

Windham Capacity Project for Youth

A Communities Empowering Youth Project



New England Network

- **Our Vision:** We envision New England communities as places where children and youth flourish and the organizations and people who work with them are strong and valued allies.
- **Our Mission:** Inspiring innovation and advancing best practices in partnership with child and youth-serving agencies.
- **Our Values:** Inclusion, Innovation, Collaboration



Compassion Capital Fund

- Improve organizations' ability to provide social services
- Strengthen and expand organizations
- Diversify funding sources
- Create collaborations



Communities Empowering Youth: What This Project Is About

- Reducing gang involvement and youth violence
- Fostering positive youth development
- Encouraging partnerships
- Building organizational capacity



Youth in Windham County: A Statistical Picture

Population of Windham County: 44,000

Youth population (ages 10-24): 8,500 (19%)

- Employment decreased 6.7% since 2003
- 10.2% of families with children -18 living below the poverty line; rate in Brattleboro is 16.2%
- 30% binge drink
- 25% use marijuana
- Half of students know an adult who uses illegal drugs (*state YRBS*)
- One-third of students know an adult who sells an illegal drug (*state YRBS*)
- 2.04% charged with juvenile crimes
- 33% - 61% engage in sexual activity (*sophomore to senior*)
- Only 45% 'feel valued by their community'
- 7% of VT teenagers are not in school and not working (8% in US)

Overall: Windham County youth fare poorly compared to other Vermont youth, but many indicators are improving and, as a whole, Vermont youth look healthy compared to youth in other states.



Windham Youth Council Suggestions

- More & better places to hang out
- Greater opportunity for meaningful activities
- Opportunities for community service
- Greater youth voice in decision-making
- More jobs for youth
- Greater tolerance & understanding
- Transportation
- Positive relationships with authority



Capacity Project Partners

- New England Network – lead organization
- Youth Services Inc. of Windham County
- Boys & Girls Club of Brattleboro
- Ecumenical Council
- Other Faith-Based Organizations



Timeframe and Tasks

- Three-year project
- Organizational Assessments
- Community Needs Assessment
- Work plan Development
- Training
- On-going Technical Assistance
- On-going Outcome Measurement



Project Scope

- Focus on up to three projects
- Make use of existing collaborations
- Develop new collaborations
- Increase the capacity of the collaborations to positively influence youth development



Potential Activities: How We Can Help

- Revenue development
- Communications planning
- Technology review and upgrade
- Researching and developing new programs or services
- Developing program curriculum



What Projects May Look Like

Windham County Project is unusual, but models do exist.

- Formal collaborations between agencies and congregations re: mentoring or other volunteer needs
- Congregations 'adopt' transitioning youth
- Afterschool programs and one-time or series events for youth
- Community discussions/forums based in congregations
- Congregational 'go-to' program for resources and connections
- Internal congregational work on youth development

Congregations may choose to collaborate with one another on any task or set of tasks.



Questions & Answers Instructions

1. Introduce yourselves if you haven't already.
2. Each person briefly report what information stood out or struck your interest.
3. Discuss any concerns about what was said.
4. Discuss the implications of what you heard.
5. As a group, discuss any questions you have, and agree on one comment and/or one question to ask in the large group.



Levels of Participation

- Full Participation
- Training Participation
- Informational Participation



Next Steps

- Discuss project with your congregation or organization.
- Determine your level of participation.
- Notify NEN by Jan. 21, 2008. Contact Cindy Carraway-Wilson.
- Complete organizational assessment by Jan. 31, 2008.
- Develop work plan by Feb. 22, 2008.



Contact Information

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