



Information Item

Date: March 3, 2014

To: Mayor and City Council
From: Karen Ginsberg, Director of Community and Cultural Services
Subject: Youth Resource Team (YRT 2.0) Program Status Report

Introduction

This information item follows the City Council meeting held on June 25, 2013 at which Council directed staff to work in collaboration with the Santa Monica Cradle to Career Initiative (SMC2C) and Youth Resource Team (YRT 2.0) to implement coordinated and interdisciplinary services in support of the most disconnected, at-risk youth (“opportunity youth”) and their families in Santa Monica. This report provides an update on YRT 2.0 and identifies next steps.

Background

In 2006, the Youth Resource Team (YRT) was created as a forum for youth service providers including schools, local social service providers, probation, and law enforcement to serve difficult to engage older youth in Santa Monica. In 2012, the SMC2C Work Group was formed as a public-private partnership between the City, Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District (SMMUSD), Santa Monica College (SMC), parent leaders and dozens of community-based organizations to sustain a vital cradle to career system via a “collective impact” approach. On June 14, 2013, in response to multiple incidents of violence in Santa Monica, the SMC2C Work Group called for an acceleration of the efforts of the Youth Resource Team to serve older youth.

On [June 25, 2013](#), Council ensured implementation of this SMC2C priority by providing funding and directing staff to implement the Youth Resource Team 2.0 (YRT 2.0) with

coordinated and interdisciplinary services in support of the most vulnerable older youth and their families in Santa Monica. YRT 2.0, a pilot project, is an enhanced team providing coordinated, integrated and interdisciplinary case management in a “whatever it takes” approach to an initial group of disconnected, at-risk youth (“opportunity youth”) ages 16-24 years. Council also awarded funding to the Hospitality Training Academy (HTA), in partnership with the Community Career Development (CCD) agency, to begin implementation of a “local hire project” offering vocational training and placement of 50 opportunity youth (ages 18-24) in career ladder jobs within high growth industries.

On July 10, 2013, [Fiscal Year 2013-2015 Notice of Funds Availability \(NOFA\)](#) was released for YRT 2.0 coaches/navigators to coordinate the engagement of youth and their families. On [October 8, 2013](#), Council approved Human Services Grant Program (HSGP) funding in the amount of \$147,000 in FY 2013-14 to St. Joseph Center for implementation with the initial group of 27 opportunity youth and their families.

Discussion

Disconnected, at-risk, opportunity youth who are not in school or working and/or lack positive supportive networks, face significant barriers transitioning to adulthood and attaining self-sufficiency. The barriers include difficulty in navigating complex family, behavioral, economic, academic and social issues.

Collective Impact Model

The guiding philosophy of the Santa Monica Cradle to Career Initiative (SMC2C) and its YRT 2.0 is to employ a collective impact model whereby diverse organizations are brought together to assess and address the needs of the individual youth and their families using a holistic approach rather than working in isolation. Brought together by the City and the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District (SMMUSD), the YRT 2.0 includes team members from 15 various non-profit agencies representing health, mental health, employment, education, law enforcement, youth centers, domestic violence, substance abuse and education/prevention direct service providers to employ the collective impact model of service delivery. Based on criteria specified in the FY 2013-

2015 NOFA, staff from the Human Services Division (HSD), SMMUSD, Pico Youth and Family Center (PYFC) and Santa Monica Police Department selected the initial group of 27 youth for the YRT 2.0 pilot project. Attachment A provides a brief overview (general information and composition) of the initial cohort of 27 youth.

Since August 2013, YRT 2.0 implementation has been underway to develop strategies to address the complex needs of these 27 opportunity youth and their families. The first step was to identify St. Joseph Center as the “backbone organization” for this pilot. With dedicated staff and a specific set of skills, St. Joseph Center, in partnership with the City and SMMUSD, developed a coordinated case management framework around the common principles and best practice of collective impact. These principles include:

- *Common Agenda:* Participating organizations (government agencies, non-profits, community members, etc.) share a common vision that includes an understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving the problem through agreed upon actions
- *Continuous Communication:* Participating organizations engage in frequent communication, through weekly case conferencing, to build trust and collaboration, ongoing learning and adaptation of strategies to enhance assistance to youth and their families
- *Mutually Reinforcing Activities:* Participating organizations engage in a coordinated set of activities based on a mutual plan of action and utilize a “whatever it takes” approach including assertive case management, flexible staff hours and repeated outreach at home, schools, parks, and drop-in centers to engage youth and their families
- *Shared Measurement System:* Participating organizations identify key indicators and benchmarks by which success will be measured. A centralized database system will be used to ensure continuity of data collection, standardized outcomes and client goals, and improved reporting. Collected data will help identify service gaps, enhance the quality and effectiveness of interventions and improve outcomes-based contracting for youth service providers

The first six months of programming has revealed the on-going need to leverage non-city resources such as county public benefits and federal housing resources to address the wellbeing of these 27 youth and their families. The most pressing needs identified to

date include access to affordable housing, mental health services, substance abuse counseling, and early childhood education.

Attachment B provides two case studies that demonstrate the rapid results of YRT 2.0 in addressing the complex needs of YRT families during the first five months of program operation. The work of the YRT 2.0 team and the St. Joseph Center coach/navigator played an instrumental role in identifying and connecting these youth and their families with appropriate services. This model represents a significant shift in service delivery.

Satellite Office at Virginia Avenue Park (VAP)

City staff established a home base for YRT 2.0 and the HTA local hire project at Virginia Avenue Park (VAP) to house the staff and meet with program participants. Project staff began operating from this site in early November while simultaneously providing field-based services at youth centers, schools and homes. Locating this project at VAP makes services accessible to the targeted community while concurrently enhancing development of the park as a central point of entry for a wide range of programs that address human development from cradle to career and beyond.

Hospitality Training Academy

On a parallel track, the SMC2C Work Group called for acceleration of efforts to expand programming to include services such as outreach, training, job development and placement for opportunity youth. While workforce development, job training and job placement are typically performed at a regional level by the state or county, the Hospitality Training Academy (HTA) was funded to provide 50 opportunity youth (ages 18-24) with specialized training, assessment and placement in jobs with career opportunities in high growth and demand industry sectors. During the initial phase of programming, HTA staff outreached to various community stakeholders, key institutions and City funded non-profit organizations. Additionally, in partnership with various trade (electrician, iron worker and laborer) unions, HTA has held a series of community orientations for eligible program participants.

To date, HTA has engaged 24 youth, eight of whom have applied and/or interviewed for hospitality positions within Santa Monica. As the program continues to develop, several challenges and opportunities have been identified.

- *Criminal History:* A number of youth referred to HTA have criminal records which precludes them from applying for positions in hospitality. HTA continues to work with these youth by offering opportunities in trades union programs which are open to youth with records. HTA will also support these youth in expunging their records.
- *Math Proficiency:* Approximately 20% of those referred to HTA struggle with math proficiency. This prevents them from meeting the minimum requirements for trade union apprenticeship programs. HTA is directing these youth to math preparation programs and is working with LA Trade Tech and Santa Monica College to bring a math course to Virginia Avenue Park.
- *Lack of Follow-Through:* For some of the young people referred into the program, follow-through after initial assessment has been inconsistent. In order to demonstrate “job readiness” applicants must be able to keep appointments, manage their schedule, and show basic interest and motivation for initial training. Specifically, 15 of the youth are currently employed part-time which may make it difficult for them to attend extended trainings. HTA is supportive of all of these young adults in their transition to long term employment and the security it can bring. However, it is also incumbent upon the program participants to adjust and make an active commitment to the training, fulltime job and career pathway that this program offers.

Next Steps

Over the next few months the following issues will be addressed:

- *Assessment of YRT 2.0 & Adding New Participants:* By summer 2014, a first year assessment of the YRT 2.0 will be completed, funds will be identified for FY 2014/15 and assuming positive progress continues, additional youth and families will be added to the YRT 2.0. Key leaders from the Child Care Early Education Task Force and the Westside Domestic Violence Network have been particularly enthusiastic about the promise of the YRT 2.0 model. They are advocating for a next cohort of participants to include very young children and their families. Others have called for a cohort of middle school age youth. As plans are developed to continue and extend the YRT 2.0 pilot, staff may extend the project to these age groups.
- *Training:* Organizations participating in the pilot project have actively identified a range of training and development topics to help strengthen the YRT 2.0. Over the next six months, training will be offered for participant agencies on a wide

range of topics such as trauma informed care, motivational interviewing, and assertive case management.

- *Shared Data System:* To get YRT 2.0 up and running quickly, City staff elected to temporarily use the existing Homeless Information Management System database as a case management tool. In addition, in FY 2014/15 City staff will begin to assess the type of data system needed over the long term and the resources required to support an on-going youth case management information system.

The SMC2C Work Group will continue to monitor the status of the YRT 2.0 through periodic discussions to guide its progress. City staff will continue to provide oversight of the YRT 2.0 including program guidance and coordination, fiscal oversight, and documentation of outcomes. Participating agencies of the YRT 2.0 will continue to coordinate teams, lead case studies, collaborate with colleagues and increase outreach to the 27 youth and their additional 57 family members.

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Attachments: A – YRT 2.0 Cohort Summary

B – YRT 2.0 Case Studies

**CITY OF SANTA MONICA
YRT 2.0 COHORT SUMMARY
AS OF: FEBRUARY 2014**

General Information	Total
Cohort Participants	27
Households	20
Household Members Engaged / Affected	57
Cohort and Household Members Engaged / Affected	84
Average Number of Additional Persons Engaged per Cohort Participant	2.1

Cohort Participant Information <i>(duplicated count)</i>	Total
Detained	7
In School or Working on GED	7
Employment	9
Linked to Mental Health Services	8
Linked to Substance Abuse Counseling	5
Homeless or At-Risk of Becoming Homeless	8
Linked to Housing Services*	7
Linked to Childcare	1

* May include participants who are not (at-risk of) homeless(ness) but live in substandard conditions

Cohort Composition by Race and Age	16 - 17	18 - 24	Total
African-American	0	2	2
Caucasian	0	1	1
Latino / Hispanic	7	12	19
Multi-Racial	1	2	3
Unknown	2	0	2
Total	10	17	27

YRT 2.0 CASE STUDIES

Family “A”

This five-member household comprised of a single mother and her four children – two minors and two young adults – exist on an income below the federal poverty level. For the past 15 years, this family has resided in sub-standard housing: a 500 sq.ft., one bedroom apartment in Santa Monica. All four children have been identified as high-risk youth and are part of the YRT 2.0 cohort due to untreated mental health symptoms, difficulty finding employment, and multiple encounters with SMPD and/or Probation.

The YRT 2.0 collaborative addressed a number of the barriers faced by this family.

- *Head of Household: Mother is working with St. Joseph Center (SJC) and the Santa Monica Housing Authority (SMHA) to secure necessary documentation to apply for a housing subsidy. Once paperwork is finalized, the family will be granted a housing subsidy for a two-to-three bedroom apartment in Santa Monica. It is anticipated the housing subsidy will be granted in February.*
- *Fifteen-Year-Old Male: In December, he was removed from house arrest due to good behavior. Continues to access services at the Boys and Girls Club and Pico Youth and Family Center. Through the efforts of the YRT Navigator and his teachers at the Off Campus Learning Center (OCLC), this youth has been linked to a YRT 2.0 mental health agency for individual therapy.*
- *Seventeen-Year-Old Male: Currently serving nine months at a juvenile camp where he is receiving individual therapy for anger management. Upon release, YRT 2.0 Navigator will engage him in individual therapy.*
- *Nineteen-Year-Old Female: Engaged through Jewish Vocational Services and currently employed as part of a paid training experience. She will be linked to additional long-term vocational training programs such as HTA.*
- *Twenty-one Year Old Male: Continues to work full-time and is engaged in case management with the YRT Navigator. The Navigator is helping this individual create a long-term vocational plan.*

Family “B”

This 12-member household is comprised of a single mother, one minor child, four young adult children, two non-related adults and four grandchildren. This is a total of 12 individuals residing in a two-bedroom apartment.

This family’s most pressing need is suitable housing. After residing in a two-bedroom apartment in Santa Monica for 15 years, this family was forced to relocate due to the landlord’s decision to stop participating in Section 8. Three of the family members are currently in a city subsidized motel and two other adult members and their families are in transitional housing.

- *Head of Household: Mother is working with St. Joseph Center (SJC) and the Santa Monica Boys and Girls Club (SMBGC) to locate a two-to-three bedroom unit in Santa Monica. Mother is also linked with mental health services through YRT 2.0.*
- *Seventeen-Year-Old Female: She and her child reside with Head of Household. She is currently being assessed to determine immediate and long-term needs.*
- *Nineteen-Year-Old Male: Resides with Head of Household and has been linked with the YRT Navigator. He is working on getting his GED and exploring vocational training programs.*
- *Twenty-Year-Old Male: Placed in transitional housing with girlfriend and their two children. This family has been linked with childcare subsidy and comprehensive parenting resources. He has gained work experience and employment through the Boys and Girls Club and continues to receive employment services through JVS. He is engaged in case management services through the St. Joseph Center YRT Navigator.*
- *Twenty-two Year Old Male: Placed in transitional housing with girlfriend and their child.*

Both families have responded well to YRT 2.0 interventions and have experienced improved conditions in a short period of time. In addition, the success of individual cohort members has inspired additional family members to request assistance from the YRT 2.0 team.