

2014



Colorado Statewide Youth Development Plan

Working together to improve outcomes for youth.

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i. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

House Bill 13-1239 charges the Colorado Department of Human Services with the responsibility of creating a “statewide youth development plan” in partnership with stakeholders. The planning committee consisted of representatives from various community organizations, state departments, and youth members. This plan is aimed at strengthening Colorado’s youth system by identifying gaps, best practices, existing evidence-supported work, and recommended enhancements. The goals of the plan are to identify key issues affecting youth and young adults, and to align strategic efforts to achieve positive outcomes for all youth and young adults. This plan reflects the Committee’s work to create informed recommendations that will strengthen Colorado’s youth system, which serves youth and young adults ages 9 years to 25 years.

It is important that Colorado has a system intentionally designed to support healthy youth development and to ensure consistency of youth policy and practice across the state. Currently, there are limited parameters in place to reduce duplication and splintering of best practice efforts; therefore, Colorado has a number of youth programs and services which are operating independently of each other and are not necessarily aligned in their efforts.

A successful youth development system must include two key components: a *positive youth development* (PYD) approach and authentic youth engagement and inclusion. Positive youth development is an evidence-based approach proven to help make programs and services for youth more effective and to help youth develop skills that make them successful. PYD is a culture shift in which services and programs partner with youth in the construction of practice and policy, development of protective factors, and harness skills and character to engage youth in reaching their full potential.

For the past few years Colorado 9to25 (CO9to25) has been implementing a PYD system in order to improve programs, policies and practices that affect youth and young adults. It is a nationally recognized youth system that is unique to Colorado and is credited with being a progressive approach to youth development. CO9to25 is a collective, action-oriented network of youth and adults working in partnership to ensure that all young people are safe, healthy, educated, connected and contributing. Although it has been implemented on a limited scale due to marginal resources, the work of CO9to25 serves as the platform for a strong youth development system in Colorado.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT GAPS AND THEMES

The Committee reviewed youth initiatives of various state and community agencies and identified the following gaps and themes across agencies. Several themes emerged from the review of data and practice across a variety of services areas, such as education, behavioral health, health, child welfare, homelessness, safety, and juvenile justice. Eight common gaps/themes were identified as impediments to successful youth outcomes in Colorado.

1. Age/Periods of Transition

There is a need for attention to youth as they navigate key transitions, such as transitions between levels of education, i.e. the periods between elementary school, middle/junior high school, high school,

and higher education and/or workforce. In addition to educational transitions, youth involved in public systems such as child welfare and juvenile corrections need supports for transitions related to changes in placements and when exiting the public systems.

2. Missing Connections to Adults

As demonstrated by research and emphasized by youth and young adults, there is a need for youth to have a connection and long-term relationship with at least one caring adult.

3. Access to Services

There is a need for youth to have access to a comprehensive continuum of care and services that spans education, prevention, intervention and treatment. The youth populations most in need of these services include youth aging out of the youth services system into the adult services system, youth involved in public service systems such as child welfare and juvenile corrections, youth experiencing homelessness, and youth from rural areas that currently have limited access to services.

4. Behavioral Health Needs

Although youth ages 18 years and under are more likely to receive behavioral health services, according to data from the Colorado Department of Human Services, Office of Behavioral Health, this is not the case for young adults over 18 years of age. Colorado has some of the highest rates in the country of serious mental illness and suicide for young adults.

5. Respect/Youth Friendly Environments & Services

In order to develop a youth friendly environment, providers must understand what youth and young adults want and need, instead of what providers believe they need. The aim is to create services and programs that youth trust and are willing to engage with.

6. Homelessness (Housing & Economic Security)

Homelessness is a systemic issue that requires the investment from agencies focused on education, behavioral health, juvenile justice, child welfare, workforce, safety agencies, and disabilities. Youth that are experiencing homelessness are particularly vulnerable and their chances of success in education, health, and well-being are greatly diminished.

7. Populations Who Experience Disparities and Stigmatizations

Across all disciplines there are disparities related to poverty, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, and others who experience discrimination.

8. Need for Cross-Systems Coordination & Collaboration

There is a continuing need for coordination and collaboration across organizations that fund or provide youth services. There is especially a need for developing solutions that increases the flexibility of funds dedicated for services by reducing restrictions and braiding or blending funds across state, federal, and private sources.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation #1: Establish a legislatively recognized Colorado Council on youth development.

The youth system in Colorado should have an official structure to advise on best practices for prevention, intervention, and treatment. Since CO9to25 is an existing youth system framework in Colorado that is nationally recognized as one of the most progressive approaches to positive youth

development, it is recommended that CO9to25 be officially recognized as Colorado's Youth Development Council.

Recommendation #2: Establish a formal process for statewide integration of the CO9to25 Youth Development Council. The Council should establish regional councils across the state and ensure there is adequate representation of state, youth, and community stakeholders.

Recommendation #3: Create a youth services division or branch within a State Department. A dedicated division or branch to coordinate funding and programmatic efforts between state agencies will increase the braiding and blending of existing funds and reduce fragmentation of efforts between departments as well as provide oversight of the backbone support organization to the CO9to25 Youth Development Council.

Recommendation #4: Increase the number of programs and organizations across the state that are trained on and utilizing a positive youth development approach. Over time an investment in PYD will create a more resilient youth population, and as a result, increase the quality of youth responsiveness to assistances and services provided by the community and state. A regionalized PYD training and technical assistance system for use across the state should include a Professional Development Series composed of trainings, webinars and online PYD resources for communities.

Recommendation #5: Establish a review system to determine that youth-focused programs, organizations, and funding requests are efficient and effective. Strategies include an endorsement (letter of support) system that certifies programs that are effectively integrating PYD strategies and practices and/or are making efficient funding request. At a minimum, programs should be PYD focused, not duplicating known existing efforts, and attempting to collaborate with other youth serving organizations.

Recommendation #6: Align funding across evidence-supported youth programs and services. CO9to25 Youth Development Council should develop strategies that include braiding funds across departments and a process to conduct joint, cross-agency (state and community) budget planning for youth and family programs and services.

Recommendation #7: Expand eligibility and capacity of service systems to meet the comprehensive needs of young people and reduce the amount of time spent in high-level system involvement. Solutions should focus on youth eligibility for services and the health care system's capacity to serve them in the community. Particularly needed is a means to address varying eligibility and age cut-offs across programs and significant timing gaps during transition. Proposed solutions should be in a comprehensive report on strategies and recommendations for improving service eligibility.

Recommendation #8: Align data systems that impact youth and collect a common set of data indicators that are critical to youth and young adult well-being. Alignment should occur at the macro level (system and community) and micro level (youth and families). Steps include expanding the

youth surveillance system in Colorado to cover young adults up to age 25, and develop interoperability of direct services data systems managed by state agencies.

Recommendation #9: Increase public awareness of available youth services and organizations.

CO9to25 Youth Development Council should develop a consumer-focused web-based information portal of available services for youth and families. In addition, a comprehensive map should identify community youth serving organizations and include key information about the youth serving organizations, such as current funding and number of youth served.

Recommendation #10: Create formalized multidisciplinary treatment teams in every community in Colorado that includes youth and families. A multidisciplinary approach with one treatment plan for each youth/family is a best practice that results in better coordination between youth-serving organizations.

Recommendation #11: Improve the quality, availability and accessibility of services, supports and relationships to provide solutions to youth who are at risk for homelessness. Multiple agencies have identified the need to address homelessness in their system, including education, behavioral health, juvenile justice, child welfare, economic security, and work force development. Efforts should include prevention as well as expanding housing assistance and job skills programs that include financial literacy and asset building.

Recommendation #12: Improve the well-being of youth and young adults who are in the care and/or custody of the state and counties; this includes youth in the foster care system and in youth corrections. Efforts should be focused on reducing over-reliance on psychotropic medications; establishing permanent connections; addressing human trafficking; preventing homelessness; educational obtainment; and increasing access to mental health and substance abuse services.

Recommendation #13: Provide educational alternatives and wraparound supports for youth with complex needs in order to close the achievement gap, including youth experiencing school and college disruptions, homelessness, poverty, foster care, youth corrections, or special education needs as well as addressing the needs of other underserved populations. Alternative education and training opportunity approaches include General Education Development (GED), concurrent enrollment, career and technical education, remediation, and credit recovery.

Recommendation #14: Strengthen strategies for a youth friendly health system that is comprehensive and holistic in its approach to youth and young adults. It is important that the health care system strategically engage youth in an effort to increase their investment in their mental, medical, and dental health.

ii. MESSAGE FROM A COLORADO YOUTH

To the Colorado General Assembly,

There seems to be a common belief in the power of a single voice. Belief in its power alone to transform our world. It's a belief that strong voices lead movements, spark revolutions, and inspire change. The power of voice is indeed the important connection between brilliant minds or thoughts and the real world; but no great change answers back to a voice screaming into the void. Opinions, ideas, and beliefs become something bigger only when someone listens, only when conversations erupt. It's this beautiful connection--this interaction--that turns one's brilliant thought into cathedrals, empires, and brilliant leaps of human achievement. It's when there is give and take, and respect for diverse opinions that we change the world. The Colorado Statewide Youth Development Plan gives us, the youth, a chance to be heard.

Our voice is powerful. As youth, we understand our vibrant, dynamic culture. We want to use this understanding to advocate for ourselves and help advocate for change everyone wants to see. Come feel the power of our voices. Come see the infectious passion in our beliefs and ideals, that we care, and that with the right guidance we will dedicate ourselves to making this a better world for young people. Our voices are strong, and yet we don't know where to go with our bold ideas and opinions. We can utilize our creativity to come up with unconventional yet effective solutions. We can think outside of the box. We don't know everything, and we accept support and direction from adults. Come help us learn, grow, and contribute. You'll gain insight into the young population; you'll better understand how to approach, interact with, and utilize the youth perspective. We all have a common goal: helping youth reach their full potential, but who better to help decide what is best for us than *us*? We are eager to share our opinions and ideas if we know there is someone listening. We are willing to learn and grow if we know we can be a part of something bigger than ourselves. Give us a chance. Let us show you that the solutions lie with us. We need to know that you believe in us, and we need to know that we are equals; we're not spilling our hearts and minds into the void. We may seem naive, but our ingenuity will surprise you. Adults can't create *effective* change for youth by themselves, and--to be honest--neither can we. But, together we can combine our assets and transform Colorado.

This plan advocates for just that. A youth system in Colorado would mean youth are involved the right way. It would mean that we are a part of identifying problems as well as engineering and implementing solutions. Utilizing adult advice, resources, and experience while incorporating youth voices, abilities, and talents creates effective change. A youth system in Colorado means walking the walk. Adults and youth need to work together, but how can that happen if nobody knows how to approach a cooperative youth-adult partnership? Specific strategies must be utilized to ensure authentic youth engagement. We helped create this plan. We had a say. We were valued. This plan is the first step to transforming Colorado and spearheading a positive change.

I hope that you consider this plan with the youth in mind. I believe that this plan can break down the barriers youth face, as it is built on a foundation that ensures youth involvement and creates a system prepared to guide us towards our full potential. This plan values the impact youth can make and understands the importance of collaboration between youth and adults as well as from system to system. Together we have the means to accomplish our goals, we just have to come together the right way. This plan is the map to help youth navigate the path to their full potential, let us explore with its guidance.

Connect, Improve, Inspire,

Yashna Eswaran (Colorado Youth, 17yrs)

iii. LETTER FROM COMMITTEE CO-CHAIRS

To the Colorado General Assembly,

Thank you for the opportunity to create this plan. This committee brought together voices of those representing youth and young adults in Colorado with a goal to investigate the existing, and explore potential, systems, policies and practices that will nurture the greatest potential of each and every individual youth, as well as strengthen our families and communities across Colorado.

Our intentional approach included understanding multiple sectors to examine positive programs and initiatives supporting youth and young adults. One unexpected benefit was facilitating connections with wonderful and effective programs. At almost every meeting presenters made connections with other service providers and committee members who can enhance and complement their intersecting missions. Unfortunately, many presentations emphasized the urgent and compelling need for expanded services, often highlighting significant gaps due to uncoordinated systems and limited resources. The following plan recommendations address the need for macro-level system changes (e.g. access, equity) to micro-level changes (e.g. training and technical assistance).

What might not be obvious when you read the report is that the committee employed a positive youth development (PYD) approach in our work. As a committee we quickly realized that authentic youth engagement, one of the cornerstones of PYD, takes time. Although this committee felt the pressure of evaluating a large scope of work in an aggressive timeframe, we also felt a deep responsibility to not only deliver a report on time, but to do it in a way that honors the tenets of the PYD movement – focusing on positive outcomes; authentically partnering with youth throughout the process; ensuring the work is culturally responsive and relevant; and ensuring collaboration and sustainability.

We redesigned the agenda to include young adult input. We created real connections and worked through difficult conversations. We empowered youth to actively participate in presentations and challenge our assumptions. This intentional and thoughtful process allowed us the benefit of experiencing powerful moments of insight from wise young adults. This direct experience with authentic youth engagement informed this robust plan.

As you read this report, we encourage you to consider our responsibility to youth and their families. We encourage you to set aside the automatic response to resist change. And, we encourage you to take the time to actively talk with and listen to youth and young adults in your lives. You will be amazed at how the world will change.

We learned that language matters, and have tried to ensure that this plan and its proposals are couched in terms of asset-building and hope and the great potential within all Colorado's youth.

Sincerely,

Connie Rule
Committee Co-Chair

Robert Werthwein
Committee Co-Chair

iv. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Colorado Statewide Youth Development Plan was developed in partnership and with input from numerous individuals, including youth and young adults. Appreciation is extended to those who dedicated their time and effort to serve on the committee, to participate in committee meetings and work groups, and to present to the committee.

Colorado Statewide Youth Development Plan Committee

Committee Co-Chairs

Connie Rule, Executive Director, *Colorado Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs*

Robert Werthwein, Deputy Director, *Office of Children, Youth and Families, Colorado Department of Human Services*

Committee Staff Lead

José Esquibel, Manager, *Prevention and Interagency Collaboration Unit, Division of Child Welfare, Colorado Department of Human Services*

Youth Representatives

Nkem Nwanko, Youth Advisor, *Children, Youth and Families Branch, Prevention Services Division, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment*

Madison Thompson, *CO9to25 Youth Advisor, The Civic Canopy*

Community Representatives

Alecia Brown, Family Leader, *Family Leadership Training Institute*

Jan Carroll, Director, *Federal and Civic Engagement, Colorado State University Extension*

Minna Castillo Cohen, Director, *Youth Success, Mile High United Way*

Mike Johnson, Executive Director, *Project PAVE*

John Mok-Lamme, Executive Director, *Karis, Inc., The House*

Alice Pugh, Executive Director, *Full Circle of Lake County/Youth and Family Services*

Stephanie Villafuerte, Esq., Executive Director, *Rocky Mountain Children's Law Center*

Samuel Wood, Special Projects Coordinator/Youth Engagement, *Educational Theatre Programs, Community Benefits and Relations, Kaiser Permanente*

Deena Ziegler, Executive Director, *Prairie Family Center*

County Representatives

Betty Donovan, Director, *Gilpin County Human Services*

Lynn Johnson, Executive Director, *Jefferson County Department of Human Services*

Dan Makelky, Director, *Douglas County Human Services*

State Department Representatives

Bill Bane, Manager, *Children, Youth, and Family Mental Health Programs, Office of Behavioral Health, Colorado Department of Human Services*

Beth W. Bean, Ph.D., *Chief Research Officer, Colorado Department of Higher Education*

Anne-Marie Braga, *Population & Community Health Unit Manager, Children, Youth & Families Branch, Prevention Services Division, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment*

Susan Colling, Probation Services Analyst, *State Court Administrator Office, Colorado Judicial Branch*
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Shannon Huska, School Health Services Program Administrator, *Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing*

Andrew Johnson, Manager, *Youth Services Unit, Division of Child Welfare, Office of Children Youth and Families, Colorado Department of Human Services*

Anna Lopez, Program Grant Manager, *Office of Adult and Juvenile Justice Assistance, Division of Criminal Justice, Colorado Department of Public Safety*

Judith Martinez, Director, *Dropout Prevention and Engagement, Colorado Department of Education*

Sharon Sandoval, Probation Supervisor, *State Court Administrator's Office, Colorado Judicial Branch*

Committee Work Groups

Advisory Committee on Homeless Youth

Education Work Group

Youth and Young Adult Health Work Group

See Appendix A for a list of individuals that participated in committee meetings and work groups, and a list of topics presented and presenters.

I. OVERVIEW

House Bill 13-1239 (HB13-1239) charges the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) with the responsibility of creating a “statewide youth development plan” in partnership with stakeholders. This plan is aimed at strengthening Colorado’s youth system by identifying gaps, best practices, existing evidence-supported work, and recommended enhancements.

A. STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Per Colorado HB 13-1239, (1) (a) subject to available funding, the State Department (CDHS), in collaboration with the Tony Grampas Youth Services (TGYS) Board, created in section 26-6.8-103, shall convene a group of interested parties to create a Colorado State Youth Development Plan. The goals of the plan are to identify key issues affecting youth and align strategic efforts to achieve positive outcomes for all youth. Specifically, statute requires the following:

1. The plan must:
 - a. Identify initiatives and strategies, organizations, and gaps in coverage that impact youth development outcomes;
 - b. Identify services, funding, and partnerships necessary to ensure that youth have the means and the social and emotional skills to successfully transition to adulthood;
 - c. Determine what is necessary in terms of community involvement to ensure youth succeed;
 - d. Develop an outline of youth service organizations based on, but not limited to, demographics, current services and capacity, and community involvement;
 - e. Identify successful youth development strategies nationally and in Colorado that could be replicated by community partners and entities across the state; and,
 - f. Create a shared vision for how a strong youth development network would be shaped and measured.
2. The plan must include a baseline measurement of youth activities, developed using available data and resources. Data and resources may be collected from, but need not be limited to the following:
 - a. An existing youth risk behavior surveillance system that monitors health-risk behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death and disability among youth, including:
 - 1) Behaviors that contribute to unintentional injuries and violence;
 - 2) Sexual behaviors that contribute to unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV;
 - 3) Alcohol and other drug use;
 - 4) Tobacco use;
 - 5) Unhealthy dietary behaviors; and,
 - 6) Inadequate physical activity.

In addition to the legislative requirements for creating the Statewide Youth Development Plan, HB13-1239 also authorized CDHS to “coordinate prevention and intervention programs focused on positive youth development in accordance with state law and rules” and that “the coordination must include the state youth development plan developed.”

B. PLAN DEVELOPMENT

As directed by HB 13-1239, in conjunction with the TGYS Board, Executive Director Bicha of the Colorado Department of Human Services called for the creation of the Colorado Statewide Youth Development Plan Committee to help identify existing efforts, gaps in services, and proposed solutions for helping youth succeed. An equal number of state and community representatives were invited to sit on the committee as well as official youth committee members. (See Acknowledgments on page ix for a list of committee members).

The Committee invited a number of agencies and private sector organizations to present information on a variety of topics regarding youth in Colorado, including education, health, homelessness, mental health, substance abuse, juvenile justice, youth corrections, child welfare, intellectual and developmental disabilities, workforce, and safety. (Summaries of data, gaps, priorities and proposed solutions for each topic area can be found at the Committee’s webpage¹). The Committee also reviewed current youth development system efforts already in existence in the state and considered any necessary changes or enhancements. The Committee assigned three subcommittees to develop detailed plans for education, health, and homelessness.

After the completion of presentations, the Committee conducted several meetings in which gaps in Colorado’s youth system and common themes were identified and reviewed. In addition, an all-day meeting was facilitated to construct final recommendations for the plan. The plan was submitted to the State Department, Colorado Youth Advisory Council, and TGYS Board for review.

As required by statute, progress on implementing this plan will be reported annually and the plan will be updated every two years.

C. PLAN OVERVIEW

Why a Youth Development System Matters in Colorado

It is projected that youth who are currently ages 9 to 14 in 2014 will become the second largest adult population in Colorado by 2024. Ensuring that Colorado’s youth can reach their full potential and become healthy, successful adults is essential to Colorado’s future. In addition to wanting to see

¹ <http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/CDHS-ChildYouthFam/CBON/1251652641526>

Colorado's youth reach their full potential, the education, health and well-being of Colorado's youth and young adults have a major impact on the social and economic health of our state.

The developmental period of adolescence and young adulthood is an incredibly significant period of change and transition. Youth move from a period of childhood in which they have things done for and to them to a period of incrementally becoming more independent and self-reliant. During this time of significant transition and increasing independence for youth, resources and systems for youth must be constructed in a developmentally appropriate approach. This approach is necessary in order to be effective and achieve the desired positive outcomes and benefits for all stakeholders (youth, family and society). Many of the existing policies and practices across the state are not consistently appropriate for the youth in the developmental period of adolescence; therefore a constructive youth development plan is critical to ensure that the existing resources are being used efficiently and effectively to achieve the desired outcomes. Particularly, youth and their families require opportunities to learn and practice skills and receive supports and services to meet their needs in meaningful and relevant ways.

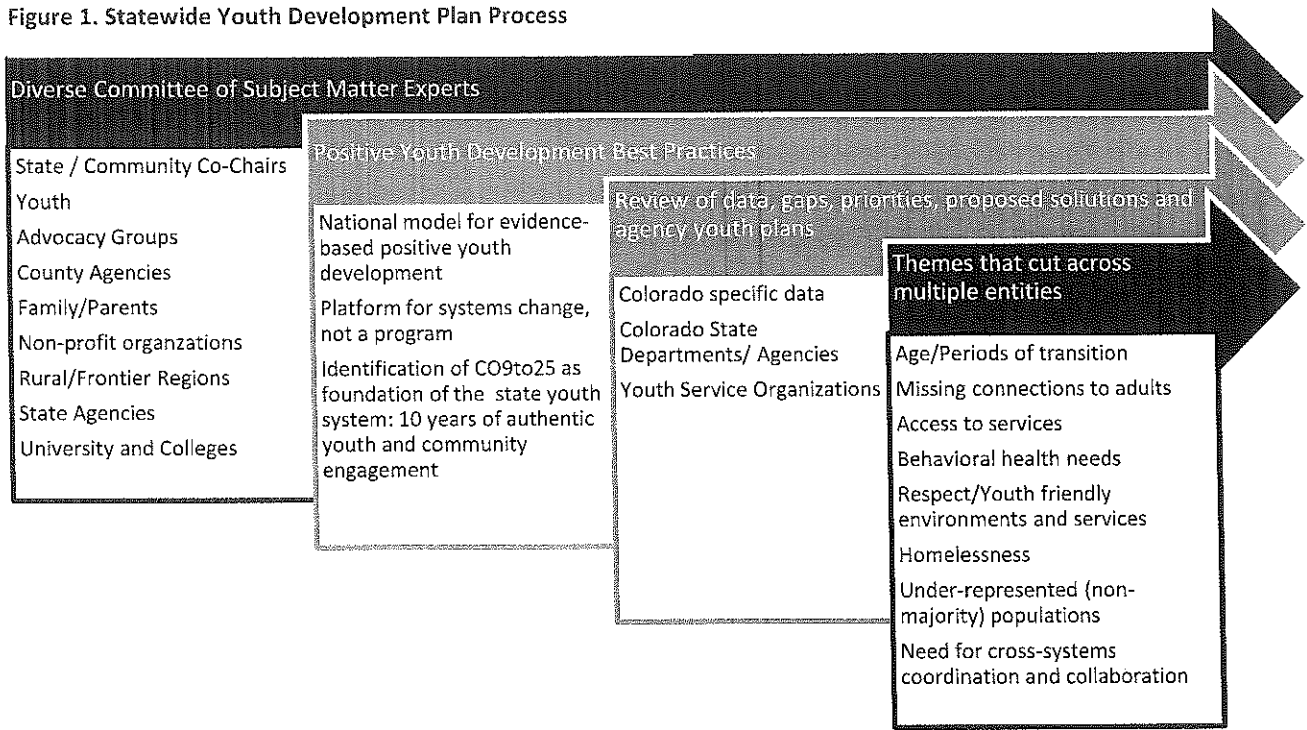
It is important that Colorado has a system intentionally designed to support healthy youth development and to ensure consistency of youth policy and practice across prevention, intervention, and treatment programs in the state. Currently, there are limited parameters in place to reduce duplication and splintering of best practice efforts; therefore, Colorado has a number of youth programs and services which are operating independently of each other and are not necessarily aligned in their efforts. While each agency has data, indicators and metrics, there is a need for stronger coordination in the definition, collection, analysis and sharing of key information. Without a formalized youth system, programs are not required to ensure that they are taking an evidenced supported approach unless required by their funding source. In developing a comprehensive youth system for Colorado, it is imperative that state and community agencies intentionally engage youth. As the system's customers, youth have relevant insights and expertise regarding what youth need and how to maximize youth programming and policy.

Plan Outline

This plan reflects the Committee's work to create informed recommendations to enhance Colorado's current capacity to serve its youth, ages 9 years to 25 years. This plan includes a brief summary defining best practice for youth development systems, and gaps and themes discovered during the review of the state's youth strategies. The plan also includes recommendations for improvements to a Colorado youth system with expected deliverables, expected outcomes with target achievement dates, needed resources, and a work plan with assigned leads and timelines for the recommendations. The recommendations are aimed at establishing a system to align strategic efforts to achieve positive outcomes for all youth.

As many of the identified areas need further analysis by experts in each respective field and implementation is not required until adequate funding is secured, the Committee made recommendations for constructing an official youth system in Colorado to address these needs as funding becomes available.

Figure 1. Statewide Youth Development Plan Process



II. BEST PRACTICE

As per HB 13-1239, the Committee was to identify successful youth development strategies nationally and in Colorado that could be replicated by community partners and entities across the state. In the development of this plan, many youth plans were reviewed including the well-respected youth plans of Massachusetts, Iowa, and the Federal Pathways for Youth Strategic Plan. All the plans required authentic youth engagement and inclusion as well as the incorporation of a *positive youth development* (PYD) approach. For the past few years Colorado 9to25 (CO9to25) has been implementing a PYD system in order to improve programs, policies and practices that affect youth and young adults. It is a nationally recognized youth system that is unique to Colorado and has been credited with being a progressive approach to youth development. National organizations recognizing the work of CO9to25 include the Association for Maternal and Child Health Programs, National Institute of Medicine, National Research Council, FSG (the founders of the Collective Impact model), State Adolescent Health Resource Center, and a variety of other states and territories.

Positive Youth Development

PYD is an evidence-based approach proven to help make programs and services for youth more effective and to help youth develop skills that make them successful. PYD is a federally recognized (endorsed by 18 federal agencies) approach to improving outcomes for youth.² “Positive youth development is an intentional, pro-social approach that engages youth within their communities, schools, organizations, peer groups, and families in a manner that is productive and constructive; recognizes, utilizes, and enhances youths' strengths; and promotes positive outcomes for young people by providing opportunities, fostering positive relationships, and furnishing the support needed to build on their leadership strengths.”³ Specifically for Colorado, PYD has been defined as “an approach, not a program, that guides communities in developing and implementing services, opportunities and supports so that young people can be engaged and reach their full potential.”⁴

This approach recognizes that services which do not build on the necessary steps to strengthen youth engagement are more likely to fail. PYD is a culture shift in which services and programs partner with youth in the construction of practice and policy, development of protective factors, and harness skills and character to engage youth in reaching their full potential. Figure 2 depicts the factors of PYD that result in meaningful engagement and improved outcomes for youth.

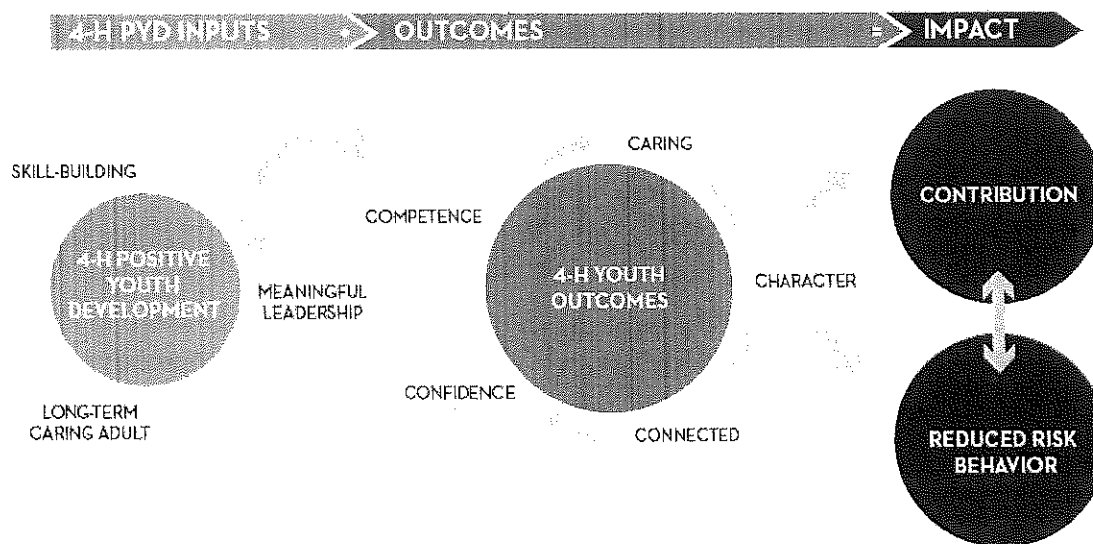
² Pathways for Youth Strategic Plan (Washington DC: Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs, 2013). Retrieved from http://www.findyouthinfo.gov/docs/Pathways_for_Youth.pdf.

³ “Positive Youth Development.” Retrieved from <http://www.findyouthinfo.gov/youth-topics/positive-youth-development>.

⁴ http://co9to25.org/co9to25/PYD_Executive_Summary.pdf

Figure 2. Characteristics and Impacts of Positive Youth Development⁵

4-H FORMULA FOR SUCCESS



In order for PYD to be successful it should be guided by the following principles⁶:

1. **Strengths-based:** Taking a holistic approach by focusing on the inherent strengths of an individual, family or community, then building upon them.
2. **Inclusive:** Addressing the needs of all youth by ensuring that the approach is culturally responsive.
3. **Engages youth as partners:** Ensuring the intentional, meaningful and sustained involvement of youth as equitable partners in the programs, practices and policies that seek to impact them.
4. **Collaborative:** Creating meaningful partnerships within and across sectors to effectively align the work.
5. **Sustainable:** Addressing long-term planning through funding, training, capacity building, professional development and evaluation in order to ensure ongoing support and engagement of youth.

In Colorado, PYD is already impacting policies and practices through CO9to25, TGYS, and Division of Child Welfare's Pathways to Success, which is a wraparound approach to obtaining permanency and

⁵ Richard M. Lerner, Jacqueline V. Lerner, and Colleagues, *The Positive Development of Youth: Comprehensive Findings from the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development*, (Tufts University: Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development, 2013)

⁶ *Positive Youth Development: Supporting Colorado Youth to Reach Their Full Potential: Recommendations from the Colorado Youth Development Team (Executive Summary, 2009)*. Retrieved from http://co9to25.org/co9to25/PYD_Executive_Summary.pdf.

promoting healthy transitions into adulthood for youth who are in or have been in foster care. In an effort to hold true to the PYD approach several community agencies and state departments have begun to incorporate youth leaders into the development of policy. To engage youth as part of the process, and not an afterthought, some community and state organizations have hired youth as employees to assist in ensuring good practice and policy development. Other organizations have utilized youth as interns or constructed youth advisory councils. Community partners that emphasize the incorporation of PYD include, but are not limited to, Kaiser Permanente, Adams County Youth Initiative Cradle to Career, Eagle River Youth Coalition/Making Youth a Community Priority, and the Leadville Lake County Youth Master Plan.

Colorado 9to25

CO9to25 is a collective, action-oriented network of youth and adults working in partnership to align efforts to achieve positive outcomes for all youth in Colorado. It takes a PYD approach which includes collaborative action to ensure that all young people are safe, healthy, educated, connected and contributing. This work serves as the platform for a strong youth development system in Colorado (see Appendix B for the current CO9to25 structure).

The work of CO9to25 is already leading other states in the nation in implementing strategies that incorporate the development of skills, opportunities and authentic relationships into programs, practices and policies, so that young people reach their full potential. CO9to25 has worked with community and state stakeholders to construct a specific set of indicators that are of priority to youth well-being (see <http://co9to25.org/> for more detailed information).

Although CO9to25 has an established framework constructed by youth and adults it has been implemented on a limited scale due to marginal resources.

III. YOUTH DEVELOPMENT GAPS AND THEMES

Through review of various state and community agencies, the Committee identified the following gaps and themes across agencies. Several themes emerged from the review of data and practice across a variety of services areas, such as education, behavioral health, health, child welfare, homelessness, safety, and juvenile justice. The following eight common gaps/themes were identified as impediments to successful youth outcomes in Colorado and all impact the ability to have a comprehensive continuum of care and services that span education, prevention, intervention and treatment.

AGE/PERIODS OF TRANSITION

The committee identified a pattern of gaps occurring during areas of transition between systems and organizations as well as disruption of assistance and services between age groups. Particularly attention should be emphasized with youth aging out of the youth services system into the adult services system, youth involved in public service systems such as child welfare and juvenile corrections, youth experiencing homelessness, and youth from rural areas that currently have limited access to services. Youth and professionals expressed concerns that eligibility criteria are not consistent across systems, especially when transitioning into adult systems of care, therefore resulting in gaps or abrupt changes in services

MISSING CONNECTIONS TO ADULTS

As demonstrated by research and emphasized by youth and young adults, there is a need for youth to have a connection and long-term relationship with at least one caring adult. This is essential for all youth in Colorado, and especially for those who experience additional challenges in their lives (e.g. receive public and non-profit services, LGBT youth) as well as for youth who are aging out of foster care without a permanent adoptive home. This theme highlights the need for the integration of a PYD approach into all programs and services for youth, including authentic youth engagement. Many service delivery systems currently are not designed to promote ongoing connections and often require youth to re-engage in the process of establishing new trusting relationships and therefore delaying the youth's service-related progress.

ACCESS TO SERVICES

There is a need for youth to have access to a comprehensive continuum of care and services that spans education, prevention, intervention and treatment. This is particularly necessary for youth aging out of the youth services system into adult services and/or involved in public service systems, such as child welfare and juvenile corrections. Additionally, homeless youth are at a high need for accessing appropriate services and youth from rural areas may have limited access.

Many service providers need increased education about specific difficulties youth and their families face in accessing services, such as inconvenient hours, transportation, concerns about confidentiality, social and cultural stigmas, discrimination, being treated with disrespect, and high costs. Service providers should be trained to understand adolescent development so they can work competently, sensitively, and respectfully with youth. There is a need to inform both the youth and service-providers of the availability of public and private services and supports

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH NEEDS

The unmet behavioral health needs of youth and young adults are an issue across multiple service systems, especially school settings. Although youth ages 18 and under are more likely to receive behavioral health services, according to data from the Colorado Office of Behavioral Health, this is not the case for young adults over age 18. Colorado has some of the highest rates in the country of serious mental illness and suicide for young adults. Colorado is among a second tier group of poor performing states for persons aged 18 years to 25 years with at least one major depressive episode in the past year.⁷ Colorado ranks 6th in the nation for suicide among high school students.⁸ The access to behavioral health care not only helps improve quality of life, but is critical in having youth and young adults obtain or retain employment.

RESPECT/YOUTH FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENTS & SERVICES

In order to develop a youth friendly environment, providers must understand what youth and young adults want and need, instead of what providers believe they need. Improving the quality of services and programs for youth requires tailoring services to youth specific needs, such accommodations consider location, facility hours, facility environments, staff preparedness, services provided, peer education and advocacy, educational activities, youth involvement, and supportive youth-friendly policies of the organization. The aim is to create services and programs that youth trust and are willing to engage with.

HOMELESSNESS (HOUSING & ECONOMIC SECURITY)

Homelessness is a systemic issue that requires the investment from agencies focused on education, behavioral health, juvenile justice, child welfare, work force, safety agencies, and disabilities. On any given night more than 1,700 youth in Colorado are living in shelters, staying with family or friends or sleeping without a roof over their heads⁹. Youth experiencing homelessness are particularly vulnerable and their chances of success in education, health, and well-being are greatly diminished. A lack of resources for the prevention of homelessness and a lack of services for better meeting the needs of

⁷ SAMHSA's 2011-2012 National Survey on Drug Use and Health National Maps of Prevalence Estimates

⁸ "The Colorado Health Report Card, 2012 (The Colorado Health Foundation, 2012 (<http://www.coloradohealth.org/ReportCard/2012/subdefault.aspx?id=5963>)

⁹ National Runaway Safe Line Point in Time Survey

youth experiencing homelessness contributes to high costs in many service systems supported by state and local government. It also ensures that these youth are more likely to live a life characterized by low-education, low skills for employment, poverty and poor health that can then be passed on to another generation.

POPULATIONS WHO EXPERIENCE DISPARITIES AND STIGMATIZATIONS

Across all disciplines there are disparities related to poverty, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, and others who experience discrimination. In Colorado, these youth are over represented in populations that represent school drop outs, juvenile justice, child welfare, and unemployment. In addition, although there are federal requirements for implementing the National Standards for Cultural and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS), there is no uniform coordination for training in Colorado and no uniform requirements contained in state-issued request for proposals or state-issued contracts and grants for youth programs and services.

Attention must be given to youth and young adults who are of greater likelihood to experience systems and other barriers. Examples are youth who:

- Experience racial and ethnic disparities;
- Live in poverty;
- Identify as, Lesbian, Gay Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, Intersex, Two Spirit (ii)¹⁰;
- Live in rural areas;
- Experience behavioral health issues;
- Experience intellectual, developmental, physical disabilities;
- Are expecting and parenting;
- Experience homelessness;
- Are human trafficked;
- Are part of migrant families;
- Are immigrants and refugees; and
- Are involved in child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

NEED FOR CROSS-SYSTEMS COORDINATION & COLLABORATION

There is a continuing need for coordination and collaboration across organizations that fund or provide youth services. There is especially a need for developing solutions that increase the flexibility of funds dedicated for services by reducing restrictions and braiding or blending funds across state, federal, and private sources. This will afford more opportunities to prevent gaps between systems and during transitions.

¹⁰ Estrada, Gabriel S. 2011. "Two Spirits, Nádleeh, and LGBTQ2 Navajo Gaze." *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 35(4):104-18.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations generated by this Committee are a result of topic area presentations, review of gaps and themes across services and programs, and input from youth development system experts, including youth. The recommendations are presented in two parts: systemic recommendations and preliminary program-related focus areas.

Systemic Recommendations

The implementation of the Colorado Statewide Youth Development Plan will require the alignment of priorities, resources, and expertise from a variety of sources across a network of partners utilizing a collective impact approach. Collective Impact is the commitment of a group of participants from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem, using a structured form of collaboration. There are several areas of interest that are common across different systems that fund programs and services for youth in Colorado. These areas have been identified as important components for improving programs and services for youth and young adults. Particularly, there is a need for a coordinating body to look at existing resources and determine how they could be better used to align efforts. In addition, there is a need to ensure that youth-serving organizations implement best practices and are effectively collaborating with one another. Alignment of efforts need to be accomplished by engaging and partnering youth, families, and professionals of non-profit organizations, state, and local government and in a manner that is relevant to helping youth achieve their full potential. The Colorado Statewide Youth Development Plan Committee determined that the best system to align efforts and serve as the authority on positive youth development is CO9to25.

Recommendation #1: Establish a legislatively recognized Colorado Council on youth development.

Purpose: A singular council consisting of diverse youth, family, community, and government stakeholders will provide greater organization of efforts, reduced duplication of services, and a structured approach to achieving positive outcomes for youth and young adults.

Recommendation: The youth system in Colorado should have an official structure to advise on best practices for prevention, intervention, and treatment. This structure should have youth representation and serve as a cross agency body between government and community. Since CO9to25 is an existing youth system framework in Colorado that is nationally recognized as one of the most progressive approaches to positive youth development, it is recommended that CO9to25 be officially recognized as Colorado's Youth Development Council.

Expected Outputs:

- 1.1 Modify the existing Colorado 9to25 documents to become the Colorado 9to 25 Youth Development Council and include:

- 1.1.1. Amend the purpose of the council to reflect these changes, including establishing a regional model across the state.
- 1.1.2. Amend the list of council membership representation prepared by CO9to25 to include a comprehensive list of state agencies and partners. Membership should include a representative from TGYS.
- 1.1.3. Revise council governance structure prepared by CO9to25.

Expected Outcome:

- 1.2 Establish a legislatively recognized council by July 2016.

Resource Needed:

- In order for the council to be effective, it will require the execution of recommendation #2 and its requested resources.

Recommendation #2: Establish a formal process for statewide integration of the CO9to25 Youth Development Council.

Purpose: By uniting collective interests and resources, changes in public and private planning and decision making will improve the health and well-being of youth across Colorado. In addition to maximizing existing resources, local representation can target youth specific needs for that region of the state.

Recommendation: To establish a strong statewide integration of the CO9to25 Youth Development Council, the Council should reexamine representation on CO9to25 statewide leadership committee to ensure there is equal representation of state and community stakeholders; ensure that an adequate number of youth are represented and intentionally engaged on the Council; and establish regional councils across the state. The youth development system shall be a sustainable and productive quality network of youth and adult partnerships statewide that will work to address youth indicators and provide training, support, and technical assistance to partners throughout the state.

Expected Outputs:

- 2.1 Update existing by-laws/policy to create regional representation.
- 2.2 CO9to25 Youth Development Council will provide ongoing, timely and thoughtful communication with stakeholders in rural and urban areas across Colorado.
- 2.3 Establish standards for Colorado PYD/youth engagement.
- 2.4 Promote Colorado Adolescent Developmental Guidelines in alignment with the new Early Childhood Developmental Guidelines.
- 2.5 Achieve systemic indicators as defined by CO9to25 Youth Development Council framework.

Expected Outcome:

2.6 Increase youth and adult connectedness: Percent of 9th grade to 12th grade students who report that if they had a serious problem, they know someone in or out of school whom they could talk to or go to for help; from 81.2% in 2013 to 86% by December 2018.¹¹

Resource Needed:

- Appropriate resources, including funding and supports, to establish the infrastructure for the youth system.
- Appropriate resources to create a web-based, user-friendly map of youth serving organizations and current youth data for each county.
- Establishment of CO9to25 Youth Development Council as the statutory authorized youth development system in Colorado.

Recommendation #3: Create a youth services division or branch within a State Department.

Purpose: A dedicated division or branch to coordinate funding and programmatic efforts between state agencies will increase the braiding and blending of existing funds and reduce fragmentation of efforts between departments.

Recommendation: The committee recommends the creation of a formal division or branch to coordinate efforts across state departments, and coordinate recommendations from the CO9to25 Youth Development Council across governmental systems. The location for this division or branch should be at the discretion of the Governor's office, however the committee recommends that the location not reside under any programs (such as child welfare, education, or youth prevention) to equally represent all youth efforts. This division or branch will also be responsible for serving as the channel through which any state funds dedicated to the CO9to25 Youth Development Council would flow, as well as identify funding opportunities that are restricted to state government. This group of state staff should be located at the level of division if under CDHS or branch if under CDPHE.

Expected Outputs:

- 3.1 Coordinate communication among committees and councils focused on youth issues; such as Behavioral Health Transformation Council, Colorado Youth Advisory Council, TGYS, Youth Partnership for Health, Advisory Council on Homeless Youth, Colorado Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice, Collaborative Management Program (CMP) State Steering Committee, Senate Bill 94, etc.
- 3.2 Make the necessary policy changes at the state, local and organizational levels that better align systems and incorporate a positive youth development approach.
- 3.3 Utilize performance management, such as C-Stat or other data outcomes, to assess the effectiveness and impact of the Statewide Youth Plan recommendations here within.

¹¹ Data from Healthy Kids Colorado Survey 2013 and goal established by CO9to25

3.4 Provide oversight of the backbone support organization to the CO9to25 Youth Development Council.

3.5 Ensure the work of Early Childhood Councils is connected to the work of the CO9to25 Youth Development Council.

Expected Outcome:

3.6 Establish an official division or branch by July 2016.

Resource Needed:

- Appropriate resources, including administrative staff and associated operating cost.
- An established location within a State Department.

Recommendation #4: Increase the number of programs and organizations across the state that are trained on and utilizing a positive youth development approach.

Purpose: Over time an investment in PYD will create a more resilient youth population, and as a result, increase the quality of youth responsiveness to assistances and services provided by the community and state.

Recommendation: Develop and implement a regionalized PYD training and technical assistance system for use across the state. This system should create standardized trainings on adolescent development, PYD, and family and youth leadership to incorporate into existing training systems of youth serving organizations. All organizations serving youth in Colorado should be trained on PYD.

Expected Outputs:

4.1 Professional Development Series composed of trainings, webinars and online PYD resources for communities.

4.2 A statewide training and technical assistance system for youth-serving programs.

Expected Outcome:

4.3 Develop a standardized training by January 2016.

4.4 Increase the number of youth serving organizations trained on PYD from under 50% to 80% by June 2017.

Resource Needed:

- Appropriate resources for the expanded development of standardized trainings, including web-based trainings and online PYD resources for communities.

Recommendation #5: Establish a review system to determine that youth-focused programs, organizations, and funding requests are efficient and effective.

Purpose: Assure that state and local community partners share accountability for promoting positive youth development.

Recommendation: Establish an endorsement (letter of support) system that certifies programs that are effectively integrating PYD strategies and practices and/or are making efficient funding request. The approval system would certify that organizations or programs are PYD trained,

incorporate PYD practices, and meet minimum criteria for any funding requests. The criteria would include, at a minimum, that programs are PYD focused, not duplicating known existing efforts, and attempting to collaborate with other youth serving organizations.

Expected Outputs:

5.1 CO9to25 Youth Development Council to establish policy on the process and requirements for an endorsement system.

Expected Outcome:

5.2 Develop a system by January 2016.

Resource Needed:

- Establishment of CO9to25 Youth Development Council as the official youth development system in Colorado.
- Appropriate resources, including funding and supports, for the development and implementation of the system.

Recommendation #6: Align funding across evidence-supported youth programs and services.

Purpose: Efficient funding targeted at proven programs will result in a reduction of wasteful spending and an increase in the number of youth and young adults served.

Recommendation: Authorize CO9to25 Youth Development Council to develop a process to conduct joint, cross-agency (state and community) budget planning for youth and family programs and services. This process should ensure that community priorities are represented in budget planning and that state level funds are braided across departments so community providers have accessible funds for services (similar to models in Wisconsin). In addition, funding should promote effective evidence-supported programs at the local and state level, and shift away from isolated, piecemeal programs towards programs that have a youth and family approach.

Expected Outputs:

6.1 A finance work group established by the CO9to25 Youth Development Council to recommend funding alignments and efficiency for youth services.

Expected Outcome:

6.2 Establish finance workgroup by January 2016.

Resource Needed:

- Establishment of CO9to25 Youth Development Council as the official youth development system in Colorado.

Recommendation #7: Expand eligibility and capacity of service systems to meet the comprehensive needs of young people.

Purpose: Adequate access to care will result in improved outcomes for the youth and reduce the amount of time spent in high-level system involvement.

Recommendation: While Colorado has made tremendous strides to increase access to care for a number of targeted groups in the youth population, such as Medicaid extension to age 26 for foster youth, there is additional work needed to ensure all youth, particularly youth experiencing homelessness and poverty, are both eligible for services and the health care system has the capacity to serve them in the community. Particularly needed is a means to address varying eligibility and age cut-offs across programs and significant timing gaps during transition.

Expected Outputs:

7.1 Coordination between experts (including youth) from existing system of care efforts and youth serving organizations.

Expected Outcome:

7.2 A comprehensive report on strategies and recommendations for improving service eligibility and capacity by June 2016. The report shall be submitted to the Executive Director of the State Department determined in recommendation #2.

Resource Needed:

- To be determined by a workgroup of subject matter experts, including youth.

Recommendation #8: Align data systems that impact youth and collect a common set of data indicators that are critical to youth and young adult well-being.

Purpose: Data is useful in helping to understand the needs and progress of youth as well as identifying gaps and priorities for action. In addition, for those youth involved in services provided by multiple organizations, it is necessary to share accurate information efficiently, appropriately, and in a timely manner to determine what services are needed, improve the integration of those services, and improve outcomes for youth.

Recommendation: Align data systems that impact youth and young adults on both the macro level (system and community) and micro level (youth and families). Macro level data, which informs policy and program development, needs to be collected more consistently across communities and cover the entire youth span, ages 9 to 25. Micro level data, client specific data, needs to be accessible for all relevant parties, via interoperability, in order to maximize the efficiency of service delivery and provide high quality level of care.

Expected Outputs:

- 8.1 Expand the youth surveillance system in Colorado to cover young adults up to age 25. This should be done in coordination with the Healthy Kids Colorado Survey and the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System.
- 8.2 Develop interoperability of direct services data systems managed by state agencies.
- 8.3 Expand use of the Colorado Authorization-Consent to Release Information, a cross-systems common authorization-consent form.
- 8.4 Review existing policy conflicts regarding individual privacy and data ownership.

Expected Outcome:

8.5 Policy developed by CO9to25 Youth Development Council to set data collection standards for youth and young adult related indicators by June 2016.

Resource Needed:

- Appropriate resources, including funding and supports, to develop an interoperable system for data and information sharing.

Recommendation #9: Increase public awareness of available youth services and organizations.

Purpose: Consumers (youth, families, and community serving organizations) need to be aware of the available resources as underutilization of existing services delay positive outcomes for youth and reduce funding efficiencies.

Recommendation: CO9to25 Youth Development Council shall develop a consumer-focused web-based information portal of available services for youth and families. The portal will serve as the home for the 300+ existing youth serving programs and the various committees identified during the statewide youth planning process as well as any organizations still to be identified. Any efforts to create a consumer friendly portal should first examine existing efforts, such as “Help Me Grow,” statewide mental health crisis hotline, and 2-1-1 Colorado.

Expected Outputs:

- 9.1 Create a public-facing, consumer-focused web-based listing of youth-serving programs.
- 9.2 Expand CO9to25’s existing work of creating a comprehensive map that identifies community youth serving organizations to include community, local and state organizations. The map should include key information about the youth serving organizations, such as current funding and number youth served.
- 9.3 Connect youth with youth-serving programs, and leadership and engagement opportunities (including advisory councils).

Expected Outcome:

9.4 Develop a phone/text and web-based interface public by June 2016.

Resource Needed:

- Appropriate resources to create and maintain a user friendly phone/text and web-based interface.

Preliminary Program-Related Focus Areas

The following recommendations are preliminary program-related focus areas of this plan. Three recommendations stemmed from subcommittees for homelessness, health and education. One stemmed from an identified gap that impacts multiple programs: a need for multi-system coordination. An additional recommendation was created out of the state and county responsibility as the legal

custodian for youth in foster care, residential care, and youth corrections. The Committee recognizes that there are a number of programs and initiatives that warrant attention and require further exploration through the CO9to25 system.

Recommendation #10: Create formalized multidisciplinary treatment teams in every community in Colorado.

Purpose: A multidisciplinary approach with one treatment plan for each youth/family is a best practice that results in better coordination between youth-serving organizations. In addition, this treatment approach is a more suitable and simplified approach for youth and their family.

Recommendation: Every community in Colorado should have access to a formalized multidisciplinary treatment team that includes youth and families. These programs should be youth and family centered with the youth being a key contributor in the development of their treatment plan. These programs should make effort to include families and other adults who have a positive role in the youth's life.

Expected Outputs:

- 10.1 Expand the number of CMPs that utilize youth as a key contributor in the process.
- 10.2 Expand the implementation of Care Management Entities (CMEs) as a cross system delivery model in Colorado for integrated youth behavioral health services.
- 10.3 Expand the implementation of High Fidelity Wraparound in Colorado in alignment with System of Care values and principles.

Expected Outcome:

- 10.4 All CMPs will have a process in place for authentic youth contribution by January 2016.
- 10.5 Increase the number of CMEs from 1 to 7 by July 2018.
- 10.6 Increase the number of multidisciplinary teams utilizing the High Fidelity Wraparound approach from 16 to 30 by July 2018.

Resource Needed:

- Appropriate resources for staffing and services of CMPs and CMEs.
- Appropriate resources at the local level so multidisciplinary teams can tailor services to the youth/family.

Recommendation #11: Improve the quality, availability and accessibility of services, supports and relationships to provide solutions to youth who are at risk for homelessness.

Purpose: Youth in Colorado are experiencing homelessness at an increasing rate and as a result their chances of success in education, health, and well-being are diminished. Ensuring that youth have access to affordable and stable homes linked to supportive services is one of the most important steps that can be taken to end youth homelessness. Multiple agencies have identified the need to address homelessness in their system, including education, behavioral health, juvenile justice, child welfare, economic security, and work force development.

Recommendation: Prevent and address youth experiencing homelessness by improving the quality, availability and accessibility of services, supports and relationships that provide solutions to homeless youth and those at risk of homelessness.

Expected Outputs:

- 11.1 Obtain appropriate funding for runaway and homeless youth to provide housing, case management, and supportive services.
- 11.2 Obtain appropriate funds for housing assistance that will provide a continuum of housing options for young adults experiencing homelessness or in jeopardy of becoming homeless.
- 11.3 Transition existing homeless outreach programs from a grant funded opportunity to a permanently funded programs.
- 11.4 Sustain and expand current paid internships and job skills programs for homeless youth that include financial literacy and asset building.

Expected Outcome:

- 11.5 Reduce the number of youth experiencing homelessness as measured by the annual Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Point in Time Homelessness Survey. In 2013 there were 1,765 homeless youth on any given night in Colorado; the goal is to achieve a 14% decrease to 1,517 youth by July 2016¹².

Resource Needed:

- Appropriate resources, including funding and supports, to provide supportive/practice housing options for youth experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness.
- Appropriate resources for additional supportive service capacity, case managers, and partner agencies to collaborate and provide direct services linked to housing.

Recommendation #12: Improve the well-being of youth and young adults who are in the care and/or custody of the state and counties.

Purpose: While all of Colorado’s youth is the responsibility of the community, a focus on improving the well-being for those youth who are in the custody of the county and state is especially pertinent. Improving their well-being will not only reduce long-term costs to the state, it will also improve the long-term outcomes for the youth currently living under the care of the public system.

Recommendation: Improve the well-being of youth who are in the care and/or custody of the state and counties; this includes youth in the foster care system and in youth corrections. Solutions to developing policy and practices should meaningfully include youth and integrates a PYD approach.

Expected Outputs:

- 12.1 Reduce over-reliance on psychotropic medications.
- 12.2 Ensure youth in (and exiting) foster care or youth corrections have permanent connections.

¹² Goal established by the Division of Housing, Office of Homeless Youth Services, Colorado Department of Local Affairs.

- 12.3 Identify sustainable funding for youth-driven mentoring and permanency models.
- 12.4 Institute a statewide coordinated response to the human trafficking of youth.
- 12.5 Partner with youth to collaboratively develop policy and practice, as established by Child Welfare's Pathways to Success plan, to ensure successful transition and prevent homelessness.
- 12.6 Improve secondary and post-secondary educational attainment of youth in or exiting foster care and youth corrections, i.e. existing collaborative efforts by Colorado Department of Education and CDHS to improve educational outcomes for youth in foster care.
- 12.7 Increase accessibility of services for families and youth with developmental disabilities without having to relinquish to the child welfare system.
- 12.8 Work in collaboration to increase access to mental health and substance abuse treatment services and in-home family services for youth transitioning from youth corrections, especially for youth in rural areas.

Expected Outcomes:

- 12.9 Increase the percentage of children and youth who are legally free for adoption that achieve permanency from 92.2% in July 2014 to 98% by January 2016.
- 12.10 Youth in the Division of Youth Corrections (DYC) will be enrolled in a full/part time program at discharge (education, employment, or other form of pro-social community engagement) 85% of the time for three consecutive months by January 2016.

Resource Needed:

- Appropriate resources to implement new innovative recruitment models for permanency.

Recommendation #13: Provide educational alternatives and wraparound supports for youth with complex needs.

Purpose: Generic traditional educational approaches to youth with complex needs often result in greater achievement gaps and poorer long-term outcomes for these youth. Poor educational attainment and lack of workplace skills decreases the economic security of the youth over their lifetime and adversely impacts the state and local economy.

Recommendation: Provide educational alternatives, training opportunities, and wraparound supports for youth with complex needs in order to close the achievement gap, including youth experiencing school and college disruptions, homelessness, poverty, foster care, youth corrections, or special education needs as well as addressing the needs of other underserved populations. Efforts should intentionally focus on reducing gender, racial, and ethnic disparities.

Expected Outputs:

- 13.1 Implement re-engagement system of supports for out-of-school and unemployed youth.

- 13.2 Provide support for alternative education and training, such as General Education Development (GED), concurrent enrollment, career and technical education, remediation, and credit recovery.
- 13.3 Enhance support for innovative student engagement strategies including Next Generation Learning and service-learning.
- 13.4 Partner with youth to create strategic cross-systems identification and wraparound supports for youth with complex needs.
- 13.5 Strategically engage families, community organizations, youth and business partners to target supports to youth who are behind in learning and training, and/or who have been traditionally underserved.
- 13.6 Enhance and expand Preschool-20 Individual and Career and Academic Plans, inclusive of financial literacy, digital literacy, vertical transitions, postsecondary/work force exposure, exploration and readiness.
- 13.7 Expand access to digital technology and digital literacy.

Expected Outcomes:

- 13.8 Reduce the dropout rate from 2.5% in 2012 to 2.2% by July 2018.
- 13.9 Increase Colorado's graduation rate from 78.5% in 2012 to 86% in 2016 with the goal of 90% by July 2018.
- 13.10 Increase the number of certificates and degrees (two-year and four-year) earned by Colorado residents from 54,041 in 2012 to 60,041 by July 2018.

Resource Needed:

- Enhanced data sharing practices between state agencies, non-profit and for-profit partners, and practitioners.
- Appropriate resources, including funding and supports, for education and work force development services.
- Appropriate resources for interagency coordination of services.

Recommendation #14: Strengthen strategies for a youth friendly health system.

Purpose: Youth and young adults in Colorado must have the opportunity to attain their full health potential. It is important that the health care system strategically engage youth in an effort to increase their investment in their behavioral, medical, sexual and dental health. In addition to having healthier citizens, improved youth health has a positive impact on the overall health system and community.

Recommendation: The existing collaboration between the health system with the community, youth, and state agencies should strengthen strategies for developing a health care system that is strategic in their comprehensive and holistic approach to youth and young adults as well as increase their engagement to the system.

Expected Outputs:

- 14.1 Enhance the annual well-health check for youth and young adults to be all encompassing of a youth's health and adopt national best standards.
- 14.2 Develop or adopt best practice guidelines on youth and young adult health care, including a CO9to25 Youth Development Council certification for health care practices and a guide for youth and young adults about their health care rights.
- 14.3 Collaborate with statewide health professional trade associations and training institutions to include youth and young adult best practice guidelines in the training of health care providers in Colorado (medical, dental, sexual and behavioral health).
- 14.4 Partner with youth to explore innovative approaches for youth to engage in shaping their own health.
- 14.5 Increase integration of behavioral health care services with housing assistance and programs that are clinically and developmentally appropriate.

Expected Outcome:

- 14.6 By 2019, move from 61% (2012 data) to 80% of eligible Medicaid youth ages 10 years to 20 years receiving annual well health checks.

Resources Needed:

- Establish a Youth and Young Adult Health Work Group of the CO9to25 Youth Development Council to coordinate implementation of recommendations or outputs.
- Appropriate resources and supports to work on the development of the Colorado Best Practice Guidelines for Youth and Young Adult Health.
- Resources to involve youth in peer-to-peer advocacy and developing strategies for increasing youth participation in annual well-health checks.

V. WORK PLAN

Rec #	Recommendation Title	Page #	Lead Party	Affiliated Parties	Due Date
1	Establish a legislatively recognized Colorado Council on youth development	11	CDHS	CDPHE	07/2015
2	Establish a formal process for statewide integration of the CO9to25 Youth Development Council.	12	CO9to25	OCYF, CDPHE	07/2015
	Increase youth and adult connectedness to 86%.				12/2018
3	Create a youth services division or branch within a State Department.	13			01/2016
4	Increase the number of programs and organizations across the state that are trained on and utilizing a positive youth development approach.	14	CO9to25		06/2017
	Developed standardized training on PYD				01/2016
	80% of youth serving organizations trained on PYD				06/2017
5	Establish a review system to determine that youth-focused programs, organizations, and funding requests are efficient and effective.	14	CO9to25		01/2016
6	Align funding across evidence-supported youth programs and services.	15	CDHS	HCPF, Judicial, CO9to25	07/2018
	Establish finance workgroup				01/2016
7	Expand eligibility and capacity of service systems to meet the comprehensive needs of young people.	15	HCPF	CDHS, CO9to25	07/2018
	A comprehensive report on strategies and recommendations for improving service eligibility and capacity				06/2016
8	Align data systems that impact youth and collect a common set of data indicators that are critical to youth and young adult well-being.	16	CHDS	GOIT, state depts, judicial, providers, etc	07/2018
	Set data collection standards for youth related indicators				06/2016
9	Increase public awareness of available youth services and organizations.	17	CO9to25	CDHS, HCPF	06/2016
	Create web-based interface public				06/2016
10	Create formalized multidisciplinary treatment teams in every community in Colorado.	18	CDHS	CO9to25, CDE, CDPHE, HCPF	01/2017
	35 CMPs will have a process in place for authentic youth contribution				01/2016
	Increase the number of CMEs to 7				07/2018
	30 multidisciplinary teams utilizing the High Fidelity Wraparound approach				07/2018
11	Improve the quality, availability and accessibility of services, supports and relationships to provide solutions to youth who are at risk for homelessness.	18	CDLA	CO9to25, CDPHE, CDHS	07/2018
	Reduce the number of youth experiencing homelessness to 1,517				07/2016
12	Improve the well-being of youth and young adults who are in the care and/or custody of the state and counties.	19	CDHS	CO9to25	01/XXXX
	98% of children and youth who are legally free for adoption to achieve permanency				01/2016
	For 3 consecutive months, 85% of youth discharge from DYC to a full-time or part-time program				01/2016
13	Provide educational alternatives and wraparound supports for youth with complex needs.	20	CDE, CDHE	CO9to25, CDHS	07/2018
	Reduce the dropout rate to 2.2%				07/2018
	Increase the graduation rate to 86%				07/2016
	Increase the number of certificates and degrees to 60,041		CDHE		7/2018
14	Strengthen strategies for a youth friendly health system.	21	CDPHE	HCPF, CO9to25	01/2019
	80% of eligible Medicaid youth ages 10 to 20 receiving an annual periodic health screening				01/2019

CDE – Colorado Department of Education
 CDHE – Colorado Department of Higher Education
 CDHS – Colorado Department of Human Services
 CDLA – Colorado Department of Local Affairs
 CDPHE – Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
 GOIT – Governor’s Office of Information and Technology
 HCPF – Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing

VI. APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. Committee and Work Group Participants and Presenters

Committee Participants

A number of individuals participated in the Committee meetings and contributed to the development of the Colorado Statewide Youth Development Plan:

Youth Participants

Yashna Eswaran, Children, Youth and Families Branch, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
Abriil Gallegos, St. Mary's Academy
Alysh Lynch, Kaiser Permanente
Kendra Martin, Bridging the Gap, Mile High United Way
Donovan Martinez, Kaiser Permanente
Marisa Mendoza, Division of Housing, Office of Homeless Youth Services, Colorado Department of Local Affairs
P.J. Sykes, Division of Housing, Office of Homeless Youth Services, Colorado Department of Local Affairs

Adult Participants

Mary Berg, Jefferson County Human Services
Audra Bishop, Prevention Services Division, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
Elizabeth Brophy, Rocky Mountain Children's Law Center
Cody Buchanan, Office of Dropout Prevention and Engagement, Colorado Department of Education
Cori Canty, Office of Dropout Prevention, Colorado Department of Education
Bob Coulson, Division of Child Welfare, Colorado Department of Human Services
Betsy Fordyce, Rocky Mountain Children's Law Center
Andrew Gabor, Office of Behavioral Health, Colorado Department of Human Services
Sharon Hamilton, Educate2Protect
Kay Hardy, Lutheran Family and Children Services
Charlie Lippolis, Colorado Psychiatric Association
Amber Leytem, Denver Public Health
David Mok-Lamme, Karis, Inc., The House
Beth Owen, Foster Care/Flexible Families Supervisor, Adoption Options
Susan Payne, Safe2Tell, Colorado Department of Law
Melanie Reece, Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Finance
Gina Robinson, Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Finance
Gretchen Russo, Division of Child Welfare, Colorado Department of Human Services
Gully Stanford, College in Colorado, Colorado Department of Higher Education
Kira Suurvarik, Juvenile Assessment Center, 18th Judicial District
Kerry Swenson, Division of Child Welfare, Colorado Department of Human Services
Dawn Taylor Owens, College in Colorado, Colorado Department of Higher Education
Kathryn Wells, MD, Denver Health and The Kempe Center

Work Groups

Housing and Homelessness Work Group: Advisory Committee on Homeless Youth

Youth:

Marisa Mendoza, Office of Homeless Youth Services, Division of Housing, Colorado Department of Local Affairs

Adults:

Bill Bane, Office of Behavior Health
Georgina Becerril, Denver Department of Human Services
Jennifer Bramstedt, Comitis Youth Shelter
Brian Brant, Division of Child Welfare, Colorado Department of Human Services
Minna Castillo Cohen, Mile High United Way
Kippi Clausen, Unfolding Directions
Claire Clurman, Attention Homes
Bob Coulson, Division of Child Welfare, Colorado Department of Human Services
Amy Coy, Shiloh House
Abby Eno, Colorado Youth for a Change
Betsy Fordyce, Rocky Mountain Children's Law Center
Susan Garcia, Garfield Department of Human Services
Autumn Gold, Office of Homeless Youth Services, Division of Housing, Colorado Department of Local Affairs

Perry May, Devereux
John Mok Lamme, Karis, Inc., The House
Denise McHugh, Spark Policy and Colorado Rural Collaborative for Runaway and Homeless Youth
Erin Medina, Mile High United Way
Melissa Moran, Comitis Youth Shelter
Moises Munoz, Children's Hospital Colorado
Peter Pike, Colorado Disability Benefits Support Program
Kendall Rames, Urban Peak of Denver and Colorado Springs
Misty Ruthven, Task Force for Higher Education for Homeless Student
Tammy Schneiderman, Division of Youth Corrections, Colorado Department of Human Services
Cheryl Secorski, United Way of Weld County
Dana Scott, Colorado Division of Education
Raven Smith, Posada
Ann Sullivan, Boulder County Department of Housing and Human Services

Education Work Group

Youth:

Yashna Eswaran, Youth Advisor, Children, Youth and Families Branch, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
Nkem Nwanko, Youth Advisor, Children, Youth and Families Branch, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

Adults:

Beth Bean, Colorado Department of Higher Education
Alecia Brown, Family Leader, Family Leadership Training Institute
Cody Buchanan, Office of Dropout Prevention and Engagement, Colorado Department of Education
Cori Canty, Office of Dropout Prevention and Engagement, Colorado Department of Education
Jan Carroll, Colorado State University Extension
Bob Coulson, Division of Child Welfare, Colorado Department of Human Services
Kristen Melton, Rocky Mountain Children's Law Center
Misti Ruthven, Office of Postsecondary Readiness, Colorado Department of Education
Gully Sanford, College in Colorado, Colorado Department of Higher Education

Youth and Young Adult Health Work Group

Youth:

Yashna Eswaran, Youth Advisor, Children, Youth and Families Branch, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
Siman Gnagy, Community Health Action Team (Kaiser Permanente and Colorado Education Initiative)
Esteia Marmolejo-Daher, Community Health Action Team (Kaiser Permanente and Colorado Education Initiative)
Dmitri Milovidov, Community Health Action Team (Kaiser Permanente and Colorado Education Initiative)
Nkem Nwankwo, Youth Advisor, Children, Youth and Families Branch, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
Danielle Perez, Community Health Action Team (Kaiser Permanente and Colorado Education Initiative)
Yeshra Perez, Community Health Action Team (Kaiser Permanente and Colorado Education Initiative)
Trevor Sanders, Community Health Action Team (Kaiser Permanente and Colorado Education Initiative)
Steven Rastrelli, Community Health Action Team (Kaiser Permanente and Colorado Education Initiative)
Lucy Reyes, Community Health Action Team (Kaiser Permanente and Colorado Education Initiative)
Saul Romero, Community Health Action Team (Kaiser Permanente and Colorado Education Initiative)
Madison Thompson, CO9to25 Youth Advisor

Adults:

Alecia Brown, Family Leader, Family Leadership Training Institute
Deborah Foote, Oral Health Colorado
Meredith Henry, Colorado Department of Health care Policy and Financing
Shannon Huska, Colorado Department of Health care Policy and Financing
Amber Leytem, Denver Public Health
Gina Robinson, Colorado Department of Health care Policy and Financing
Samuel Wood, Educations Theatre Programs, Community Benefits and Relations, Kaiser Permanente

Presenters by Topic

National and Federal Youth Development Efforts

Elizabeth Gains, Forum for Youth Investment

Behavioral Health

Bill Bane, Children, Youth, and Family Mental Health Programs, Office of Behavioral Health, Colorado Department of Human Services

Erin Elder, The Colorado Education Initiative

Claudia Zundel, Child, Adolescent and Family Services, Office of Behavioral Health, Colorado Department of Human Services

Child Welfare

Andrew Johnson, Youth Services Unit, Division of Child Welfare, Office of Children Youth and Families, Colorado Department of Human Services

Betsy Fordyce, Rocky Mountain Law Center

Colorado 9to25

Anne-Marie Braga, Children, Youth and Families Branch, Prevention Services Division, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

Education

Beth Bean, Colorado Department of Higher Education

Judith Martinez, Dropout Prevention and Engagement, Colorado Department of Education

Misti Ruthven, Office of Postsecondary Readiness, Colorado Department of Education

Family Leadership

Eileen Forlenza, Prevention Services Division, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

Health

Melanie Reece, Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Finance

Gina Robinson, Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Finance

Housing and Homelessness

Autumn Gold, Division of Housing, Office of Homeless Youth Services, Colorado Department of Local Affairs

Marisa Mendoza, Youth Intern Division of Housing, Office of Homeless Youth Services, Colorado Department of Local Affairs

P.J. Sykes, Youth Intern, Division of Housing, Office of Homeless Youth Services, Colorado Department of Local Affairs

Human Trafficking

Sharon Hamilton, Educate2 Protect

Juvenile Assessment Centers

Jeff McDonald, Jefferson County Juvenile Assessment Center

Kira Suurvarik, Juvenile Assessment Center, 18th Judicial District

Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

Anna Lopez, Office of Adult and Juvenile Justice Assistance, Division of Criminal Justice, Colorado Department of Public Safety

Juvenile Probation

Susan Colling, State Court Administrator Office, Colorado Judicial Branch

Sharon Sandoval, Probation Supervisor, State Court Administrator's Office, Colorado Judicial Branch

Safety

Christine Harms, School Safety Resource Center, Colorado Department of Public Safety

Jan Hart, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

Susan Payne, Safe2Tell, Colorado Department of Law

Youth Corrections

Al Estrada, Division of Youth Corrections, Office of Children, Youth and Families, Colorado Department of Human Services

Youth Development Institute

Betsy Kummer, The Partnership for Families and Children

Facilitators

Ashley Denault, Spark Policy

Denise McHugh, Spark Policy

Natalie Portman-Marsh, Spark Policy

Ana Soler, The Civic Canopy

Mae Thompson, The Civic Canopy

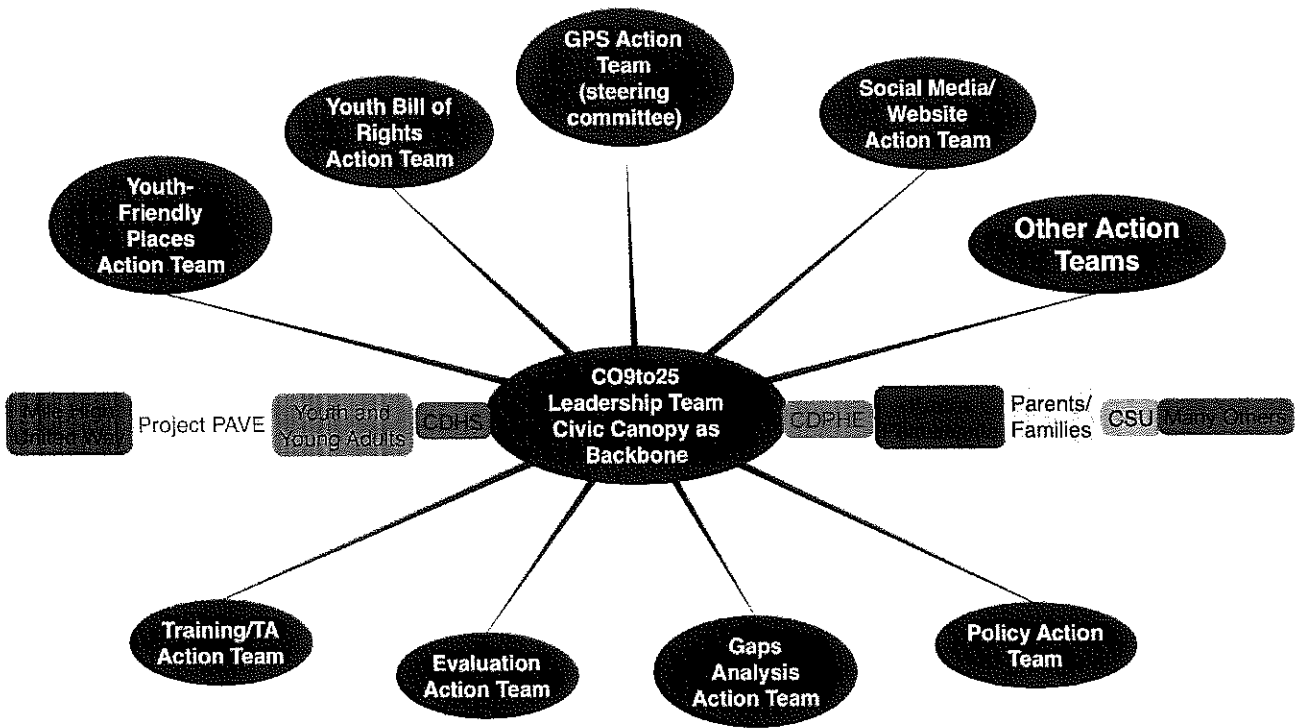
Lorena Zimmer, Spark Policy

APPENDIX B. Current CO9to25 Structure

Who is involved with this effort?

Youth and young adults, families, public and private, state, local and community leaders including the Colorado Departments of Public Health and Environment; Public Safety; Human Services; Education; Higher Education; Labor and Employment; Local Affairs; and Health Care Policy and Financing; local public health and human service and community-based organizations. For a complete list, please visit www.co9to25.org.

The CO9to25 structure



CO9to25 Action Teams are responsible for implementing portions of the CO9to25 Action Plan. They are groups of 8-10 people co-led by an adult and youth and managed by The Civic Canopy.