

WorkLink Youth Council

Comprehensive Strategic Plan

2009 - 2014

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Strategic Plan 2009 - 2014

Executive Summary.

The theme for our Strategic Plan is “opportunities for all youth”. The thinking and work performed by our Youth Council during the Strategic Planning session has created a framework that places a premium on the Youth Council using its resources and influence to ensure all youth have access to workforce development opportunities, as a result of the Youth Council’s identification of the region’s workforce development challenges, opportunities and solutions.

This strategic plan emerged from discussion, analysis and formulation by the WorkLink Youth Council members. It was led by current Chairperson Kristi King-Brock and facilitated by a national workforce development consultant, Ricki Kozumplik.

The process was open, transparent, and inclusive. The Youth Council was guided by a set of guidelines that included an honest appraisal of:

- *information from the WorkLink Workforce Investment Board’s strategic planning process;*
- *changes to the local community since the last strategic plan;*
- *potential changes the local community will face in the near future;*
- *recent and potential changes to the workforce development business’s technology, suppliers, economy, customers’ needs and preferences and government regulations;*
- *characteristics of a winning workforce system and Youth Council and an analysis of the current performance of each entity; and,*
- *current internal strengths and weaknesses, and external opportunities and threats.*

From that list, the Youth Council identified a set of current challenges that provided the basis for determining our vision, mission, and goals for the next year. The entire process gave those who participated an opportunity to re-examine our organizational values, our capabilities, products and services, and our customers.

This plan is our predetermined course of action. Of course, a plan that sits on the shelf is no plan at all – it is only a dream. In order to make the dream a reality, this plan has three main characteristics: First, it involves the future state of this Council. Second, it addresses the actions that we must take in order to achieve this future state. Finally, we have created personal and organizational identification with and ownership of the goals, objectives and action strategies that will determine our future.

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Local Past and Potential Future Accomplishments.

Members listed these as accomplishments for which they were most proud in the last year, and those activities they want to accomplish in the coming year:

Most Proud Accomplishment (What we did.)	Most Important to Complete (What we will do.)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinated youth needs for Anderson, Oconee, and Pickens counties • Hosted a Job Fair and enabled youth to attend • Served out of school youth through education, job readiness training, support, and remove their barriers • Worked with supporting partners • Have excellent diverse and engaged providers and agency leaders • Added PYC as a provider • Hosted a youth forum where we informed each other of the services • Came together as a council to focus on goals • Created a handbook • Funded the welding program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter the “prevention” realm of serving youth versus just the “reaction” mode • Obtain additional funding by - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ developing a systemic process to identify resources ○ securing additional funding outside of WIA dollars • Increase collaborations - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ with youth ministries ○ by initiating more collaborative activities ○ by coordinating with civic and other groups for “boot on the ground” efforts to reach youth with more than just money ○ by inviting the community to participate • Reach more in-school and at risk Youth by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ being more visible to youth ○ offering more and clearer ads using the appropriate channels

Youth Council Values.

The following Youth Council values were identified from the accomplishments list:

- Customer focused and driven
- Strong advocate for all youth
- Bold initiatives
- Positive approach
- Embracing diversity
- Reliable and professional
- Responsibility, accountability and integrity
- Prevention as well as intervention
- Appropriate use and scope of resources
- Collaboration of the community, faith-based organizations, business, and education partnerships

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Current and Future Community Trends Assessment and Assumptions.

Before creating a strategic plan, it is important to gather information from community leaders about the current workforce development issues, assess the recent changes in the region and the workforce development system business environment, as well as make assumptions about potential future changes in each category.

Focus Group and Survey Results Key Information

Our members reviewed the results of the focus groups and surveys that were conducted with businesses, economic development agencies, education, and youth and adult/dislocated worker service providers and determined the following should be considered when developing the Youth Council strategic plan:

Focus Group/Survey Category	Items to be Considered for the Youth Council Strategic Plan
Businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Create a structure to ensure all programs are holding their youth accountable to demonstrate the following skill requirements and education levels:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Soft skills○ Basic skills○ HS Diploma/GED○ Technical Certificate● Help educate parents on business requirements● Help businesses use WorkKeys● Help educators assess using WorkKeys
Service Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Create youth buy-in● Create an understanding of the generation differences● Make workplace skills training mandatory● Hold the youth accountable● Revamp Vocational Education to address types, access, supply, and include vocational education to address key industries● Address education system process issues through existing mechanisms and also offer non-traditional options such as evening high school classes, divergent learning● Identify the youth's gaps in the business requirements and ensure that we integrate these skills into provider services through curriculum and work experience● Increase and develop pathways for all youth to work● Provide diverse training methods● Provide social workers in the schools

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Focus Group/Survey Category	Items to be Considered for the Youth Council Strategic Plan
Economic Development Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the youth’s gaps in the business requirements • Ensure that we integrate these skills into provider services, through curriculum and work experience, to prepare an upcoming labor force that meets the needs of businesses. This will allow economic developers to promote our labor force in economic development activities
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist youth to understand the importance of soft skills in the workplace • Provide contextual/ workplace academics • Provide Adult Ed/GED training and community support mentoring to assist students to “stay in school” • Increase the ways educators can connect with businesses • Increase parental/family involvement

Local Area Trends

Our members identified the following changes to the local community since the last strategic plan and the anticipated changes during the next year:

- Increase in
 - gang activity
 - the dropout rate
 - teen pregnancies
 - substance abuse
 - drug dealing
 - crime
 - domestic violence
 which causes an increase in the need and activities of child protective services;
- Reduced youth employment;
- Fewer 4-year degree seekers;
- Reduction of services to youth;
- Change in population;
- Loss of manufacturing jobs;
- Higher unemployment rate;
- Change in performance measures for youth services;
- More involvement by/with the Youth Council;
- Increase in the need for “meaningfulness” regarding career choice and unrealistic expectations (individuals want to start in the workplace as the president of the company);
- East/west connector;
- Received stimulus money;
- Leadership changes—governmental at all levels, WIB leadership and staff;
- More collaboration among partners;

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- More education opportunities for youth which now may be limited due to lack of funds and youth not meeting the criteria to enter those opportunities;
- Push for efficiency -- which may result in fewer workers doing more tasks;
- Push to be more energy efficient and environmentally friendly (“green” jobs);
- Implementation EEDA/pathways; and
- Increased use of technology (texting which negatively impacts face-to-face communication).

Workforce Development Business Environment Changes:

The following chart identifies the recent changes and the anticipated changes to the business environment of the workforce development industry within 6 categories: funding, technology, services, government regulations, business customers’ needs and preferences, and, youth customers’ needs and preferences.

Workforce Development Business Environment	
Category	Future Changes
<i>Funding</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lots of stimulus funding without clarification on regulations/outcomes and a short time frame to spend it • Infrastructure with stimulus dollars may disappear in a few years • There is a growing need to procure additional funding (other than WIA)
<i>Technology</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everywhere and rapid growth/change • Expense is high, especially for tech support for youth at home • Provides opportunities for connectivity to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jobs ○ Mentors ○ Program staff/faculty ○ Parents and families • Provides opportunities to be fast, but maybe not complete
<i>Services</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need to provide service to <u>all</u> youth • There is a need for more collaboration – more seamless delivery • We need a community asset map
<i>Government Regulations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We must consider the needs of <u>all</u> youth • Restrictions on qualified participants • We need to use different eligibility criteria (free/reduced lunch, WIC, etc.) but those most in need have challenges with going through the “hoops” effectively
<i>Business Customers’ Needs/ Preferences</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in soft skills training (this may be impacted since they will have a larger pool from which to choose) • Employees who can do multiple tasks/jobs • Basic technology skills • Dependable people

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Workforce Development Business Environment	
Category	Future Changes
<i>Youth Customers' Needs/ Preferences</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in basic and soft skills • Education – high school diploma/GED • Confidence • Jobs • Accept jobs for which they are over qualified • Entrepreneurship

Profiles of Successful Youth Councils and Workforce Development Youth Systems.

The following charts identify the characteristics of successful Youth Councils and workforce development youth systems in 5 –10 years, the importance of each characteristic and, the current performance using the following scales:

Importance

- 1 = Extremely Critical
- 2 = Very Critical
- 3 = Critical
- 4 = Extremely Important
- 5 = Very Important
- 6 = Important
- 7 = Extremely Beneficial
- 8 = Very Beneficial
- 9 = Beneficial

Current Performance

- 1 = Almost Perfect
- 2 = Excellent
- 3 = Good
- 4 = Some Strength (on the balance)
- 5 = Neutral
- 6 = Some weakness (on the balance)
- 7 = Poor
- 8 = Very Poor
- 9 = Abysmal

Successful Youth Council Characteristics

Characteristic	Future Importance	Current Performance
No government interference	1	9
Visionary	1	6
Fully engaged/committed	1	4
Divers membership (includes youth, business, and, faith based organization representation)	1	6
Educated about its role	1	4
Addresses all youth (not just WIA eligible)	1	7.5
Has complimentary programs	2	8
Supports all providers (not just WIA providers)	2	7
Leverages funds/focuses funds	1	8
Has diverse opportunities for youth input	1	8
Has a strong connection to education (all levels), businesses and faith-based organizations	1	8

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Successful Workforce Development System Characteristics

Characteristic	Future Importance	Current Performance
No government interference	1	9
Collaborative/cooperative	1	6
Local oversight	5	8
Needs aligned with services (including the fact that services would be exciting/fun/engaging)—Holistic (all aspects of youth development addressed)	1	7
Inclusive	3	6
Seamless	3.5	6
Empowering	2	6
Efficient	3	6
Well Branded/Well Known	1	8
Creative	4	6
Well funded – diversified/multiple funding sources	1	7
Developmentally responsive (respond to the needs of the individual based on their development level, not their age)	3	6
Without walls (we go to customers, they do not always have to come to us)	4	8.5
Customer-driven (youth and business) and not performance measure driven	1	7

Characteristics to Address to Become More Successful

The members identified the following characteristics as most in need of attention in order to become more successful:

Group	Characteristic
Youth Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has diverse opportunities for youth input • Has a strong connection to education (all levels), businesses and faith-based organizations • Leverages funds/focuses funds • Addresses all youth (not just WIA eligible)
Workforce System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well Branded/Well Known • Needs aligned with services (including the fact that services would be exciting/fun/engaging)—Holistic (all aspects of youth development addressed) • Well funded – diversified/multiple funding sources • Customer-driven (youth and business) and not performance measure driven • Collaborative/cooperative

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SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis

The SWOT analysis identified the following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the region. Strengths and weaknesses are internal to the organization and system and ones over which the Youth Council has control. Opportunities and Threats are external to the Youth Council and therefore are not under their control. In order to be considered an opportunity, the Youth Council must have an internal strength that would allow them to take advantage of it.

Strengths (What internal strengths bring us a competitive advantage?)	Weaknesses (What internal weaknesses might inhibit our abilities to meet our mission and vision?)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity of perspective and experience of members • Connections to agencies , services, community • Involved, capable, passionate council, chair and vice chair • Engaged, dedicated members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government regulations (DOL, DOC) • Understanding /interpretation of those government regulations • Operate in a garmented system of providers • Lack of collaboration • Lack of knowledge about available resources • Dissemination of information in schools/businesses/agencies/community • Lack of involved parents • Lack of other funding streams

Opportunities (Of what external opportunities will our strengths allow us to take advantage)	Threats (What external influence might inhibit us in reaching our mission and vision?)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link more purposefully with other groups/funding sources/programs • Provide leadership for future youth system direction • Reach all youth more effectively • Enhance brand/reach into the community • Expand focus to include prevention versus only intervention • Become more family oriented (serve all members of the family as needed) • To collaborate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of WIA • Loss of jobs • Funding Sources • Lack of employment opportunities outside of service industry • State of the economy • Increase in Child protective services, domestic violence, etc. caused by the above threats which causes a downward spiral for the community

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Youth Council Vision.

Our vision provides a directional statement; a “picture” of a future state of the organization (what we are striving to become); it provides inspiration; it gives a framework for our area of influence/responsibility.

“To have all youth educated and prepared for self-sufficiency in work and in life.”

Youth Council Mission.

Our mission is a brief description of the organization’s fundamental purpose (what we do)/reason for existence, articulated for those inside and outside of the organization.

“The WorkLink Youth Council facilitates collaboration and the delivery of services for all youth, leading to educational, workplace and personal success.”

Strategic Goals.

Our goals grew out of an analysis of the region’s focus group and survey results, recent and potential changes within the community and the workforce development industry, our identification of the characteristics of successful/winning workforce systems and Youth Council, and, the SWOT analysis. We chose to have four goals for this strategic plan that were directed at our four most immediate challenges:

- 1) There is a lack of system-wide coordination of services due to the service providers’ lack of knowledge about each other’s services,*
- 2) Youth have a lack of work ethics, soft skills, and basic skills,*
- 3) Family units are weak and there is no structured system to support them, and,*
- 4) The region has a high dropout rate for HS and 2 year degrees.*

The goals based on the above immediate challenges show us what our world will look like when we have accomplished our objectives.

The Youth Council’s Four Goals.

- Integrate work systems and process
- Improve work ethic and soft skills of youth
- Strengthen family units/improve services to families
- Increase the number of youth who are completers and employed in jobs paying more than minimum wage.

The objectives for each goal are the measurable statements towards which our efforts are directed. Each objective contains three elements: a specific statement of what is to be accomplished, a standard by which we can measure the accomplishment, and a timeframe and deadline within which to accomplish the objective. Finally, Strategies are the specific steps which need to happen to bring completion to the objective, and eventually, the goal.

The Youth Council and its sub-committees will assess the attainment of objectives at each meeting to assess progress on the successful completion of our goals.

Goals, Objectives and Action Strategies Narrative.

Goal I. Integrate work systems and process

*The **Service Integration Committee** oversees the attainment of this goal and will be responsible to complete the objectives and strategies to facilitate its successful attainment.*

Key Objective:

- A.** By June 30, 2011 enhance the service mapping data base by identifying Faith Base Organizations, Churches, and Service Organizations for families in the three county areas.

Key Action Strategies:

1. Establish/identify service mapping parameters.
2. Research resources.
3. Collect/Input service map data.
4. Disseminate the product.
5. Provide training to users.
6. Identify/ address gaps in community service.
7. Establish maintenance process.

Goal II. Improve work ethic/soft skills, and basic skills

The Work Readiness Committee will be responsible for the attainment of this goal and will be responsible to complete the objectives and strategies to facilitate its successful attainment.

Key Objective:

- A. By June 30, 2012, we will increase the community's perception of the work readiness and work ethics of our youth by 10-25%.

Key Action Strategies:

- 1. Improve work ethic/soft skills, and basic skills.
- 2. Establish the baseline.
- 3. Teach the soft skills.
- 4. Evaluate progress yearly.

Key Objective:

- B. Improve awareness and Implementation of WorkKeys.

Key Action Strategy:

- 1. Work with WIB Business Partnership and Workforce Skills and Education Committees to address this.

Goal III. Strengthen family units/ improve services to families.

The Family Services Committee will oversee the attainment of this goal, its key objectives, and strategies to facilitate its successful attainment.

Key Objective:

- A. Introducing 90% of our partners to family services available in our geographical area.

Key Action Strategies:

1. Hold round table discussions with partners, agencies, and community service in three county areas.
2. Encourage partners to distribute appropriate information /materials on education options to parents/adults in the family.
3. Offer by June 10, 2010 a “services fair” to families (free of charge) to feature community services /programs.
4. Use results of Youth forum to guide planning efforts by August 1, 2009.
5. By July 2011, engage FBOs in programming plans and activities.

Goal IV. Increase the number of youth who are completers and employed in jobs paying more than minimum wage.

The Education Committee oversees the attainment of this goal, objectives and strategies to facilitate its successful attainment.

Key Objective:

- A. Produce 240 general completers by June 30, 2014.
- B. Produce 35 postsecondary completers by June 30, 2014.
- C. Place 150 youth in jobs paying more than minimum wage by June 30, 2014.

Key Action Strategies:

1. Address:
 - Idle teens (16-19)
 - Recent dropouts
 - Certificate students
 - Transition students
 - Upper youth (20-21)
 - Youth who move into the service area and are not enrolled in school.
2. Advocate for improved state policies, local awareness and responsiveness regarding high school dropouts.
3. Develop a system wide support infrastructure (e.g., mentoring, transportation, life skills training, tutoring, community resources data bank, etc.).

Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Action Steps Chart

The following displays the above Youth Council's goals, objectives, and strategies within a chart. The fifth and sixth columns indicate the action steps for each strategy and the committee responsible for overseeing the completion of the goal.

WorkLink Youth Council's Strategic Plan Key Critical Issues, Goals, Objectives, Strategies, and Action Plans					
Critical Issue	Goal	Objective	Strategy	Action Plan	Sub-Committee
Service Providers are working in silos	Integrate work systems and process	By June 30. 2011 enhance the service mapping data base by identifying Faith Base Organizations, Churches, and Service Organizations for families in the three county areas.	Establish/ identify service mapping parameters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify all stakeholders • Define information needed about each service • Determine which services need to be included within the database • Decide audience access <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ partners ○ organizations ○ businesses ○ families ○ community • Decide who qualifies as a service provider to be on database • Identify list of agencies to participate 	Service Integration
			Research resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify youth partners in AOP • Research current data on service providers • Utilize <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ VISTA members ○ AmeriCorps volunteers ○ Intern • Review sample service mapping resources • Research current systems in use • Identify other sample completed service maps • Contact SC Youth Council to see if any have done mapping • Research 211, ASA book of services • Review /research www.indyserves.com website and templates 	
			Collect/ Input service map data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate the need for a service map to all youth service agencies • Advocate/solicit partner involvement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Local church time/talent banks ○ Talk to local service clubs ○ Talk to retiree groups 	

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WorkLink Youth Council's Strategic Plan Key Critical Issues, Goals, Objectives, Strategies, and Action Plans					
Critical Issue	Goal	Objective	Strategy	Action Plan	Sub-Committee
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address service groups in AOP Write/communicate guidelines for input and/or maintenance of partner information Collect data Input information 	
			Disseminate the Product	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop marketing plan for database Market service mapping resource Define method for letting partners know of database 	
			Provide training to users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train staff on how to use the service map database Train partners to update information Provide training to school counselors, teachers, students, FBOs, community on how to use map 	
			Identify/ address gaps in community services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do gap analysis Disseminate to Youth Council, WIB, service providers and partners Determine how to address gaps 	
Lack of work ethics, soft skills, basic skills	Improve work ethic/ soft skills, and basic skills	By June 30, 2011, we will increase the community's perception of the work readiness and work ethics of our youth by 10-25%	Establish the baseline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review data from the surveys Provide the WIB with the survey scores of the youth on work readiness/soft skills Finalize the baseline data 	Work Readiness
			Teach the soft skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research work readiness/soft skills curriculum 	

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WorkLink Youth Council's Strategic Plan Key Critical Issues, Goals, Objectives, Strategies, and Action Plans					
Critical Issue	Goal	Objective	Strategy	Action Plan	Sub-Committee
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose/create work readiness/soft skills curricula Implement work readiness/soft skills curricula . 	
			Evaluate progress by June 30, 2014.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey businesses to determine increase in work readiness/soft skills of youth 	
		Improve awareness and Implementation of WorkKeys	Work with WIB Business Partnership and Workforce Skills and Education Committees to address this	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See action plans of WIB committees 	
Weakened family units/ Not enough focus on families – no structured system for support	Increase awareness and resources available to family units.	Introduce 90% of our partners to family services available in our geographical area.	Hold round table discussions with partners, agencies, and community services in three county areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To hold Information Session for Anderson County and combine session for Oconee and Pickens Counties. Training provided by 2-1-1. 	Family Services
			Encourage partners to distribute appropriate information /materials on education options to parents/adults in the family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine what information needs to be distributed Identify and collect information for 211 system Determine distribution process Implement process 	
			Offer by June 10, 2010 a "services fair" to families (free of charge) to feature community services /programs	Accomplished - May 22, 2010 @Tri County Technical College, Pendleton Campus 8:30am-12:30pm.	
			Use results of Youth Forum to guide planning efforts by August 1, 2009	Accomplished- Youth Forum 2010 meetings held March 1, 2010-May 4, 2010.	

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WorkLink Youth Council's Strategic Plan Key Critical Issues, Goals, Objectives, Strategies, and Action Plans					
Critical Issue	Goal	Objective	Strategy	Action Plan	Sub-Committee
			By July 2011, engage FBOs in programming plans and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify FBO's and contact persons in AOP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Contact existing groups/ Associations ○ Develop a list/database of FBOs in service area ○ Find organizations ○ Contact organizations • Identify 3 representative contacts of FBOs to serve on subcommittee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ review the FBO list ○ determine key contacts • Create "buy-in" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ invite key contacts to Youth Council meeting ○ Encourage Church Associations ○ Train/orient key contacts to subcommittee ○ provide youth Council Strategic Plan • Implement a joint plan to work together to serve the families <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ convene the FBOs for a discussion of key issues regarding strengthening family units ○ develop a plan ○ Implement cooperative strategies 	
Too many youth are disengaged ⁱ from school and work.	Increase the number of youth who are completers ⁱⁱ and employed in jobs	Produce 240 general completers by June 30, 2014. Produce 35 postsecondary completers ⁱⁱⁱ by June 30, 2014.	Address: -Idle teens (16-19) -Recent dropouts -Certificate students -Transition students -Upper youth (20-21) -Youth who move into the service area and are not enrolled in school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the issues pertinent to each group. • Identify promising, practical solutions to each issue. • Implement action plans. • Evaluate results. • Engage appropriate WIA partners to assist in accomplishing goals and successes for all youth. 	Education

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WorkLink Youth Council's Strategic Plan Key Critical Issues, Goals, Objectives, Strategies, and Action Plans					
Critical Issue	Goal	Objective	Strategy	Action Plan	Sub-Committee
	paying more than minimum wage.	Place 150 youth in jobs paying more than minimum wage by June 30, 2014. (See end notes.)	Advocate for improved state policies, local awareness and responsiveness regarding high school dropouts. Develop a system wide support infrastructure (e.g., mentoring, transportation, life skills training, tutoring, community resources data bank, etc.).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify state and local policies and practices that negatively impact completion rates. Create discussion points for meetings with key stakeholders. Conduct roundtables or focus groups with stakeholder groups. Develop action plans (including specific areas of responsibility and follow-up milestones). 	

End notes

ⁱ Not high school graduates (or GED completers), not in school, and not employed.

ⁱⁱ General completers means youth who complete a high school diploma, GED, certificates, and credentials.

ⁱⁱⁱ Postsecondary completers means youth who earn any credential (certificate, diploma, or associate's degree) from a regionally accredited institution of higher education.