

**Youth at Risk Report**  
**Summary of the report submitted by Strumpf**  
**Associates**  
**April 2004**  
**Summary Overview**

**Section I:**

**The Northwest Workforce Development Council Research and  
2004 Youth Survey**

**Purpose of the study:**

- Identify the service gaps that all or most of the provided research cited in the reports.
- Link the local research to national and state trends
- Forecast local needs into the future based on local, state and national data to support local decision-making.

**Three (3) areas of highest ranking gaps include:**

- Dropout Prevention
  - o Homework support
  - o Decision-making programs
- Transition to Work
  - o Vocational counseling
  - o Occupational training
  - o Paid work experience
  - o Job placement
- Scholarships and Grants

**Top eight (8) issues identified by youth as important to getting  
or keeping a job:**

- transportation
- money for college
- basic skills knowledge
- education for employment
- knowing what do when and what you are good at
- managing your anger
- health benefits
- coping skills

## Section II: Drop Out Prevention

**Overview:** High school graduation rates are a national and state priority. Defining, tracking, providing intervention and reporting are key elements of dropout reduction. Rather than focusing on dropout intervention strategies, this study mirrors national efforts to focus on the 'whole-child and whole-school' approach. In this approach, attention is given to the environmental factors that impact a youth's decisions about school.

<b>Identified Gaps for reducing dropout rates</b>	<b>Programs that Best Reduce Dropout Rates</b>	<b>Recommended Actions for Decreasing Dropout Rates in NWDC area</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Programs for racial/ethnic impacted areas</li> <li>2. Preventive programs and services for high impact areas: juveniles, low income, homeless, disabled, and parenting youth.</li> <li>3. Distribution of youth academic services.</li> <li>4. Services are identified that impact dropout rate, however there is no initiative to reduce the dropout rate in the region.</li> </ol>	<p>The following programs have proven to have the most success with youth in the high impact black, Hispanic , and low economic categories:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Kipp Academy:</b> recommended by the Gates Foundation, was used successfully in the Bronx, New York and Texas. Stated by two <i>Teach for America</i> graduates.</li> <li>2. <b>Comer School System:</b> developed by Dr. James Comer, professor of medicine at Yale University</li> <li>3. <b>Oakland's Life Academy:</b> best program on the West Coast.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Link Service Providers and community resources to create an initiative to reduce the dropout rate in the region by 1-1.5% per year until it matches or goes below the national average</li> <li>2. Track success of programs in racial/ethnic communities as they impact the dropout rates.</li> <li>3. Review distribution of youth academic achievement services and develop plan to overcome service gaps.</li> <li>4. Partner with stakeholders and alliances to establish broad-based funding sources.</li> </ol>

### Section III: Transitions to Work

**Overview:** One overriding goal when working with at-risk youth is that they assume 'adult' roles within society by the age of 25. This is measured against whether they have achieved at minimum a high school diploma, are gainfully employed (or enrolled in school), has clear career expectations, and are not involved in risky behaviors. It is believed that work experiences are an integral part of reaching this goal.

**Identified Gaps Include:** (1) Occupational Training, (2) Paid Work Experience (3) Job Placement, and (4) Vocational Counseling

<b>Characteristics of Effective Transitioning to Work Programs</b>	<b>Best Programs for Work Transitions</b>	<b>Recommendations for Success</b>
<p><b>Balance:</b> should address the 'total' participant by providing academic and vocational training, career-focused work experiences, job placement, and comprehensive counseling.</p> <p><b>Quality and Availability:</b> Effectiveness of local programs is tied to the availability and quality of local business, education and public resources.</p> <p><b>Local Leadership:</b> believed that strategy for developing local workforce should come from local business leaders because they know most what the industry needs. System must be responsive to the needs of the local business and economic development.</p> <p><b>Limit Hours Spent in Work:</b> programs must limit the number of hours spent at work. 20 hours per week seems to be the most effective.</p>	<p><b>Career Academies:</b> great emphasis on linking vocational &amp; academic preparation together. Participants in this program tend to have lower drop-out rates and be more engaged in school.</p> <p><b>Career Beginnings:</b> 2 year program for at risk 11<sup>th</sup> &amp; 12<sup>th</sup> graders; provides mentoring, workforce training and placement and a competency based curriculum.</p> <p><b>Job Corps:</b> helps disadvantaged youth 16-24; program includes academic education, health education, health care, vocational training, job placement, and counseling</p> <p><b>YouthReach:</b> based in Massachusetts; non-traditional method of developing responsibility in youth.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review program for balance between academic and vocational preparation.</li> <li>2. Plan ways to overcome gaps in job skills training.</li> <li>3. Expand linkages with the local business community.</li> <li>4. Partner with stakeholders and alliances to establish/extend funding sources, to increase availability of work experiences opportunities.</li> </ol>

## Section IV: Scholarships & Grants

**Overview:** As national and state funding sources continue to shrink, there is a need to address scholarships and grants as a high priority item. There have been many instances where it this category has been classified as low availability. In fact, the 2004 Youth Survey named 'money for college' as a top need.

Identified Gaps	Best Practices	Recommended Actions for Securing Scholarships & Grants
<p><b>Gaps in scholarships &amp; grants fell into the following categories:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Academic Achievement Services Funding</li> <li>2. Dropout Prevention Services Funding</li> <li>3. Money for College</li> <li>4. Program Support</li> </ol>	<p><b><u>Partnership &amp; Resource Sharing:</u></b> share in the scholarship and grant process to optimize the attainment of limited funds.</p> <p><b><u>Expansion of Scope:</u></b> diversify funding scope to ensure the longevity of the project incase one source fails in the future.</p> <p><b><u>Long-Term Planning:</u></b> strategic planning with more groups of people to sustaining results over longer timeframes.</p> <p><b><u>Building of Networks:</u></b> similar to the partnership sharing, organizations form a hub that others join to achieve a common long term strategies.</p> <p><b><u>Clear, Quantifiable Objectives:</u></b> funding sources require clarity of purpose and the ability to communicate it effectively.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop the role of NWDC as a "Network Hub"</li> <li>2. Define outcomes in quantifiable terms.</li> <li>3. Build a database of funding sources on related projects.</li> <li>4. Build long term strategies for key projects so that funding is secure for the life of the project.</li> <li>5. Development methods to help students secure money for college via grants and scholarships.</li> </ol>

## Section V: 2004 Youth Survey

**Overview:** youth were surveyed to find out what they thought their greatest barriers to getting and keeping a job were. 191 youth were surveyed, 56 online and 135 pen and paper version. Presented with 32 factors and asked to list what they felt affected their abilities to get and keep a job.

<p><b>Top Eight (8) factors listed as <i>Very Important</i>:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation</li> <li>• Money for College</li> <li>• Basic Skills Knowledge</li> <li>• Education for Employment</li> <li>• Knowing what do to &amp; what you're good at.</li> <li>• Managing your anger</li> <li>• Health Benefits</li> <li>• Coping Skills.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Identified Gaps for the 2004 Youth Survey</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Money for College (scholarships &amp; grants)</li> <li>2. Vocational Counseling</li> <li>3. Decision-Making, including coping, anger management &amp; career planning.</li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Conclusions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respondents did not see race, disabilities or homelessness as impacting their ability to succeed in a job. May be due to the fact that the survey was predominantly white females.</li> <li>• No. 1 on the list of important to youth is transportation. This is listed as the most available resource in the community on the Youth Audit &amp; Resource Mapping Report.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Six (6) factors listed as <i>Least Important</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Race</li> <li>• Disability</li> <li>• Work Permit</li> <li>• Homelessness</li> <li>• Being a Teenage Parent</li> <li>• Employers don't understand youth</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Racial / Ethnic and male Representation.</li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Recommendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop resources of scholarships and grants for college.</li> <li>• Gain greater participation in diverse populations</li> <li>• Develop linkages to expand school to work/college preparation.</li> <li>• Expand decision-making programs &amp; measure impact.</li> </ul>

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