



# Opportunity Reboot

**POSITIVE DISRUPTION IN ACTION**  
**THE OPPORTUNITY REBOOT TOOLKIT**

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# CREDITS

This toolkit was made possible thanks to the time, talents, and contributions of many individuals as well as the partnering organizations.

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## ABOUT YOUTHPRISE AND SEARCH INSTITUTE

Youthprise is a Minneapolis-based non-profit intermediary organization whose mission is to increase equity with and for Minnesota's Indigenous, low-income, and racially diverse youth. [www.youthprise.org](http://www.youthprise.org)

Search Institute is a Minneapolis-based non-profit that partners with organizations to conduct and apply research that promotes positive youth development and advances equity. [www.searchinstitute.org](http://www.searchinstitute.org)

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SIF received funding from 2010 to 2016 from CNCS, a federal agency that engages millions of Americans in service through its AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and Volunteer Generation Fund programs, and leads the nation's volunteer and service efforts. Using public and private resources to find and grow community-based nonprofits with evidence of results, SIF intermediaries received funding to award subgrants that focus on overcoming challenges in economic opportunity, healthy futures, and youth development. Although CNCS made its last SIF intermediary awards in fiscal year 2016, SIF intermediaries have continued to administer their subgrant programs until their federal funding is exhausted.

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# INTRODUCTION

The number of young people living in the margins of society—disconnected from work and school, or isolated from family—reflects one of the most pressing social inequities of our time. A 2018 study found that an estimated one in nine youth ages 16 to 24 were out of work and school in the United States (Burd-Sharps & Lewis, 2018). That ratio certainly grows in socially and economically challenging times, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic. Young people in these circumstances often face a large range of complex and stacked issues, such as homelessness, chemical dependency, mental health challenges, learning disabilities, and health disparities perpetrated by persistent systemic barriers. For Black, Indigenous, and Youth of Color these realities are exacerbated even further by systemic racism deeply embedded in U.S. policies, practices, and narratives.

It is easy to be discouraged and dismayed by the data and the accompanying real-life stories, and yet there is cause for a great deal of hope. The trajectories for many of these young people can be positively disrupted by surrounding them with a cohesive web of support that not only provides access to important resources, but also spaces where their strengths are seen and leveraged. This toolkit is rooted in that hope. By reframing the narrative from a deficit- and risk-based perspective to one of possibility, *Positive Disruption in Action: The Opportunity Reboot Toolkit* is designed to help program leaders, implementers, and coordinating team members push beyond standard solutions to create more effective pathways to school, career, and life success for *14-24 year old opportunity youth*.<sup>1</sup> Developed with community-based advisors who offer workforce development programs including wraparound supports, research highlights, stories, strategic concepts, and practical strategies that grew out of a multi-year innovation initiative fusing together positive youth development and workforce development. In the process, it disrupted disconnection and rebooted a positive future for young people.



<sup>1</sup>See page 16 for a definition of terms used throughout this resource

# WHAT IS OPPORTUNITY REBOOT?

Opportunity Reboot (OR) is one effort within a larger strategy by Youthprise, a Minneapolis-based non-profit whose mission is to increase equity with and for Minnesota's Indigenous, low-income, and racially diverse youth. With funding from the Social Innovation Fund (SIF), a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), Youthprise launched the first OR cohort in 2016 with six subgrantee programs.<sup>2</sup> The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development ([DEED](#)) – Office of Youth Development, [Search Institute](#) and the [MENTOR Minnesota](#) were key partners in the initiative, providing technical assistance to the sites as well research and evaluation of the initiative as a whole.

The long-term goals of OR are to support opportunity youth to sustain living wage employment, achieve stable housing, establish a web of social capital, and contribute to their communities. Achieving these goals depends on a collaborative approach deeply rooted in both youth development and economic opportunity principles and practices. Young people need access to high-quality programs and services that help them develop holistically, rather than having to navigate multiple systems. For this to be possible, programs in different sectors need shared sets of approaches, principles, and interventions through which they engage young people and set them on a path towards economic stability and independence.



Despite growing evidence of the critical need to link technical, academic, and social-emotional development to prepare young people to enter the workforce effectively (Aspen Institute, 2019), most intervention efforts targeting opportunity youth remain largely siloed, with the implicit assumption that youth will access different programs for different needs.

To achieve an integrated, wraparound context, OR initiative and program partners developed, tested, and improved a multi-pronged program enhancement model with four key features, each linked by research to educational achievement and career development. The four features are:



**Positive Mentoring Relationships**



**Coordinated Career Pathway Supports**



**Responsive Individualized Goal Supports**



**Impactful Cross-Sector Partnerships**

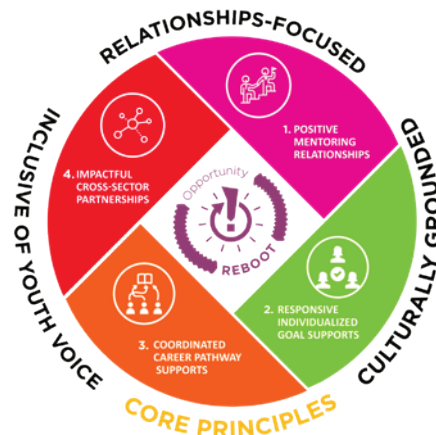
<sup>2</sup>A full list of the Cohort 1 programs can be found on page 16.

Drawing on the available scientific evidence, these four key features were identified as the cornerstone of Opportunity Reboot. The innovation is the consolidation of these activities into a single model and the provision of support to integrate these enhancements into existing programs. The model was created with community-based agencies in Minnesota, MENTOR Minnesota, and DEED to build collaborative, community-based approaches to address educational and social obstacles that opportunity youth face. Search Institute served as the independent evaluator.

The wraparound nature of the model is designed to inherently respond to the multiple and complex needs of opportunity youth. The four features work in concert to provide opportunity youth with the full range of supports that they need to experience improved educational and career attainment. The innovation does not lie in any one of the features, each of which, alone, already has preliminary or moderate evidence of impact on important youth development outcomes. Rather, the innovation comes from partners being intentionally supported through technical assistance and training to infuse the model into existing programming, to implement each model feature, and to be part of a learning community.

This technical assistance, peer learning community, and program enhancement model leverages the existing capacity and strengths of community programs to more effectively create pathways to school, career, and life success. This approach expands services and integrates an intentional, systemic focus on the four key features. The rest of this introduction focuses on the infrastructure that undergirds the approach, and how to assess and prepare for readiness to undertake a “system reboot.” If instead you want to start with developing a more in-depth understanding of the features, you can start here.

In addition to integrating the model into programming, OR partners worked with Youthprise and Search Institute to conduct an implementation and preliminary impact evaluation. The implementation evaluation provided an understanding of the contextual differences in how the model worked in practical terms in geographically and culturally diverse communities and with young people experiencing varying and complex needs. The findings from the preliminary impact evaluation demonstrate that the OR model has strong preliminary evidence of impact on key developmental and employment outcomes for participants (Syvertsen et al., 2020).



*The findings from the preliminary impact evaluation demonstrate that the OR model has strong preliminary evidence of impact on key developmental and employment outcomes for participants.*

# WHAT MAKES OPPORTUNITY REBOOT WORK?

In the first five years of OR, the six community-based partners served nearly 1,500 youth, placing 634 of them in jobs, supporting 337 of them in retaining employment for more than six months, and helping 492 of them earn credentials or certification in high demand local industries. Additionally, 79 percent of these young people said their program worked to meet their personal needs and 81 percent said their program helped them identify what they are good at and where they may need help. From a program perspective, leaders in all participating programs said that using the model helped them establish new beneficial collaborations to support opportunity youth.

A variety of factors contribute to the effectiveness of this approach. A number of the OR program partners have at least a partial focus on construction fields (e.g., roofing, carpentry, electrical), so let's use a scaffolding metaphor to think about how the model works. At the very base is the philosophy described on page 6. The next layer or level of support and access is formed by three guiding principles:

***“A key to the project’s success was an unwavering willingness to make sure that young people remained at the center...”***

*-from OR program report*



## **1. Inclusive of youth voice**

Opportunity youth come into relationships and into programs with a wealth of life experience, including survival skills. Many of them bring a healthy dose of skepticism to even the most well-intentioned offers of “help.” To authentically engage opportunity youth, then, it is critical that adults share power and keep youth at the center of all decisions. As one OR program reflected in their final report, “A key to the project’s success was an unwavering willingness to make sure that young people remained at the center – and that the decisions that were made were about how to get the most resources to – and achieve the best results for – youth. Although this seems like it should be the focus of all youth development efforts, experience has found that this is not always the case.”

## **2. Relationships-focused**

Mentoring is one of the features of the model, but relationship building and connecting are threads that run through all successful work with opportunity youth. We all need relationships in our lives that support us, challenge us, and help us grow. Opportunity youth are no different. Furthermore, relationships can be even more important when other systems and supports have failed young people. There is great truth in, “it’s who you know,” and having limited



access to social capital can limit many opportunities. Add unjust systems and under-resourced communities to the list of barriers, and you quickly see that relationships become paramount to ensuring success for youth who have the odds stacked against them.

### 3. Culturally grounded

Culture is a term that gets used a lot, often in misleading ways. Culture refers to shared patterns of behaviors and interactions, ways of thinking and knowing, and understandings that are learned by socialization. In working with opportunity youth, adults often must suspend judgment, examine their own implicit biases, understand how systemic issues are at play with different impacts in different contexts, and understand culture “below the surface” (see resource links on page 16).

Being culturally grounded is both about understanding the people you’re working with, and also about constant internal self-reflection. It includes supporting young people in developing strong cultural identities, and giving them a chance to examine their often unwritten rules or beliefs about adults. Culture clashes are inevitable, and it’s important to be prepared for that. Being culturally grounded in youth work practices includes seeking to understand the life experiences of young people, their histories, their stories, and their ways of moving through the world.

When engaging with opportunity youth it likely requires an understanding of the impact of trauma, of the unique type of survival resilience that comes from homelessness, disengagement, and disenfranchisement. It also means rejecting “the fallacy of reading the book and being stamped culturally competent,” as one program staff member put it. “You can know a people and a culture, but that’s different from knowing individual people and where they’ve come from and who they are today,” reflected another.

There is no one right way to build cultural competence and to ground programming in culture; there are many. It needs to include individual as well as organizational awareness and prioritization. For white people in the United States it looks different than it does for Black, Indigenous and People of Color. As such, programs took different approaches, all of which can be pieces of the puzzle.





For example:

- One program works with a significant population of refugees. They reached out to a cultural organization in the community who provided information they could share with staff, mentors, partners, and others on the history of that diaspora.
- One program studies the culture of youth, and youth experiencing homelessness in particular, as well as chemical dependency.
- One program works intentionally to teach practices that have been lost to Native youth, including working with elders in their community to better understand the historical and cultural roots of the work they are doing in green energy and food security.
- Several of the programs prioritize hiring staff members and recruiting volunteers who share similar backgrounds to the young people they serve.

Layered on these three principles are four key activities that form the next level of the scaffold of OR programming:

- ① **Education programming to ensure youth obtain a high school diploma or GED;**
- ② **Enrolling/co-enrolling youth in post-secondary programs relevant to their career interest;**
- ③ **Providing supporting services to ensure basic needs are met that support education/career goals; and**
- ④ **Helping youth secure industry-recognized credentials in high-demand local industries.**

# HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT: START WITH A SOLID FOUNDATION

This resource may be helpful to you if you:

- lead an organization that supports opportunity youth;
- are a funder committed to initiating or sustaining programs that support opportunity youth; and or
- are part of a system or community that seeks to mobilize public and private resources to grow the collective work of creating career pathways for youth who are disconnected from education and employment.

We've compiled and synthesized a range of tools to bridge best practices in youth development and workforce development in order to more effectively create structures to support school, career, and life success for young people. You'll find example strategies, resources, tools, ideas, and reflections from partner programs. The tools and content provided are primarily adaptations or actual versions of materials developed by one of more of the programs or their partners. Some are additional resources that have been identified through the evaluation process or by the technical assistance providers. As of publication, all links and references are currently active and/or in print.

While we have much to share, we cannot give you a single, one-size-fits-all blueprint. This work requires an ongoing commitment to listening, learning, growth, and adaptation. It does not happen quickly or easily. It is a process of building, and sometimes remodeling. With any construction project, in addition to having the right tools, it is critical to understand the environment you're building upon or in, to assemble a team that combined has the skills and knowledge you need, to know what materials you're working with, and to have a shared understanding of the desired end result. In this section, we've highlighted four questions to ask before laying your first brick.



*This work requires an ongoing commitment to listening, learning, growth, and adaptation. It does not happen quickly or easily. It is a process of building, and sometimes remodeling.*



### **1. THE ENVIRONMENT: How does the philosophy fit with the culture of your organization?**

As discussed, OR begins with a philosophy: that opportunity youth are whole beings who have been failed by many people, institutions, and systems around them; who have within them power and potential for growth and change; who have as much to teach as they do to learn; and who deserve the same rights, opportunities, and privileges as anyone else. Successful OR programs build organizational cultures based on that philosophy. They do this in myriad ways that are relevant and realistic for their contexts, including:

- Extensive staff on-boarding and ongoing training focused on housing first and other stabilizing approaches, harm reduction, trauma-informed practice, addressing chemical dependency, understanding refugee and immigrant communities, youth-adult partnership, relationship building, and more.
- Staff book clubs, both as team building and education, including paid time each day for reading.
- Regular team meetings in the style of medical grand rounds, where all practitioners providing services to or in relationships with opportunity youth meet to share concerns, ideas, and insights.
- A focus on radical transparency, meaning no decision is made or action taken with regard to a young person without the input of that young person.

Any program seeking to grow or expand an OR model needs to take a deep internal reflective look at its organizational values and priorities before launching into specific details.

## 2. THE TEAM: How will you ensure you have the human capital you need for success?

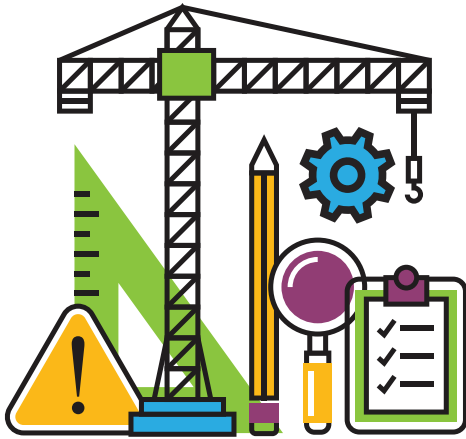
In the words of one OR initiative partner, “You don’t just think this is a good idea and go do it.” You need knowledge, skills, connections, and more.” But you don’t need to start from scratch and build it all internally within your organization. You can start with assessing readiness (see worksheet on page 17), including what you have in-house as well as networks you have in your community and beyond that you can draw upon. Youthprise, for example, knew when launching the OR initiative that they had to collaborate with people and organizations that had expertise in research and evaluation (Search Institute), mentoring (MENTOR MN), and youth employment (DEED). They had relationships within each of these entities that they could leverage to form a real partnership and shared investment. The result was a highly impactful collaboration that is sustainable. Had any of those organizations tried to go it alone the results would have been disappointing at best.

If you are thinking about starting a program for opportunity youth, or remodeling an existing one, here are things to think about when it comes to inclusion:

- Which existing relationships and connections can you leverage? Which need to be built?
- Who will be responsible for implementing any changes made through this process? How will you ensure they are equipped and “bought in” to the work?
- Who else might be on the margins of this work, but still care about it? Can/should they be brought into? If so, how will you do that?







### 3. THE MATERIALS: How equipped are you to launch an Opportunity Reboot program?

OR is built around current research and wisdom about disrupting detrimental and even destructive pathways, and helping to create and support constructive, life-enhancing ones for opportunity youth. It is critical to understand where you're starting out in order to know where to begin making change. By assessing readiness using the tool on page 17, you can identify areas of strength to build upon and areas of growth to focus on. Before doing that, however, consider the type of effort you're undertaking and how that might impact your approach:

- ☐ **New construction**—If you are starting with a clean slate, rather than using the tool on page 17 to assess readiness, you can use it as a guide to help you design your new structure.
- ☐ **A remodel of a solid existing structure**—If you are fairly satisfied with your current situation, but are wanting to add or expand, the self-assessment can help you identify areas for targeted expansion or improvement.
- ☐ **Massive repairs or teardown required**—If you have a situation where your current structure is unstable or otherwise in crisis, it's important to identify and address the fundamental problems before moving forward. OR is an enhancement model and as such, needs to stand on firm, stable ground.

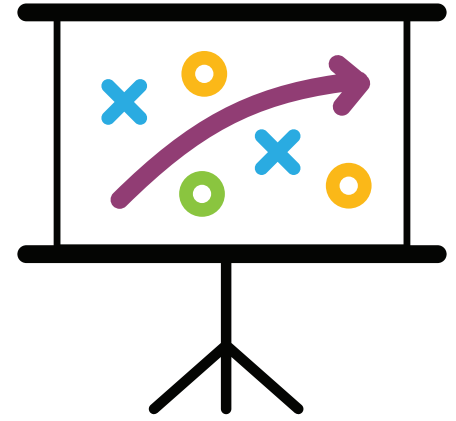
#### 4. DESIGN: What's your final, hoped-for product and initial plan for how to get from here to there?

After completing a self-assessment and deciding to move forward with an OR approach, a helpful next step is to get clarity about the final product you desire. This can take the form of a program charter, which may include a vision statement, a mission statement, and the scope of the projects and its participants. Ultimately you may want to develop a theory of change and/or a logic model. A theory of change describes the high level strategic components of an initiative. A logic model shows the relationship between activities and intended outcomes.

As shown on page 15, the overall OR logic model provides an extensive overview of all the elements of the model. On the left side, it articulates the core principles it draws on as well as the specific resources and structures (inputs) it uses to achieve its goals. On the right side, it shows the short-term, intermediate term, and longer-term outcomes that the OR model seeks to achieve. In between, it describes the kinds of activities, relationships, and programs that are offered that produce outputs that logically lead to growth toward those outcomes.

This logic model is, admittedly, more complicated than you may need, as it unified a theory across six different programs. However, it shows clear connections across the diverse programs and contexts in ways that they could share with and learn from each other using a shared language and framework.

The planning guide on pages 18-23 is designed to reflect on the current status of your programs based on best practices around each of the key features of Opportunity Reboot. Pages 24 and 25 then offer questions and a template for designing your own logic model based on the strengths, challenges, and aspirations present for your own young people, your community, and your organization.



# OPPORTUNITY REBOOT LOGIC MODEL

CORE PRINCIPLES	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES	INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES	LONGER TERM OUTCOMES
<p><b>Culturally grounded</b></p> <p><b>Relationships-focused</b></p> <p><b>Inclusive of youth voice</b></p>	<p><b>Feature 1: Positive Mentoring Relationships</b></p> <p><b>Concept 1A.</b> Program staff engaged with youth adopt a mentoring mindset grounded in best practices of culturally responsive informal mentoring and relationship building.</p> <p><b>Concept 1B.</b> Youth are prepared for the mentoring experience and develop skills to identify and engage informal mentors.</p> <p><b>Feature 2: Responsive Individualized Goal Supports</b></p> <p><b>Concept 2A.</b> Programs assess youth's needs and strengths.</p> <p><b>Concept 2B.</b> Youth develop an individualized education and work plan in achieving their goals with assistance from program staff.</p> <p><b>Concept 2C.</b> Programs support youth in tracking progress, recognizing and learning from setbacks, and reaching their goals.</p>	<p>90% of staff who work directly with youth have participated in the <i>Maximize Your Impact</i> training.</p> <p>90% of youth have participated in the <i>Maximize Your Impact</i> training.</p> <p>95% of youth can identify 2-3 staff at this program who support their growth.</p> <p>90% of youth can identify at least one new adult outside of the program who supports their growth.</p> <p>95% of youth have set goals and created a plan to reach these goals.</p> <p>75% of youth have demonstrated marked growth towards their individualized goals.</p> <p>95% of youth have enrolled in credential programs, trainings, or coursework aimed at preparing them for viable career paths.</p> <p>75% of youth have participated in an apprenticeship, internship, or other paid or unpaid work experience.</p> <p>All partners report new, beneficial collaborations have been established to support opportunity youth locally.</p>	<p><b>Youth-Level</b></p> <p><b>Positive Identity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Positive Self-Worth</li> <li>Positivity in the Face of Challenge</li> <li>Goal-Setting Skills</li> <li>Future Orientation</li> <li>Civic Efficacy</li> </ul> <p><b>Social-Emotional Competencies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-Awareness</li> <li>Responsible Decision-Making</li> <li>Relationship Skills</li> </ul> <p><b>Systems Navigation and Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial Literacy</li> <li>Job-Seeking Skills</li> <li>Resource Identification Skills</li> </ul> <p><b>Organizational-Level</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased capacity to use and share data within and across organizations</li> <li>Increased access to information and resources</li> <li>Shortened referral times for inter-organization support services</li> <li>Increased capacity to serve additional opportunity youth</li> <li>Organizations adopt a shared mentoring mindset</li> </ul>	<p><b>Securing a credential</b></p> <p><b>Enrolling in post-secondary learning</b></p> <p><b>Obtaining a high school diploma, GED, or adult diploma</b></p> <p><b>Securing living-wage employment</b></p> <p><b>Stable or increasing wage over 4 quarters</b></p>	<p><b>Sustained, living-wage employment</b></p> <p><b>Stably housed</b></p> <p><b>Established web of social capital</b></p> <p><b>Contributing to community</b></p> <p><b>Sustained and integrated network of community services for OY</b></p>
INPUTS					
<p><b>Trained Program Staff</b></p> <p><b>400-450</b></p> <p><b>Opportunity Youth</b></p> <p><b>Core Partners</b></p> <p><b>Evaluation Team</b></p> <p><b>Facilities</b></p> <p><b>SIF Grant / Matching Funds</b></p> <p><b>Research</b></p> <p><b>Biweekly Check-In &amp; Technical Assistance Calls</b></p> <p><b>Quarterly In-Person Convenings</b></p> <p><b>Annual Site Visits</b></p>	<p><b>Feature 3: Coordinated Career Pathway Supports</b></p> <p><b>Concept 3A.</b> Programs create opportunities for career exploration that are grounded in connecting youth with employers in high growth-high demand industries.</p> <p><b>Concept 3B.</b> Programs assist youth with career preparation and planning</p> <p><b>Concept 3C.</b> Programs provide culturally appropriate wraparound services that include multiple support structures pre- and post-employment to promote retention and encourage continuing education.</p> <p><b>Feature 4: Impactful Cross-Sector Partnerships</b></p> <p><b>Concept 4A.</b> Sites regularly interact with diverse stakeholders to implement strategies and increase capacity to serve youth.</p>				

# DEFINITION OF TERMS

Throughout this resource we use a variety of terms that may have different meanings in other settings in which you work.

**Opportunity youth**—People ages 14-24 who are either in foster care, the juvenile justice system, homeless, or disconnected from school and work.

**OR initiative**—Youthprise’s work to mobilize public and private resources to sustain and grow the work of organizations creating career pathways for opportunity youth; training and technical support are provided to help organizations bridge best practices in youth development and workforce development in order to more effectively create pathways to school, career, and life success.

**OR program**—One of the six programs that participated in the first Opportunity Reboot initiative led by Youthprise; these were Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, Guadalupe Alternative Programs (GAP), MIGIZI, Northfield Healthy Community Initiative, Sauk Rapids-Rice School District/Initiative Foundation, and SOAR Career Solutions.

**OR participant**—An opportunity youth who participates or has participated in an Opportunity Reboot program

**OR program partner**—Community-based organizations or people who collaborated with the six programs that participated in the first OR initiative

**OR initiative partner**—One of the intermediary programs that collaborated with Youthprise on the first OR initiative; these were Search Institute, MENTOR Minnesota, and DEED.

*“...the best way to build any type of relationship or connection is to offer help when it’s needed (and believe people when they say they need it). More than this, though, the Opportunity Reboot project helped to lead a mental shift away from the idea that financial resources like support services ‘belong’ to an agency or an institution; instead, they ‘belong’ to the people who are entitled to them – the role of the agency is to just facilitate this in the easiest way possible. Having a hyper-level of ownership or control does not serve young people well.”*

—OR partner organization staff

## ONLINE TOOLS YOU CAN USE

[Iceberg Concept of Culture lesson from PBS](#)

[Dylomo](#) is a free, online logic model builder.

The University of Minnesota’s: Children Youth and Families at Risk (CYFAR) initiative has a variety of [logic model tools](#) available online.

# OPPORTUNITY REBOOT READINESS SELF-ASSESSMENT

In this worksheet each of the four key features is broken down into more detailed explanations and even more specific strategies that can serve as a starting point. At this point, you are not trying to figure out changes you want to make, you're simply reflecting on:

**Column A:** List ways in which you are currently implementing each strategy in your program.

**Column B:** Rank how much your program currently implements, or "aligns with" each strategy.  
**0 = Not Aligned; 1 = Minimally Aligned; 2 = Mostly Aligned; 3 = Strongly Aligned**

**Column C:** Notes that help inform or make meaning of the information in columns 1 and 2.

## OPPORTUNITY REBOOT SELF-ASSESSMENT REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. What are key areas of strength we can leverage to grow or expand programming for opportunity youth?
2. What are our most significant areas of challenge or growth?
3. What are the areas in between that we can build or improve with less effort?



## KEY FEATURE 1. POSITIVE MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

**Concept 1A: Program staff engaged with youth adopt a mentoring mindset grounded in culturally responsive informal mentoring and relationship building**

	A: Current implementation	B: Ranking	C: Notes
Strategy 1Ai: Program staff receive customized, ongoing technical assistance in informal mentoring best practices that supports continuous professional development.			
Strategy 1Aii: Program staff develop and implement a plan for incorporating relevant informal mentoring best practices to maximize positive relationships between youth and adults (includes employers, when applicable).			

**Concept 1B: Youth are prepared for mentoring experiences and develop skills to identify and engage informal mentors.**

Strategy 1Bi: Youth understand their rights, responsibilities and have appropriate expectations of a mentoring relationship.			
Strategy 1Bii: Youth learn how to identify informal mentors.			
Strategy 1Biii: Youth receive support from program staff in order to maximize the impact of informal mentors.			

## KEY FEATURE 2. RESPONSIVE INDIVIDUALIZED GOAL SUPPORTS

### Concept 2A: Programs assess youth's needs and strengths.

	A: Current implementation	B: Ranking	C: Notes
Strategy 2Ai: Program staff leverage internal and external resources to meet youth's needs, such as healthcare, housing, and transportation.			
Strategy 2Aii: Program staff and youth engage in a visioning process about current and future goals that is strengths-based.			
Strategy 2Aiii: Youth learn to identify their strengths, potential support networks, and resources.			

### Concept 3B: Youth develop an individualized education and work plan in achieving their goals with assistance from program staff.

Strategy 2Bi: Youth learn to set attainable and measurable goals within the plan that have short-term, intermediate, and long-term milestones.			
Strategy 2Bii: Youth and program staff identify their roles and responsibilities within the plan.			

## KEY FEATURE 2. RESPONSIVE INDIVIDUALIZED GOAL SUPPORTS

Strategy 2Biii: Youth learn to identify and address barriers, including modifying their plan if necessary.

**Concept 3C: Programs support youth in tracking progress, recognizing and learning from setbacks, and reaching their goals.**

Strategy 2Ci: Program staff motivate and encourage youth to attain short-term, intermediate and long-term milestones.

Strategy 2Cii: Program staff assist youth in revising and expanding goals when appropriate.

Strategy 2Ciii: Program staff provide informal and formal assistance, including helping youth reflect on the overall goal-setting process and address barriers to achieving goals.

Strategy 2Civ: Program staff and youth celebrate successes in attaining milestones.

### KEY FEATURE 3. COORDINATED CAREER PATHWAY SUPPORTS

**Concept 3A: Programs create opportunities for career exploration that are grounded in connecting youth with employers in high growth-high demand local industries.**

	A: Current implementation	B: Ranking	C: Notes
Strategy 3Ai: Program staff facilitate exploration of career interest inventories and labor market information related to high growth-high demand occupations.			
Strategy 3Aii: Program staff create linkages with specific employers in high demand industries to deepen youth participants' understanding of career options including hands-on work experiences with employers.			
Strategy 3Aiii: Program staff arrange opportunities for youth to participate in on-site secondary, post-secondary and/or on-the-job training leading to industry/employer recognized credentials.			

**Concept 2B: Programs assist youth with career preparation and planning.**

Strategy 3Bi: Program staff engage youth in occupational aptitude and basic skill assessments to develop and implement an agreed-upon education and work plan that aligns with their career goals.			
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### KEY FEATURE 3. COORDINATED CAREER PATHWAY SUPPORTS

Strategy 3Bii: Program staff provide youth with programming aimed at improving financial literacy and money management.

Strategy 3Biii: Program staff prepare youth to successfully navigate a job search, application process, interviews, and other processes associated with their identified career path.

**Concept 3C: Programs provide culturally appropriate wraparound services that include multiple support structures pre- and post-employment to promote retention and encourage continuing education.**

Strategy 3Ci: Program staff provide training aimed at promoting critical job retention and academic success, including social-emotional competencies, work readiness and life skills.

Strategy 3Cii: Program staff have regular contact with youth to discuss barriers to maintaining employment and academic success and identify specific resources to address those barriers.



## KEY FEATURE 4. IMPACTFUL CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

**Concept 4A: Opportunity Reboot programs regularly interact with diverse stakeholders to implement strategies and increase capacity to serve youth.**

	A: Current implementation	B: Ranking	C: Notes
Strategy 4Ai: Cross-sector partners are identified, and they jointly establish a clear vision and goals for collaboration.			
Strategy 4Aii: Cross-sector partners agree on specific roles and responsibilities as it relates to serving youth.			
Strategy 4Aiii: Cross-sector partners maintain and strengthen collaboration through regular interactions and share successes and lessons learned.			
Strategy 3Civ: Program staff and youth celebrate successes in attaining milestones.			

# LOGIC MODEL PLANNING WORKSHEET

**1. Core Principles:** What are the values and beliefs that undergird our work?

**2. Inputs:** What are the resources available, accessible, or needed?

**3. Activities:** What work will be done?

**4. Outputs:** How will you know the activities have been done? What direct evidence will there be?

**5. Short-term outcomes:** These are typically measures of change in skills or knowledge. What changes will you look for in participants? In your organization? In partnerships?

**6. Intermediate outcomes:** These tend to be changes in behavior. What transformation do you think will occur among participants? Within your organization? Among partners?

**7. Long-term outcomes:** These focus on economic, environmental, and/or social changes for the target audience as a whole. How will the context for opportunity youth change because of your efforts?

# LOGIC MODEL PLANNING WORKSHEET

## CORE PRINCIPLES, INPUTS, & ACTIVITIES

## OUTPUTS

## SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES

## INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

## LONGER TERM OUTCOMES

# THE FOUR KEY FEATURES

This section is focused on putting the OR theory into practice, and forms the bulk of this toolkit. You'll find descriptions of each of the features and how they were implemented by different programs and communities, specific tools you can use as is or modify to help build or enhance your own work with opportunity youth, and links to additional resources. For each of the four key features of the model it includes:

**At-a-Glance:** [overview](#)

**About this Feature:** [introduction](#)

**Key Findings From the Evaluation:** [summary](#)

**More Tools You Can Use:** [links to online resources](#)

***“Going into Opportunity Reboot, we felt confident in our model and how we communicated this information with stakeholders. However, development of the four key features provided a different lens for us to look at our program. The four features fit our program well, and we intend to continue using this framework to explain our work.”***

*—OR program director*

## OPPORTUNITY REBOOT FEATURE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These five simple questions can help your program reflect on your current efforts related to each feature, where you'd like to get in terms of implementation, and steps to take to help you progress.

1. In what ways are we currently implementing this feature and these strategies? (Stay focused just on the what, not on judging the quality or impact of the activities.)
2. How is that going? (Here's where you get to analyze.)
3. What could we do to improve these efforts? (Just brainstorm here; don't rule out any ideas. Add in suggestions from this toolkit if applicable).
4. Which idea is feasible in one week? In one month? In one year?
5. Given the resources we have available to us (time, money, interest, expertise, and so on), what's one thing we'll take on now, and one thing will plan for a later date?



## Feature 1: At-a-Glance

### POSITIVE MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

#### WHAT THEY ARE:

Youth develop intentional, mutually agreed upon, positive relationships with supportive adults both within and outside their programs.

#### WHY THEY MATTER:

Opportunity Reboot youth who forged new mentoring relationships outside of their program saw significant gains in their orientation towards the future, civic efficacy, self-awareness, responsible decision making, relationship skills, job-seeking skills, resource identification skills, and financial literacy. Youth who developed stronger relationships within their programs experienced significant growth in financial literacy, job-seeking skills, and resource identification skills.

#### STRATEGIES:

#### DESCRIPTION

#### TOOLS

##### **Mentoring Mindset:**

Adopt a mentoring mindset grounded in best practices of culturally responsive informal mentoring and relationship building.

Offer staff ongoing technical assistance and professional development regarding mentoring best practices.

Develop and implement a plan for incorporating relevant informal mentoring best practices to maximize positive relationships between youth and adults (including employers, when applicable).

- Positive Mentoring Relationships Training Overview (pages 32-34)
- What's In a Developmental Relationship? (pages 35-39)
- 4Ss Conversation: Building Developmental Relationships One-on-One (pages 40-43)
- Tiny Teach (page 44)
- Goal Setting & Webs of Support (page 45)
- Strategy Box (pages 46-47)

##### **Youth Preparation:**

Prepare youth for mentoring experiences, and develop skills to identify and engage informal mentors.

Equip youth to understand their rights and responsibilities, and to have appropriate expectations of a mentoring relationship.

Youth learn how to identify informal mentors.

Maximize the impact of informal mentors by providing support to youth.

- Positive Mentoring Relationships Training Overview (pages 32-34)
- What's In a Developmental Relationship? (pages 35-39)
- 4Ss Conversation: Building Developmental Relationships One-on-One (pages 40-43)
- Tiny Teach (page 44)
- Goal Setting & Webs of Support (page 45)
- Strategy Box (pages 46-47)



## About This Feature

In 2014, MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership released [The Mentoring Effect](#), a report on the results of a nationally representative survey of 1,109 young people ages 18-21. The survey included questions about whether they had a mentor, defined as a supportive adult who works with a young person to build a relationship by offering guidance, support, and encouragement to help the young person's positive and healthy development over a period of time. This could either be through a structured or an informal connection. The survey asked about a variety of other topics as well, including young people's aspirations compared with actual life experiences.

The results were clear: Positive mentoring relationships are linked to significant positive outcomes, and there is a mentoring gap in America (Bruce and Bridgeland, 2014). One in three young people in this country are growing up without a mentor. For young adults in the study who were considered “at risk”—because they were neither enrolled in school nor working, or reported that they experienced at least one risk factor growing up such as having an incarcerated parent, school expulsion, or getting into trouble with the law—the mentoring effect was particularly strong. Compared with their peers who did not have a mentor, study participants were:

- **52% less likely** to skip a day of school
- **55% more likely** to be enrolled in college
- **46% less likely** to start using drugs
- **81% more likely** to report participating regularly in sports of extracurricular activities
- **78% more likely** to volunteer regularly in their communities
- **130% more likely** to say that they held a leadership position in a club or sports team

Mentoring also creates a ripple effect—when young people are positively impacted by a mentor, they become interested in mentoring others. Ninety percent of the MENTOR survey respondents who had a mentor said they are now interested in becoming mentors. Businesses and companies benefit as well, through increased employee productivity and engagement, improved morale, cultivation of the future workforce, and enhanced leadership and management skills among employees.

In the OR model, mentoring is integrated in the roles of case managers, employment specialists, resource specialists, educators, professional mentors, apprenticeship supervisors, and employers. The idea that some adults are considered formal mentors while others (most, in the case of OR) as informal, cannot be emphasized enough when working with opportunity youth. With a mentoring mindset an adult can support a young person in some areas of life and not others, without having to enter into a formal relationship. A young person who has a mentoring mindset could have multiple adults in their network who play different roles in supporting them in different ways. For OR, [MENTOR Minnesota](#) provided training and technical assistance to partners on practices for building high-quality mentoring relationships between opportunity youth and adults in their programs and the community. Additional information about these trainings can be found on page 32.



It's worth noting that some opportunity youth have had negative experiences with mentors. In the words of one staff member of a partner organization who considers themselves a former opportunity youth, "I interacted with a whole lot of unhealthy adults my whole childhood." The majority of youth participants in another partner organization don't have a word for mentoring in their first language. For these and other reasons, it's important for opportunity youth to have guidance as well as choices when it comes to being mentored, and to have a clear understanding of what it means and what they want, need, and will value from a supportive relationship with an adult. It's also critical that adults understand the role of mentor and what is and isn't appropriate and helpful. Some adults are apprehensive or uncomfortable working with youth who seem different from them. Others may be totally comfortable but not clear on effective practices. OR partners address the needs of young people and mentors in a variety of ways:

- Training for both mentors and mentees on effective practices in mentoring and how to have a mentor mindset.
- Culturally specific training related to mentoring.
- Emphasis on informal but intentional relationships.
- Recruiting and training mentors from partner organizations, specific cultural groups, and program alumni.
- Recognizing that mainstream approaches may not work with young people who are concerned about where they will sleep or where their next meal will come from.
- Using relationship-based case management as a vehicle for integrating mentoring into program offerings.
- Focusing in general on helping youth identify and learn how to engage in healthy relationships.



## Key Findings From the Evaluation

The strongest and most consistent empirical finding to emerge from the OR evaluation is that relationships matter. Survey data show that opportunity youth who build strong relationships with program staff are more likely to show positive gains in the skills required to navigate systems: financial literacy, job-seeking skills, and resource identification skills. And when they build strong relationships with other adults outside of the program that support their growth, they are more likely to show positive gains – over and above all of the other model features – on ALL of the social-emotional competencies and systems navigation and skills outcomes targeted in the evaluation. New mentoring relationships with adults outside of the program are also significantly linked to gains in their orientation towards the future and civic efficacy.

These quantitative findings are reinforced in the qualitative interview and focus group data, in which youth revealed through their personal stories and experiences the subtleties of what makes these relationships so powerful. For many of these opportunity youth, the relationships they formed with mentors (within and outside of the program) were qualitatively different from others in their lives. Prior relational trauma could make it difficult for opportunity youth to build trusting, healthy relationships. Mentors, particularly those interviewed at the partner sites, took seriously the responsibility of showing program participants that the relationship they formed together could – and would – be different: it would be safe and healthy; there would be no quid pro quo; they would be challenged to reflect, grow, and learn; and the relationship would be dependable. Evidence of mentors' success in achieving these kinds of relationships is resoundingly strong in the narratives youth shared.

When OR participants talked about mentoring relationships they generally referred to program staff including case managers, teachers, and youth workers. These mentoring relationships were integral to participant success in the program. Participants shared numerous accounts of what these relationships meant to them, what they looked like, and how they helped them grow. In a close examination of the impact narrative data, it became clear that participants talked about all five critical components of what are being described in youth development literature as developmental relationships (see Pekel et al., 2015). Developmental relationships are defined by Search Institute as close connections through which young people discover who they are, gain abilities to shape their own lives, and learn how to interact with and contribute to the world around them. These connections between youth and adults or youth and their peers powerfully and positively shape young people's growth and development.



## Tools You Can Use

In this section we've included links to mentoring research and resources, as well as overviews of the trainings that were provided as part of the OR initiative.

[The Mentoring Effect](#) report on the impact of mentoring for youth at-risk

[Fueling a Relationship Movement—The Critical Role that Employers Play in Growing and Supporting Youth Mentoring in America](#) resource from MENTOR

[Workplace Mentoring Supplement to the Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring](#)

[Check and Connect](#) from The University of Minnesota

### Positive Mentoring Relationships Training

For OR, MENTOR Minnesota (MENTOR MN) provided training and technical assistance to subgrantees on effective practices to build high quality mentoring relationships between opportunity youth and adults in your networks. All trainings were hosted onsite, in the communities of each of the subgrantees. Trainings were typically two hours and included a mix of interactive exercises and discussion. Specific areas of support and consultation included the delivery of three specialized trainings:

- Maximize Your Impact – Employers/Managers/Mentors
- Maximize Your Opportunity – Youth
- Maximize Your Impact – Program Staff

The descriptions that follow are intended as a guide to helping you plan for mentor training and supports in your own OR work. For additional information see [MENTOR MN](#) and [MENTOR](#).

## Maximize Your Impact

Designed for employers, managers, program staff, and/or volunteer mentors, this training introduces the idea of adopting a “mentoring mindset” in workplace or more “informal” mentoring settings. Participants learn some of the fundamentals of positive youth development: how to be strengths-based, youth centered, help young people overcome challenges, and identify and nurture individual goals. Key takeaways include:

- Understanding the various roles of supportive adults in the lives of youth and what it means to have a “mentoring mindset”
- Ability to identify key considerations in how to be youth-centered in a variety of workplace scenarios
- Identifying ways to empower youth to manage the challenges of their own lives without crossing employer boundaries
- Ability to work with the young person to identify and plan for achieving goals at work
- Build excitement to engage with youth in a mentoring relationship in the workplace

### *For program staff training:*

- Ability to differentiate between a strengths- and deficits-based approach to youth work
- Ability to work with the young person to identify and build their own networks of support in order to plan and achieve their personal and professional goals

The Maximize Your Impact trainings cover the following topics and questions:

- Why Mentoring?
- What is formal vs. informal mentoring?
- What makes someone a good mentor/manager?
- What is your role in the mentoring relationship?
- How does one’s culture play a role in the mentoring relationship?
- How is a workplace/case management mentoring relationship different from a traditional one?

## Activities, Related Resources, & Further Reading:

- ❑ Video: [Don’t Quit on Me](#)
- ❑ Activity: Tiny Teach\*
- ❑ Video: [Cultural Iceberg](#)
- ❑ Video: [Rethinking Thinking — Trevor Maber \(ladder of inference\)](#)
- ❑ Video: [Goal Setting & How to Achieve Your Goals](#)
- ❑ Activity: Goal Setting & Webs of Support\*
- ❑ Video: [Growth Mindset vs. Fixed Mindset](#)
- ❑ Toolkit: [Growth Mindset Toolkit & Implementation Guide](#)
- ❑ Activity: Strategy Box\*

*\*Activities provided by MENTOR MN*

## Maximize Your Opportunity

Mentoring is a two-way relationship—its success is dependent on both the mentor and the mentee. This training prepares young people to build a relationship with a mentor and to make the most of their mentoring experiences. It uses engaging activities to explore the roles and boundaries of a mentor, set realistic expectations, practice communication skills, set personal goals, and learn how to engage with natural/informal mentors throughout life.

The Maximize Your Opportunity trainings cover the following topics and questions:

- Why mentoring?
- How to identify mentors in our lives
- What is your role in the mentoring relationship?
- What does your network of support look like?
- How do I get the most out of a mentoring relationship?
- How do I ask someone to be my mentor?
- How do I become a mentor magnet?

## Getting Relationships Right: A Workshop for Leaders

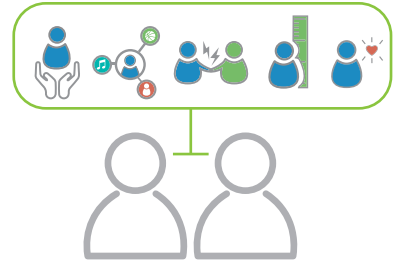
This two-day training-of-trainers workshop prepares leaders in youth organizations and schools to equip staff to be intentional in nurturing developmental relationships in their everyday interactions with young people, to integrate the principles and practices into their programming, and to use the framework to advance equity and inclusion in their program. The workshop is based on Search Institute's research-based Developmental Relationships Framework, which identifies the qualities of relationships that are powerful catalysts for young people's growth, resilience, and thriving. Other workshop options are also available at [www.searchinstitute.org](http://www.searchinstitute.org).

### Activities, Related Resources, & Further Reading:

- ❑ Activity: Tiny Teach\*
- ❑ Video: [How a High School Coach Changed Dwayne Johnson's Life](#)
- ❑ Activity: Goal Setting & Webs of Support\*
- ❑ Activity: Strategy Box\*
- ❑ Video: [Growth Mindset vs. Fixed Mindset](#)
- ❑ Toolkit: [Growth Mindset Toolkit & Implementation Guide](#)

*\*Activities provided by MENTOR MN*

# WHAT'S IN A DEVELOPMENTAL RELATIONSHIP?



## DESCRIPTION:

Participants are introduced to the Developmental Relationships Framework and are invited to begin mapping developmental relationships in their own lives.

## OBJECTIVES:

- Builds and strengthens relationships among participants
- Builds and strengthens relationships between participants and leaders Introduces the Developmental Relationships Framework

**RECOMMENDED NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS:** Any size

**TIME:** 30 minutes

## MATERIALS:

- ☐ Copies of “The Developmental Relationships Framework” (included)
- ☐ Copies of “My Developmental Relationships” Map (included)
- ☐ Pen or pencil for each participant
- ☐ Half sheet of paper for each participant

**SET-UP:** This activity can be done in any setting; however, participants will need a hard surface to write on whether a table, desk, or clipboard.

**KEY NOTES FOR FACILITATOR:** Be aware that participants will have varying levels of access to developmental relationships in their lives. Consider the participants’ unique situations and be prepared for the following scenarios:

- Young people may not be able to think of many people they have relationships with, either because they do not have many or because they have trouble coming up with them on the spot. Be prepared with prompts to help them think of relationships they have - think outside the box! Examples include friends, family, mentors, coaches, teachers, neighbors, youth program leaders, etc.
- Some young people may be able to list many relationships; others may be able to list very few. Be prepared to affirm students who may have fewer and remind students that the number of relationships they have does not indicate success or failure on their part.
- Participants may have initial confusion about the elements of the Developmental Relationships Framework and/or the map. Make sure you are familiar with both and ready to answer questions.

# FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Hand out the Developmental Relationships Framework.** Let participants know this Framework has been developed over time by Search Institute, a research organization that studies important relationships that help people grow. Ask everyone to be thinking about important relationships in their own lives while they look at the framework together. Read through the framework out loud together, beginning with the introduction then moving on to each element and its actions/ definitions, giving anyone willing a chance to read. (Or ask if someone will start with the first element after you read the intro, and go in a circle while giving them a choice to pass or proceed.) After you are done reading through the framework, ask if anyone has any questions or initial thoughts about the framework. **(5 minutes)**
- 2. Pass out half sheets of paper.** Ask participants to think to themselves about people that make their lives better in some way. Have them think about people in all parts of their lives, such as their home, school, youth organizations, neighborhood, community centers, faith or spiritual communities, and other places. Have them write each of these people's names down on the half sheet of paper. (They could also choose to write who the person is in relationship to them, e.g. mom, piano teacher, soccer coach, etc.) **(5 minutes)**
- 3. After participants have finished writing, hand out the "My Developmental Relationships" mapping sheet.** Note that the graphic has concentric circles, representing places in our lives, and wedges that represent the five elements of developmental relationships. Have participants write their name in the middle circle. Then, for each person on their list, have participants think about the place where this person impacts them most, and what it is that person does that is most helpful. Have participants write the person's name in the appropriate space. Let youth know that they will be sharing their map with one or two other students. **(5 minutes)**  
  
*For example, a teacher who always asks you for updates on your hobbies or interests may be really good at Expressing Care. Write their name in the "Express Care" wedge in the "school" circle.*
- 4. After everyone has had a chance to add all their names to their maps, divide participants into pairs or trios.** Have each participant share their diagram with their partner or group, naming a few of the people and what they do that is helpful. **(5 minutes)**
- 5. Ask participants (still in their pairs or groups) to look over their maps and talk about what they notice about their maps.** Let participants know there are no right or wrong maps or required amount of relationships. You may use the following questions for discussion:
  - a. Where do you have the most developmental relationships? (e.g. school, community, etc.)
  - b. Where do you have fewer developmental relationships?
  - c. Which elements do you experience the most? (e.g. express care, challenge growth, etc.)
  - d. Which elements do you experience the least?



## REFLECT

Discuss these questions as a large group:

- What are some things you learned about relationships in your life today?
- Are there places in your life you'd like to have more relationships? Are there elements you'd like to experience more of?
- Where do you think others would put you on their map? What elements do you think you practice the most with others in your life?
- What surprised you as you reflected on your relationships?

## TAKING ACTION (OPTIONAL)






1. Have each person decide something they will do to thank a person on their diagram in the next week.
2. Have each person decide one developmental relationship action they will take with another person this week.  
(e.g. "I will really listen to my sister.")

### Putting it into Practice:

If you see participants throughout the week, take time to ask them more about the ways they practice developmental relationships with others. Find out more about the people and places they impact the most.

# SEARCH INSTITUTE'S FRAMEWORK OF DEVELOPMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS

Young people are more likely to grow up successfully when they experience developmental relationships with important people in their lives. Developmental relationships are close connections through which young people discover who they are, cultivate abilities to shape their own lives, and learn how to engage with and contribute to the world around them. Search Institute has identified five elements—expressed in 20 specific actions—that make relationships powerful in young people's lives.

ELEMENTS	ACTIONS	DEFINITIONS
 <p><b>Express Care</b></p> <p><i>Show me that I matter to you.</i></p>	<p><b>Be dependable</b>..... Be someone I can trust.</p> <p><b>Listen</b>..... Really pay attention when we are together.</p> <p><b>Believe in me</b>..... Make me feel known and valued.</p> <p><b>Be warm</b>..... Show me you enjoy being with me.</p> <p><b>Encourage</b>..... Praise me for my efforts and achievements.</p>	
 <p><b>Challenge Growth</b></p> <p><i>Push me to keep getting better.</i></p>	<p><b>Expect my best</b>..... Expect me to live up to my potential.</p> <p><b>Stretch</b>..... Push me to go further.</p> <p><b>Hold me accountable</b>..... Insist I take responsibility for my actions.</p> <p><b>Reflect on failures</b>..... Help me learn from mistakes and setbacks.</p>	
 <p><b>Provide Support</b></p> <p><i>Help me complete tasks and achieve goals.</i></p>	<p><b>Navigate</b>..... Guide me through hard situations and systems.</p> <p><b>Empower</b>..... Build my confidence to take charge of my life.</p> <p><b>Advocate</b>..... Stand up for me when I need it.</p> <p><b>Set boundaries</b>..... Put in place limits that keep me on track.</p>	
 <p><b>Share Power</b></p> <p><i>Treat me with respect and give me a say.</i></p>	<p><b>Respect me</b>..... Take me seriously and treat me fairly.</p> <p><b>Include me</b>..... Involve me in decisions that affect me.</p> <p><b>Collaborate</b>..... Work with me to solve problems and reach goals.</p> <p><b>Let me lead</b>..... Create opportunities for me to take action and lead.</p>	
 <p><b>Expand Possibilities</b></p> <p><i>Connect me with people and places that broaden my world.</i></p>	<p><b>Inspire</b>..... Inspire me to see possibilities for my future.</p> <p><b>Broaden horizons</b>..... Expose me to new ideas, experiences, and places.</p> <p><b>Connect</b>..... Introduce me to more people who can help me develop and thrive.</p>	

NOTE: Relationships are, by definition, bidirectional, with each person giving and receiving. So each person in a strong relationship both engages in and experiences each of these actions. However, for the purpose of clarity, this framework is expressed from the perspective of one young person.

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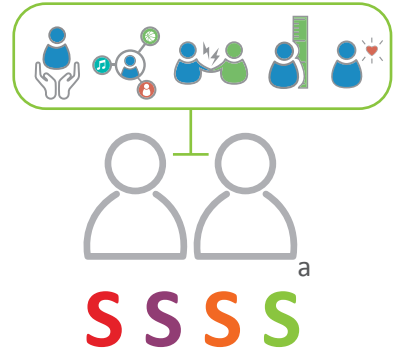
# MY DEVELOPMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS

Who are people in each setting with whom you have relationships that reflect the five elements of a developmental relationship? Jot their names or initials in the appropriate space in the diagram.



# 4 Ss CONVERSATION

## BUILDING DEVELOPMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS ONE-ON-ONE



### DESCRIPTION:

This activity is for facilitators and participants to get to know each other in one-on-one discussion focusing on sparks, strengths, struggles and supports.

### OBJECTIVES:

- Strengthens relational skills: listening, communication
- Builds and strengthens relationships between participants and leaders

### RECOMMENDED NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 1

**TIME:** 30 minutes

### MATERIALS:

- ☐ Copy of the 4 Ss Interview Questions handout
- ☐ Each question written on an index card or post-it (use one color for each set of “S” questions e.g. struggles questions on green post-its, strengths on yellow, etc.)
- ☐ A container to put the questions in, like a box, hat, or bucket

**SET-UP:** This activity works best in a semi-private space where you can have a one-on-one conversation.

**KEY NOTES FOR FACILITATOR:** Before conducting the discussion, consider the following:

- Discuss questions in an informal and warm way. Emphasize that the goal of the conversation is to get to know one another and that there are no right or wrong answers.
- This activity can have multiple objectives. It can help you get to know a participant, make them feel understood and validated, and gain an understanding of what resources and supports they may need as well as what strengths and assets they have.
- During the discussion, respond to the participant in ways that convey you are really listening, such as asking a follow-up question that explores an answer a bit more deeply. After the discussion, find ways to refer back to the things you learned about the participant throughout your interaction with them.
- As the participant asks you questions, prepare yourself to be vulnerable and open to share authentically.
- It may be intimidating for some young people to have a one-on-one conversation with you. Make sure that the space you choose feels comfortable - while being in a completely private and quiet space may seem most conducive to having this conversation to you, consider that a semi-private space, like a table in a library or other room where additional people are present and there is a little background noise, may actually feel more comfortable. This also ensures safety for the facilitator and participant.

- If you take notes during the interview, it could feel intimidating for the participant. Instead, if there is something you want to remember, write it down privately after the conversation is complete. If you're worried about remembering something important and feel that you need to take a note during the conversation, ask the participant if you can write a note, explaining that it's important for you to remember it and how you plan to follow up.
- Depending on your context, sensitive topics may come up during the interview. Make sure you know what to do if something reportable or referable comes up in conversation. You may also want to let the participant know that while the conversation will be confidential, if they share anything about their own safety or another person's safety being in danger, you will need to share it with someone who can help.

# FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS

## 1. Relay the following instructions:

- Today we're going to talk about four things that start with the letter S: sparks, strengths, struggles, and supports. Sparks are your talents, deep interests, and activities that you love doing. Strengths are your skills, values, habits, and other things about you that help you do well in life. Struggles are the things that you worry about and that stress you out. Supports are the people and programs and even places that help you get through your struggles and succeed at things.
- Let the participants know that you will be choosing questions out of the box or bucket. They are welcome to pass if they don't feel comfortable answering a question or may even make up a new one if they want to.
- Let them know they can ask you questions from the bucket too or make up new ones for you.

## 2. After the conversation, tell the participant that from time to time (or at each check-in) you will do activities that help further explore and share the 4 Ss: sparks, strengths, struggles, and supports.

## 3. If the participant hasn't already asked you any 4S questions, ask them if they have any questions for you. Thank the young person for sharing part of their story with you.

## REFLECT

- What did you think of our conversation today?
- Were some questions easier or harder than others?
- Did you learn anything about yourself that surprised you?
- What other questions might be fun to add to our “bucket?”

### Putting it into Practice:

If the young person you had a conversation with today brings up struggles that demonstrate they may need additional support, be sure to talk with them and connect them with needed resources. Depending on what the young person expressed interest in, you may be able to connect them with new knowledge, a place to go, or person who has expertise in the area they are interested in. Think of ways you can broaden this young person’s horizons based on your 4S conversation today.

# 4 Ss INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

## SPARKS QUESTIONS

1. What is something you really enjoy doing and that you almost lose track of time when you do it?
2. Is there something that you are interested in learning more about?
3. What subject are you are most interested in? It doesn't matter if you are good at it or not.

## STRENGTHS QUESTIONS

4. What are some of the best things about you?
5. What are you good at doing?
6. Are there any values or rules that you try to live by? What do you think is important in life?

## STRUGGLES QUESTIONS

7. Are there things that you worry about or are afraid of?
8. What are some things that have been a challenge for you this year?
9. Is there anything you wish you could change about yourself?

## SUPPORTS QUESTIONS

10. Who are the people that matter most to you?
11. Who can you talk to when you have a problem?
12. Are there programs you participate in or places you go that help you do things you want to do or need to do?
13. What are some things you do if you feel stressed out or overwhelmed? What activities help you calm down?



# TINY TEACH

**AUDIENCE:** Any

Sometimes when youth and adults are forming a mentoring relationship – whether it is formal or informal – there can be a power dynamic in play where the adult either assumes the primary leadership role and/or the youth defers to the adult as the decision maker.

An important part of forming a relationship that is developmentally focused is sharing power – which means youth and adults are collaborating on decision making, equally sharing their ideas and perspectives, setting expectations for their relationship and communicating boundaries with each other as well.

We are each the expert on ourselves – in relationships, we should strive to learn from each other’s expertise. Having the mindset of “What can I learn from this person?” can help you and your youth employee to get comfortable sharing power.

## **AT YOUR NEXT TEAM MEETING, SPEND 10 MINUTES ON THIS EXERCISE:**

- Ask each person to think of something you are good at or know well enough to teach someone else.
  - This could be a favorite dance move, recipe, conversation in a foreign language, sports move, or something related to a personal hobby.
- Invite everyone to partner up with someone that they do not know.
- Within each partnership, ask for a volunteer. The volunteer is asked to teach their partner something that their partner does not know in 2 minutes or less.
- After 2 minutes, have individuals switch roles – so the one that was teaching is now learning.
- Invite some partners to share with the full group what they learned. Celebrate the volunteers.

**To make connections with others, you should seek to learn from them while reflecting on what you can teach in return.**

# GOAL SETTING & WEBS OF SUPPORT

Use this worksheet to identify a goal you'd like to accomplish in the next 6-12mos, list action items to help you achieve this goal, and who some of the people in your life are that might help you to reach the goal.

**What is one goal that you hope to achieve in the next 6-12 months?**

**Name an action item to achieve your goal.**

**Who can help you?**

**Name an action item to achieve your goal.**

**Who can help you?**

**Name an action item to achieve your goal.**

**Who can help you?**

**Name an action item to achieve your goal.**

**Who can help you?**

**Name an action item to achieve your goal.**

**Who can help you?**

**Name an action item to achieve your goal.**

**Who can help you?**

# GROWTH MINDSET STRATEGY BOX

## ACTIVITY GUIDE

This tool can get individuals thinking about the strategies they have used in the past to learn new skills and overcome challenges, reinforcing that they have the ability to improve and identifying approaches that have worked in the past that they can apply to current challenges or learning new skills.

### Instructions

A Strategy Box has four quadrants. In three of the quadrants, list things that you are good at or have achieved (try to include things that you perhaps struggled with at first). In the fourth, list the things you identified as not being good at or wanting to change.

Next, list the most important strategies, steps, or beliefs that helped you be successful in those first three areas. What were your successes factors? How did you progress through the challenges? What actions did you take? How did you think about the challenge? List as many as you can.

The last step is to see if any of those strategies or factors could be applied to your fourth box. For an adult who wanted to get organized financially, their final Strategy Box might look like this:

#### Can play the piano

1. Took lessons every week
2. Bought books on learning to read music
3. Reminded myself to practice by giving myself rewards
4. Parents made sure I put in the work
5. Always had a passion for music

#### Know how to cook

1. Mom taught me at an early age
2. Tried many bad recipes and burned a lot of meals
3. Took cooking classes in 2005
4. Found website and message board and learned from other

#### Have a good career

- Researched nursing careers online
- Talked to friends of older sister who were thinking about medical careers
- Selected good nursing school
- My mentor, Sheila at the Med Center
- Keep up to date on research and trends in field

#### Not organized financially

- Buy books on personal finance (from piano example)
- Look into classes I could take on money management/ investing (from cooking example)
- Look for reputable online message boards with advice (cooking)
- Ask friends about their strategies (career example)
- Set a goal around savings (career)
- Also set a reward if I make my goal! (piano)

# STRATEGY BOX ACTIVITY GUIDE

Strategy box for: \_\_\_\_\_

<p><b>Something I learned or succeeded at:</b></p> <p><b>Strategies I used:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>	<p><b>Something I learned or succeeded at:</b></p> <p><b>Strategies I used:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>
<p><b>Something I learned or succeeded at:</b></p> <p><b>Strategies I used:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>	<p><b>My new learning challenge:</b></p> <p><b>Strategies to borrow from other boxes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>

Source: <https://www.mindsetkit.org/growth-mindset-mentors/how-mentors-support-gms/activity-strategy-box>



## Feature 2: At-a-Glance

### RESPONSIVE INDIVIDUALIZED GOAL SUPPORTS

#### WHAT THEY ARE:

Staff and mentors help youth clarify goals, track them, connect their goals to college or future careers, and access critical resources.

#### WHY THEY MATTER:

For many opportunity youth, goal setting with specific plans is a new experience. Through individualized supports, opportunity youth can be guided in the development of concrete goals based on their intrinsic interests and skills, including the long-term relevance of goal-setting in terms of achieving their own aspirations. By regularly monitoring goals and learning, opportunity youth increase their investment in their own progress (Hulleman & Harackiewicz, 2009).

#### STRATEGIES:

#### DESCRIPTION

#### TOOLS

##### Assessment:

Programs assess youth's needs and strengths.

Leverage internal and external resources to meet youth's needs, such as healthcare, housing, and transportation.

Engage in a strengths-based visioning process about current and future goals.

Youth learn to identify their strengths, potential support networks, and resources.

Sample Support Services Menu (page 53)

##### Goal Setting and Planning:

Youth develop an individualized education and work plan to achieve their goals with assistance from program staff.

Youth learn to set attainable and measurable goals within the plan that have short-term, intermediate, and long-term milestones.

Youth and program staff identify their roles and responsibilities within the plan.

Youth learn to identify and address barriers, including modifying their plan if necessary.

Sample Goals Check-In Report: Construction (pages 54-55)

Sample Goals Tracking Form: Employment Focus (page 56)

Sample Core Competency Checklist (page 57)

STRATEGIES:	DESCRIPTION	TOOLS
<b>Goal Tracking and Progress:</b> Programs support youth in tracking progress, recognizing and learning from setbacks, and reaching their goals.	<p>Program staff motivate and encourage youth to attain short-term, intermediate, and long-term milestones.</p> <p>Program staff assist youth in revising and expanding goals when appropriate.</p> <p>Program staff provide informal and formal assistance, including helping youth reflect on the overall goal-setting process and address barriers to achieving goals.</p> <p>Program staff and youth celebrate successes in attaining milestones.</p>	<p>Sample Goals Check-In Report: Construction (pages 54-55)</p> <p>Sample Goals Tracking Form: Employment Focus (page 56)</p> <p>Sample Core Competency Checklist (page 57)</p>

***“Pick small wins and build on them over time.”***

***—OR program staff member***



## About This Feature

Goals and aspirations are assumed to be critical motivators for learning and work. Yet just having positive aspirations or fantasies rarely stimulates goal-directed action (Duckworth et al., 2013; Oettingen, 2012). Several factors are at work, including young people's default mental focus on short-term concerns or desires (Oyserman, 2013), the possible lack of knowledge about institutional systems, and how to access available resources.

Mentoring often links youth to additional culturally relevant resources and social capital that meet their needs (Oransky et al., 2013) and help them make progress towards their personal goals (Watson et al., 2016). Furthering the evidence for the importance of responsive adults in the goal-setting and attaining process, studies have positively associated youths' discussions of school and future plans with supportive adults with positive academic outcomes (Hill et al., 2004).

Through individualized goal-setting supports and mentoring, OR participants are guided to shift from vague aspirations toward concrete goals based on their intrinsic interests and skills, including the long-term relevance of what they are being asked to do for their own aspirations. By regularly monitoring their goals and learning, they increase their investment in their own progress toward their aspirations (Hulleman & Harackiewicz, 2009).

Additionally, a key component was being able to help young people identify and address the very real barriers to goal-achievement they experience, whether that's hunger or housing needs, mental illness, chemical dependency, technology access, or otherwise.





## Key Findings From the Evaluation

Of the four OR model features, Responsive Individualized Goal Supports had the strongest alignment across all six original programs. All were aligned with this feature of the OR model throughout the duration of the project.

Overall, programs were confident with their established goal setting processes. Drawing on highly relational approaches, program staff work closely with opportunity youth to establish open lines of communication and identify, monitor, and adjust goals that are responsive to their individual needs. A key part of supporting opportunity youth with goals involves staff helping them navigate complex educational, financial, health, and legal systems. Program staff acknowledged that youths' goals often change as they learn more about the requirements and industry standards for pursuing specific personal and career interests. Working with youth to identify resources and draw on their strengths to set and reach goals is key. Case management is the method most programs employ to establish, communicate, and process goals with opportunity youth. Youth are expected to learn professional and healthy relationship boundaries and the skills to set goals through the process of working with program staff.

Program staff leverage community connections to help youth figure out what they want to do. Most programs expose youth to different career trajectories through guest speakers, field trips, and conversations about what professions youth want to explore. Program staff use various tactics for guiding youth in setting short- and long-term goals, all of which include processes for breaking large goals into manageable pieces, as well as addressing barriers.

***“In our setting, opportunity youth are not necessarily academically behind, but the traditional school setting has been difficult for them. Having a smaller setting can help. We view it as an on-off ramp...get the skills they need and then push them out to be in a more regular setting if that’s appropriate for them. The idea is that if they were on a traditional path they would likely not be successful.”***

***—School-based OR program staff***



## Tools You Can Use

For this feature we've included a variety of examples of tools for tracking progress on goals, skills, and/or competencies. There's also a sample list of support services with cost limits. These were provided by a program partner and are based on their budget and the costs of services in their community. Two online resources are shared along with a reflection guide.

Online Resources:

[Indigenous Stewardship Methods](#) from the United States  
Department of Agriculture

[Partnership for 21st Century Skills](#) from the National Education Association

## SAMPLE SUPPORT SERVICES MENU

Additional funding is available to cover the costs for participants of some educational and job-search related needs and opportunities that are not part of what is offered through this program. These are described below.

### **School Expenses: Average of \$750/participant per program year\***

- School Expenses
  - Supportive services for school-related expenses including, but are not limited to:
    - Up to \$500 in textbooks per semester
    - Additional school costs (i.e. lab supplies, graphing calculator, computer software)

### **Other Support Services: Average of \$750/participant per program year\***

- General Transportation & Need-Related Supportive Services
  - Participants may access up to \$250 in general transportation per semester
  - Supportive services include, but are not limited to:
    - Gas cards (up to \$100 within 12 months), grocery store gift cards, and other gift cards to alleviate financial barriers
    - Reimbursement for mileage to training for work if their agency does not provide reimbursement
    - Car repairs, including labor and parts
- Written estimate must be provided, as well as current car insurance
- Vehicle repair parts may be paid to the participant if original receipts are included
- Child Care
  - Participants may access up to \$300 in child care expenses per semester
  - Child care provider must be a licensed in-home provider or a licensed family care center
  - Payment will be made directly to the provider
- Housing
  - Participants may receive up to \$750 per year for housing assistance
  - Voucher/payment may only be made to the mortgage company or landlord
  - Must provide a copy of the lease or bill (i.e. Xcel) and assistance may only be provided for the Fellow if their name is on the lease and only for their portion on the rent or the bill

\* The amount spent on a participant can be exceeded, if key to their continued participation and success in the program. Should such a situation arise, the Project Director will reach out to the Grant Manager for approval.

# **SAMPLE GOALS CHECK-IN REPORT:** **ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER AND CONSTRUCTION FOCUS**

Name:		Date:			
Comprehensive Adults Student Assessment System (CASAS) Reading Score		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Credits Earned					
Credits Needed					
Certifications		In Progress		Completed	
CPR					
First Aid					
<u>Northstar Digital Literacy</u>					
Construction - <u>National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER)</u>	Safety				
	Math				
	Hand Tools				
	Power Tools				
	Blueprints				
	Rigging				
	Communications				
	Employability				
<u>Green Building Certification</u>					

Other Milestones		In Progress	Completed
Job secured			
MN State ID			
MN Driver's License			
MN Driver's Permit			
Car Insurance			
Health Insurance			
Employability Class			
Housing			
College Application			
Resume			
FAFSA (Federal Student Financial Aid form)			
<a href="#">Accuplacer</a>			
Service Learning (hours earned)			
Summer School			
Graduation			
Transition plan:			

## SAMPLE GOALS TRACKING FORM: EMPLOYMENT FOCUS

Date of Enrollment: _____ Date of Most Recent Update: _____ Date Exited Program: _____					
	Not applicable	Goal set	Some progress	Substantial progress	Goal met
Complete assessment for strengths and barriers to employment					
Apply for public benefits					
Complete a skills assessment or aptitude test to careers of interest					
Create a resume					
Obtain, complete and submit job applications					
Enroll in a transitional employment program					
Enroll in a job skills training program					
Complete a job skills training program					
Connect to services at a job placement program (Workforce Center, etc.)					
Secure and complete a job interview					
Build resume by volunteering					
Attend a job fair or hiring event					
Obtain employment					
Maintain employment for three months					
Maintain employment for six months					
Open a bank account					
Other employment goal:					

## SAMPLE OPPORTUNITY REBOOT CORE COMPETENCY CHECKLIST

Use or modify this checklist to support opportunity youth's progress toward work readiness.

Teamwork/Leadership	Scheduling/ Time Management	Communication	Intrapersonal Skills
<b>Conflict Management</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Can work as a team member with wide range of people</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Knows who to talk to about an issue</li> </ul>	<b>Timeliness</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Arrives on time</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Has good attendance</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Returns from breaks on time</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Is dependable</li> </ul>	<b>Listening Comprehension</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pays attention</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Can sustain attention over a long period of time</li> </ul>	<b>Self Care</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Self-advocacy</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Self-awareness</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Personal care</li> </ul>
<b>Adaptability</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Can respond well to new environments</li> </ul>	<b>Organization</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Can easily find assignments</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Completes assignments on time</li> </ul>	<b>Intrapersonal Competency</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Eye contact</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Politeness</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Social etiquette</li> </ul>	<b>Perseverance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Problem solving skills</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Willingness to ask questions</li> </ul>
<b>Problem Solving</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Can solve problems independently</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Can collaborate with others to solve problems</li> </ul>	<b>Schedule Management</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Knows their long-term schedule</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Can read a work schedule</li> </ul>	<b>Written Communication</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Able to use search engines adequately</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ability to read and write</li> </ul>	<b>Can Accept Constructive Criticism</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Responds appropriately to feedback</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Able to make needed changes</li> </ul>
<b>Can Work Unattended</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Can take initiative</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Can manage work without supervision</li> </ul>	<b>Can Prioritize Tasks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Able to identify projects and timelines</li> </ul>	<b>Verbal and Nonverbal communication</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Increasing verbal vocabulary</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Workplace ready vocab</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Verbal participation in class</li> </ul>	<b>Positive Attitude</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates respect for self and others</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Willingness to learn</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Takes pride in work</li> </ul>
<b>Could Assume a Leadership Role</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Can lead group work</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Interacts respectfully in a group</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Contributes to group work</li> </ul>	<b>Can Meet Outlined Objectives</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Able to read objectives</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Can set own project objectives</li> </ul>	<b>Professional Communication Abilities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Writing a professional email</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Writing a cover letter</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Filling out a job application</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Choosing appropriate work attire</li> </ul>	<b>Ethical &amp; Empathetic</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Accepts responsibility for self</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Accountable</li> </ul>



## Feature 3: At-a-Glance

### COORDINATED CAREER PATHWAY SUPPORTS

#### WHAT THEY ARE:

Opportunity Reboot programs and partners support young people's pursuit of living-wage employment through intentionally scaffolded education and training, hands-on work experience, leadership and life skills development, and college and career preparation.

#### WHY THEY MATTER:

Using a pathways approach to support opportunity youths' career development serves as an effective process not only for introducing youth to a job and formal employment, but also creating opportunities for youth to explore career trajectories and align themselves with a job that is a good fit for their skills and interests. Programs implementing key career pathways elements have documented success producing educational and employment-based outcomes (Symonds et al., 2011).

#### STRATEGIES:

#### DESCRIPTION

#### TOOLS

##### Career Exploration:

Create opportunities that are grounded in connecting youth with employers in high growth-high demand local industries.

Program staff facilitate exploration of career interest inventories and labor market information related to high growth-high demand occupations.

Program staff create linkages with specific employers in high demand industries to deepen youth participants' understanding of career options including hands-on work experiences with employers.

Program staff arrange opportunities for youth to participate in on-site secondary, post-secondary, and/or on-the-job training leading to industry/employer recognized credentials.

Sample job descriptions (pages 64-66)



STRATEGIES:	DESCRIPTION	TOOLS
<b>Youth Preparation and Planning:</b> Programs assist youth with career preparation and planning	Engage youth in occupational aptitude and basic skill assessments to develop and implement an agreed upon education and work plan that aligns with their career goals.  Provide youth with programming aimed at improving financial literacy and money management.  Program staff prepare youth to successfully navigate a job search, application process, interviews, and other processes associated with their identified career path.	Sample job descriptions (pages 64-66)
<b>Wraparound Services:</b> Provide culturally appropriate wraparound services that include multiple support structures pre- and post-employment to promote retention and encourage continuing education.	Training aimed at promoting critical job retention and academic success, including social-emotional competencies, work readiness, and life skills.  Regular contact with youth to discuss barriers to maintaining employment and academic success and identify specific resources to address those barriers	Sample job descriptions (pages 64-66)  Sample Guidelines Agreement (page 67)  Sample Informed Consent Contract (page 68)

***“Youth can’t learn everything they need to know in a training and then suddenly be successful on the job. It requires a partnership and relationship between the employer and the people who are supporting the youth (staff, mentors, etc.). Expectations need to be clear. Employers need to know how to correct behavior that isn’t working and youth need to learn how to accept that correction.”***

*—OR program staff member*



## About This Feature

The career pathways feature of the OR model is based on a toolkit created by the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (Else et al., 2015). In the OR model, these key elements have been adapted as follows:

- Create opportunities for career exploration that are grounded in connecting youth with employers in high growth-high demand industries.
- Assist youth with career preparation and planning.
- Provide culturally appropriate wraparound services that include multiple support structures pre- and post-employment to promote retention and encourage continuing education.

***Providers needed to be connected to and cognizant of employment needs, trends, and dynamics in their respective communities.***

These supports look significantly different in different communities. Among the OR programs, for example, there were rural, urban, and suburban areas; school-based and community-based programs; a tourist area with a focus on the hospitality industry; and a community with a large agricultural focus. Examples of approaches, none of which explain the full scope of the program provide a sense of the variety, include:

- Three different career pathways embedded within an alternative high school, where young people complete a high school diploma or GED program while simultaneously earning certifications, training, and paid or volunteer experience in one of the three.
- A micro-enterprise where young people earn an hourly wage both for working in the business as well as working on other goals such as sobriety, mental health, housing, or education.
- A correctional facility where young people who are incarcerated are able to receive training and work experience including apprenticeships, service-learning opportunities, and volunteering.

What was consistent was that providers needed to be connected to and cognizant of employment needs, trends, and dynamics in their respective communities. Additionally, programs shared a commitment to having boundaries and expectations, but “sticking with” young people whom many others have given up on. As one program staff member put it, “Sometimes young people need to take a break, do some other work; when they are ready they are welcome back. If we’ve given them 100 chances and they’ve blown 100 chances we give them 101 and 102 chances.”



## Key Findings From the Evaluation

Programs use a wide range of tactics to support experiential learning, such as site visits to local colleges and universities, guest speakers from various industries, short-term job training, and workplace tours. One program started a micro-enterprise as a learning lab after recognizing that some young people needed opportunities to try and fail in a safe space before heading into a job in the community. The program was able to pay young people for their work in the business they created, as well as for their work on developing their own skills, knowledge, and readiness, such as earning a GED, securing housing, or working with a chemical dependency counselor.

Many participants worked in jobs through their programs that helped them build workplace skills or specialized training. Some participants shared that it felt like they were “getting paid to learn” through these experiences. Many participants also received specialized training and certifications, such as Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) compliance, Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) training, and Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) certification. They talked about being eager to finish these trainings because of their direct link with potential job opportunities.

Some participants described these work experiences as an opportunity to “get ahead,” especially when others in their age group may not have had these opportunities. “I can only name four 18-year-olds that I know who have gotten the qualifications I’ve gotten...I’m already a step above my age group.”

Other participants may not have had a paid job through their program, but volunteered instead. They described how their volunteer experiences had also been a way to prepare for future careers: “We get to work with the people...I have a chance to volunteer in long-term care, so I feel like [I had] more experience.”

Participants also described the benefit of learning leadership and life skills, beyond job-specific training. One participant shared that they felt they solved “real-life problems” through their program, such as how to read and manage an electric bill or utilize environmentally friendly and efficient tools in their home. Another said, “We work on different skills, and our main skill was teamwork.” Others echoed the sentiment that collaboration with others helped them grow in their leadership abilities: “...they just prepare you for the leadership skills...so you feel confident to work with other people...you have more confidence and more experience about that.”

***“Not all students are ready to just jump into an apprenticeship. We kind of have a scaffold for them.”***

***—OR partner organization staff***

Participants described several ways that their programs offered preparation for college. These included college visits over the course of their participation in a program. “It’s a good option, because I look at different colleges and see my options of where I want to go,” noted one. Programs also provided information on how to apply for college, including notification of deadlines, and how they could academically prepare for college. One participant shared, “They help you with college opportunities as well, and they explain stuff there, too.” Another participant shared that even though they were not interested in colleges early in their high school career, they appreciated that staff exposed them to ideas for colleges.

For some, college credits earned through their program allowed them to begin their college careers with some credits already completed. Participants were able to articulate the link they saw to their college coursework and beginning their college experience with an advantage: “...with the amount of credits I already have...instead of me having to wait at the back of the line to get accepted before anyone, I’d probably be the first one they’d accept, because I already have some college credits. My transcript for college looks good so far.”

In addition to college preparation, participants also experienced a variety of opportunities to hone skills for obtaining a job. Interviews and job application help were discussed by a large number of participants, with some noting that they got a job with the help of a staff member who helped them to apply. Other activities that helped included mock interviews, resume and application workshops, and guidance on how to find jobs. One participant said, “It’s important for me, like before I interview, I have more experience. If I go to the real interview, it will make me less nervous, like I can’t speak. I have experience already. I can do a good job.”

Many young people also participated in activities through their programs to learn about different career paths and what they could do to prepare for them. Others shared what it was like to participate in a career exploration class: “[It’s] making me think about how my future could be, like with different jobs, especially through the career exploration class I have at the end of the day, ‘cause we’ve done a lot of field trips to these different job sites.”

***“Wraparound services, being able to get young people the help they need when they need it, is the tool that we have.”***

***—OR partner organization staff***



## Tools You Can Use

Most programs relied heavily on staff members who specifically focused on this aspect of the model. We have included sample job descriptions for two different positions, one school-based and one community-based. Programs also shared sample guidelines and informed consent agreement, many online tools, and a reflection tool to help you think about what your career pathways options could look like. The job descriptions in particular provide details that can help you think about the types of supports and opportunities you will put into place. We've also included links to information about many different programs that include a licensing or certification element. Make sure that any programs you use align with your state requirements, will meet the needs of your pool of potential employers.

### Online Resources

- [YouthBuild](#) national non-profit focused on pathways to jobs, education, entrepreneurship, and other opportunities leading to productive and contributing livelihoods
- [Minnesota Career Information System](#) for finding online information about careers, education and the labor market
- [Connections/Ramp Up](#) job search engine
- [DEED](#) website
- Certification trainings

[Occupational safety](#)

[Renewable energy](#)

[Food service safety](#)

[Health, first aid, personal safety](#)

[Careerwise](#) career and education resource from Minnesota State Colleges and Universities

[Strengths Finder](#) assessment tool

[STEP-UP](#) Minneapolis-based employment program

[21st Century Skills and Work Readiness training](#)

[Tests of Basic Adult Education \(TABE\)](#)

[Career Quest workshop](#)

[Money Smart for Young People](#)

## SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION: SCHOOL-BASED CAREER PATHWAY LEAD

### **Reason position exists: (key deliverables and why the job is important)**

1. To help students transition into jobs and secondary education.
2. To lead career pathway teams and facilitate meetings.
3. To build rapport with students to address their life goals and challenges.
4. To implement and deliver career and college readiness curriculum.
5. To manage and ensure compliance with private, state, and/or federal grants.
6. To build relationships with employers and education institutions.

### **Primary Job Responsibilities:**

1. Assist students in transitioning into jobs and secondary education.
2. Lead the pathway team.
3. Implement strategies to help the pathway team succeed.
4. Foster relationships with employers and educational institutions.
5. Build and maintain positive relationships with students and staff.
6. Be an advocate for the program.
7. Be willing to step outside the job description and help when needed.
8. Be able to work with English Language Learner (ELL) students and deliver instruction.
9. Contribute to the program's success.
10. Invite feedback and be supportive of decisions from above.

### **Primary Measures of Success:**

1. Successfully placing a high number of students in jobs and higher education.
2. Students develop trust in you and confidence you will help them with any of their transition needs.
3. Students who receive training are ready to find jobs and continue their education.
4. Students working with you view you as a valued member of the team.
5. The team is supportive of your work and efforts toward the good of the program and the students.

## Qualifications

### Required:

- Education: AA
- Experience: 1+ year of experience in the field of training
- Software: Use of Word and Excel programs
- Interpersonal: Must be able to work well with students and staff

### Preferred:

- Education: Bachelor's degree
- Experience: 2+ years of experience in placement services
- Other: Connections to employers/other supporting institutions

### Attributes:

- Strong communication skills (listening, writing, presenting, facilitating, coaching, leading)
- Comfortable working with young people ages 14-24
- Ability to work with ELL students
- Flexible, adaptable, and open to others' ideas
- Strong critical thinking/problem solving skills with results-orientation
- Desire and ability to hold self and others accountable

This job description is not meant to be all-inclusive. It defines the critical job responsibilities and requirements only, which are subject to change at any time, with or without notice due to business requirements, reasonable accommodation, or any other reason.

Employee Signature / Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Manager Signature / Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION: COMMUNITY-BASED BRIDGE MENTOR**

Opportunity Reboot is a new collaboration that supports systems enhancements and postsecondary bridge programming for opportunity youth in our community.

Opportunity youth are young people ages 14-24 who are in foster care, involved in the juvenile justice system, experiencing homelessness, and/or disconnected from school and work. This initiative provides academic and career-readiness programming, as well as wrap-around support services, for opportunity youth from the area.

Opportunity Reboot is seeking a full-time Bridge Mentor to work directly with youth.

### **Tasks:**

- Partner with local agencies to recruit opportunity youth; local agencies include social services, schools, county corrections staff, and other youth development programs.
- Meet with youth in person to determine eligibility and fit for Opportunity Reboot and other youth programs; complete enrollment paperwork alongside youth.
- Administer and interpret assessments and interest inventories for youth to determine strengths and interests, as well as barriers to achieving educational and career goals.
- Meet weekly with youth enrolled in the program to develop and continuously revisit their individualized success plans, focusing on goal setting and achievement related to secondary school completion, career development, and postsecondary training/education.
- Support youth to identify ways to access a career pathway of their choosing based on their interests, strengths/abilities, and jobs currently available. Particular focus should be placed on pathways in manufacturing, healthcare, and construction, based on local workforce needs.
- Support program instructors to deliver and reinforce course content related to job seeking, transferable skill development, and professionalism in the workplace.
- Attend staff meetings to share information and identify opportunities to collaborate that would enhance services provided to youth.
- Keep detailed counseling notes and support extensive data tracking through use of Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Google Docs/Sheets, and Workforce One.

### **Required qualities:**

- Bachelor's degree or commensurate experience
- 2-5 years experience in student support services, career counseling, and/or workforce development
- Eagerness to learn about a variety of cultures and to reach out to and work with diverse youth
- Excellent interpersonal and organizational skills
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Ability to manage a caseload of up to X youth simultaneously
- Ability to work select evening hours and to travel within the community
- Experience with Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Word, Outlook, and Gmail (Google Docs/Sheets)

### **Preferred qualities:**

- Familiarity with community organizations and resources
- Multilingual



# SAMPLE GUIDELINES AGREEMENT FOR PARTICIPANTS

Participation in this community requires that you help us maintain a safe environment and that you respect yourself, your peers, staff, and partners of this program. Demonstrate your respect by following these guidelines:

SAFETY	RESPECT
Be violence free Be gang free Be gun free Be drug and alcohol free	Treat others as you want to be treated  Be inclusive and affirming of all identities; racist, homophobic, transphobic, or other discriminatory behavior will not be tolerated  Clean up after yourself  Demonstrate healthy boundaries  Respect our space and our neighbors

To participate in Opportunity Reboot, we ask that we all adhere to these guidelines. If you are unable to meet the above expectations, we will develop a plan to support you in successfully meeting those expectations.

By signing below you are agreeing to follow the above expectations.

Full name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# SAMPLE INFORMED CONSENT CONTRACT FOR PARTICIPANTS

Opportunity Reboot can help you with housing, education, employment, or wellness. All of our services are free and voluntary—you can quit at any time, and you do not have to share information you’d rather keep private.

Opportunity Reboot keeps information about you as required by the government or agencies that fund Opportunity Reboot. All of your records are secure and confidential. Generally, we will not share any information about you with anyone outside of Opportunity Reboot unless you have given us written permission (called a Release of Information). However, Opportunity Reboot staff and volunteers are mandated reporters, which means that we may be required by law to disclosed confidential information to the proper authorities if any of the following exist:

- You are a danger to yourself or others.
- You report, or staff reasonably suspects, child abuse (physical, emotional or sexual) or neglect.

*I understand that it is my choice to participate in services at Opportunity Reboot. I have had this document explained to me, I understand its purpose, and I have been offered a copy for my records.*

Full name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness name (printed): \_\_\_\_\_



## Feature 4: At-a-Glance

### IMPACTFUL CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

#### WHAT THEY ARE:

Opportunity Reboot organizations work in coordination with employers, industry partners, community providers, and education/training providers to provide a web of opportunities and resources for opportunity youth.

#### WHY THEY MATTER:

Working together, organizations can maximize their impact by creating a matrix of supports and resources for addressing workforce needs and those of opportunity youth.

#### STRATEGIES:

#### DESCRIPTION

#### TOOLS

##### **Diverse stakeholder engagement:**

A group of diverse stakeholders regularly interact to implement strategies and increase capacity to serve youth.

Cross-sector partners are identified and establish a clear vision and goals for collaboration.

Cross-sector partners agree on specific roles and responsibilities as it relates to serving youth.

Cross-sector partners maintain and strengthen collaboration through regular interactions, and share successes and lessons learned.

Sample Memorandum of Understanding (pages 74-75)

Sample Streamlined Intake Form (pages 76)

Sample Comprehensive Intake/ Application Form (pages 77-79)

***“You gotta use the resources that are out there. People want to partner.”***

***—OR partner organization staff***



## About This Feature

Partnerships can be difficult to define and even more challenging to navigate. In a blog post from 2015, The [Bridgespan Group](#) defines partnership as “strategic alliances between nonprofits that are intended to achieve greater impact than any organization could generate on its own. These alliances exist along a broad spectrum of approaches, ranging from less integrated associations and coalitions to more highly integrated joint programming, shared services, and legal mergers.”

OR’s approach to partnership emphasizes the proven successful model of one intermediary organization coordinating those alliances—employers, industry partners, community providers, and education/training providers in a “collective, place-based effort...to build high-quality employer-connected pathways” for opportunity youth (Grobe, Martin, & Steinberg, 2015, p. vii). These cross-sector collaborative partnerships often have “nested identities” in which organizations and programs share information and resources, as they have overlapping goals, but not necessarily missions (Stadtler & Van Wassenhove, 2016). Employees play multiple roles in terms of relationships and responsibilities. Young people don’t even necessarily perceive where one organization ends and another begins.

Numerous models point out that wraparound services allow for staff and professional teaming, which opens space for conversation about true community transformation. Opportunity youth face a matrix of systemic oppressions that can halt their opportunities and investments toward success (Crenshaw, 2013; Mattsson, 2014; McBride & Mazur, 2008). A coordinated focus on change allows the community to identify and take steps toward addressing gaps in services to better meet the needs of opportunity youth (Walter & Petr, 2011).



## Key Findings From the Evaluation

Initially, most OR programs were actively working to expand and deepen their network of partnerships through outreach and ongoing relationship management. Over time, these connections grew for each of the six original OR programs, with 100 percent of them reporting that using the model helped them establish new beneficial collaborations to support opportunity youth.

Most of the cross-sector partnerships leveraged by OR programs are aimed at providing participants with trainings, services, opportunities, and other resources that programs are unable to provide on their own. For example, programs offer training for English language learners, and on topics like socioemotional learning, financial literacy, sexual health, environmental justice, and jobs in the Green economy. These partnerships also create opportunities for college visits, scholarships, internship or job placements, and service-learning. They provide mental health services, GED support, and financial counselling.

Partnerships were also forged with the explicit purpose of removing barriers to program participation and success (e.g., access to food, bus passes, childcare). In a few cases, program partners provide support to program staff, rather than to participants (e.g., around recruiting or evaluation). Sometimes partners purchase services from programs, providing additional income to support organizational goals. Staff of all sites reported connecting with partners to talk about progress being made by youth they serve together, and to work together to identify ways to better help youth achieve goals.

***“There isn’t anything revolutionary about this work. Be honest with employers about the challenges, but also that there are also huge positives. It has to be mutual; it needs to be beneficial for parties. That’s where our best partnerships are, when it’s benefiting both parties. When it’s philanthropic it doesn’t last long.”***

***—OR program staff member***



## Tools You Can Use

We have included a variety of resources partner organizations can use to gain clarity about the agreements you're making in partnerships, to maximize the benefits of working together, and to streamline processes. These include a sample Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) you can adapt for use and two sample intake forms.

### Online Tools:

[Wilder Foundation Collaboration Resources](#)

[Advancing Collaboration — BBB Wise-Giving Alliance](#)

[The Bridgespan Group](#)

[Institute for Public Relations](#)

[Centre for Education and Youth's "Effective Partnership Models \(PDF\)](#)

["The Bias of 'Professionalism' Standards" \(Stanford Social Innovation Review\)](#)

["Professionalism or Socialized White Supremacy" \(NASPA\)](#)

[The Characteristics of White Supremacist Culture \(Showing Up for Racial Justice\)](#)

[Partnerships: Frameworks for Working Together](#)

## SAMPLE LIST OF WORKPLACE ISSUES FACED ON A REGULAR BASIS

This list of topics was brainstormed by a team of Opportunity Reboot program partners in one community. It includes things that employers felt they needed to address with young people, but didn't know how to do so with a mentoring mindset. We have left the list in the language that was used by the members of the partner organization staff so you can see how they described the challenges in their own words. The list was used to inform training for both mentors and mentees about how to respectfully and constructively address issues in the workplace.

*It is important to note that often, the ways in which “professionalism” is conceptualized are grounded in norms and stereotypes that favors white people and perpetuate white supremacy. When considering the things employers may need to address with young people, encourage them to reflect on whether the “issue” is truly affecting their or others’ ability to successfully conduct their work, or whether it is simply something that appears to be an issue because it is different than their workplace’s current norm. It is a current reality that many workplaces, particularly in the corporate setting, have a culture informed by white supremacist norms. When discussing and addressing these issues, be transparent while discussing them and acknowledge when a policy or expectation may be inequitable. In addition to helping employees understand the expectations, consider also the ways the workplace may be able to adjust or shift to become a culture where all employees can show up as their full, authentic selves.*

- Loud, inappropriate conversations, swearing where customers overhear them (e.g., housekeeping – talking loudly in between rooms while cleaning)
- Employees need to know how to talk to customers (professionalism)
- Tardiness and/or lack of accountability while on the clock
- Conflicts with other employees
- The need to teach tolerance and resistance to entry-level employees
- Persistence—if it's a tough work day, and things are going wrong, a common action for employees is to just give up and not see that this is just a tough day/weekend
- Resistance to listening to supervisors, folks in authority positions. Employers encourage and are willing to listen to suggestions for improving processes/procedures, but if the “rules” do not allow for any changes, the employees feel as if they are not being listened to.
- Employees’ lack of communication about scheduling (e.g., an employee has a court case, doctor’s appointment, etc., but they wait until the last minute to inform their supervisor); employers are willing to work with employees but notifications need to not come at the last minute if possible
- Lack of time management such as adhering to break times and keeping up the pace on the job
- Phone use on the job
- Inability/unwillingness to follow uniform policies

# OPPORTUNITY REBOOT SAMPLE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING OUTLINE

Note: There are many ways to structure an MOU. Your organization or organizations you partner with may have the own format and requirements. If possible, have a lawyer review any document prior to signing it, particularly if an exchange of money is involved.

WHEREAS, [list all partner agencies], have come together to implement the [name of initiative, project or partnership], funded by [names of funders];

Whereas, the partners listed below have agreed to enter into a collaborative agreement; and

Whereas, the partners herein desire to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding for the services to be provided by the collaborative:

## I) Description of Partner Agencies

[Insert descriptions]

## II) Purpose and Scope

[List all partners] will increase employment readiness skills for opportunity youth ages 14-24 through stabilization support, relationship building, career exploration services, work experiences, soft skills training, self-awareness trainings, education, and employment opportunities. The [name of initiative, project or partnership] works to obtain the goal and objectives outlined in [include the names of relevant documents such as a grant narrative or project work plan]

[Sample goal and objectives]

Goal: Improved educational and career attainment for opportunity youth ages 14-24

Objective 1: Increase access and coordination of stabilization support for opportunity youth

Objective 2: Increase work readiness skills for opportunity youth

Objective 3: Increase access to in-demand careers for opportunity youth

## III) Roles and Responsibilities

NOW, THEREFORE, it is hereby agreed by and between the partners as follows:

[List all partners] will:

[Sample shared roles and responsibilities]

1. Regularly participate in meetings of the partners
2. Identify and pursue shared funding opportunities
3. Ensure great outcomes and objectives are met
4. Ensure proper documentation supports success measures and benchmarks
5. Retain all documentation for a minimum of [X] years

[Sample individual partner roles and responsibilities]

[Partner 1] will:

1. Serve as the fiscal host and grant administrator
2. Facilitate regular meetings of partner agencies for the purpose of providing collaborate oversight of the project
3. Conduct initial assessments
4. Provide evidence-based, comprehensive re-entry services
5. Provide direct employment and training services



[Partner 2] will:

1. Conduct initial assessments and referrals to the appropriate partner agencies
2. Provide stabilization services including but not limited to basic needs such as food, clothing and supportive housing
3. Provide no-cost/no-insurance mental health therapy, drug counseling, and parenting education
4. Provide on-site educational support including GED tutoring and preparation, high school diploma and credit recovery
5. Provide “Transitional Employment” program designed to build pre-employment work readiness skills while providing paid training and employment opportunities onsite

[Partner 3] will:

1. Connect participants to training opportunities and job search assistance
2. Facilitate career exploration activities by conducting interest inventory assessments, facilitating employer visits and/or establishing job shadow opportunities
3. Provide paid, community-based work experience for eligible youth
4. Engage with employers to develop internship opportunities for program participants in areas of career interest
5. Maintain ongoing contact with the partners to ensure the needs of participants are met

#### **IV) Financial and Progress Reports**

Describe any required financial or reporting transactions

#### **V) Timeline**

Responsibilities under this Memorandum of Understanding will be effective from [insert date] through [insert date].

#### **V) Mutual Understanding**

This MOU may be terminated by either party upon 30 days’ written notice.

#### **VI) Signatures**

[List all partners] agree to collaborate and provide services as detailed above and pursuant to the program narrative of [insert names of relevant documents such as grant narratives or work plans].

BY: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

BY: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

BY: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## SAMPLE INTAKE FORMS

Even entry points for programs can be problematic. Being repeatedly asked for personal and detailed information can be a significant barrier. One opportunity youth said, “It’s tough having to share what you’re not proud of with new people.” Ways OR programs and their partners worked across organizations to address this included:

- Creating one shared intake form that could be used by all collaborators
- Agreeing that one member of the partnership will serve as the “home” organization for intake and other data collection, and that additional data would be shared with other organizations when needed, legal, and appropriate
- Streamlining intake and collecting as little data as possible (just data needed legally, for grant purposes, and to meet the needs of the client)

### Streamlined Intake Form

#### GENERAL

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender Identity: \_\_\_\_\_

#### ACADEMIC STATUS

☐ Enrolled in school (name of school): \_\_\_\_\_

Anticipated graduation date: \_\_\_\_\_ Free/Reduced Lunch eligible: Yes/No

Location of application or letter: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Graduate (date of graduation): \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Not currently enrolled (name of last school attended): \_\_\_\_\_

Date last attended: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ GED (Completion date): \_\_\_\_\_

Date of transcript, diploma, or certificate copy on file: \_\_\_\_\_

#### OTHER VERIFICATION (IF APPLICABLE):

☐ Unemployed

☐ Employed (complete below)

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Type and location of employment documentation: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Selective Service registration: Yes/No/Not applicable (reason): \_\_\_\_\_

Verification number, if applicable (from SSA): \_\_\_\_\_

#### INCOME:

Household income: \_\_\_\_\_

Type and location of documentation: \_\_\_\_\_

Government assistance (type): \_\_\_\_\_

Type and location of documentation: \_\_\_\_\_

## Comprehensive Intake/Application Form

Date completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Last name: \_\_\_\_\_ First name: \_\_\_\_\_ MI: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_ Age at time of application: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Highest level of education completed/current grade in school: \_\_\_\_\_

Currently enrolled in school: Yes/No

If yes, name of school: \_\_\_\_\_

Self-identified race and ethnicity (check all that apply):

☐ White

☐ Black

☐ Asian

☐ Native American/Native Alaskan

☐ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

☐ Hispanic or Latino/a/x

☐ Other:

Disability: Yes/No If yes, type of disability: \_\_\_\_\_

English language learner: Yes/No

Veteran Status:

☐ Not a veteran ☐ Veteran ☐ Spouse of veteran ☐ Recent veteran (<180 days of active duty)

Labor Force Status:

☐ Employed part time ☐ Employed full time ☐ Not employed

Self-Attestation of Participant's Eligibility

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (print full name), hereby certify that as of today's date, my

income for the last six months has been: \_\_\_\_\_

I currently (check all that apply)

- ☐ Am in school
- ☐ Am in need of remedial writing or reading skill development
- ☐ Am an English language learner
- ☐ Am subject to the justice system
- ☐ Have a criminal record
- ☐ Am experiencing homelessness or am highly mobile
- ☐ Am in foster care/out-of-home placement
- ☐ Am truant from school for the most recent completed quarter
- ☐ Have graduated or completed a GED
- ☐ Am an individual with a disability
- ☐ Have dropped out of school
- ☐ Am pregnant/parenting
- ☐ Require additional assistance with an educational program or to secure or hold employment

I am currently living...

- ☐ ...with my parents/parenting adults/legal guardians, and do not pay rent or bills. I receive more than 50% support from my parents.
- ☐ ...with friends and/or acquaintances and do not receive any financial support from my parents/parenting adults/legal guardians.
- ☐ ...with my parents/parenting adults/legal guardians, but I am paying my own bills and am receiving less than 50% support from them.
- ☐ ...on my own. I have my own place and receive no financial support from my parents/parenting adults/legal guardians or anyone else.
- ☐ Other (describe): \_\_\_\_\_

I certify that the information provided is true to the best of my knowledge. I am aware that the information I have provided is subject to review and verification and I may be required to provide documents to support this application. I am also aware that I am subject to immediate termination if I am found ineligible after enrollment and may be prosecuted for perjury. I also allow release of this information in accordance with the use of data privacy statement.

Applicant signature and date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian signature (if under 18) and date: \_\_\_\_\_

Organizational signatures as needed and date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Individualized Service Strategy

Time table: \_\_\_\_\_

Employment goal: \_\_\_\_\_

Assessment/Background Information: \_\_\_\_\_

### Education/Training:

Work experience: \_\_\_\_\_

Intake assessment notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Other factors (barriers/strengths): \_\_\_\_\_

Plan of action: \_\_\_\_\_

### Recommended Services to Reach

#### Goal:

All participants will receive career counseling and job placement assistance.

This participant also needs:

☐ Basic skills/GED

☐ Classroom training

☐ Job search class/job search club

☐ Referrals (to): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

☐ Other (describe): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Support services needed:

☐ Child care

☐ Transportation

☐ Tuition assistance

☐ Books/Fees assistance

☐ Other (describe): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Participant Responsibilities

☐ Provide financial report

☐ Provide documented copy of grades

☐ Provide copy of credentials upon completion

☐ Attendance (describe):

☐ Report changes in financial or school status

☐ Meeting with counselor on a regular basis (describe):

☐ Other (describe): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I have read this plan and agree to work with \_\_\_\_\_ (staff) to reach my goal. I understand services may be withdrawn if I do not fulfill my responsibilities as listed above.

Participant signature and date: \_\_\_\_\_

Counselor/staff member signature and date: \_\_\_\_\_

## USING DATA TO IMPROVE, NOT JUST PROVE

A high-quality OR program is not static. It isn't simply a matter of designing it and then implementing it in the same ways repeatedly over time. As noted in other sections of this toolkit, things change...staff, participants, funding, community dynamics, the job market, and more. One OR program leader said in reference to the Covid-19 pandemic, "You just have to adapt. Youth work agencies understand the concept of having to be adaptive. In order to be relevant as a youth serving agency you have to be adaptive. Youth service orgs are used to handling crises every day."

Making a commitment to gathering and using data for improvement is one way to ensure that you are paying attention to the ways your program needs to evolve to best meet the needs of opportunity youth. One way to ensure this commitment is operationalized is to develop a continuous improvement plan. There are different names and different models out there to describe what such a plan looks like, but at the core it's about intentional planning, followed by implementation, followed by assessment, followed by adjustments that lead back to intentional planning. The Minnesota Department of Health describes this cycle as Plan >> Do >> Study >> Act or, alternately, Plan >> Do >> Check >> Act.



- PLAN** A good place to start is with your logic model ([page 15](#)). You can use that as the basis for an action plan that identifies SMART (strategic, measurable, actionable, realistic, and time-bound) goals, as well as an evaluation plan that details what data you will collect to assess your progress and success.
- DO** This phase is about implementing programs as well as data collection.
- CHECK** In a continuous improvement environment, data are used to improve, rather than to prove. This means getting the information into the hands of the people who are most able to use it to inform change. This can include funders, but equally or more important, it means youth workers, case managers, program leaders, and sometimes young people themselves. Just as some programs have regular check-ins with opportunity youth to review their progress toward their goals, so too should programs check-in on themselves.
- ACT** The phase is about continuing what's working, adjusting where it's needed, and moving forward into new plans that take you back into the cycle.

Continuous improvement often ends up looking and feeling more like a spiral than a circle, as different components move at different speeds, changes are made in some areas but not others, and so on. That's okay. It isn't about "doing it right," it's about a philosophy and an approach that once again keeps the young and their experiences at the center of the work.

***"Adaptability is one of our big assets. No one has gotten set in our ways because we're always doing different roles because of the ever changing demographics and who comes through our door and our resources and capabilities. When we were able to have a daycare we could serve more parents...now that we have ELL we're able to serve more of those folks...It's something that has happened so many times."***

***—Opportunity Reboot program director***



## Tools You Can Use

In this section of the toolkit we've included two resources to help you with continuous improvement. You'll find an Activity PDSA form and survey you can use or adapt to learn about your participants' experiences in and outcomes from your program. There are also links to evaluation and continuous improvement resources online.

### Online Tools

[Wilder Foundation Evaluation Resources and Tools](#)

[Minnesota Health Department Plan Do Study Act](#) information



**PLAN****DO****STUDY****ACT****OPPORTUNITY REBOOT ACTIVITY FORM**

Organization name	
Program name	
Activity name	

**STEP 1: PLAN**

<b>Name (s)</b> of the individual(s) completing this section of the form	
<b>Date</b> this section was filled out	
<b>Objective:</b> What are we trying to accomplish with this activity?	
<b>Description:</b> What will the activity include?	
<b>Who will be involved?</b> (group size, participant characteristics)	
<b>When</b> will we carry it out? <b>How long</b> will it take?	
<b>Where</b> will we test/try it? (setting)	
<b>What resources</b> do we need to carry out this test?	

	<b>Expectations</b> What do you expect to happen if the plan works well?	<b>Measures</b> What data will we collect to see if that happens?	<b>Data Collection Plan</b> How will the data be collected? Who will collect it? When will it be collected?
<b>1</b>			
<b>2</b>			
<b>3</b>			

## STEP 2: DO

<b>Name (s)</b> of the individual(s) completing this section of the form	
<b>Date</b> this section was filled out	
<b>Basic description of test:</b> When was the activity carried out? Where? Who was involved?	
<b>Observations:</b> Generally, how did it go? What did you observe? Were there surprises or problems in implementation?	
<b>Data Collection:</b> What data were collected? How? Were there any surprises or problems in collecting the data?	

## STEP 3: STUDY

<b>Name (s)</b> of the individual(s) completing this section of the form	
<b>Date</b> this section was filled out	
<b>Implementation:</b> Were there any lessons learned related to implementation? (timing, setting, facilitation, data collection, etc.)	
<b>Results:</b> Describe the results of the data. Were there any surprises?	
<b>Expectations:</b> How did the things that happened match up with your expectations? Did the data you collected help you learn what you wanted to know?	

STEP 4: ACT

<b>Name (s)</b> of the individual(s) completing this section of the form	
<b>Date</b> this section was filled out	
<b>Choose a plan:</b>  <b>Adapt:</b> Modify the activity, then test it in a new cycle  <b>Adopt:</b> embed this activity into your routine  <b>Abandon:</b> discard this activity and move on to a new idea  <b>Expand:</b> Learn how this activity works under different conditions	Describe what you plan to do:

# PROGRAM PARTICIPANT SURVEY

We want to understand how our program affects the lives of young people. To do this, we invite you to take this survey. Before you begin, there are a few things you should know:

- This survey is NOT A TEST. There are no right or wrong answers, just your experiences.
- Your responses will be kept CONFIDENTIAL. Your individual responses will not be shared with the program.
- Your name or other identifying information will NEVER be connected to the information you provide.
- You can skip any questions you do not want to answer. We hope the questions are interesting to you, and that you choose to answer all of the questions HONESTLY.
- Participation in this survey is VOLUNTARY; you may end your participation at any time.
- THIS SURVEY WILL TAKE YOU ABOUT 10 MINUTES TO COMPLETE.

**Are you willing to participate in this survey?**

☐ Yes ☐ No

**Consent for Participation:**

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PRINT NAME of Youth

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SIGNATURE of Youth

How much do you agree or disagree with the following:	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Once I set a goal for myself, I try to find out how to reach my goal.					
2. When I talk to someone, I think about how I would feel if I were in their place.					
3. When something is hard to learn, I tell myself I can get better at it.					
4. I do a good job managing my own money.					
5. I know how to complete a job application (including a resume and cover letter).					
6. I believe in myself.					
7. I believe I can have a positive impact on someone else's life.					
8. I think about what might happen before making a decision.					
9. I know who I am and what I believe in.					
10. When I make a decision, I consider the effect it will have on my future.					

The next set of questions is about your relationships with people at this program. We are asking these questions because we want to understand the different kinds of support you have.

How much do you agree or disagree with the following:	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
11. How often do staff at this program show you that you matter to them?					
12. How often do staff at this program encourage you to be your best?					
13. How often do staff at this program help you get things done?					
14. How often do staff at this program listen to your ideas and take them seriously?					
15. How often do staff at this program connect you with new people or services that help you?					

The next set of questions refer to services you might want to access. By services, we are including health, educational, employment, financial, and housing services.

How much do you agree or disagree with the following:	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
16. I can find the answers to questions I have about services available.					
17. I can find services that can help me.					
18. When I have a problem finding the services I need, I know who to talk to.					

The following questions are about your background. The purpose of these questions is to better understand and describe survey participants. Please answer honestly.

19. What is your gender?
- ☐ Female
  - ☐ Male
  - ☐ Other/prefer to self-describe: \_\_\_\_\_

20. Do you consider yourself transgender, genderqueer, genderfluid, or unsure about your gender identity?
- ☐ Yes
  - ☐ No

21. Please select your age:
- ☐ 13   ☐ 14   ☐ 15   ☐ 16   ☐ 17   ☐ 18   ☐ 19   ☐ 20
- ☐ 21   ☐ 22   ☐ 23   ☐ 24   ☐ 25   ☐ 26   ☐ 27   ☐ 28
- ☐ 29   ☐ 30   ☐ 31   ☐ 32   ☐ 33   ☐ 34   ☐ 35

22. Which of the following best describes you? Select all that apply.
- ☐ Black, African, or African American
  - ☐ Asian or Pacific Islander
  - ☐ Native American or Alaskan Native
  - ☐ Spanish or Hispanic origin, such as Latin American, Mexican, Puerto Rican, or Cuban
  - ☐ White
  - ☐ Other/prefer to self-describe: \_\_\_\_\_

How much do you agree or disagree with the following:	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
23. During my time at this program, I formed a relationship with an adult outside of the program who supports my growth. This might include, for example, a boss, mentor, neighbor, community members.					
24. At this program, I had opportunities to explore education or career options or both.					
25. This program helped me make a plan to reach goals.					
26. When I am at this program, staff work to meet my personal needs. In other words, staff figure out what my specific needs and interests are and then help me.					
27. This program helped me identify both what I am good at and areas where I may need help.					
28. The staff at this program checked in with me regularly about my goals.					
29. The staff at this program want me to reach the goals I set.					

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