment services. “There is peer-to-peer learning and individual work taking place. We also offer separate spaces for youth who excel in a more isolated learning environment,” he says.

Key to helping runaway and homeless youth prepare for the GED, Williams



says, is tapping into the intelligence they have that doesn’t come from books. “It’s just being able to tie in what those books say to [the skills] they’ve built to cope,” she says.

A Stepping Stone

Youth workers emphasize that in today’s tough job market, with the wage gap for low-skilled workers growing, the GED should not be an end in itself for young people.

“A GED should be presented to youth with a realistic understanding,” says Dennis Enix, executive director of Safe

Place Services at the YMCA of Greater Louisville in Louisville, Kentucky.

“If they are making 6 bucks an hour, when they complete their GED their boss is not going to give them a raise and they are not going now to be able to get a 10-buck-an-hour job. The GED must be sold as a stepping stone to college.”

Williams echoes that idea. To go on to community college or vocational school and increase their job-specific skills, youth need a high school degree or GED, she says. Often, youth in her program have already tried to enroll in trade school and been turned away.

“[The GED] gives them the opportunity to pursue other educational opportunities,” Williams says. As such, she adds, “it decreases their likelihood to remain homeless. The kids realize that.”

“These kids don’t have anyone in their lives who tell them, ‘You can live outside of your circumstances,’” she says. “Our job is to tap inside their abilities, to help them see the possibilities.” ■

TIPS ON HELPING RUNAWAY AND HOMELESS YOUTH PREPARE FOR THE GED

- ◆ Make your first priority addressing young people’s basic needs, such as food and shelter.
- ◆ Give youth the information they need to make their own decisions about whether the GED is right for them.
- ◆ Help students create their own timeline for preparing for and taking the tests, based on individual ability and circumstances. Some youth may need a few months to prepare while others may need 1 or 2 years.
- ◆ Be realistic and honest about the GED’s potential to improve young people’s earning potential and career opportunities. Put it in the context of other life planning, life skills training, and career building activities.
- ◆ In addition to GED classes, offer support in the form of one-on-one tutoring or mentoring.
- ◆ Help youth think about college and other post-GED education programs. The U.S. Department of Education’s Think College Web site at www.ed.gov/students/prep/college/thinkcollege/edlite-index.html provides useful information about preparing for college.
- ◆ Incorporate hands-on and nontraditional classroom experiences, such as using monopoly money and budgeting exercises, analyzing receipts, going grocery shopping, and taking field trips.
- ◆ Offer specific workshops in areas youth generally have trouble with, such as writing or math. To learn about strategies for improving student performance, go to the “Just for Teachers” section of the U.S. Department of Education Web site at www.ed.gov/teachers.
- ◆ Offer spaces and activities that facilitate different styles and levels of learning, for instance, by using a combination of group learning, one-on-one tutoring sessions, and individual projects.
- ◆ Give youth opportunities to work together and learn from each other.

THE RULES OF THE GAME: PREPARING YOUTH FOR THE WORLD OF WORK

Dressed in matching navy blue T-shirts, members of the HIRE Ground day labor crew show up for work at 7:45 a.m. sharp. A normal day for crew members might include sweeping the facilities of San Francisco's Larkin Street Youth Services, which runs the HIRE Ground program, painting a local hotel, or watering plants and cleaning storefronts for local businesses—all under the watchful eye of an adult supervisor.

Crew members not only get paid (\$6.25 an hour, or \$7.25 an hour with a high school diploma or GED), they also learn “what it's like to be at work,” says Andrew Niklaus, director of education and employment services at Larkin Street, a Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) grantee agency, where communicating with supervisors and peers, interacting with the public, and working independently at times all fit into the job description.

The day labor experience, part of Larkin's multifaceted HIRE UP youth employment program, helps runaway and homeless youth and other at-risk young people take an important step, one that precedes job readiness class, technical and vocational training, or getting a traditional job.

“Someone who has just exited the street, more likely than not, isn't going to be ready to hold a job,” Niklaus explains.

Niklaus isn't just talking about a lack of training or education. He and other youth service professionals and youth employment advocates say that young people in general, and especially youth in at-risk situations, often lack the fundamental skills and attitudes necessary for entry-level employment. Before entering the workforce, youth employment advocates say, young people need to learn about the importance of things longtime workers take for granted, like



A young woman graduates from job readiness class at Larkin Street Youth Services.

showing up for work on time, dressing appropriately, managing stress, resolving conflicts with bosses and coworkers, communicating with others, and working as part of a team.

Young people need to learn these so-called soft skills, or nontechnical skills, before they show up for their first jobs, because many employers don't want to have to teach new workers skills they

TIPS ON PREPARING YOUNG PEOPLE FOR THE WORLD OF WORK

- ◆ Don't consider any detail too small. Youth who've lived on the streets for a long time may not consider hygiene important, and they may never have owned an alarm clock.
- ◆ Introduce young people to workplace expectations and norms through a sponsored work program such as a supervised day labor program or through a simulated work environment in which they can practice work readiness skills.
- ◆ If you plan to use a job readiness curriculum, choose one that takes into account the special needs of youth and the realities of adolescent development.
- ◆ Guide youth in assessing their skills using a tool such as the Skills Profiler developed by O*Net, a program of the U.S. Department of Labor. The Skills Profiler is available at www.careerinfonet.org/acinet/skills.
- ◆ Help young people decide whether to obtain a job readiness credential. Credentials that confirm a worker's basic job skills are offered by some State and local workforce initiatives. For information about the Equipped for the Future Work Readiness Credential (see box), go to www.uschamber.com/cwp/strategies/workreadinesscredential.htm.
- ◆ Connect job readiness to life skills training. Many skills valuable for entry-level workers are taught in transitional living and life skills curricula. Tools such as the Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment (www.caseylifeskills.org) or the Daniel Memorial Institute's Assessments for Life Skills (www.danielkids.org/sites/web/index.cfm) can help you determine the particular skills each young person needs to learn.
- ◆ Model workplace norms in your job readiness program or class, for instance by asking youth to attend from 9 to 5, providing stipends, creating a dress code, and requiring that youth behave as they would be expected to at a workplace.
- ◆ Teach young people about participation and collaboration in the workplace by asking them to create a mission statement and rules for the class.
- ◆ Use role playing to help young people learn how to act in specific workplace situations, such as a job interview, a dispute with a coworker or supervisor, or a racist incident.
- ◆ Introduce young people to working professionals, either in one-on-one meetings or by arranging for youth to “shadow” someone during a regular workday, so they can observe how people act, dress, and talk at work.

consider basic. U.S. Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao reflected on this issue at the White House Conference on Helping America's Youth in October 2005. "Many employers tell the Labor Department that they can teach workers the technical skills for just about any job," she said. "What they need are workers who are ready to learn. Workers who can show up on time, get along with others, complete assignments, and take direction."

Cindy Perry, director of special projects for the San Diego Workforce Partnership, has heard the same comment

from employers. "Preferably, these were the skills your parents were teaching you," she says.

The disconnect between the basic skills employers expect and the deficiencies they detect in entry-level workers stems in part from the changing nature of work, says Sondra Stein, project manager for the Equipped for the Future Work Readiness Credential Project, a joint endeavor of the Federal government's National Institute for Literacy, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, five States, the District of Columbia, and major industry groups.

For instance, she says, in the past, entry-level workers in manufacturing jobs worked primarily alone, all day long. "You don't work on your own anymore in the workplace," she says, and that leads to a slew of consequences for job seekers. "In every industry, workers have to make more decisions, work with more people, communicate more."

Given that reality, young people with unstable family backgrounds who don't learn important interpersonal, decisionmaking, and communications skill at home or in their communities are at a disadvantage in today's labor market, Stein says.

In addition, compared to their peers with stable home lives and residences, runaway and homeless youth are "less likely to get connected to any kind of [early] work experience" where they could learn workplace norms and expectations, says Kate O'Sullivan, director of quality initiatives at the National Youth Employment Coalition in Washington, DC.

That's where HIRE Ground, the U.S. Department of Labor's Job Corps (a residential training program for at-risk young people ages 16 to 24), and other job readiness programs come in, helping young people to gain the nontechnical skills and the workplace savvy they need to succeed on the job. "What's really important for [at-risk youth] is to make it explicit," Stein says, "because they don't have expectations. They've never had it modeled."

That modeling may come via a simulated work environment or a program like HIRE Ground. Many transitional living and youth employment programs, including Larkin Street, also have developed "job readiness" curricula that cover a range of topics such as conflict resolution, communication skills, self exploration, dress and hygiene, résumé building, and interviewing.

WHAT NEW WORKERS IN ENTRY-LEVEL JOBS NEED TO BE ABLE TO DO

A new credential developed through a partnership of the Federal government, five States, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and major industry groups, will allow workforce programs to measure how well they prepare young people for entry-level jobs. Though some States and localities have work readiness certificate programs, no national credential has existed until now.

Based on the Equipped for the Future work readiness standards developed by the Federal government's National Institute for Literacy, the assessment tool that leads to the national credential was field-tested across the country in early 2006. Field-test sites included two FYSB Runaway and Homeless Youth Program grantees in Washington, DC, Covenant House and Latin American Youth Center. The exam is slated to debut in June 2006.

Funding from the National Institute for Literacy, which is administered by the U.S. Secretaries of Education, Labor, and Health and Human Services, helped to support the first phase of the credential's development.

According to the assessment, new workers in entry-level jobs need to be able to do the following:

Communication Skills

- ◆ Speak so others can understand
- ◆ Listen actively
- ◆ Read with understanding

Observe critically

- ◆ Interpersonal skills
- ◆ Cooperate with others
- ◆ Resolve conflict and negotiate

Decisionmaking Skills

- ◆ Use math to solve problems and communicate
- ◆ Solve problems and make decisions

Lifelong Learning Skills

- ◆ Take responsibility for learning
- ◆ Use information and communications technology

To see the complete Equipped for the Future Work Readiness Profile, go to <http://www.uschamber.com/cwp/strategies/workreadinesscredential.htm>.

In addition to teaching the “soft skills,” many successful work readiness programs emphasize “biculturalism,” Stein says, contrasting the culture of the street and the culture of mainstream America and making clear when different behaviors are appropriate.

Programs also need to show an appreciation of the culture that young people come from, says Terry

Simmons, program administrator and career coach at Career Builders, a State workforce development intermediary in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and a partner in the FYSB-funded Louisiana Positive Youth Development Collaboration Demonstration Project.

“A huge part of getting these kids to conform is confirming that their culture is legitimate,” Simmons says.

He recommends teaching young people to adapt to diverse environments by offering them a dual message: that hip-hop and other aspects of youth culture are valid and significant, but at the same time, “if they go in with gold teeth and tattoos, it’s going to be hard to get a mainstream job.” ■

FROM TAKEOFF TO LANDING: STEPS TO MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT

Jill Conlon likens the work of youth employment programs to that of an air traffic controller. Staff members do more than gliding young people in for a landing in a brand new job. They help set the course, predict the weather, prevent mid-air collisions.

“It’s not just case managing and the GED,” says Conlon, vice president of programs at MY TURN, a youth employment agency serving economically and socially disadvantaged youth in Massachusetts and New Hampshire. Given the challenges that runaway and homeless youth face, Conlon and other youth employment advocates say, programs must take a comprehensive approach to preparing these young people for employment and finding them jobs.

“Even though they know they need a job, sometimes that’s not their priority,” says Maggie Driscoll, employment and training director of the Human Resource Councils, a network of social services agencies in Montana that runs both a transitional living program funded by the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) and a Workforce Investment Act-funded youth employment program. Finding shelter or addressing health or family problems often ranks higher on a runaway or homeless youth’s to-do list than finding a job, she says.

Once programs have helped young people achieve more stability, getting

them on the path to employment is an important step, Driscoll says. “We see it as a priority to get them some work experience and a job so they can maintain some self-sufficiency.”

“Once you’ve gotten a young person to overcome their barriers, they’re going to want to move forward,” Conlon says. She adds: “Our goal is not to just get kids jobs, but to help them gain careers.”

To help youth make the journey from jobless to gainfully employed, youth employment specialists like Driscoll and Conlon follow a number of steps.

Assessment and self awareness

Program staff begin by formally or informally assessing the young person’s education and work history. What level of education have they reached? Have they ever successfully held a job? If not, what has prevented them from keeping a job?

MY TURN case managers also observe the young person to gauge his or her interpersonal and communication acumen, Conlon says. Does the youth make eye contact? Does he or she have a positive or negative self-image?

Pinpointing the youth’s interests comes next. Driscoll’s program uses the Harrington-O’Shea Career Decision-Making System to help young people assess their abilities, values, and interests. Staff at Aunt

Martha’s Youth Service Center, a FYSB grantee serving counties in northeastern Illinois, pose the questions, “What did you want to be at [age] 7? At 16? What do you want to do now? At 25?” Then they ask youth to fill out worksheets that quiz them about the things they like to do.

Whatever their methods for assessing young people’s work readiness and interests, youth employment staff use the information to help the youth create a personal strategic plan.

“[The plans] are highly individualized,” Driscoll says. “Some kids are ready to work. Others are far away from that.”

Career exploration

Telling young people about the range of options available to them plays an important part in preparing them for careers, youth employment professionals say. Often, youth have limited information about career paths and gravitate toward high-profile professions.

“Young people now want something that’s fun and exciting, something that’s flexible,” says Terry Simmons, program administrator and career coach at Career Builders, a State workforce development intermediary in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and a partner in the FYSB-funded Louisiana Positive Youth Development Collaboration Demonstration Project.

Because of the popular television show “CSI,” about a group of crime scene investigators, Simmons says, “everybody wants to be a forensic scientist.” Conlon explains that many youth can only envision themselves in the careers of people they have interacted with, like doctors or social workers, or someone famous, like Donald Trump or the popular singer Usher. And most young people, Simmons and Conlon say, don’t understand the conditions they would encounter in particular professions (like seeing blood) or the skills they would need (like the analytical abilities necessary for business).

“We have to open their eyes to all the other careers out there,” Conlon says. For instance, she says, becoming a physician isn’t the only option for young people interested in health care. They could choose to become phlebotomists or licensed practical nurses.

In addition to having limited information about the range of professions, many young people are constricted by the environment in which they live, and youth in areas with depressed job markets may have difficulty envisioning a future. That occurs in Metro District 7 in north Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Simmons says. “You can’t just walk straight out of the office and knock on some doors,” he says, explaining that the corner stores, fast food restaurants, and retail outlets that make up the district’s businesses have little to offer young people beyond a minimum wage job.

“It dampens [youths’] enthusiasm about working at all,” he says. “They don’t see anything in their community, so it’s a hard sell to say ‘I’m preparing myself for something greater.’”

To battle that pessimism, Simmons taps into youths’ interests, encourages them to research career options, and connects them to the wider Baton Rouge business community and to

working professionals. “We give them the information they need to make a sound decision,” he says, for instance by telling them about the training they will need to succeed in a given profession. Once a young person has identified a career he or she would like to pursue, Simmons introduces them to professionals in the field who can give them an insider’s take. “That usually seals the deal,” he says, “or we can go down another path.”

In Montana, where the job market offers low wages and many people work two jobs to make ends meet, runaway and homeless youth seeking employment compete with adults and college students, Driscoll says. She tries to introduce young people to occupations that are growing in Montana, such as construction and health care.



Because of the popular television show “CSI,” about a group of crime scene investigators, Simmons says, “everybody wants to be a forensic scientist.”

Sometimes, the career itself is not the hook. “We’re dealing with a generation that has music video mentality,” Simmons says. “They identify with lifestyle.” Career Builders and MY TURN both organize activities in which young people make mock lifestyle decisions, like buying a car or a house, and then learn about a profession of their choice—what kind of education they would need, how much they would make. “Sometimes, they realize their goals don’t match their finances,” Conlon says. “They might have to live with Mom and Dad to afford that Lexus.”

Other strategies for introducing young people to career options include research projects on a given occupation, guest speakers, job shadowing (in which a young person tags along with a working adult for a day or a week),



A young man in a Spanish computer class at Larkin Street Youth Services.

and paid and unpaid internships (more on these below).

In addition, many programs emphasize community service because of its myriad benefits, both related and unrelated to job seeking.

Participating in service projects “shows [youth] the things people get paid to do,” says Kyla Williams, division manager for comprehensive services at Aunt Martha’s, and allows them to meet a range of working adults. “Sometimes they network with people to create a paying position.”

Service also connects young people to their communities. “Getting rid of apathy is a big thing,” Simmons says. “It’s an empowering thing when they can identify something they want to change in their community and actually do something about it. In a lot of cases, African American youth build resilience and then get out [of their neighborhoods]. Community service makes them feel accountable, so that even if their goal is to move across town, they’ll come back and contribute to the community they grew up in.”

Exploring entrepreneurship can present an appealing option for some young people, Conlon says. “A lot of these kids have had to be very independent and streetwise,” Conlon says, “and I think that kind of lifestyle encourages entrepreneurship.”

MY TURN collaborated last summer with the National Foundation for

Teaching Entrepreneurship on a pilot program teaching entrepreneurial skills to at-risk young people. The young people in the pilot program developed their own business plans, received \$20 business loans, bought products wholesale, and then sold them at Boston's South Station.

"Some of the kids realized that it's not for them because it's too risky, but others really want to pursue it," Conlon says. One young man went on to open a landscaping business in Nashua, New Hampshire.

Job preparation

Many programs offer "job readiness" or "job preparation" classes, either in group settings or one-on-one. Young people learn how to write a cover letter and résumé, conduct a job search, and network. Trainers also introduce them to other aspects of the work world like proper attire and corporate dos and don'ts. (For more information about teaching young people nontechnical skills, see story on page 8.)

Youth in job readiness class at Larkin Street Youth Services, a FYSB grantee in San Francisco, earn a weekly stipend (with \$20 raises in the last 2 weeks of the 3-week training program). Along with standard job-hunting stuff, they work on class projects, such as a PhotoShop poster and personal portfolios. They also learn basic computer skills.



For most youth, achieving education goals, such

as graduating high school, obtaining a high school equivalency credential such as the GED, or improving math and reading skills, plays an important role in preparing for employment.

While employability training can help youth put a foot in the door by getting

an entry-level job, young people need more training for a career, Conlon says. "Minimum wage is not going to break the cycle of poverty," she says.

Vocational or technical training is the next step for some youth. "Otherwise their strategic plan will just be a binder that collects dust," Simmons says. Job-related training programs and other post-secondary education help young people gain more skills and become more marketable, Conlon says. "We need to develop skills in these young people," she says.



Simmons lets young people know that taking the entrance exam at the local community college allows them to take up to 9 credit hours of classes without a high school diploma if they score high enough. By trying out culinary arts or welding classes, they often become more motivated to get the high school diploma or GED credential they need to continue.

But all training is not equal. For instance, in a city or town with few health care opportunities, Conlon says, training young people for health jobs doesn't make sense, unless young people are willing to relocate. For that reason, MY TURN works with businesses to identify employment trends and create training programs that match the jobs available in a particular community.

This kind of partnership offers benefits for businesses as well as for youth. Simmons and Career Builders have worked with Louisiana companies to create training opportunities and scholarships so that more young people will enter the processing technology field; process operators, or PTECs, control and monitor the systems that run chemical plants. As the third largest producer of chemicals in the United States, Louisiana had forecast a worker shortage of 5,000 to 10,000 over 5 to 10 years, Simmons says. With the automation of plants, process operators need more training now than they did in the past.

"Young people thought that it was a dead end job that required no additional education beyond high school," Simmons says. "Somebody had to get out in the community and dispel those myths." Since 2001, there has been a 71 percent increase in student enrollment in PTEC programs at Louisiana community and technical colleges.

Getting a job

Once young people have gotten the amount of training they need—whether it's simply completing work readiness training, finishing high school, earning a GED credential, or getting advanced training—finding a job is the next step. How that happens depends on the young person. Some young people move into internships and apprenticeships, which can provide training and a taste of what the job is like.

At Larkin Street's Institute for HIRE Learning, young people choose a career track, such as culinary arts, veterinary care, multimedia, or nonprofit social services, and are placed in a paid internship. (Larkin Street, rather than the employers, pays for youths' stipends.) Working 20 hours a week for 3 months, young people must save 30 percent of their \$8-an-hour wage. Young people

also attend weekly one-on-one counseling and workshops on topics such as self care, money management, soft-skill development, long-term planning, and advanced job searching.

Andrew Niklaus, director of education and employment services, says that 70 percent of Institute for HIRE Learning alumni get a job with the internship employer or at another company or go on to postsecondary education.

Larkin Street also supports the job searches of young people who go straight from job readiness training into employment. Job counselors accompany young people as they hit the pavement in San Francisco neighborhoods, looking for vacancies and getting job applications. Other times, counselors will “job carve” for a young

person who needs help, going to an employer and negotiating a position created specifically for that young person’s strengths and weaknesses.

To help youth find jobs, Aunt Martha’s has agreements with local businesses, including Jiffy Lube, a gas station, Wal-Mart, Applebee’s restaurant, and the fast food chain Chipotle. “We tell employers, ‘We will work with youth ... and work to ensure they become good employees for you,’” Williams says. In return, the agency gives the companies business, using them as vendors. Using this community approach, Williams says, “we’ve easily been able to employ our kids.”

And when a young person gets a job offer and goes off to work, Niklaus says, “it feels good to them. Everything clicks.”

Job retention and followup

But landing a job is not the end of the struggle for runaway and homeless youth. Youth employment programs stress the need to follow up, both with young people and with employers. That way, potential conflicts can be nipped in the bud, Conlon says, “so the kid doesn’t just walk off, or the employer doesn’t just fire them after they’re late 2 days in a row.”

Larkin Street staff check in with employers regularly, Niklaus says; how often depends on the needs of the youth. If young people are also in Larkin’s housing program, HIRE UP staff members check in with the case manager to ferret out issues that might affect their job performance. The program also gives youth incentives to stick with a job, promising a lunch

Job Corps

jobcorps.doleta.gov
1-800-773-JOBS

At 122 Job Corps campuses across the country, young people ages 16-24 receive academic, vocational, and social skill training in an environment that encourages independent living.

National Guard Youth Challenge Program

www.ngycp.org
1-703-607-2664

The National Guard Challenge Program offers a 22-week military-style residential program and a year of mentoring to youth, ages 16-18, who need educational opportunities, job skills, and self confidence to avoid risky behaviors.

STRIVE

www.strivenational.org/strive.html
1-212-360-1100

Over an intensive, month-long

NATIONAL YOUTH JOB PROGRAMS

course, STRIVE teaches those in danger of chronic unemployment the soft skills, such as communication and professionalism, they need to succeed in any workplace. Job placement and long-term followup are also provided.

YouthBuild

www.youthbuild.org
1-617-623-9900

In YouthBuild programs across the country, unemployed and under-educated young people ages 16-24 work toward their GEDs or high school diplomas while learning job skills by building affordable housing for homeless and low-income people.

Youth Service and Conservation Corps

www.nascc.org
1-202-737-6272

Youth in the Corps carry out a wide range of conservation, urban infrastructure improvement, and human

service projects while receiving academic, financial, emotional, and vocational support.

Source: Preparing Youth for Employment: Principles and Characteristics of Five Leading United States Youth Development Programs. Author: G. Partee. 2003. Available from American Youth Policy Forum at www.aypf.org.

Many local programs offer promising practices in youth employment, as well. For programs recognized in the Community Guide to Helping America’s Youth, a project of the White House initiative Helping America’s Youth, go to www.helpingamericasyouth.gov, use the program tool, and search using the keyword “employment.” For a list of programs recognized by the National Youth Employment Coalition’s PEPNet (Promising and Effective Practices Network) program, go to www.nyec.org.



date at the end of month 1, another incentive, such as a movie pass, at the end of month 2, and so on. After

6 months, the young person might receive a \$50 gift certificate.

Driscoll's transitional living program helps young people budget and plan, and then backs away incrementally, she says. "Once they're stable, the counselor backs off a bit, calls less often, gives less help with rent—we help with rent until they're stable." Other programs encour-

age young people to make goals of saving up for things they want.

Followup can also mean referring young people to other services, like health care, or just listening when they drop by, Driscoll says.

In addition to providing adult support, some programs nudge youth toward



relying on each other. MY TURN youth meet in a weekly or biweekly "job club," where they eat free pizza and talk about job-related issues and ways to overcome them. When problems arise on the job, "often youth point the finger at their boss," Conlon says. Job club teaches them to talk about their problems with peers and resolve issues amicably.

All of this persistence gives young people the encouragement they need to stick with it. "Staying in a job for 6 months, if you've been on the streets, is a huge accomplishment," Niklaus says. ■

NATIONAL OR REGIONAL COMPANIES WITH YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

CVS Pharmacies of Promise

Goal: Prepares young people for careers in pharmacy.

The program: After being chosen through a rigorous selection process, high school students complete a six-week summer internship where they spend 35 hours a week as CVS crew members, and 5 hours each week in educational sessions with pharmacy professionals. During the school year, students work part time and continue to do so through graduation from pharmacy school.

Locations: New York, Washington, DC, and Atlanta

Contact: Steven Wing, CVS Government Programs, (330) 487-6957

UPS School to Work

www.community.ups.com/education/school.html

Goal: Meets the educational and employment needs of each community. Each facility involved with the program develops relationships with colleges and nonprofit agencies in their area to create a program that benefits the company and the surrounding community.

The program: Each program integrates school-based learning with work-based learning. In many of the facilities, UPS partners with local community colleges to offer onsite classes for college credit to students while they are still in high school. Other programs offer college preparation classes that teach students time management and study skills needed to be successful in college. An increasing number of facilities have career resource rooms where students

can fill out college applications or get help with a résumé. Students work 15 to 20 hours a week while in the programs. Mentoring by UPS employees plays an important role.

Locations: UPS facilities across the United States

Contact: Mark Giuffre, UPS Airlines Public Relations, (502) 329-3060

Wegmans Youth Program

www.wegmans.com/about/jobs/edu/youth.asp

Goal: To prepare young people for culinary and business careers at Wegmans, a mid-Atlantic supermarket chain.

The program: The 3-year work-study program offers 1,500 or more hours of paid, school-supervised work experience, supported by related instruction at school. Students may receive high school credits for the experience. With the support of a staff mentor, students complete rotations through a variety of departments. Students in their last rotation senior year focus on gaining new experiences in merchandising, product preparation, selling skills, and department sales concepts and finish off the program by completing a senior research project. Students who successfully finish the program receive a full-time employment opportunity or, if they go to college, a Wegmans Scholarship Award and an opportunity to compete for the Store Operations Summer Internship program immediately after high school graduation.

Locations: Wegmans stores in the mid-Atlantic region

Contact: 1-800-WEGMANS

THE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT AND YOUTH

Expanding on the successful aspects of earlier workforce legislation, Congress passed the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) in 1998 in order to establish a comprehensive Federal job training program for both youth and adults. But what, exactly, does the WIA mean for young people?

Workforce programs must offer a variety of services for young people that focus on Positive Youth Development and long-term outcomes rather than short-term job attainment.

Services include:

- ❖ Tutoring, study skills training, instruction leading to completion of high school, including dropout prevention strategies
- ❖ Alternative high school services
- ❖ Summer employment linked to academic and occupational learning
- ❖ Paid and unpaid work experience, including internships and job shadowing
- ❖ Occupational skills training
- ❖ Leadership development, which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility

- ❖ Supportive services (for example, transportation and childcare)
- ❖ Adult mentoring during program participation
- ❖ A 12-month followup after program completion
- ❖ Guidance and counseling, including drug and alcohol abuse counseling, and referral

Core services for youth must be offered all in one place through a network of nearly 3,500 “one-stop” career centers around the country.



“One-stop” centers are intended to be more convenient for and attractive to at-risk, out-of-school, and disconnected youth who may not have the means or motivation to access services in a variety of different locations. For a list of the one-stop centers near a given zip code, visit www.careeronestop.org.

Services are vetted and overseen by a Youth Council made up of community youth experts.

- ❖ To ensure that youth workforce development programs actually



address the issues and concerns of young people, the WIA calls for the creation of Youth Councils that write requests for proposals, solicit bids, recommend applicants, and oversee the contracts of winning bidders. Youth Councils are made up of representatives from Job Corps, the juvenile justice system, local youth programs, public housing authorities. Parents and youth themselves may also participate.

Source: *Taking the Bumpy 'Workforce Investment Act' Path to Connect 'Disconnected' Youth*. Author: D. Hamm. *Youth Law News*, October-December 2003. Available from the National Center for Youth Law at www.youthlaw.org.

Federal WIA Resources

America's CareerOneStop Portal:
www.careeronestop.org

America's Career InfoNet:
www.acinet.org/acinet

America's Job Bank: www.ajb.org

America's Service Locator:
www.servicelocator.org

O*NET (the Occupational Information Network) OnLine:
online.onetcenter.org

Workforce Tools of the Trade:
www.workforcetools.org

Career Voyages:
www.careervoyages.gov



A young man in the MY TURN job program serves up popcorn at a concession stand.

RECOMMENDED READING

- Educating Homeless Children and Youth: A Resource Guide to Promising Practices. Authors: J. Funkhouser et al. 2002. Volume II of report entitled The Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program: Learning to Succeed. Available from U. S. Department of Education, Planning and Evaluation Service, Elementary and Secondary Education Division at www.ed.gov/offices/OUS/PES/esed/learnsucceed/volume2.pdf.
- Hard Work on Soft Skills: Creating a 'Culture of Work' in Workforce Development. Authors: T. Houghton and T. Proscio. 2001. Available from Public/Private Ventures at www.ppv.org.
- Helping Students Graduate: A Strategic Approach to Dropout Prevention. Authors: J. Smink and F. Schargel. 2004. Available from Eye on Education at www.eyoneducation.com.
- A How To Guide for Creating Employment and Entrepreneurship Opportunities for Youth. Author: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. 2002. Available at www.hud.gov/offices/hsg/mfh/nnw/resourcesforcenters/nnwcreatingemployment.pdf.
- It's My Life: Employment. Author: Casey Family Programs. 2004. Available at www.casey.org.
- An Overview of Alternative Education. Author: L. Aron. 2006. First in a series of papers on alternative education prepared for the U.S. Department of Labor by the Urban Institute. Available at www.doleta.gov/youth_services.
- PEPNet Guide to Quality Standards for Youth Programs: Linking Youth to Work and Education for a Successful Transition to Adulthood. Author: National Youth Employment Coalition. 2005. Available at www.nyec.org.
- Providing Employment and Training Services to Homeless and Runaway Youth (training and employment notice). Author: Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor. January 6, 2006. Available at www.doleta.gov/youth_services.
- The Road to Self-Sufficiency: An Income Growth Strategy for Out of School Youth. Author: K. Stottlemeyer. 2001. Available from the New York Association of Training & Employment Professionals at www.nyatep.org.

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