



Positive Youth Development

Positive Youth Development (PYD) is a research-based approach that treats youth as partners, not problems. It builds on young people's strengths and their potential to help counter the challenges they face during adolescence and young adulthood. Young people are far more likely to succeed if they are active participants in decisions that affect their lives and their communities.¹

Oregon PYD Collaboration Project

Oregon is one of nine states to receive a second five-year Positive Youth Development State and Local Collaboration Demonstration Project award from the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The purpose of the grant is to support a local PYD pilot site to build relationships among community organizations, local governmental agencies, nonprofits, schools and young people. These relationships will increase opportunities for youth to use their time in positive ways through education, employment, community service or civic engagement, organized sports and the arts, and to provide assistance to other counties wanting to implement similar efforts.



The Oregon PYD Collaboration is comprised of state and local human services, mental and public health, Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development, Oregon Youth Authority, Oregon State University 4-H, Oregon After School for Kids (OregonASK), and local nonprofit youth-serving organization. The Oregon Commission on Children & Families (OCCF) coordinates the Oregon Positive Youth Development Collaboration. The Collaboration seeks to incorporate youth development principles and practices into decision making, resource allocation, goal prioritization and all other aspects of youth programs (e.g. policy, education, employment, civic engagement and community services).

2007-08 Results

The Collaboration has met on a regular basis for two years and has developed recommendations for building a comprehensive system that supports youth through services, and alignment of state policies and practices; and to support expansion of service-learning opportunities, community involvement, PYD training and professional development opportunities for those who work with youth.

Over the last biennium, progress has been made on several of these recommendations:

¹ National Academy of Sciences Study, *Community Programs to Promote Youth Development*, 2002.

- PYD Collaboration members worked closely with the PCF Runaway and Homeless Youth Committee to develop and present to the 2007 Legislature policy recommendations to integrate services and opportunities to meet the needs of this population, as required by HB 2202.
- Oregon is one of two states to establish a PYD Benchmark, which measures positive youth development through questions developed jointly by the Oregon Progress Board, Department of Human Services/ Adolescent Health, Washington County Commission on Children and Families and OCCF. The benchmark will be measured through a statewide health risk survey (the Oregon Healthy Teens Survey), which is administered annually to 8th and 11th graders.
- Oregon was selected as one of six states to participate in a national one-year professional development training “Spotlighting Positive Youth Development.” The program helps state-level agencies work together using the positive youth development approach to address health disparities for youth in high-risk situations, and to provide services, social supports and opportunities for young people to contribute to their communities. The Oregon Commission on Children & Families is the lead agency for this project.
- Our local partners, Lane County Commission on Children & Families, (national positive youth development pilot site for Oregon) successfully hosted a Youth Celebration in Eugene. The event drew more than 1,300 children and families to showcase the skills and contributions of youth from diverse cultural and ethnic groups. This event facilitated better understanding and communications among diverse ethnic and cultural groups through spoken word, traditional dress and dance, arts and crafts, food, and resource-sharing among community members. The Youth Action Board also planned a Youth Empowerment Summit and solicited support from key decision-makers to establish a future Mayoral Youth Commission to advise officials on youth-related issues.
- The Oregon Positive Youth Development Collaboration also sponsored regional and state Youth Summits to provide leadership training, and solicited input on youth-related issues as well as identified strategies to implement positive youth development activities statewide. Approximately 130 young people participated in these two summits. Their input was incorporated in statewide strategies to continue youth leadership and engagement throughout Oregon. Their suggestions included outreach to rural and tribal groups to solicit additional recommendations and to encourage participation in future positive youth development activities.
- The collaboration has provided training and technical assistance to state agencies and local youth-serving groups to increase youth/adult partnerships; to increase services and opportunities for youth to participate in program decision-making and community activities; to expand outreach to non-traditional youth leaders; to establish a dialogue between youth and decision-makers; and to establish a youth leadership council to address issues that affect youth and help them contribute to their local community.
- The Oregon Positive Youth Development Alliance, an inclusive body of youth, state agencies, nonprofits, faith-based organizations, businesses, and other community groups, was agreed upon by state and local partners as the new operational structure to continue to promote and implement positive youth development approaches to increase resources, supports and opportunities for all children and youth in Oregon.

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