

# 2016 Statewide Youth Development Plan

Working together to improve outcomes for youth.  
*Revised 2016*



House Bill 13-1239 (HB13-1239) charges the Colorado Department of Human Services with the responsibility of creating a “statewide youth development plan” in partnership with stakeholders.



This plan is implemented as a part of Colorado’s youth system Colorado9to25 by identifying gaps, best practices, existing evidence-supported work, and recommended enhancements.

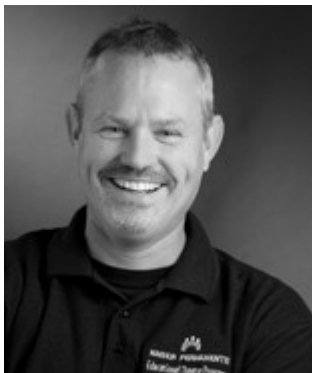
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## i. LETTER FROM COLORADO 9 TO 25



### To the Colorado General Assembly,

Thank you for helping to advance the Statewide Youth Development Plan (the Plan). We are honored and humbled that the Plan adopted CO9to25's already existing, community-vetted framework. These past two years have been an amazing journey. We are excited to share the attached report which updates you on the Plan. The report outlines:

- Accomplishments that have been achieved in the last 24 months
- Updates on collaborative efforts
- Revisions to original recommendations based on the current climate
- Future steps that will keep this important work moving forward for the next 2 years.

The basic assumption of the Plan is deceptively simple: it takes collaborative action to ensure that all Colorado youth ages 9 to 25 are safe, healthy, educated, connected, and contributing. However, the work is complex, difficult, and time intensive. CO9to25 utilizes innovative strategies to build a system that provides a structured approach for collaboration across all Colorado's youth-serving organizations (government agencies, businesses, and nonprofits) while engaging youth in the process. We envision a day where all Colorado youth-serving organizations align efforts and leverage shared resources to achieve positive outcomes for all Colorado youth.

Starting in 2014, key CO9to25 network members actively participated in the development of the Plan and the initial recommendations. As noted, the integration of these two groups is essential and has taken considerable thought and effort. Without statutory directive, network partners looked to CO9to25's foundational documents for a structural organizing framework but also recognized that significant revisions (charter, logic model, strategic action plan, etc.) were necessary. At a day-long event in April 2016, the CO9to25 Leadership Team successfully merged with the Statewide Development Plan Steering committee creating the CO9to25 Council.

CO9to25 uses six basic strategies: 1) maintain a strong infrastructure, 2) mobilize partners, 3) raise public awareness, 4) promote best and promising practices, 5) share accountability for results, and 6) promote policy and environmental change. The attached report divides the recommendations into these five categories. Each of the Plan's recommendations has been assigned a status of completed, revised, or active (along with a brief explanation for the assigned heading). We have made considerable progress and are excited to see what can be achieved in the next two year cycle.

CO9to25 exists because of our members' profound commitment to the youth of our state. We believe that youth are resources to be cultivated rather than problems to be fixed. The CO9to25 youth, along with their adult and organizational partners, are creating educational resources, creating awareness campaigns, facilitating positive youth development trainings, holding an annual youth leadership summit, helping to promote policies and environmental change, and more. This strength-based approach to youth development works magic. We cheer as CO9to25 youth were the first in their families to graduate high school and go to university. We watch as our youth grow from shy and quiet participants into dynamic facilitators and community advocates. We walk alongside our youth as they struggle with life challenges, finding ourselves inspired by their strength, grit, and truth.

We can no longer allow any more of our state's young people to fall through the gaps in our youth systems. We challenge you to join the CO9to25 movement. Lifelong success for young people demands cooperation and collaboration amongst all who care for them. We must strengthen our policies, programs, and services with and for all young people in Colorado, especially those who are experiencing tremendous challenges such as homelessness, involvement with the juvenile justice system, teen parenting, visible and invisible disabilities, and identification as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or questioning. It's time to join forces and take action.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Samuel Wood".

Samuel Wood CO9to25 GPS Member

## ii. LETTER FROM COLORADO YOUTH



### To the Colorado General Assembly,

The beauty of Colorado 9to25 (CO9to25) and the connection to the Statewide Youth Development Plan (the Plan) is the power to connect the young people of Colorado to the resources and opportunities they desperately need. Building connections with youth is necessary for innovative solutions that can improve the lives of young people. Research shows that connections have been correlated to better health outcomes. As one of my favorite authors, David Greer, stated in the Wind in Your Sails, “by connecting and being part of a community with a shared vision and goals, we can create great things.” It is because of the powerful connections that I’ve seen built with CO9to25 and the Plan that I am asking for you to stand alongside young people and their families as we move the Plan forward.

During its inception the Plan included young people from all walks of life who helped advocate and draft the Plan based on their own unique experiences. The young people dedicated to this Plan represent more than the circumstances they’ve conquered or currently face; they represent the voices of young people in the foster care system, those who are experiencing homelessness, young people who are parenting and great at it, and those who are newly immigrated citizens. In banding together, we developed a plan in connection with parents and professionals alike to move the Colorado Youth System forward. We are improving outcomes that impact us and consequently impacting the future of all of Colorado.

As a young person that participated in the development and implementation of the Plan, I experienced the positive impact of my voice through CO9to25. I sat alongside tables of my peers in connection with communities, business, and government representatives to effect change. I’ve been involved, hands on, in the development and the improvement of structures that move the Plan forward. I have seen light return to the eyes of disenfranchised populations of young people, just like me, as their voices are heard, having their experiences and perspectives drive the improvement of our great state’s policies and practices. Today, I can say that I feel empowered!

Updates and changes to the recommendations have been done with the best interest of young people and their loved ones at heart and in partnership with young people connected to our systems and their communities. Our voices have guided the creation of solutions responsive to the nuanced challenges of making Colorado a more amazing state.

I stand with CO9to25 as we continue unwaveringly through lean financial times, well-armed and willing to dedicate time, passion, and talent. I know young people just like me need the connections to opportunities and resources the Plan provides just as much as I do, if not more. I ask you to stand alongside CO9to25 with your support and resources in recognition of Colorado’s young people, their families, and communities. As a young person, a resident of Aurora, Colorado, and someone who navigates through the gaps of disparities daily, I support this Plan. I ask that you stand with Colorado 9to25 as we connect, improve, and inspire positive change in our great state.

**Nkem Nwankwo (Colorado young person and member of CO9to25 GPS)**

## iii. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Overview

House Bill 13-1239 charges the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) with the responsibility of creating and biennially revising a “statewide youth development plan” (the Plan) in partnership with stakeholders. The Plan’s steering committee consists of representatives from various community organizations, state departments, and youth members. The intent of the Plan is to support healthy youth development and to ensure consistency of youth policy and practice across Colorado. Currently, Colorado has a number of disconnected youth programs and services which are operating independently of each other, and there are limited parameters in place to reduce duplication and splintering of best practice efforts. In order to support Colorado’s alignment of strategic efforts, the Plan identifies gaps, best practices, existing evidence-supported work, and recommended enhancements.

A successful youth system must be based on a positive youth development (PYD) approach, including authentic youth engagement and inclusion. Positive youth development is an evidence-based approach proven to help make programs and services for youth more effective and to help youth develop skills that make them successful. PYD is a culture shift in which services and programs partner with youth in the construction of practice and policy, development of protective factors, and harnessing of skills and character to engage youth in reaching their full potential.

Since 2011 Colorado 9to25 (CO9to25) continues to implement PYD and engage in system building to improve programs, policies, and practices that affect youth and young adults. CO9to25 is Colorado’s youth system and acts as a collective, action-oriented network of youth and adults working in partnership to ensure that all young people are safe, healthy, educated, connected, and contributing. CO9to25 is now nationally-recognized as a progressive youth system that is unique to Colorado. The work of CO9to25 and the Plan serve as the platform for a strong youth system in Colorado, although it is implemented on a limited scale due to marginal resources.

In 2016 the Plan’s steering committee merged with CO9to25 to create the Colorado 9to25 Council (the

Council). With this collaboration the Statewide Youth Development Plan became the CO9to25 “Action Plan” for implementing and sustaining a youth system in Colorado. As CO9to25 takes ownership of the Plan over the next two years, they will take action to complete recommendations and integrate a feedback loop between community, youth, and government.

### Status and Revisions

This document is the biennial update for the 2016 Statewide Youth Development Plan as directed by HB 13-1239. These revisions remain true to the spirit of the initial plan yet incorporate current work and revisions based on new priorities. The gaps and themes remain paramount and unchanged. Over the next two years, CO9to25 will take a deeper look at these gaps and themes for future revision. Wraparound approaches are added to the best practices section. A report on accomplishments and progress are included for each recommendation, with further details available in the appendix including links to references. Two new recommendations (Rec 1 on page 10 and Rec 3 on page 11) are included to create stronger connections, recruit advocates, and create sustainability over the next two years. Overall the Plan creates a solid framework for supporting Colorado’s youth system and aligning services.



## Youth Development Gaps and Themes

In the first year of the Plan, stakeholders reviewed youth initiatives of various state and community agencies and identified gaps and themes across Colorado. Stakeholders reviewed data and practices across a variety of service areas, such as education, health, behavioral health, child welfare, homelessness, safety, and juvenile justice. They identified eight common gaps/themes as impediments to successful youth outcomes in Colorado, which remain in this revision. Recognizing that these are not comprehensive, the CO9to25 Council and Action Teams will revise these gaps and themes for the 2018 revisions of the Plan.

### Age/Periods of Transition

There is a need for attention to youth as they navigate key transitions, like those between levels of education, such

**1** as the periods between elementary school, middle/junior high school, high school, and higher education and/or workforce. Similarly, youth involved in public systems such as child welfare and juvenile corrections need supports for transitions related to changes in placements and when exiting the public systems.

### Missing Connections to Adults

**2** Youth need to have a connection and long-term relationship with at least one caring adult. This need is established by research and emphasized by youth and young adults.

### Access to Services

Youth need access to a comprehensive continuum of care and services that span education, prevention, intervention, and treatment. The populations most in need of these services include youth aging out of the youth services system into the adult services system, youth involved in public service systems such as child welfare and juvenile corrections, youth experiencing homelessness, and youth from rural areas that currently have limited access to services.

### Behavioral Health Needs

Youth need access to programs and services that are resiliency-based and that build protective factors. Colorado youth ages 18 years and under are more likely to receive behavioral health services than Colorado young adults over age

18. While access and eligibility play a role, Colorado has some of the highest rates in the country of serious mental illness and suicide for young adults. More Colorado youth die by suicide than by homicide, motor vehicle crashes, cancer, or drowning combined. Female youth ages 10-24 have the highest suicide attempt rate out of any age and gender group in Colorado.

### Respect/Youth-Friendly Environments & Services

Youth need services and programs they can trust and

**5** that will meaningfully engage them. To develop a youth-friendly environment, providers must understand what youth and young adults actually want and need rather than making assumptions about their needs.

### Homelessness (Housing & Economic Security)

Youth need access to affordable housing. Homelessness is a systemic issue that requires the investment from

**6** agencies focused on education, behavioral health, juvenile justice, child welfare, workforce, safety agencies, and disabilities.

Youth that are experiencing homelessness are particularly vulnerable and their chances of success in education, health, and well-being are greatly diminished.

### Populations Who Experience Disparities and Stigmatizations

Youth need equal access and opportunities regardless of

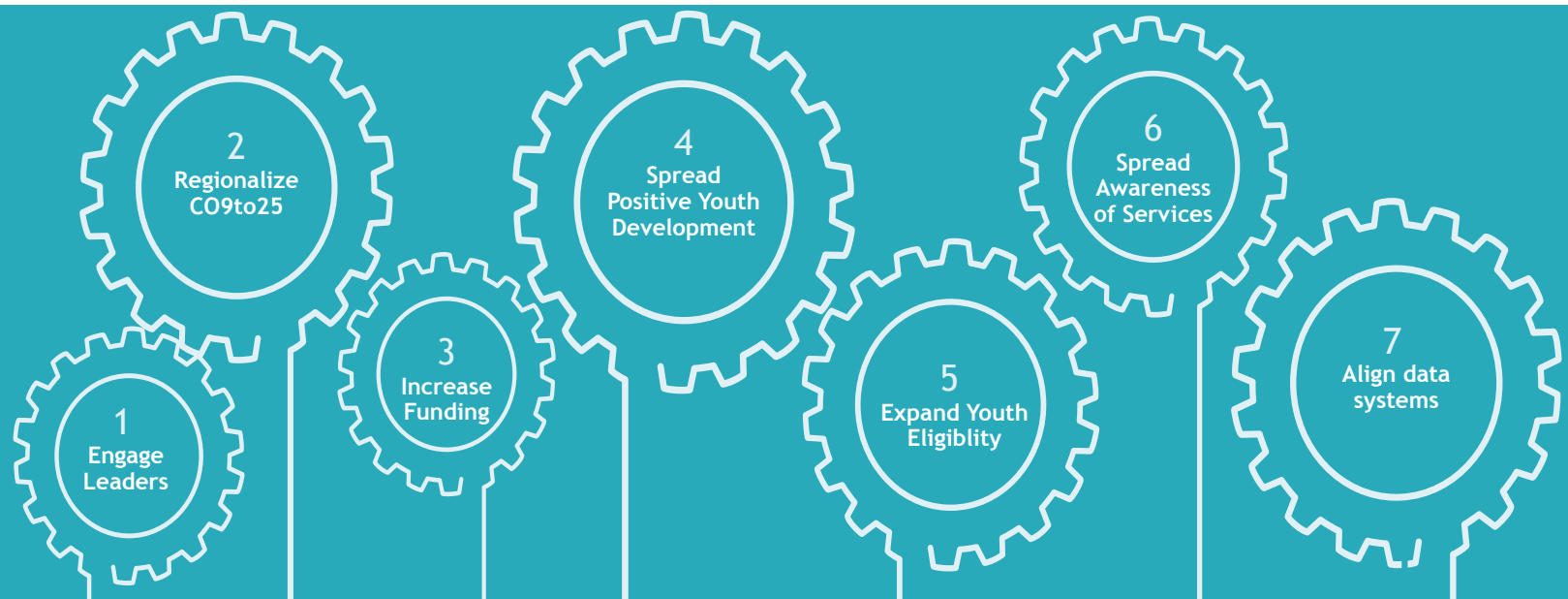
**7** their income, race or ethnicity, gender, LGBTQ status, or where they live. Across all disciplines, there are disparities related to poverty, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, and more.

### Need for Cross-Systems Coordination & Collaboration

Youth need the organizations that fund or provide youth

**8** services to coordinate and collaborate with each other. There is especially a need for increasing the flexibility of funds dedicated to services. This can be done, for example, by reducing restrictions and braiding or blending funds across state, federal, and private sources.

# 2016 UPDATED STRATEGIES & RECOMMENDATIONS



## Engage influential leaders to support Colorado's youth system, CO9to25.

The youth system in Colorado needs influential government, youth, and community leaders to effectively connect and coordinate work across the state. These leaders will make the following recommendations possible.

## Establish a formal process for statewide regional integration of CO9to25.

CO9to25 will partner with regional initiatives to ensure there is adequate representation of state, youth, and community stakeholders.

## Develop a sustainable funding source to support Colorado's youth system.

A dedicated source of funding to support Colorado's youth system is necessary for viable systemic and programmatic collaboration. Increasing the braiding and blending of existing funds will create sustainability and reduce fragmentation of efforts.

## Increase the number of programs and organizations across the state that are trained on and utilizing a positive youth development approach.

Over time, an investment in PYD will create a more resilient youth population and, as a result, increase the effectiveness of adults' interventions to engage youth.

## Expand eligibility and capacity of a wide variety of service systems to meet the comprehensive needs of young people and reduce the amount of time spent in high-level system involvement.

Solutions should focus on youth eligibility for services as well as capacity to serve them in the community. In particular, Colorado should review the varying eligibility and age cut-offs across programs to provide intentional transitions and reduce gaps in services.

## Increase public awareness of available youth services and organizations.

A consumer-focused, web-based information portal should identify available services for youth and families. In addition, a comprehensive map should identify community youth-serving organizations and include key information about the youth-serving organizations, such as current funding and number of youth served. A public awareness campaign of these available services will support points of access across Colorado.

## Align data systems that impact youth and collect a common set of data indicators that are critical to youth and young adult well-being.

Alignment should occur at the macro level (system and community) and micro level (youth and families). Steps include aligning existing statewide surveillance systems collecting data on youth ages 9-25, creating developmentally appropriate, aligned measures that complement the CO9to25 indicators, and developing interoperability of direct services data systems managed by state agencies.



8  
Improve accessibility of housing

**Improve the quality, availability, and accessibility of housing, services, supports, and relationships to provide solutions to youth who are at risk for homelessness.**

Multiple agencies identify the need to address homelessness in their system, including education, health, behavioral health, juvenile justice, child welfare, economic security, and work force development. Efforts should include prevention as well as expanding housing assistance and job skills programs that include financial literacy and asset building.



9  
Improve well-being of young people involved in foster care and youth corrections

**Improve the well-being of youth and young adults who are in the care and/or custody of the state and counties, including youth in the foster care system and in youth corrections.**

Continue to establish permanent connections, address human trafficking, prevent homelessness, promote educational attainment, and increase access to mental health and substance abuse services.



10  
Educational Alternatives

**Provide educational alternatives and wraparound supports for youth with complex needs.**

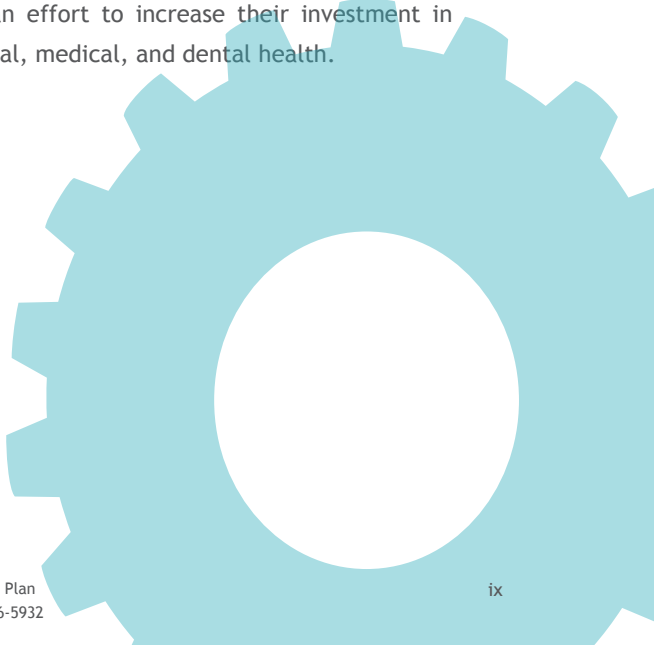
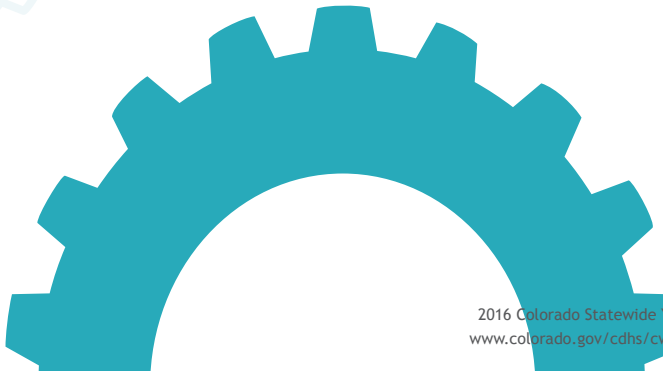
Close the achievement gap for underserved populations, including youth experiencing school and college disruptions, homelessness, poverty, family instability, correctional detainment, or special education needs.



11  
Youth friendly health system

**Strengthen strategies for a youth-friendly health system.**

The health system should be comprehensive and holistic in its approach to youth and young adults. The health care system should strategically engage youth in an effort to increase their investment in their mental, medical, and dental health.



# iv. THANK YOU STAKEHOLDERS, PARTICIPANTS & PRESENTERS

The Colorado Statewide Youth Development Plan was developed in partnership and with input from numerous individuals, including youth and young adults. Appreciation is extended to those who dedicated their time and effort to serve on the committee, to participate in committee meetings and work groups, and to present to the committee.

## Colorado Statewide Youth Development Plan Committee

### Committee Co-Chairs

- Connie Rule, Executive Director, Colorado Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs (2014-2016)
- Robert Werthwein, Director, Office of Children, Youth and Families, Colorado Department of Human Services (2014-2016)

### Committee Staff Lead

- José Esquibel, Manager, Prevention and Interagency Collaboration Unit, Division of Child Welfare, Colorado Department of Human Services (2014-2015)
- Pearl Bell, Youth Development Specialist, Division of Child Welfare, Colorado Department of Human Services (2015-2016)

### Youth Representatives

- Nkem Nwanko, Youth Advisor, Children, Youth and Families Branch, Prevention Services Division, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (2014-2016)
- Madison Thompson, CO9to25 Youth Advisor, The Civic Canopy (2014-2016)

### Community Representatives

- Alecia Brown, Family Leader, Family Leadership Training Institute (2014-2016)
- Jan Carroll, Director, Federal and Civic Engagement, Colorado State University Extension (2014-2016)
- Minna Castillo Cohen, Director, Youth Success, Mile High United Way (2014-2016)
- Mike Johnson, Executive Director, Project PAVE (2014-2016)
- John Mok-Lamme, Executive Director, Karis, Inc., The House (2014-2016)
- Alice Pugh, Executive Director, Full Circle of Lake County/Youth and Family Services (2014-2016)
- Stephanie Villafuerte, Esq., Executive Director, Rocky Mountain Children's Law Center (2014-2016)
- Samuel Wood, Special Projects Coordinator/Youth Engagement, Educational Theatre Programs, Community Benefits and Relations, Kaiser Permanente (2014-2016)
- Deena Ziegler, Executive Director, Prairie Family Center (2014-2016)

### County Representatives

- Betty Donovan, Director, Gilpin County Human Services (2014-2016)
- Lynn Johnson, Executive Director, Jefferson County Department of Human Services (2014-2016)
- Dan Makelky, Director, Douglas County Human Services (2014-2016)

### State Department Representatives

- Bill Bane, Manager, Children, Youth, and Family Mental Health Programs, Office of Behavioral Health, Colorado Department of Human Services (2014-2016)
- Beth W. Bean, Ph.D., Chief Research Officer, Colorado Department of Higher Education (2014-2016)
- Anne-Marie Braga, Population & Community Health Unit Manager, Children, Youth & Families Branch, Prevention Services Division, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (2014-2016)
- Susan Colling, Probation Services Analyst, State Court Administrator Office, Colorado Judicial Branch (2014-2016)
- Al Estrada, Director, Division of Youth Corrections, Office of Children, Youth and Families, Colorado Department of Human Services (2014-2016)
- Autumn Gold, Homeless Prevention Specialist, Division of Housing, Office of Homeless Youth Services, Colorado Department of Local Affairs (2014-2015)
- Kristin Toombs, Division of Housing, Office of Homeless Youth Services, Colorado Department of Local Affairs (2016)
- Meredith Henry, Children's Health Policy Specialist, Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (2014-2016)
- Shannon Huska, School Health Services Program Administrator, Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (2014-2016)
- Andrew Johnson, Manager, Youth Services Unit, Division of Child Welfare, Office of Children Youth and Families, Colorado Department of Human Services (2014-2016)
- Anna Lopez, Program Grant Manager, Office of Adult and Juvenile Justice Assistance, Division of Criminal Justice, Colorado Department of Public Safety (2014-2016)
- Judith Martinez, Director, Dropout Prevention and Engagement, Colorado Department of Education (2014-2016)
- Sharon Sandoval, Probation Supervisor, State Court Administrator's Office, Colorado Judicial Branch (2014-2016)

## Committee Participants

A number of individuals participated in the Committee meetings and contributed to the development of the Colorado Statewide Youth Development Plan:

### Youth Participants

- Yashna Eswaran, Children, Youth and Families Branch, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (2014-2015)
- Abril Gallegos, St. Mary's Academy (2014-2015)
- Alysh Lynch, Kaiser Permanente (2014-2015)
- Kendra Martin, Bridging the Gap, Mile High United Way (2014-2015)
- Donovan Martinez, Kaiser Permanente (2014-2015)
- Marisa Mendoza, Division of Housing, Office of Homeless Youth Services, Colorado Department of Local Affairs (2014-2015)
- P.J. Sykes, Division of Housing, Office of Homeless Youth Services, Colorado Department of Local Affairs (2014-2015)

### Adult Participants

- Mary Berg, Jefferson County Human Services (2014-2015)
- Audra Bishop, Prevention Services Division, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (2014-2016)
- Elizabeth Brophy, Rocky Mountain Children's Law Center (2014-2015)
- Cody Buchanan, Office of Dropout Prevention and Engagement, Colorado Department of Education (2014-2016)
- Cori Canty, Office of Dropout Prevention, Colorado Department of Education (2014-2015)
- Bob Coulson, Division of Child Welfare, Colorado Department of Human Services (2014-2015)
- Betsy Fordyce, Rocky Mountain Children's Law Center (2014-2015)
- Andrew Gabor, Office of Behavioral Health, Colorado Department of Human Services (2014-2015)
- Sharon Hamilton, Educate2Protect (2014-2015)
- Kay Hardy, Lutheran Family and Children Services (2014-2015)
- Charlie Lippolis, Colorado Psychiatric Association (2014-2015)
- Amber Leytem, Denver Public Health (2014-2015)
- John Mok-Lamme, Karis, Inc., The House (2014-2015)
- Beth Owen, Foster Care/Flexible Families Supervisor, Adoption Options (2014-2015)
- Susan Payne, Safe2Tell, Colorado Department of Law (2014-2015)
- Melanie Reece, Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Finance (2014-2016)
- Gina Robinson, Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Finance (2014-2016)
- Gretchen Russo, Division of Child Welfare, Colorado Department of Human Services (2014-2015)
- Gully Stanford, College in Colorado, Colorado Department of Higher Education (2014-2015)
- Kira Suurvarik, Juvenile Assessment Center, 18th Judicial District (2014-2015)
- Kerry Swenson, Division of Child Welfare, Colorado Department of Human Services (2014-2015)
- Dawn Taylor Owens, College in Colorado, Colorado Department of Higher Education (2014-2015)
- Kathryn Wells, MD, Denver Health and The Kempe Center (2014-2015)

## Work Groups

### Housing and Homelessness Work Group: Advisory Committee on Homeless Youth

#### Youth:

- Marisa Mendoza, Office of Homeless Youth Services, Division of Housing, Colorado Department of Local Affairs (2014-2015)

#### Adults:

- Bill Bane, Office of Behavior Health (2014-2015)
- Georgina Becerril, Denver Department of Human Services (2014-2015)
- Jennifer Bramstedt, Comitis Youth Shelter (2014-2015)
- Brian Brant, Division of Child Welfare, Colorado Department of Human Services (2014-2015)
- Minna Castillo Cohen, Mile High United Way (2014-2016)
- Kippi Clausen, Unfolding Directions (2014-2016)
- Claire Clurman, Attention Homes (2014-2015)
- Bob Coulson, Division of Child Welfare, Colorado Department of Human Services (2014-2015)
- Amy Coy, Shiloh House (2014-2015)
- Abby Eno, Colorado Youth for a Change (2014-2015)
- Betsy Fordyce, Rocky Mountain Children's Law Center (2014-2015)

#### Work Groups cont.

- Susan Garcia, Garfield Department of Human Services (2014-2015)
- Autumn Gold, Office of Homeless Youth Services, Division of Housing, Colorado Department of Local Affairs (2014-2015)
- Perry May, Devereux (2014-2015)
- John Mok Lamme, Karis, Inc., The House (2014-2016)
- Denise McHugh, Spark Policy and Colorado Rural Collaborative for Runaway and Homeless Youth (2014-2016)
- Erin Medina, Mile High United Way (2014-2015)
- Melissa Moran, Comitis Youth Shelter (2014-2015)
- Moises Munoz, Children's Hospital Colorado (2014-2015)
- Peter Pike, Colorado Disability Benefits Support Program (2014-2015)
- Kendall Rames, Urban Peak of Denver and Colorado Springs (2014-2015)
- Misty Ruthven, Task Force for Higher Education for Homeless Student (2014-2015)
- Tammy Schneiderman, Division of Youth Corrections, Colorado Department of Human Services (2014-2015)
- Cheryl Secorski, United Way of Weld County (2014-2015)
- Dana Scott, Colorado Division of Education (2014-2015)
- Raven Smith, Posada (2014-2015)
- Ann Sullivan, Boulder County Department of Housing and Human Services (2014-2015)

#### Education Work Group

##### Youth:

- Yashna Eswaran, Youth Advisor, Children, Youth and Families Branch, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (2014-2015)
- Nkem Nwanko, Youth Advisor, Children, Youth and Families Branch, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (2014-2016)

##### Adults:

- Beth Bean, Colorado Department of Higher Education (2014-2015)
- Alecia Brown, Family Leader, Family Leadership Training Institute (2014-2015)
- Cody Buchanan, Office of Dropout Prevention and Engagement, Colorado Department of Education (2014-2016)
- Cori Canty, Office of Dropout Prevention and Engagement, Colorado Department of Education (2014-2015)
- Jan Carroll, Colorado State University Extension (2014-2015)
- Bob Coulson, Division of Child Welfare, Colorado Department of Human Services (2014-2015)
- Kristin Melton, Rocky Mountain Children's Law Center (2014-2015)
- Misti Ruthven, Office of Postsecondary Readiness, Colorado Department of Education (2014-2015)
- Gully Sanford, College in Colorado, Colorado Department of Higher Education (2014-2015)

#### Youth and Young Adult Health Work Group

##### Youth:

- Yashna Eswaran, Youth Advisor, Children, Youth and Families Branch, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (2014-2015)
- Siman Gnagy, Community Health Action Team (Kaiser Permanente and Colorado Education Initiative) (2014-2015)
- Estela Marmolejo-Daher, Community Health Action Team (Kaiser Permanente and Colorado Education Initiative) (2014-2015)
- Dmitri Milovidov, Community Health Action Team (Kaiser Permanente and Colorado Education Initiative) (2014-2015)
- Nkem Nwankwo, Youth Advisor, Children, Youth and Families Branch, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (2014-2016)
- Danielle Perez, Community Health Action Team (Kaiser Permanente and Colorado Education Initiative) (2014-2015)
- Yeshra Perez, Community Health Action Team (Kaiser Permanente and Colorado Education Initiative) (2014-2015)
- Trever Sanders, Community Health Action Team (Kaiser Permanente and Colorado Education Initiative) (2014-2015)
- Steven Rastrelli, Community Health Action Team (Kaiser Permanente and Colorado Education Initiative) (2014-2015)
- Lucy Reyes, Community Health Action Team (Kaiser Permanente and Colorado Education Initiative) (2014-2015)
- Saul Romero, Community Health Action Team (Kaiser Permanente and Colorado Education Initiative) (2014-2015)
- Madison Thompson, CO9to25 Youth Advisor (2014-2016)

##### Adults:

- Alecia Brown, Family Leader, Family Leadership Training Institute (2014-2016)
- Deborah Foote, Oral Health Colorado (2014-2015)
- Meredith Henry, Colorado Department of Health care Policy and Financing (2014-2015)
- Shannon Huska, Colorado Department of Health care Policy and Financing (2014-2015)
- Amber Leytem, Denver Public Health (2014-2015)
- Gina Robinson, Colorado Department of Health care Policy and Financing (2014-2016)
- Samuel Wood, Educations Theatre Programs, Community Benefits and Relations, Kaiser Permanente (2014-2016)

#### Presenters by Topic

##### National and Federal Youth Development Efforts:

- Elizabeth Gains, Forum for Youth Investment

##### Behavioral Health:

- Bill Bane, Children, Youth, and Family Mental Health Programs, Office of Behavioral Health, Colorado Department of Human Services
- Erin Elder, The Colorado Education Initiative
- Claudia Zundel, Child, Adolescent and Family Services, Office of Behavioral Health, Colorado Department of Human Services

##### Child Welfare:

- Andrew Johnson, Youth Services Unit, Division of Child Welfare, Office of Children Youth and Families, Colorado Department of Human Services
- Betsy Fordyce, Rocky Mountain Law Center

##### Colorado 9to25:

- Anne-Marie Braga, Children, Youth and Families Branch, Prevention Services Division, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

##### Education:

- Beth Bean, Colorado Department of Higher Education
- Judith Martinez, Dropout Prevention and Engagement, Colorado Department of Education
- Misti Ruthven, Office of Postsecondary Readiness, Colorado Department of Education

##### Family Leadership:

- Eileen Forlenza, Prevention Services Division, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

##### Health:

- Melanie Reece, Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Finance
- Gina Robinson, Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Finance

##### Housing and Homelessness:

- Autumn Gold, Division of Housing, Office of Homeless Youth Services, Colorado Department of Local Affairs
- Marisa Mendoza, Youth Intern Division of Housing, Office of Homeless Youth Services, Colorado Department of Local Affairs: P.J. Sykes, Youth Intern, Division of Housing, Office of Homeless Youth Services, Colorado Department of Local Affairs

##### Human Trafficking:

- Sharon Hamilton, Educate2 Protect

##### Juvenile Assessment Centers:

- Jeff McDonald, Jefferson County Juvenile Assessment Center
- Kira Suurvarik, Juvenile Assessment Center, 18th Judicial District

##### Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention:

- Anna Lopez, Office of Adult and Juvenile Justice Assistance, Division of Criminal Justice, Colorado Department of Public Safety

##### Juvenile Probation:

- Susan Colling, State Court Administrator Office, Colorado Judicial Branch
- Sharon Sandoval, Probation Supervisor, State Court Administrator's Office, Colorado Judicial Branch

##### Safety:

- Christine Harms, School Safety Resource Center, Colorado Department of Public Safety
- Jan Hart, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
- Susan Payne, Safe2Tell, Colorado Department of Law

##### Youth Corrections:

- Al Estrada, Division of Youth Corrections, Office of Children, Youth and Families, Colorado Department of Human Services

##### Youth Development Institute:

- Betsy Kummer, The Partnership for Families and Children

##### Facilitators:

- Ashley Denault, Spark Policy
- Denise McHugh, Spark Policy
- Natalie Portman-Marsh, Spark Policy
- Ana Soler, The Civic Canopy
- Mae Thompson, The Civic Canopy
- Lorena Zimmer, Spark Policy



# Get involved.

Our movement is growing. The challenges young people in Colorado face cannot be solved by edicts or quick fixes from individual silos. Are you interested in sharing your opinions? Do you want your voice to be heard? Are you interested in making change locally and statewide? It is time to work together, united, with one voice, and around one cause. We can write this Plan, but we need youth and adults with expertise and passion to implement it. We can set a goal to increase access to services for youth, but we need people on the ground in our hospitals and communities to spread the word, raise awareness, and provide support for youth to lead healthier lives. We can invest in systems change, but we need the right representatives and leaders at the table. Now is the moment! Join us! Reach out! We can help you find the opportunity that best suits your skills and experience so that you can make a difference. [www.co9to25.org](http://www.co9to25.org)

Together we can reach our goal of all youth being safe, healthy, educated, connected, and contributing members of society.



**COLORADO**  
**Office of Children,  
Youth & Families**

Division of Child Welfare

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**COLORADO**  
Department of Human Services

Representative Dickey Lee Hullinghorst  
Speaker of the Colorado House of Representatives  
Colorado State Capitol  
200 East Colfax  
Denver CO 80203

Senator Bill Cadman  
President of the Colorado Senate  
Colorado State Capitol  
200 East Colfax  
Denver CO 80203

September 28, 2016

Dear Speaker Hullinghorst and Senate President Cadman:

Pursuant to C.R.S. 25-20.5-202, the Colorado Department of Human Services is charged with the responsibility of creating and updating a "statewide youth development plan" in partnership with stakeholders. Please find the enclosed updated and revised 2016 Statewide Youth Development Plan which reflects information for the period of January 1, 2015 through September 30th, 2016.

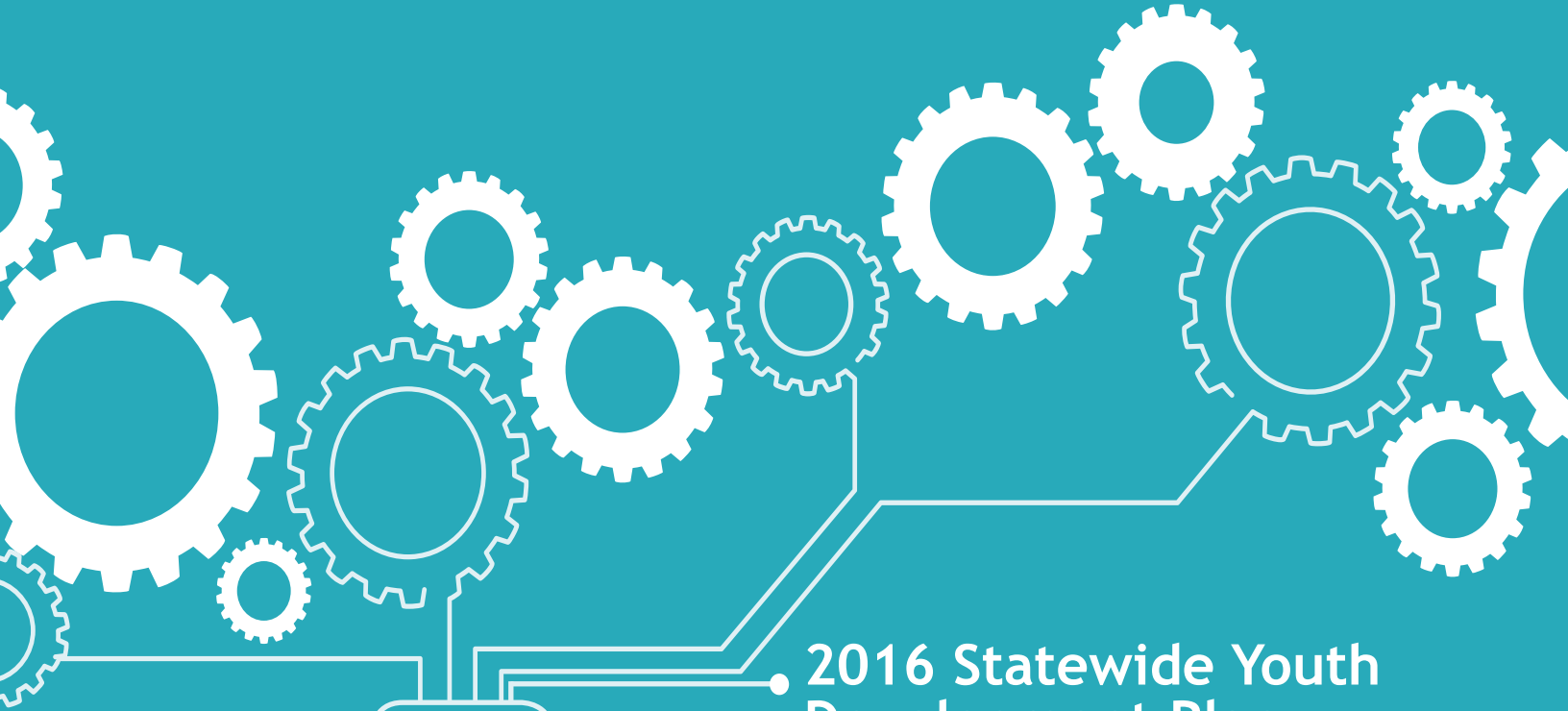
As directed by HB 13-1239, the statewide youth development plan must be updated biennially. The enclosed revised 2016 Statewide Youth Development Plan remains true to the spirit of the initial plan while incorporating current work, completed strategies and revisions based on new priorities and input from stakeholders, project leads and Colorado 9to25 GPS, the guiding advisory committee for the development of the Statewide Youth Development Plan.

If you have any questions about the revised 2016 Statewide Youth Development Plan, please contact Pearl Bell, Youth Development Specialist, at (303) 866-4706 or [pearl.bell@state.co.us](mailto:pearl.bell@state.co.us).

Sincerely,

Robert Werthwein, PhD  
Director of the Office of Children Youth and Families  
Colorado Department of Human Services





# 2016 Statewide Youth Development Plan

Working together to improve outcomes for youth.  
*Revised 2016*



House Bill 13-1239 (HB13-1239) charges the Colorado Department of Human Services with the responsibility of creating a “statewide youth development plan” in partnership with stakeholders.



This plan is implemented as a part of Colorado’s youth system Colorado9to25 by identifying gaps, best practices, existing evidence-supported work, and recommended enhancements.

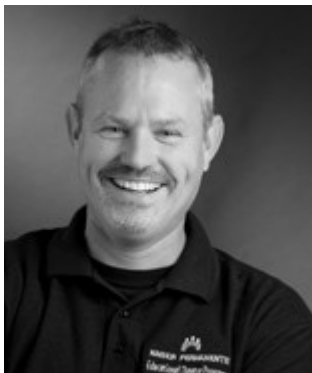
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## i. LETTER FROM COLORADO 9 TO 25



### To the Colorado General Assembly,

Thank you for helping to advance the Statewide Youth Development Plan (the Plan). We are honored and humbled that the Plan adopted CO9to25's already existing, community-vetted framework. These past two years have been an amazing journey. We are excited to share the attached report which updates you on the Plan. The report outlines:

- Accomplishments that have been achieved in the last 24 months
- Updates on collaborative efforts
- Revisions to original recommendations based on the current climate
- Future steps that will keep this important work moving forward for the next 2 years.

The basic assumption of the Plan is deceptively simple: it takes collaborative action to ensure that all Colorado youth ages 9 to 25 are safe, healthy, educated, connected, and contributing. However, the work is complex, difficult, and time intensive. CO9to25 utilizes innovative strategies to build a system that provides a structured approach for collaboration across all Colorado's youth-serving organizations (government agencies, businesses, and nonprofits) while engaging youth in the process. We envision a day where all Colorado youth-serving organizations align efforts and leverage shared resources to achieve positive outcomes for all Colorado youth.

Starting in 2014, key CO9to25 network members actively participated in the development of the Plan and the initial recommendations. As noted, the integration of these two groups is essential and has taken considerable thought and effort. Without statutory directive, network partners looked to CO9to25's foundational documents for a structural organizing framework but also recognized that significant revisions (charter, logic model, strategic action plan, etc.) were necessary. At a day-long event in April 2016, the CO9to25 Leadership Team successfully merged with the Statewide Development Plan Steering committee creating the CO9to25 Council.

CO9to25 uses six basic strategies: 1) maintain a strong infrastructure, 2) mobilize partners, 3) raise public awareness, 4) promote best and promising practices, 5) share accountability for results, and 6) promote policy and environmental change. The attached report divides the recommendations into these five categories. Each of the Plan's recommendations has been assigned a status of completed, revised, or active (along with a brief explanation for the assigned heading). We have made considerable progress and are excited to see what can be achieved in the next two year cycle.

CO9to25 exists because of our members' profound commitment to the youth of our state. We believe that youth are resources to be cultivated rather than problems to be fixed. The CO9to25 youth, along with their adult and organizational partners, are creating educational resources, creating awareness campaigns, facilitating positive youth development trainings, holding an annual youth leadership summit, helping to promote policies and environmental change, and more. This strength-based approach to youth development works magic. We cheer as CO9to25 youth were the first in their families to graduate high school and go to university. We watch as our youth grow from shy and quiet participants into dynamic facilitators and community advocates. We walk alongside our youth as they struggle with life challenges, finding ourselves inspired by their strength, grit, and truth.

We can no longer allow any more of our state's young people to fall through the gaps in our youth systems. We challenge you to join the CO9to25 movement. Lifelong success for young people demands cooperation and collaboration amongst all who care for them. We must strengthen our policies, programs, and services with and for all young people in Colorado, especially those who are experiencing tremendous challenges such as homelessness, involvement with the juvenile justice system, teen parenting, visible and invisible disabilities, and identification as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or questioning. It's time to join forces and take action.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Samuel Wood".

Samuel Wood CO9to25 GPS Member

## ii. LETTER FROM COLORADO YOUTH



### To the Colorado General Assembly,

The beauty of Colorado 9to25 (CO9to25) and the connection to the Statewide Youth Development Plan (the Plan) is the power to connect the young people of Colorado to the resources and opportunities they desperately need. Building connections with youth is necessary for innovative solutions that can improve the lives of young people. Research shows that connections have been correlated to better health outcomes. As one of my favorite authors, David Greer, stated in the Wind in Your Sails, “by connecting and being part of a community with a shared vision and goals, we can create great things.” It is because of the powerful connections that I’ve seen built with CO9to25 and the Plan that I am asking for you to stand alongside young people and their families as we move the Plan forward.

During its inception the Plan included young people from all walks of life who helped advocate and draft the Plan based on their own unique experiences. The young people dedicated to this Plan represent more than the circumstances they’ve conquered or currently face; they represent the voices of young people in the foster care system, those who are experiencing homelessness, young people who are parenting and great at it, and those who are newly immigrated citizens. In banding together, we developed a plan in connection with parents and professionals alike to move the Colorado Youth System forward. We are improving outcomes that impact us and consequently impacting the future of all of Colorado.

As a young person that participated in the development and implementation of the Plan, I experienced the positive impact of my voice through CO9to25. I sat alongside tables of my peers in connection with communities, business, and government representatives to effect change. I’ve been involved, hands on, in the development and the improvement of structures that move the Plan forward. I have seen light return to the eyes of disenfranchised populations of young people, just like me, as their voices are heard, having their experiences and perspectives drive the improvement of our great state’s policies and practices. Today, I can say that I feel empowered!

Updates and changes to the recommendations have been done with the best interest of young people and their loved ones at heart and in partnership with young people connected to our systems and their communities. Our voices have guided the creation of solutions responsive to the nuanced challenges of making Colorado a more amazing state.

I stand with CO9to25 as we continue unwaveringly through lean financial times, well-armed and willing to dedicate time, passion, and talent. I know young people just like me need the connections to opportunities and resources the Plan provides just as much as I do, if not more. I ask you to stand alongside CO9to25 with your support and resources in recognition of Colorado’s young people, their families, and communities. As a young person, a resident of Aurora, Colorado, and someone who navigates through the gaps of disparities daily, I support this Plan. I ask that you stand with Colorado 9to25 as we connect, improve, and inspire positive change in our great state.

**Nkem Nwankwo (Colorado young person and member of CO9to25 GPS)**

## iii. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Overview

House Bill 13-1239 charges the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) with the responsibility of creating and biennially revising a “statewide youth development plan” (the Plan) in partnership with stakeholders. The Plan’s steering committee consists of representatives from various community organizations, state departments, and youth members. The intent of the Plan is to support healthy youth development and to ensure consistency of youth policy and practice across Colorado. Currently, Colorado has a number of disconnected youth programs and services which are operating independently of each other, and there are limited parameters in place to reduce duplication and splintering of best practice efforts. In order to support Colorado’s alignment of strategic efforts, the Plan identifies gaps, best practices, existing evidence-supported work, and recommended enhancements.

A successful youth system must be based on a positive youth development (PYD) approach, including authentic youth engagement and inclusion. Positive youth development is an evidence-based approach proven to help make programs and services for youth more effective and to help youth develop skills that make them successful. PYD is a culture shift in which services and programs partner with youth in the construction of practice and policy, development of protective factors, and harnessing of skills and character to engage youth in reaching their full potential.

Since 2011 Colorado 9to25 (CO9to25) continues to implement PYD and engage in system building to improve programs, policies, and practices that affect youth and young adults. CO9to25 is Colorado’s youth system and acts as a collective, action-oriented network of youth and adults working in partnership to ensure that all young people are safe, healthy, educated, connected, and contributing. CO9to25 is now nationally-recognized as a progressive youth system that is unique to Colorado. The work of CO9to25 and the Plan serve as the platform for a strong youth system in Colorado, although it is implemented on a limited scale due to marginal resources.

In 2016 the Plan’s steering committee merged with CO9to25 to create the Colorado 9to25 Council (the

Council). With this collaboration the Statewide Youth Development Plan became the CO9to25 “Action Plan” for implementing and sustaining a youth system in Colorado. As CO9to25 takes ownership of the Plan over the next two years, they will take action to complete recommendations and integrate a feedback loop between community, youth, and government.

### Status and Revisions

This document is the biennial update for the 2016 Statewide Youth Development Plan as directed by HB 13-1239. These revisions remain true to the spirit of the initial plan yet incorporate current work and revisions based on new priorities. The gaps and themes remain paramount and unchanged. Over the next two years, CO9to25 will take a deeper look at these gaps and themes for future revision. Wraparound approaches are added to the best practices section. A report on accomplishments and progress are included for each recommendation, with further details available in the appendix including links to references. Two new recommendations (Rec 1 on page 10 and Rec 3 on page 11) are included to create stronger connections, recruit advocates, and create sustainability over the next two years. Overall the Plan creates a solid framework for supporting Colorado’s youth system and aligning services.



## Youth Development Gaps and Themes

In the first year of the Plan, stakeholders reviewed youth initiatives of various state and community agencies and identified gaps and themes across Colorado. Stakeholders reviewed data and practices across a variety of service areas, such as education, health, behavioral health, child welfare, homelessness, safety, and juvenile justice. They identified eight common gaps/themes as impediments to successful youth outcomes in Colorado, which remain in this revision. Recognizing that these are not comprehensive, the CO9to25 Council and Action Teams will revise these gaps and themes for the 2018 revisions of the Plan.

### Age/Periods of Transition

There is a need for attention to youth as they navigate key transitions, like those between levels of education, such

**1** as the periods between elementary school, middle/junior high school, high school, and higher education and/or workforce. Similarly, youth involved in public systems such as child welfare and juvenile corrections need supports for transitions related to changes in placements and when exiting the public systems.

### Missing Connections to Adults

**2** Youth need to have a connection and long-term relationship with at least one caring adult. This need is established by research and emphasized by youth and young adults.

### Access to Services

Youth need access to a comprehensive continuum of care and services that span education, prevention, intervention, and treatment. The populations most in need of these services include youth aging out of the youth services system into the adult services system, youth involved in public service systems such as child welfare and juvenile corrections, youth experiencing homelessness, and youth from rural areas that currently have limited access to services.

### Behavioral Health Needs

Youth need access to programs and services that are resiliency-based and that build protective factors. Colorado youth ages 18 years and under are more likely to receive behavioral health services than Colorado young adults over age

18. While access and eligibility play a role, Colorado has some of the highest rates in the country of serious mental illness and suicide for young adults. More Colorado youth die by suicide than by homicide, motor vehicle crashes, cancer, or drowning combined. Female youth ages 10-24 have the highest suicide attempt rate out of any age and gender group in Colorado.

### Respect/Youth-Friendly Environments & Services

Youth need services and programs they can trust and

**5** that will meaningfully engage them. To develop a youth-friendly environment, providers must understand what youth and young adults actually want and need rather than making assumptions about their needs.

### Homelessness (Housing & Economic Security)

Youth need access to affordable housing. Homelessness is a systemic issue that requires the investment from

**6** agencies focused on education, behavioral health, juvenile justice, child welfare, workforce, safety agencies, and disabilities.

Youth that are experiencing homelessness are particularly vulnerable and their chances of success in education, health, and well-being are greatly diminished.

### Populations Who Experience Disparities and Stigmatizations

Youth need equal access and opportunities regardless of

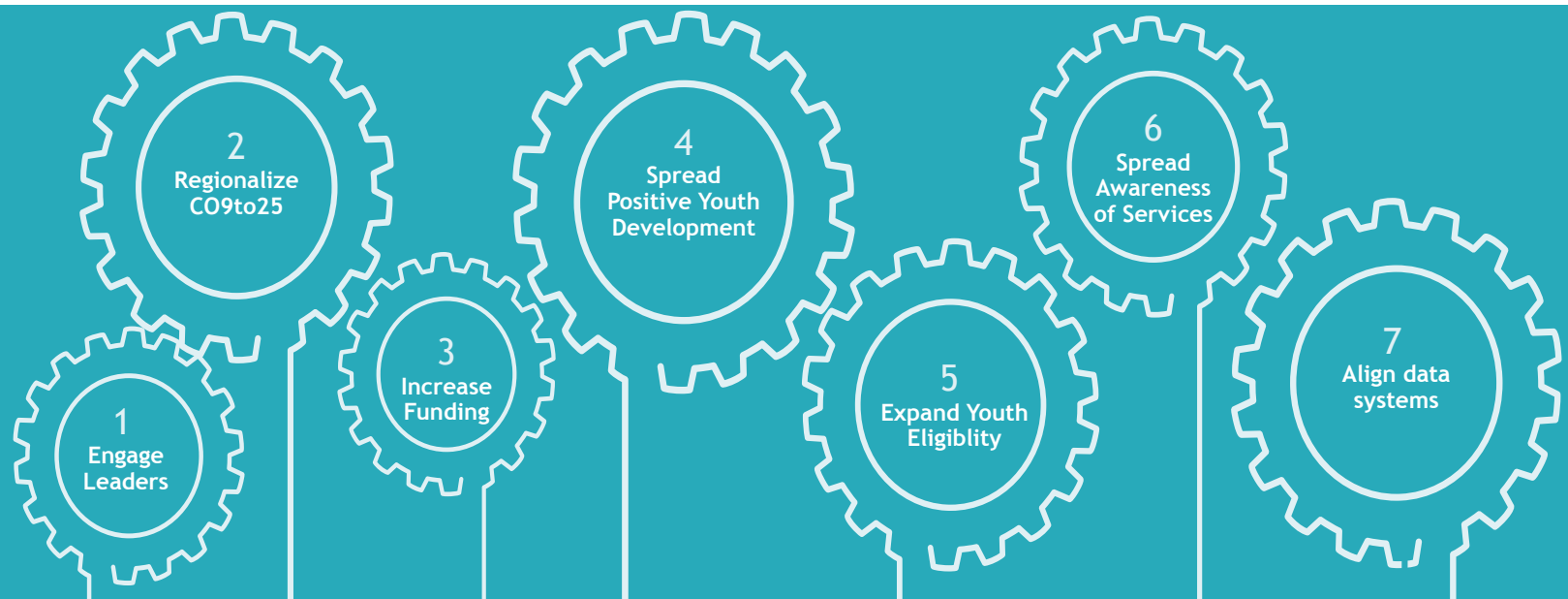
**7** their income, race or ethnicity, gender, LGBTQ status, or where they live. Across all disciplines, there are disparities related to poverty, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, and more.

### Need for Cross-Systems Coordination & Collaboration

Youth need the organizations that fund or provide youth

**8** services to coordinate and collaborate with each other. There is especially a need for increasing the flexibility of funds dedicated to services. This can be done, for example, by reducing restrictions and braiding or blending funds across state, federal, and private sources.

# 2016 UPDATED STRATEGIES & RECOMMENDATIONS



**Engage influential leaders to support Colorado's youth system, CO9to25.**

The youth system in Colorado needs influential government, youth, and community leaders to effectively connect and coordinate work across the state. These leaders will make the following recommendations possible.

**Establish a formal process for statewide regional integration of CO9to25.**

CO9to25 will partner with regional initiatives to ensure there is adequate representation of state, youth, and community stakeholders.

**Develop a sustainable funding source to support Colorado's youth system.**

A dedicated source of funding to support Colorado's youth system is necessary for viable systemic and programmatic collaboration. Increasing the braiding and blending of existing funds will create sustainability and reduce fragmentation of efforts.

**Increase the number of programs and organizations across the state that are trained on and utilizing a positive youth development approach.**

Over time, an investment in PYD will create a more resilient youth population and, as a result, increase the effectiveness of adults' interventions to engage youth.

**Expand eligibility and capacity of a wide variety of service systems to meet the comprehensive needs of young people and reduce the amount of time spent in high-level system involvement.**

Solutions should focus on youth eligibility for services as well as capacity to serve them in the community. In particular, Colorado should review the varying eligibility and age cut-offs across programs to provide intentional transitions and reduce gaps in services.

**Increase public awareness of available youth services and organizations.**

A consumer-focused, web-based information portal should identify available services for youth and families. In addition, a comprehensive map should identify community youth-serving organizations and include key information about the youth-serving organizations, such as current funding and number of youth served. A public awareness campaign of these available services will support points of access across Colorado.

**Align data systems that impact youth and collect a common set of data indicators that are critical to youth and young adult well-being.**

Alignment should occur at the macro level (system and community) and micro level (youth and families). Steps include aligning existing statewide surveillance systems collecting data on youth ages 9-25, creating developmentally appropriate, aligned measures that complement the CO9to25 indicators, and developing interoperability of direct services data systems managed by state agencies.



8  
Improve accessibility of housing

**Improve the quality, availability, and accessibility of housing, services, supports, and relationships to provide solutions to youth who are at risk for homelessness.**

Multiple agencies identify the need to address homelessness in their system, including education, health, behavioral health, juvenile justice, child welfare, economic security, and work force development. Efforts should include prevention as well as expanding housing assistance and job skills programs that include financial literacy and asset building.



9  
Improve well-being of young people involved in foster care and youth corrections

**Improve the well-being of youth and young adults who are in the care and/or custody of the state and counties, including youth in the foster care system and in youth corrections.**

Continue to establish permanent connections, address human trafficking, prevent homelessness, promote educational attainment, and increase access to mental health and substance abuse services.



10  
Educational Alternatives

**Provide educational alternatives and wraparound supports for youth with complex needs.**

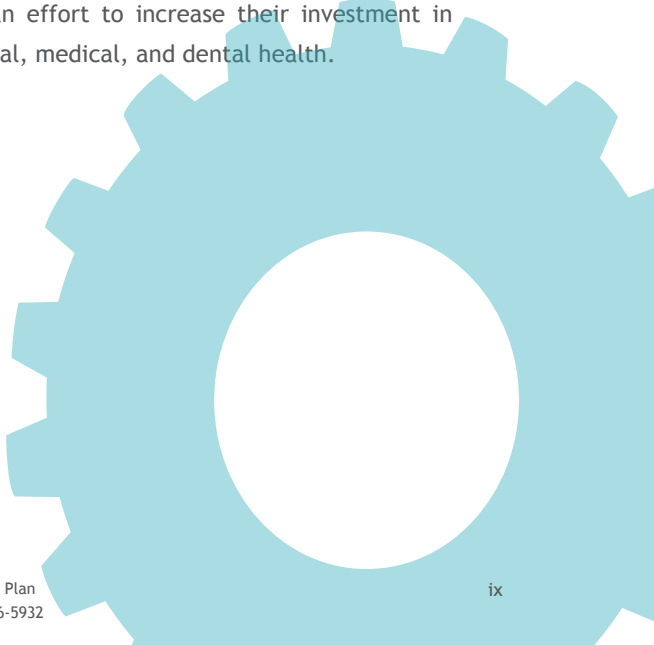
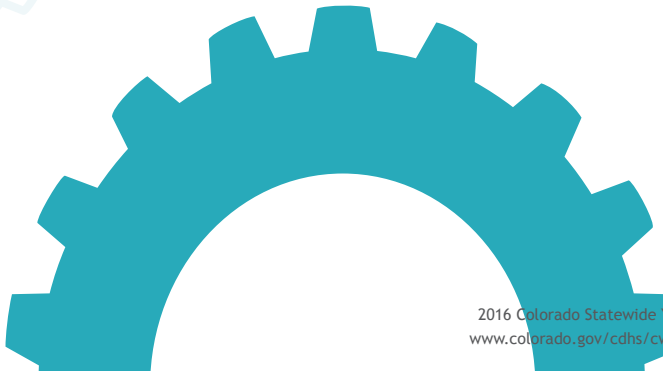
Close the achievement gap for underserved populations, including youth experiencing school and college disruptions, homelessness, poverty, family instability, correctional detainment, or special education needs.



11  
Youth friendly health system

**Strengthen strategies for a youth-friendly health system.**

The health system should be comprehensive and holistic in its approach to youth and young adults. The health care system should strategically engage youth in an effort to increase their investment in their mental, medical, and dental health.



# iv. THANK YOU STAKEHOLDERS, PARTICIPANTS & PRESENTERS

The Colorado Statewide Youth Development Plan was developed in partnership and with input from numerous individuals, including youth and young adults. Appreciation is extended to those who dedicated their time and effort to serve on the committee, to participate in committee meetings and work groups, and to present to the committee.

## Colorado Statewide Youth Development Plan Committee

### Committee Co-Chairs

- Connie Rule, Executive Director, Colorado Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs (2014-2016)
- Robert Werthwein, Director, Office of Children, Youth and Families, Colorado Department of Human Services (2014-2016)

### Committee Staff Lead

- José Esquibel, Manager, Prevention and Interagency Collaboration Unit, Division of Child Welfare, Colorado Department of Human Services (2014-2015)
- Pearl Bell, Youth Development Specialist, Division of Child Welfare, Colorado Department of Human Services (2015-2016)

### Youth Representatives

- Nkem Nwanko, Youth Advisor, Children, Youth and Families Branch, Prevention Services Division, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (2014-2016)
- Madison Thompson, CO9to25 Youth Advisor, The Civic Canopy (2014-2016)

### Community Representatives

- Alecia Brown, Family Leader, Family Leadership Training Institute (2014-2016)
- Jan Carroll, Director, Federal and Civic Engagement, Colorado State University Extension (2014-2016)
- Minna Castillo Cohen, Director, Youth Success, Mile High United Way (2014-2016)
- Mike Johnson, Executive Director, Project PAVE (2014-2016)
- John Mok-Lamme, Executive Director, Karis, Inc., The House (2014-2016)
- Alice Pugh, Executive Director, Full Circle of Lake County/Youth and Family Services (2014-2016)
- Stephanie Villafuerte, Esq., Executive Director, Rocky Mountain Children's Law Center (2014-2016)
- Samuel Wood, Special Projects Coordinator/Youth Engagement, Educational Theatre Programs, Community Benefits and Relations, Kaiser Permanente (2014-2016)
- Deena Ziegler, Executive Director, Prairie Family Center (2014-2016)

### County Representatives

- Betty Donovan, Director, Gilpin County Human Services (2014-2016)
- Lynn Johnson, Executive Director, Jefferson County Department of Human Services (2014-2016)
- Dan Makelky, Director, Douglas County Human Services (2014-2016)

### State Department Representatives

- Bill Bane, Manager, Children, Youth, and Family Mental Health Programs, Office of Behavioral Health, Colorado Department of Human Services (2014-2016)
- Beth W. Bean, Ph.D., Chief Research Officer, Colorado Department of Higher Education (2014-2016)
- Anne-Marie Braga, Population & Community Health Unit Manager, Children, Youth & Families Branch, Prevention Services Division, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (2014-2016)
- Susan Colling, Probation Services Analyst, State Court Administrator Office, Colorado Judicial Branch (2014-2016)
- Al Estrada, Director, Division of Youth Corrections, Office of Children, Youth and Families, Colorado Department of Human Services (2014-2016)
- Autumn Gold, Homeless Prevention Specialist, Division of Housing, Office of Homeless Youth Services, Colorado Department of Local Affairs (2014-2015)
- Kristin Toombs, Division of Housing, Office of Homeless Youth Services, Colorado Department of Local Affairs (2016)
- Meredith Henry, Children's Health Policy Specialist, Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (2014-2016)
- Shannon Huska, School Health Services Program Administrator, Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (2014-2016)
- Andrew Johnson, Manager, Youth Services Unit, Division of Child Welfare, Office of Children Youth and Families, Colorado Department of Human Services (2014-2016)
- Anna Lopez, Program Grant Manager, Office of Adult and Juvenile Justice Assistance, Division of Criminal Justice, Colorado Department of Public Safety (2014-2016)
- Judith Martinez, Director, Dropout Prevention and Engagement, Colorado Department of Education (2014-2016)
- Sharon Sandoval, Probation Supervisor, State Court Administrator's Office, Colorado Judicial Branch (2014-2016)

## Committee Participants

A number of individuals participated in the Committee meetings and contributed to the development of the Colorado Statewide Youth Development Plan:

### Youth Participants

- Yashna Eswaran, Children, Youth and Families Branch, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (2014-2015)
- Abril Gallegos, St. Mary's Academy (2014-2015)
- Alysh Lynch, Kaiser Permanente (2014-2015)
- Kendra Martin, Bridging the Gap, Mile High United Way (2014-2015)
- Donovan Martinez, Kaiser Permanente (2014-2015)
- Marisa Mendoza, Division of Housing, Office of Homeless Youth Services, Colorado Department of Local Affairs (2014-2015)
- P.J. Sykes, Division of Housing, Office of Homeless Youth Services, Colorado Department of Local Affairs (2014-2015)

### Adult Participants

- Mary Berg, Jefferson County Human Services (2014-2015)
- Audra Bishop, Prevention Services Division, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (2014-2016)
- Elizabeth Brophy, Rocky Mountain Children's Law Center (2014-2015)
- Cody Buchanan, Office of Dropout Prevention and Engagement, Colorado Department of Education (2014-2016)
- Cori Canty, Office of Dropout Prevention, Colorado Department of Education (2014-2015)
- Bob Coulson, Division of Child Welfare, Colorado Department of Human Services (2014-2015)
- Betsy Fordyce, Rocky Mountain Children's Law Center (2014-2015)
- Andrew Gabor, Office of Behavioral Health, Colorado Department of Human Services (2014-2015)
- Sharon Hamilton, Educate2Protect (2014-2015)
- Kay Hardy, Lutheran Family and Children Services (2014-2015)
- Charlie Lippolis, Colorado Psychiatric Association (2014-2015)
- Amber Leytem, Denver Public Health (2014-2015)
- John Mok-Lamme, Karis, Inc., The House (2014-2015)
- Beth Owen, Foster Care/Flexible Families Supervisor, Adoption Options (2014-2015)
- Susan Payne, Safe2Tell, Colorado Department of Law (2014-2015)
- Melanie Reece, Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Finance (2014-2016)
- Gina Robinson, Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Finance (2014-2016)
- Gretchen Russo, Division of Child Welfare, Colorado Department of Human Services (2014-2015)
- Gully Stanford, College in Colorado, Colorado Department of Higher Education (2014-2015)
- Kira Suurvarik, Juvenile Assessment Center, 18th Judicial District (2014-2015)
- Kerry Swenson, Division of Child Welfare, Colorado Department of Human Services (2014-2015)
- Dawn Taylor Owens, College in Colorado, Colorado Department of Higher Education (2014-2015)
- Kathryn Wells, MD, Denver Health and The Kempe Center (2014-2015)

## Work Groups

### Housing and Homelessness Work Group: Advisory Committee on Homeless Youth

#### Youth:

- Marisa Mendoza, Office of Homeless Youth Services, Division of Housing, Colorado Department of Local Affairs (2014-2015)

#### Adults:

- Bill Bane, Office of Behavior Health (2014-2015)
- Georgina Becerril, Denver Department of Human Services (2014-2015)
- Jennifer Bramstedt, Comitis Youth Shelter (2014-2015)
- Brian Brant, Division of Child Welfare, Colorado Department of Human Services (2014-2015)
- Minna Castillo Cohen, Mile High United Way (2014-2016)
- Kippi Clausen, Unfolding Directions (2014-2016)
- Claire Clurman, Attention Homes (2014-2015)
- Bob Coulson, Division of Child Welfare, Colorado Department of Human Services (2014-2015)
- Amy Coy, Shiloh House (2014-2015)
- Abby Eno, Colorado Youth for a Change (2014-2015)
- Betsy Fordyce, Rocky Mountain Children's Law Center (2014-2015)

#### Work Groups cont.

- Susan Garcia, Garfield Department of Human Services (2014-2015)
- Autumn Gold, Office of Homeless Youth Services, Division of Housing, Colorado Department of Local Affairs (2014-2015)
- Perry May, Devereux (2014-2015)
- John Mok Lamme, Karis, Inc., The House (2014-2016)
- Denise McHugh, Spark Policy and Colorado Rural Collaborative for Runaway and Homeless Youth (2014-2016)
- Erin Medina, Mile High United Way (2014-2015)
- Melissa Moran, Comitis Youth Shelter (2014-2015)
- Moises Munoz, Children's Hospital Colorado (2014-2015)
- Peter Pike, Colorado Disability Benefits Support Program (2014-2015)
- Kendall Rames, Urban Peak of Denver and Colorado Springs (2014-2015)
- Misty Ruthven, Task Force for Higher Education for Homeless Student (2014-2015)
- Tammy Schneiderman, Division of Youth Corrections, Colorado Department of Human Services (2014-2015)
- Cheryl Secorski, United Way of Weld County (2014-2015)
- Dana Scott, Colorado Division of Education (2014-2015)
- Raven Smith, Posada (2014-2015)
- Ann Sullivan, Boulder County Department of Housing and Human Services (2014-2015)

#### Education Work Group

##### Youth:

- Yashna Eswaran, Youth Advisor, Children, Youth and Families Branch, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (2014-2015)
- Nkem Nwanko, Youth Advisor, Children, Youth and Families Branch, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (2014-2016)

##### Adults:

- Beth Bean, Colorado Department of Higher Education (2014-2015)
- Alecia Brown, Family Leader, Family Leadership Training Institute (2014-2015)
- Cody Buchanan, Office of Dropout Prevention and Engagement, Colorado Department of Education (2014-2016)
- Cori Canty, Office of Dropout Prevention and Engagement, Colorado Department of Education (2014-2015)
- Jan Carroll, Colorado State University Extension (2014-2015)
- Bob Coulson, Division of Child Welfare, Colorado Department of Human Services (2014-2015)
- Kristin Melton, Rocky Mountain Children's Law Center (2014-2015)
- Misti Ruthven, Office of Postsecondary Readiness, Colorado Department of Education (2014-2015)
- Gully Sanford, College in Colorado, Colorado Department of Higher Education (2014-2015)

#### Youth and Young Adult Health Work Group

##### Youth:

- Yashna Eswaran, Youth Advisor, Children, Youth and Families Branch, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (2014-2015)
- Siman Gnagy, Community Health Action Team (Kaiser Permanente and Colorado Education Initiative) (2014-2015)
- Estela Marmolejo-Daher, Community Health Action Team (Kaiser Permanente and Colorado Education Initiative) (2014-2015)
- Dmitri Milovidov, Community Health Action Team (Kaiser Permanente and Colorado Education Initiative) (2014-2015)
- Nkem Nwankwo, Youth Advisor, Children, Youth and Families Branch, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (2014-2016)
- Danielle Perez, Community Health Action Team (Kaiser Permanente and Colorado Education Initiative) (2014-2015)
- Yeshra Perez, Community Health Action Team (Kaiser Permanente and Colorado Education Initiative) (2014-2015)
- Trever Sanders, Community Health Action Team (Kaiser Permanente and Colorado Education Initiative) (2014-2015)
- Steven Rastrelli, Community Health Action Team (Kaiser Permanente and Colorado Education Initiative) (2014-2015)
- Lucy Reyes, Community Health Action Team (Kaiser Permanente and Colorado Education Initiative) (2014-2015)
- Saul Romero, Community Health Action Team (Kaiser Permanente and Colorado Education Initiative) (2014-2015)
- Madison Thompson, CO9to25 Youth Advisor (2014-2016)

##### Adults:

- Alecia Brown, Family Leader, Family Leadership Training Institute (2014-2016)
- Deborah Foote, Oral Health Colorado (2014-2015)
- Meredith Henry, Colorado Department of Health care Policy and Financing (2014-2015)
- Shannon Huska, Colorado Department of Health care Policy and Financing (2014-2015)
- Amber Leytem, Denver Public Health (2014-2015)
- Gina Robinson, Colorado Department of Health care Policy and Financing (2014-2016)
- Samuel Wood, Educations Theatre Programs, Community Benefits and Relations, Kaiser Permanente (2014-2016)

#### Presenters by Topic

##### National and Federal Youth Development Efforts:

- Elizabeth Gains, Forum for Youth Investment

##### Behavioral Health:

- Bill Bane, Children, Youth, and Family Mental Health Programs, Office of Behavioral Health, Colorado Department of Human Services
- Erin Elder, The Colorado Education Initiative
- Claudia Zundel, Child, Adolescent and Family Services, Office of Behavioral Health, Colorado Department of Human Services

##### Child Welfare:

- Andrew Johnson, Youth Services Unit, Division of Child Welfare, Office of Children Youth and Families, Colorado Department of Human Services
- Betsy Fordyce, Rocky Mountain Law Center

##### Colorado 9to25:

- Anne-Marie Braga, Children, Youth and Families Branch, Prevention Services Division, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

##### Education:

- Beth Bean, Colorado Department of Higher Education
- Judith Martinez, Dropout Prevention and Engagement, Colorado Department of Education
- Misti Ruthven, Office of Postsecondary Readiness, Colorado Department of Education

##### Family Leadership:

- Eileen Forlenza, Prevention Services Division, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

##### Health:

- Melanie Reece, Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Finance
- Gina Robinson, Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Finance

##### Housing and Homelessness:

- Autumn Gold, Division of Housing, Office of Homeless Youth Services, Colorado Department of Local Affairs
- Marisa Mendoza, Youth Intern Division of Housing, Office of Homeless Youth Services, Colorado Department of Local Affairs: P.J. Sykes, Youth Intern, Division of Housing, Office of Homeless Youth Services, Colorado Department of Local Affairs

##### Human Trafficking:

- Sharon Hamilton, Educate2 Protect

##### Juvenile Assessment Centers:

- Jeff McDonald, Jefferson County Juvenile Assessment Center
- Kira Suurvarik, Juvenile Assessment Center, 18th Judicial District

##### Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention:

- Anna Lopez, Office of Adult and Juvenile Justice Assistance, Division of Criminal Justice, Colorado Department of Public Safety

##### Juvenile Probation:

- Susan Colling, State Court Administrator Office, Colorado Judicial Branch
- Sharon Sandoval, Probation Supervisor, State Court Administrator's Office, Colorado Judicial Branch

##### Safety:

- Christine Harms, School Safety Resource Center, Colorado Department of Public Safety
- Jan Hart, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
- Susan Payne, Safe2Tell, Colorado Department of Law

##### Youth Corrections:

- Al Estrada, Division of Youth Corrections, Office of Children, Youth and Families, Colorado Department of Human Services

##### Youth Development Institute:

- Betsy Kummer, The Partnership for Families and Children

##### Facilitators:

- Ashley Denault, Spark Policy
- Denise McHugh, Spark Policy
- Natalie Portman-Marsh, Spark Policy
- Ana Soler, The Civic Canopy
- Mae Thompson, The Civic Canopy
- Lorena Zimmer, Spark Policy



# Get involved.

Our movement is growing. The challenges young people in Colorado face cannot be solved by edicts or quick fixes from individual silos. Are you interested in sharing your opinions? Do you want your voice to be heard? Are you interested in making change locally and statewide? It is time to work together, united, with one voice, and around one cause. We can write this Plan, but we need youth and adults with expertise and passion to implement it. We can set a goal to increase access to services for youth, but we need people on the ground in our hospitals and communities to spread the word, raise awareness, and provide support for youth to lead healthier lives. We can invest in systems change, but we need the right representatives and leaders at the table. Now is the moment! Join us! Reach out! We can help you find the opportunity that best suits your skills and experience so that you can make a difference. [www.co9to25.org](http://www.co9to25.org)

Together we can reach our goal of all youth being safe, healthy, educated, connected, and contributing members of society.



**COLORADO**  
**Office of Children,  
Youth & Families**

Division of Child Welfare

1575 Sherman Street, 2nd Floor

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## I. OVERVIEW

House Bill 13-1239 (HB 13-1239) charges the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) with the responsibility of creating a “Statewide Youth Development Plan” in partnership with stakeholders. This Plan is implemented as a part of Colorado’s youth system, Colorado 9to25, by identifying gaps, best practices, existing evidence-supported work, and recommended enhancements.

### A. STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Per Colorado HB 13-1239 section (1)(a) subject to available funding, the State Department (CDHS), in collaboration with the Tony Grampas Youth Services (TGYS) Board, created in section 26-6.8-103, shall convene a group of interested parties to create a Colorado State Youth Development Plan (the Plan). The goals of the Plan are to identify key issues affecting youth and align strategic efforts to achieve positive outcomes for all youth. Specifically, statute requires the following:

1. The Plan must:
  - a. Identify initiatives and strategies, organizations, and gaps in coverage that impact youth development outcomes;
  - b. Identify services, funding, and partnerships necessary to ensure that youth have the means and the social and emotional skills to successfully transition to adulthood;
  - c. Determine what is necessary in terms of community involvement to ensure youth succeed;
  - d. Develop an outline of youth service organizations based on but not limited to demographics, current services and capacity, and community involvement;
  - e. Identify successful youth development strategies nationally and in Colorado that could be replicated by community partners and entities across the state; and
  - f. Create a shared vision for how a strong youth development network would be shaped and measured.
  
2. The Plan must include a baseline measurement of youth activities, developed using available data and resources. Data and resources may be collected from, but need not be limited to, an existing youth risk behavior surveillance system that monitors health-risk behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death and disability among youth, including:
  - a. Behaviors that contribute to unintentional injuries and violence;
  - b. Sexual behaviors that contribute to unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV;
  - c. Alcohol and other drug use;
  - d. Tobacco use;
  - e. Unhealthy dietary behaviors; and
  - f. Inadequate physical activity.

In addition to the legislative requirements for creating the Statewide Youth Development Plan, HB 13-1239 also authorized CDHS to “coordinate prevention and intervention programs focused on positive youth development in accordance with state law and rules” and that “the coordination must include the state youth development plan developed.”

### B. PLAN DEVELOPMENT

In conjunction with the TGYS Board, Executive Director Reggie Bicha of the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) called for the creation of the Colorado Statewide Youth Development Plan Committee in 2014 to help identify existing efforts, gaps in services, and proposed solutions for helping youth succeed. An equal number of state and community representatives were invited to sit on the committee along with official youth committee members. (See Acknowledgments in executive summary for a list of committee members.) See Figure 1 on page 2 for an explanation of the process for development.

At the beginning of 2016, the Plan steering committee and CO9to25’s Leadership team combined to create the Colorado 9to25 Council. At this time CO9to25 adapted their bylaws and structure to spearhead the Plan and its development in partnership with CDHS. Although the Council is not legislatively recognized, the creation of the Council substantially implements the 2014 Recommendation #1 “to establish a legislatively recognized Colorado Council on youth development.”

Over the next two years, CO9to25 will continue the process of realigning the Plan with the CO9to25 Action Plan. As required by statute, to update the Plan every two years, stakeholders provided input on revisions for relevant information, current direction, and new needs that may have developed. This 2016 revision of the Plan was submitted to the CO9to25 Council, CDHS, Colorado Youth Advisory Council, and TGYS Board.

### C. PLAN OVERVIEW

#### **Why a Youth System Matters in Colorado**

Projections indicate that youth aged 9 to 14 in 2014 will become the second largest adult population in Colorado by 2024. Ensuring that Colorado's youth can reach their full potential and become healthy, successful adults is essential to Colorado's future. In addition to the direct impact on Colorado's youth, the education, health, and well-being of Colorado's youth and young adults have a major impact on the social and economic health of our state.

For decades, Colorado has invested in early childhood systems. Colorado must protect those investments by ensuring that there is a strong youth system in place that allows all young people the possibility to achieve their full potential. Partnership with community organizations, state agencies, and, most importantly, youth, to align the work of CO9to25 with the Statewide Youth Development Plan is essential to success.

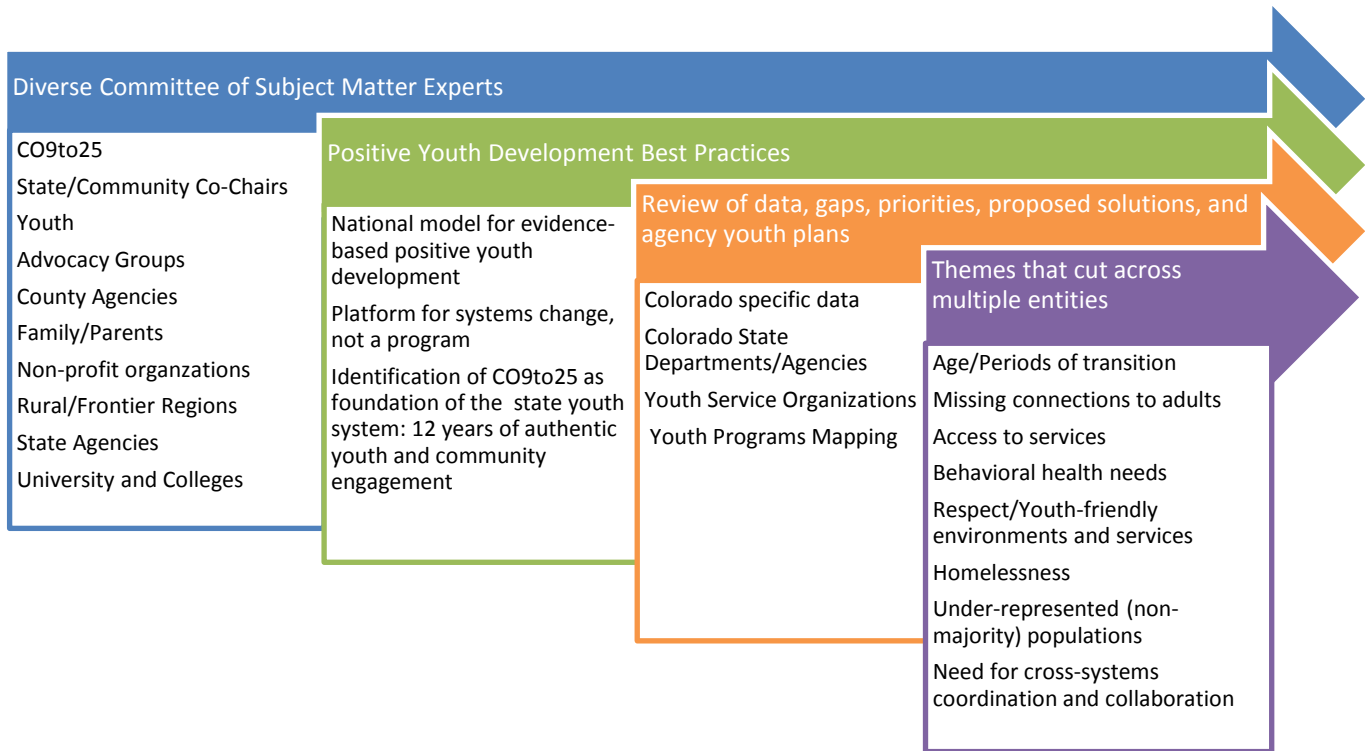
The developmental period of adolescence and young adulthood is an incredibly significant period of change and transition. Youth move from a period of childhood, in which they have things done for and to them, to a period of incrementally becoming more independent and self-reliant. During this time of significant transition and increasing independence for youth, resources and systems for youth must include a developmentally appropriate approach. This approach is necessary in order to effectively achieve the desired positive outcomes and benefits for all stakeholders: youth, family, and society. Many of the existing policies and practices across the state are not consistently appropriate for youth; therefore a strong youth system is critical to ensure that the existing resources are being used efficiently and effectively. Particularly, youth and their families require opportunities to learn and practice skills along with supports and services to meet their needs in meaningful and relevant ways.

An intentionally designed youth system will support healthy youth development and ensure consistency of policy and practice across prevention, intervention, and treatment programs in the state. Currently, there are limited parameters in place to reduce duplication and splintering of best practice efforts. While each agency has data, indicators, and metrics, Colorado needs stronger coordination in the definition, collection, analysis, and sharing of key information. Additionally, a comprehensive youth system for Colorado must intentionally engage youth. As the system's customers, youth have relevant insights and expertise regarding what they need.

#### **Plan Outline**

This revision reflects stakeholders' desire to create more clarity in the recommendations, provide updates on key work and accomplishments, and prioritize work to enhance capacity to serve youth ages 9 years to 25 years. This Plan includes a brief summary defining best practice for youth development and gaps and themes discovered during the initial review of the state's youth strategies. The Plan also includes recommendations for improvements to a Colorado youth system with expected deliverables, expected outcomes, and needed resources. The recommendations aim to align strategic efforts to achieve positive outcomes for all youth.

Figure 2: Statewide Youth Development Plan Process



## II. BEST PRACTICES

In the initial development of this Plan, the committee reviewed many youth plans including the well-respected youth plans of Massachusetts, Iowa, and the Federal Pathways for Youth Strategic Plan. All the plans required incorporation of a positive youth development (PYD) approach, including authentic youth engagement and inclusion. For over ten years, CO9to25 has implemented a PYD system in order to improve programs, policies, and practices that affect youth and young adults. It is now nationally-recognized as a progressive youth system that is unique to Colorado. National organizations recognizing the work of CO9to25 include the Association for Maternal and Child Health Programs, National Institute of Medicine, National Research Council, FSG (the founders of the Collective Impact model), State Adolescent Health Resource Center, and a variety of other states and territories.

This revision includes additional best practices for supporting youth in a holistic way, including wraparound approaches. In the national scene, wraparound approaches, including multidisciplinary teams, have proven effective across disciplines for youth with complex needs. Wraparound support approaches integrate PYD principles and systemic approaches to implement plans for each youth and family and create better coordination towards positive outcomes for youth.

### Positive Youth Development

PYD is an evidence-based approach proven to help make programs and services for youth more effective and to help youth develop skills that make them successful. PYD is a federally recognized (endorsed by 18 federal agencies) approach to improving outcomes for youth.<sup>1</sup> "Positive youth development is an intentional, pro-social approach that engages youth within their communities, schools, organizations, peer groups, and families in a manner that is productive and constructive; recognizes, utilizes, and enhances youths' strengths; and promotes positive outcomes for young people by providing opportunities, fostering positive relationships, and furnishing the support needed to build on their leadership strengths."<sup>2</sup> Specifically for Colorado, PYD has been defined as "an approach, not a program, that guides communities in developing and implementing services, opportunities, and supports so that young people can be engaged and reach their full potential."<sup>3</sup>

This approach recognizes that services which do not build on the necessary steps to strengthen youth engagement are more likely to fail. PYD is a culture shift in which services and programs partner with youth in the construction of practice and policy, development of protective factors, and harnessing skills and character to engage youth in reaching their full potential. In practice, positive youth development incorporates the development of skills, opportunities, and authentic relationships into programs, practices, and policies, so that young people reach their full potential. See Figure 2 CHPHE's framework for Positive Youth Development on page [Error! Bookmark not defined.](#)

In order for PYD to be successful, it should be guided by the following principles:<sup>4</sup>

1. **Strengths-based:** Taking a holistic approach by focusing on the inherent strengths of an individual, family, or community, then building upon them.
2. **Inclusive:** Addressing the needs of all youth by ensuring that the approach is culturally responsive.
3. **Engages youth as partners:** Ensuring the intentional, meaningful, and sustained involvement of youth as equitable partners in the programs, practices, and policies that seek to impact them.
4. **Collaborative:** Creating meaningful partnerships within and across sectors to effectively align the work.
5. **Sustainable:** Addressing long-term planning through funding, training, capacity building, professional development, and evaluation in order to ensure ongoing support and engagement of youth.

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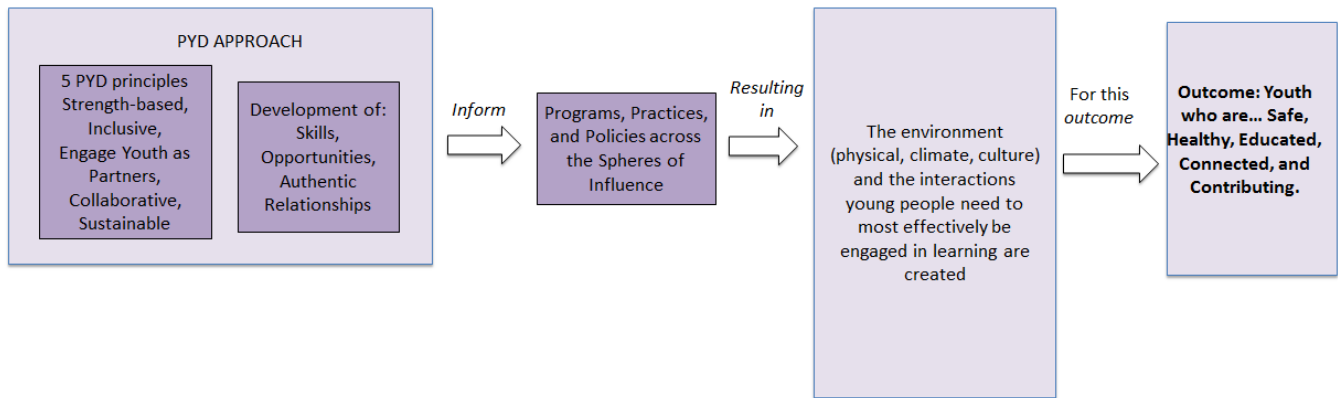
<sup>1</sup> Pathways for Youth Strategic Plan (Washington DC: Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs, 2013). Retrieved from [http://www.findyouthinfo.gov/docs/Pathways\\_for\\_Youth.pdf](http://www.findyouthinfo.gov/docs/Pathways_for_Youth.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> "Positive Youth Development." Retrieved from <http://www.findyouthinfo.gov/youth-topics/positive-youth-development>.

<sup>3</sup> [http://co9to25.org/co9to25/PYD\\_Executive\\_Summary.pdf](http://co9to25.org/co9to25/PYD_Executive_Summary.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> *Positive Youth Development: Supporting Colorado Youth to Reach Their Full Potential: Recommendations from the Colorado Youth Development Team (Executive Summary, 2009)*. Retrieved from [http://co9to25.org/co9to25/PYD\\_Executive\\_Summary.pdf](http://co9to25.org/co9to25/PYD_Executive_Summary.pdf).

Figure 3: CDPHE’s Framework for Positive Youth Development



In Colorado, PYD is already impacting policies and practices through CO9to25, TGYS, and Division of Child Welfare’s Pathways to Success, which is a wraparound approach to obtaining permanency and promoting healthy transitions into adulthood for youth who are in or have been in foster care. In an effort to hold true to the PYD approach, several community agencies and state departments are engaging youth leaders as Youth Advisors and prioritizing youth voices in the development of policy. Other organizations are utilizing youth as interns or constructing youth advisory councils. Community partners that emphasize the incorporation of PYD include but are not limited to Kaiser Permanente, Adams County Youth Initiative Cradle to Career, Eagle River Youth Coalition/Making Youth a Community Priority, and the Leadville Lake County Youth Master Plan. State Agencies including Tony Grampsas Youth Services and the Colorado Board of Health are engaging youth as voting members of their board.

In the last two years, more and more organizations are seeing the value of youth advisors. They realize that youth have answers that they don’t have. For a list of businesses, agencies, and nonprofits that are engaging youth advisors see Appendix D (page 31).

Additionally, many programs utilize existing best practices and infuse PYD approaches into existing programs. One example is the Kaiser Permanente YouthCHAT program where youth leaders are tasked to address youth health issues by creating resources that the youth deliver and present to health care professionals. By interacting with young people directly, health professionals gain the skills and strategies for partnering more effectively with young people on youth health issues.

### Colorado 9to25

The CO9to25 youth system is a collective, action-oriented network of youth and adults working in partnership to align efforts to achieve positive outcomes for all youth in Colorado. It prioritizes the PYD approach which includes collaborative action to ensure that all young people are safe, healthy, educated, connected, and contributing. This work serves as the platform for a strong youth development system in Colorado (see Appendix A for the new CO9to25 structure, page 27). The work of CO9to25 is already leading other states in the nation in implementing strategies that incorporate the development of skills, opportunities, and authentic relationships into programs, practices, and policies, so that young people reach their full potential. CO9to25 has worked with community and state stakeholders to construct a specific set of indicators that are of priority to youth well-being (see <http://co9to25.org/> for more detailed information). Although CO9to25 has an established framework constructed by youth and adults, it is implemented on a limited scale due to marginal resources. The revisions in this Plan include strategies to enhance the youth system and identify funding.

### Wraparound Initiatives

The wraparound process is described as a “promising” intervention, and as new research continues to be published, wraparound is fast making its way to be listed as an “evidence-based” model. As with all evidence-based programs, fidelity

to the model is important in having an effective approach.<sup>5</sup> The intent of the wraparound process is to provide a plan and support services to assist the youth and family in a holistic way. Programs nationally are implementing wraparound supports in juvenile justice, child welfare, behavioral health, and educational settings for youth and families with complex needs. Wraparound is both individual level intervention and a community level approach aimed at collaboration and connections across systems.<sup>6</sup> Like PYD, wraparound includes: (1) honoring the voice of the families and the youth that are engaged in services and (2) utilizing strength-based support to build assets and find natural capacities. Wraparound is team based and relies on essential community and system supports in these six themes:<sup>7</sup>

- Community partnership: Representatives of key stakeholder groups, including families, young people, agencies, providers, and community representatives, join together in a collaborative effort to plan, implement, and oversee wraparound as a community process.
- Collaborative action: Stakeholders involved in the wraparound effort work together to take steps to translate the wraparound philosophy into concrete policies, practices, and achievements that work across systems.
- Fiscal policies and sustainability: The community develops fiscal strategies to support and sustain wraparound and to better meet the needs of children and youth participating in wraparound.
- Access to needed supports and services: The community develops mechanisms for ensuring access to the wraparound process as well as to the services and supports that wraparound teams need to fully implement their plans, including evidence-based interventions.
- Human resource development and support: The system supports wraparound staff and partner agency staff to fully implement the wraparound model and to provide relevant and transparent information to families and their extended networks about effective participation in wraparound.
- Accountability: The community implements mechanisms to monitor wraparound fidelity, service quality, and outcomes, and to oversee the quality and development of the overall wraparound effort.

In Colorado, efforts continue to work towards every community having access to wraparound teams or individualized service and support teams. These programs should be youth and family centered with youth being a key contributor to the process and development of treatment plans. One barrier to implementing wraparound with fidelity is securing appropriate funding; many communities are using a wraparound model with adaptations, as adhering to these guidelines is very expensive.

Current efforts include the Collaborative Management Program (CMP) administered by the Division of Child Welfare (DCW). In 2004, the Colorado General Assembly passed House Bill 04-1451 to establish collaborative management programs at the county level that would improve outcomes for children, youth, and families involved with multiple agencies. Partners in local CMPs include county departments of human/social services, local judicial districts including probation, health departments, school districts, community mental health centers and behavioral health organizations, managed service organizations for the treatment of drugs and alcohol, and domestic violence providers. CMPs can also include parent or family advocacy groups and community agencies. Each of the CMP sites are required to have an Individualized Service and Support Team (ISST) that can be a wraparound team or a multisystem staffing for children and youth involved or at risk of involvement in multiple systems.

Additionally, Colorado is expanding the implementation of Care Management Entities (CMEs) across Colorado as a cross system delivery model for integrated youth behavioral health services. CMEs are organizational entities that serve as the “locus of accountability” for defined populations of youth with complex emotional, behavioral, and mental health

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<sup>5</sup> Bruns, E. J., & Suter, J. C. (2010). Summary of the wraparound evidence base. In E. J. Bruns & J. S. Walker (Eds.), *The resource guide to wraparound*. Portland, OR: National Wraparound Initiative. Retrieved from [http://nwi.pdx.edu/NWI-book/Chapters/Bruns-3.5-\(evidence-base\).pdf](http://nwi.pdx.edu/NWI-book/Chapters/Bruns-3.5-(evidence-base).pdf).

<sup>6</sup> Bruns, E. (2008). The evidence base and wraparound. In E. J. Bruns & J. S. Walker (Eds.), *The resource guide to wraparound*. Portland, OR: National Wraparound Initiative, Research and Training Center for Family Support and Children’s Mental Health. Retrieved from [http://www.nwi.pdx.edu/NWI-book/Chapters/Bruns-3.2-\(research-base\).pdf](http://www.nwi.pdx.edu/NWI-book/Chapters/Bruns-3.2-(research-base).pdf).

<sup>7</sup> National Wraparound Initiative <http://nwi.pdx.edu/wraparound-basics/#whatisWraparound>.

challenges, and their families who are served in multiple systems. The CME is accountable for improving the quality, outcomes, and cost of care for populations historically experiencing high costs and poor outcomes. Across the nation, this type of approach is improving outcomes for children and adolescents with severe behavioral health needs and reducing, or at least keeping steady, the overall costs of systems providing services to children.

Colorado has funding from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to deliver a comprehensive and trauma-informed system of care (SOC) for children and adolescents with serious mental health challenges and their families. A system of care is a family-driven, youth-guided, culturally competent, community-based approach to serving children and youth with behavioral health needs or traumatic histories. This approach includes helping youth and their families develop a vision for their future and then supporting the youth and family to achieve that vision. This approach is best delivered through the high-fidelity wraparound process, along with youth peer support specialists. The project builds on current SOC expansion planning, behavioral health transformation, infrastructures, and family and youth organizations. CME's developed by the project integrate funding and ensure delivery of efficient and effective services and supports, resulting in reinvested savings achieved through improved outcomes for youth at risk of congregate care placement. CME's work with family and youth support organizations and trained family advocates/systems navigators that complement the array of recovery- and resiliency-focused services. The project works with Regional Care Coordination Organizations (Accountable Care Organizations) to ensure integration of the system of care with physical health services. Family advocacy training is provided to prepare family advocates/systems navigators to join the behavioral health workforce and enable them to be reimbursed by Medicaid. SOC efforts focus on developing culturally and linguistically competent services and supports, particularly for youth of color and LGBT youth.

### **III. YOUTH DEVELOPMENT GAPS AND THEMES**

Several themes emerge from the review of data and practice across a variety of services areas, such as education, behavioral health, health, child welfare, homelessness, safety, and juvenile justice. The following eight common gaps/themes are impediments to successful youth outcomes in Colorado. All impact the ability to have a comprehensive continuum of care and services that span education, prevention, intervention and treatment. In this revision these gaps and themes remain paramount. However, we recognize they are not comprehensive. It is the charge of the CO9to25 Council and Action Teams to revise these gaps and themes for the 2018 revisions of the Plan

#### **AGE/PERIODS OF TRANSITION**

The committee identifies a pattern of gaps occurring during areas of transition between systems and organizations as well as disruption of assistance and services between age groups. Colorado should pay particular attention to youth aging out of the youth services system into the adult services system, youth involved in public service systems such as child welfare and juvenile corrections, youth experiencing homelessness, and youth from rural areas that currently have limited access to services. Youth and professionals express concerns that eligibility criteria are not consistent across systems, especially when transitioning into adult systems of care, therefore resulting in gaps or abrupt changes in services.

#### **MISSING CONNECTIONS TO ADULTS**

Research indicates that youth greatly benefit from having a connection and long-term relationship with at least one caring adult. These relationships are essential for all youth in Colorado, especially for those who experience additional challenges in their lives or those who are aging out of foster care without a permanent adoptive home. This theme highlights the need for the integration of a PYD approach into all programs and services for youth, especially authentic youth engagement. Many current service delivery systems are not designed to promote ongoing connections. They often require youth to re-engage in the process of establishing new trusting relationships with adults, thus delaying the youth's service-related progress.

#### **ACCESS TO SERVICES**

Youth need access to a comprehensive continuum of care and services that spans education, prevention, intervention, and treatment. This is particularly necessary for youth aging out of the youth services system into adult services and/or

involved in child welfare or juvenile corrections. Additionally, homeless youth have a high need for appropriate services, and youth from rural areas may have limited access. Many service providers need increased education about specific difficulties youth and their families face in accessing services, such as inconvenient hours, transportation, concerns about confidentiality, social and cultural stigmas, discrimination, disrespectful treatment, and high costs. Service providers should be trained to understand adolescent development so they can work competently, sensitively, and respectfully with youth. There is a need to inform both the youth and service-providers of the availability of public and private services and supports.

### **BEHAVIORAL HEALTH NEEDS**

Youth need access to programs and services that are resiliency-based and build protective factors. The unmet behavioral health needs of youth and young adults are problematic across multiple service systems, especially school settings. Colorado youth ages 18 years and under are more likely to receive behavioral health services than Colorado young adults over age 18. Access and eligibility play a role; Colorado, however, has some of the highest rates in the country of serious mental illness and suicide for young adults. More Colorado youth die by suicide than by homicide, motor vehicle crashes, cancer, or drowning. Female youth ages 10-24 have the highest suicide attempt rate out of any age and gender group in Colorado. Colorado is among a second tier group of poor performing states for persons aged 18 years to 25 years with at least one major depressive episode in the past year.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, Colorado ranks 6<sup>th</sup> in the nation for suicide among high school students.<sup>9</sup> The access to behavioral health care not only helps improve quality of life, but it is also critical in having youth and young adults obtain or retain employment.

### **RESPECT/YOUTH-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENTS & SERVICES**

Youth need services and programs they can trust and will meaningfully engage them. In order to develop a youth-friendly environment, providers must understand what youth and young adults want and need, instead of what providers believe they need. Improving the quality of services and programs for youth requires tailoring services to youth specific needs. Accommodations to consider include location, facility hours, facility environments, staff preparedness, services provided, peer education and advocacy, educational activities, youth involvement, and supportive youth-friendly policies of the organization.

### **HOMELESSNESS (HOUSING & ECONOMIC SECURITY)**

Youth need access to affordable housing. Homelessness is a systemic issue that requires the investment from agencies focused on education, behavioral health, juvenile justice, child welfare, work force, safety agencies, and disabilities. On any given night, more than 1,700 youth in Colorado live in shelters, stay with family or friends, or sleep without a roof over their heads.<sup>10</sup> Youth experiencing homelessness are particularly vulnerable; their chances of success in education, health, and well-being are greatly diminished. A lack of resources for preventing homelessness and for responding to the needs of youth experiencing homelessness contributes to high costs in many service systems supported by state and local government. It also ensures that these youth are more likely to live a life characterized by low-education, low skills for employment, poverty, and poor health that can then be passed on to another generation.

### **POPULATIONS WHO EXPERIENCE DISPARITIES AND STIGMATIZATIONS**

Youth need equal access and opportunities regardless of their income, race or ethnicity, gender, LGBTQ status, or where they live. Across all disciplines there are disparities related to poverty, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, and other characteristics. In Colorado, minority and LGBTQ youth are over represented in populations that experience school dropout, juvenile justice, child welfare, and unemployment. In addition, although there are federal requirements for implementing

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<sup>8</sup> SAMHSA's 2011-2012 National Survey on Drug Use and Health National Maps of Prevalence Estimates.

<sup>9</sup> "The Colorado Health Report Card, 2012 (The Colorado Health Foundation, 2012 (<http://www.coloradohealth.org/ReportCard/2012/subdefault.aspx?id=5963>).

<sup>10</sup> National Runaway Safe Line Point in Time Survey.

the National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) in Health and Health Care <sup>11</sup>, there is no uniform coordination for training in Colorado and no uniform requirements in state-issued request for proposals or state-issued contracts and grants for youth programs and services. Colorado's systems must focus on youth and young adults who are more likely to experience public systems and experience disparities within those systems.

Examples are youth who:

- Are racial and/or ethnic minorities;
- Live in poverty;
- Identify as, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, Intersex, and/or Two Spirit (ii);<sup>12</sup>
- Live in rural areas;
- Experience behavioral health issues;
- Have intellectual, developmental, or physical disabilities;
- Are pregnant or parenting;
- Experience homelessness;
- Are human trafficked;
- Are part of migrant families;
- Are immigrants and refugees; and
- Are involved in child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

#### NEED FOR CROSS-SYSTEMS COORDINATION & COLLABORATION

Youth need collaboration amongst the organizations that fund or provide youth services. There is a particular need for increasing the flexibility of funds dedicated to services, such as by reducing restrictions and braiding or blending funds across state, federal, and private sources. This will afford more opportunities to prevent gaps between systems and during transitions.

#### IV. INITIATIVES, STRATEGIES, AND ORGANIZATIONS THAT IMPACT YOUTH OUTCOMES

##### Strategic Youth Program Mapping

In 2016 CO9to25 convened a group of government partners working on outcomes for youth. The goal was to map these programs and organizations across the continuum of prevention, intervention, and treatment, as well as the Socio-Ecological Model. A visual understanding showcases what is already in place at the state government level working to impact outcomes for youth. This map creates a baseline for collaboration and alignment of funding, programmatic outcomes, and continued partnerships. The process for partners to participate was voluntary and thus the mapping is an imperfect representation of what is available in Colorado to support youth. Nevertheless, the process created partnerships, started conversations, and initiated activities to support collective work.

This mapping is integrated into an interactive online resource that can be found at:

<http://coyouthprogrammapping.silk.co>. Included online is a geographic map identifying which counties participating programs are impacting. The goal is to slowly help regional communities integrate and access relevant partners in their region. Programs can continually be added to this baseline as interested and appropriate partners are identified. The intention is to conduct yearly updates as supportive funding is identified and available. Further description of the project is available in Appendix E (see page 32).

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<sup>11</sup> US Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health  
<http://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/omh/browse.aspx?lvl=2&lvlid=53>

<sup>12</sup> "Two-spirited" or "two-spirit" usually indicates a Native person who feels their body simultaneously manifests both a masculine and a feminine spirit, or a different balance of masculine and feminine characteristics than usually seen in masculine men and feminine women. Estrada, Gabriel S. 2011. "Two Spirits, Nádleeh, and LGBTQ2 Navajo Gaze." *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 35(4):104-18.

## Annual Youth Service Organizations Survey

CO9to25 Gaps Analysis Action Team conducts an annual survey of youth service organizations. The purpose is to assess gaps in need and the availability of high quality prevention, intervention, and treatment services and supports for Colorado youth. Over 233 service organizations completed the 2014 survey. The survey also asked questions about the use of positive youth development approaches in delivering programs, services for youth ages 9 to 25, and the areas of focus of the programs and services in regard to the five goals of CO9to25, and associated indicators of youth well-being. Of particular note is that among the youth-serving organizations surveyed, programs and services were being provided for youth in all 64 counties in Colorado during 2014. Forty-eight percent of respondents identified their services as a state program and 52% of respondents identified their organization as a non-state program (local direct service provider and/or a local initiative/collaborative that works to support youth). The majority of the programs indicated they conduct work with individuals and families, as well as work with the community. Just over half of the youth service organizations (52%) indicated that a positive youth development approach is intentionally integrated into their daily work with youth.

The adapted 2015 survey is an expanded version of the 2014 survey with additional questions designed to query the extent to which youth-serving organizations identify, adopt, and integrate PYD principles into their work. Over 136 individuals representing 60 youth-serving organizations completed the survey. Approximately 32 counties are represented throughout Colorado. Results from the current survey cohort indicate that individuals working at youth-serving organizations in Colorado report a high-level of identification with PYD principles, a somewhat lower but still high-level of identification with PYD principles on the part of the organization they represent, and a moderate degree of application of PYD principles in their work. Nearly half reported that other staff at their organization applied PYD principles and an equal number reported they would like to receive PYD training. Just under half of respondents also report that their organization has a Youth Advisory group (40%), has youth serving in non-governmental leadership positions (38%), and has policies and/or practices that engage youth or celebrate their contribution (48%). Only 17% reported that youth formally serve on their organization's governance group (e.g., Board of Directors). Results from both of these annual surveys can be found at <http://co9to25.org/>.

## v. 2016 STRATEGIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Systems and Policy Recommendations

CO9to25 uses a collective impact approach to develop and implement a quality, sustainable, and unified youth system. Strategies include: mobilizing partnerships, raising public awareness, promoting best and promising practices, sharing accountability for results, and promoting policy and environmental change. CO9to25 through utilizing PYC principles will force a fundamental shift in approach and outcomes that youth, families, and communities deserve.

### Maintain Strong Infrastructure and Mobilize Partnerships

One of CO9to25's goals as a youth system is to mobilize public-private partnerships across sectors at the state, local, and community levels to create a quality, sustainable, productive network of youth and adult partnerships. Partnerships and infrastructure combine to address youth indicators and provide training, support, and technical assistance to partners throughout the state to move the work forward.

### Recommendation #1: Engage influential leaders to support Colorado's youth system CO9to25

**Purpose:** In order to create a sustainable impact and effective youth system, CO9to25 needs to engage leaders with a passion for work with youth and with the status to implement large system change. These leaders are the change makers that bring resources to the table to get things done.

**Recommendation:** Colorado's youth system needs a variety of leaders at every level with the status needed for better systems alignment and for effective implementation of the youth system. CO9to25 needs influential government, youth, and community leaders to effectively connect and coordinate work across the state. Utilizing these partner relationships will help drive meaningful outcomes across sectors.

#### **Strategies:**

**Strategy 1.1** CO9to25 will create and implement a recruitment and retention plan for CO9to25 GPS, the Council, Action Teams, and the Network.

**Strategy 1.2** CO9to25 will develop and obtain signed agreements outlining clear commitments, both financial and programmatic, for members' engagement or support of the CO9to25 youth system.

**Strategy 1.3** CO9to25 will provide technical assistance, training, coaching, outreach, resources, partners, and mentors to support influential leaders in fulfilling their signed agreements.

**Strategy 1.4** Leaders will identify channels of communication with the Governor and executive leadership at state agencies to provide regular updates on youth systems activities. Engaged leaders will obtain support on an as-needed basis for furthering a strong and sustainable youth system.

**Expected Outcome:**

- By 2018, CO9to25 will have engaged leaders who are action-oriented and influential. Leaders include youth, community partners, and government executives represented within the CO9to25 recruitment matrix and membership lists.

#### **Recommendation #2: Establish a formal process for regional integration of CO9to25.**

**Purpose:** The Council will partner with regional initiatives to ensure there is adequate representation of state, youth, and community stakeholders. In addition to maximizing existing resources local representation can target youth-specific needs for that region of the state and influence decision making at the local level.

**Recommendation:** To establish a strong statewide integration CO9to25 should establish regional partnership statewide. The youth system will work to address youth indicators and provide training, support, and technical assistance to partners throughout the state.

**Strategy:**

**Strategy 2.1** CO9to25 will explore regional partnership with existing efforts in communities, including but not limited to: Communities that Care, Systems of Care, Collaborative Management Program, Strategic Prevention Framework through Office of Behavioral Health. Through these partnerships, CO9to25 will encourage PYD framework, create opportunities to mobilize partnerships, share accountability, raise public awareness, promote best and promising practices, and promote policy and environmental change.

**Strategy 2.2** CO9to25 will obtain funding for the CO9to25 backbone to support regional structure and communication with these communities.

**Expected Outcome:**

- Increase youth and adult connectedness: Increase the percent of 9<sup>th</sup> grade to 12<sup>th</sup> grade students who report that if they had a serious problem, they know an adult in or out of school whom they could talk to or go to for help from 81.2% in 2013 to 86% by December 2018.<sup>13</sup>

#### **Recommendation #3: Develop a sustainable funding source to support Colorado's youth system.**

**Purpose:** A dedicated source of funding to support Colorado's youth system is necessary for viable systemic and programmatic collaboration. Without sustainable funding there are significant barriers to a viable youth system. Increasing the braiding and blending of existing funds will create sustainability and reduce fragmentation of efforts.

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that programs that support strategies and outcomes that impact youth ages 9 to 25 collectively pool a portion of their flexible funding to support the work of the Colorado youth system. Programs can include government programs, foundations, non-profit members, and businesses. This will increase the braiding and blending of existing funds and reduce fragmentation of efforts. Through providing a percentage of their funding to support the youth system, these programs and initiatives would receive direct benefit from the youth system including benefit from the outcomes of the further recommendations in the Plan.

**Strategy:**

**Strategy 3.1** CO9to25 will approach government programs that support strategies and outcomes that impact youth ages 9 to 25 to provide a percentage of their flexible funding to support the work of the Colorado youth system. First, CO9to25 will identify youth programs that comprise the government participants in Colorado's youth system.

**Strategy 3.2** CO9to25 will implement the sustainability plan to seek out diverse funding streams and approach

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<sup>13</sup> Data from Healthy Kids Colorado Survey 2013 and goal established by CO9to25

foundations for financial support of the youth system and system mapping process.

**Strategy 3.3** CO9to25 will approach businesses to become members of a funding club for youth. In partnership with the Workforce Development Council, CO9to25 will engage business and industry in the process of aligning elements, increasing coordination, and accessing resources from community to ensure that Colorado's youth can reach their full potential and become healthy, successful, contributing adults.

**Strategy 3.5** CO9to25 will align funding across evidence-supported youth programs and services. Efficient funding targeted at proven programs will result in a reduction of wasteful spending and an increase in the number of youth and young adults served.

**Expected Outcome:**

- Sustainable funding for the backbone of CO9to25 including funding to implement regional integration as well as systemic support for programs like the already developed Youth Endorsement System; expanding the Training and TA system, aligning, tracking, and collecting shared outcome data; and providing financial support and oversight for youth advisors throughout Colorado for public and private entities.

### Promote Best and Promising Practices

Increase the number of programs and organizations across the state utilizing evidence-based practices that incorporate a positive youth development approach into their prevention, intervention, and treatment programs or initiatives.

**Recommendation #4: Increase the number of programs and organizations across the state that are trained on and utilizing a positive youth development approach.**

**Purpose:** Over time, an investment in PYD will create a more resilient youth population, and, as a result, increase the quality of effectiveness of adults' interventions to engage youth.

**Recommendation:** Implement a regionalized PYD training and technical assistance system for use across the state.

This system should create standardized trainings on adolescent development, PYD, and family and youth leadership to incorporate into existing training systems of youth serving organizations. All organizations serving youth in Colorado should be trained on PYD.

**Strategy:**

**Strategy 4.1** CDPHE will continue providing statewide trainings in partnership with the Retail Marijuana Education Program.

**Strategy 4.2** CDPHE will explore the possibility of partnering with the Child Welfare Training System for regional PYD trainings and regional training of trainers.

**Strategy 4.2** CDPHE will train two regional trainers in PYD to support the training and technical assistance system in two regions outside the Denver Metro Area in Colorado.

**Strategy 4.3** CDPHE will train up to four state agency individuals from various programs as trainers for the training and technical assistance system.

**Expected Outcome:**

- Increase the number of youth-serving organizations trained on PYD from under 50% to 80% by June 2018.

### Raise Public Awareness

There is a need to engage the both state agencies and the public to increase awareness of Colorado's youth system and its benefits. This will increase the number of network partners who participate and integrate these principles in their state and local work.

**Recommendation #5: Expand eligibility and capacity of a wide variety of service systems to meet the comprehensive needs of young people.**

**Purpose:** Adequate access to care will result in improved outcomes for the youth and reduce the amount of time spent in high-level system involvement

**Recommendation:** Colorado should review the varying eligibility and age cut-offs across programs to provide intentional transitions and reduce gaps in services. There is additional work needed to ensure all youth, particularly

youth experiencing homelessness and poverty are eligible for services. Additionally, we need to review existing services to ensure health care system has the capacity to serve youth in the community.

**Strategies:**

**Strategy 5.1** CDHS and HCPF will collect information from across systems about eligibility and capacity limits.

**Strategy 5.2** CO9to25 will support coordination between experts (including youth) from existing systems and youth serving organizations.

**Strategy 5.3** CDHS and HCPF will support promotion of existing underutilized accessible options as well as any changes to eligibility or access. They will raise awareness about areas of eligibility that could be altered to improve youth support and outcomes.

**Expected Outcome:**

- A comprehensive report on strategies and recommendations to address capacity limitations and improving service eligibility across services and systems will be completed December 2017.

**Recommendation #6: Increase public awareness of available youth services and organizations.**

**Purpose:** Consumers (youth, families, and community-serving organizations) need to be aware of the available resources, as underutilization of existing services delays positive outcomes for youth and reduces funding efficiencies.

**Recommendation:** CO9to25 Council shall develop a consumer-focused, web-based information portal of available services for youth and families. The portal will serve as the home for the 300+ existing youth serving programs and the various committees identified during the statewide youth planning process as well as any organizations still to be identified. Any efforts to create a consumer-friendly portal should first examine existing efforts, such as “Help Me Grow,” statewide mental health crisis hotline, and 2-1-1 Colorado. A public awareness campaign of these available services will support points of access across Colorado.

**Strategy:**

**Strategy 6.1** CO9to25 will create a public-facing, consumer-focused, web-based listing of youth-serving programs.

**Strategy 6.2** Expand CO9to25’s existing work of creating a comprehensive map that identifies community youth-serving organizations to include community, local, and state organizations. The map should include key information about the youth serving organizations, such as current funding and number of youth served.

**Strategy 6.3** The portal will connect youth with youth-serving programs and leadership and engagement opportunities (including advisory councils).

**Expected Outcome:**

- Develop a phone/text and web-based interface public by June 2017.

**Share Accountability**

There is a need to ensure that state and local community partners share accountability for promoting positive youth development and the CO9to25 youth system. We must have common language, indicators, and data to help drive the effort forward.

**Recommendation #7: Align data systems that impact youth, and collect a common set of data indicators that are critical to youth and young adult well-being.**

**Purpose:** Data is useful in helping to understand the needs and progress of youth as well as identifying gaps and priorities for action. For those youth involved in services provided by multiple organizations, it is necessary to share accurate information efficiently, appropriately, and in a timely manner in order to better determine what services are needed, improve the integration of those services, and improve outcomes for youth.

**Recommendation:** Align data systems that impact youth and young adults on both the macro level (system and community) and micro level (youth and families). Macro level data, which informs policy and program development, needs to be collected more consistently across communities and cover the entire youth span, ages 9 to 25. Micro level data, which is client-specific data, needs to be accessible for all relevant parties, via interoperability, in order to maximize the efficiency of service delivery and provide high quality level of care.

**Strategy:**

**Strategy 7.1** CDHS, in partnership with others, will coordinate and enhance existing surveillance systems that capture data across ages 9 to 25 including the Child Health Survey, Healthy Kids Colorado Survey, and the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System.

**Strategy 7.2** CDHS will develop interoperability of state agency direct services data systems.

**Strategy 7.3** CDHS, in partnership with others, will expand use of the Colorado Authorization-Consent to Release Information, a cross-systems common authorization consent form.

**Strategy 7.4** CDHS will continue to review existing policy conflicts regarding individual privacy and data ownership.

**Expected Outcome:**

- CO9to25 Council to set data collection standards for youth and young adult related indicators by June 2017.
- In partnership with data stewards from CDPHE, CDE, CDPS, CDLA, and State Judicial, implement data collection standards to better track common indicators across the youth system by June 2018.

### Other Programmatic Areas

The following recommendations are preliminary program-related focus areas of this Plan. Three recommendations stemmed from subcommittees for homelessness, health, and education. One stemmed from an identified gap that impacts multiple programs: a need for multi-system coordination. An additional recommendation is created out of the state and county responsibility as the legal custodian for youth in foster care, residential care, and youth corrections. The Committee recognizes that there are a number of programs and initiatives that warrant attention and require further exploration through the CO9to25 system.

**Recommendation #8:** Improve the quality, availability, and accessibility of housing, services, supports, and relationships to provide solutions to youth who experiencing or at risk for homelessness statewide.

**Purpose:** Youth in Colorado are experiencing homelessness at an increasing rate and, as a result, their chances of success in housing, education, employment, health, and well-being are diminished. Ensuring that youth regardless of where they live have access to safe, affordable, and stable homes linked to supportive services is one of the most important steps that can be taken to end youth homelessness. Multiple agencies identify the need to address homelessness in their systems, including education, behavioral health, juvenile justice, child welfare, economic security, and workforce development.

**Recommendation:** Improving the quality, availability, and accessibility of housing, services, supports, and relationships that provide solutions to homeless youth and those at risk of homelessness.

**Strategy:**

**Strategy 8.1** Colorado Department of Local Affairs (CDLA) and the Advisory Committee on Homeless Youth (ACHY) will work to obtain more accurate data about youth who are experiencing homelessness through combining Point in Time (PIT) measures with school and local data, as well as data regarding the number of youth connected to permanent housing each year throughout the state. Increase the number of communities that participate in the count as well as increase the geographic coverage of area surveyed during each PIT.

**Strategy 8.2** CDLA and ACHY will increase awareness, of both youth and providers, regarding youth's eligibility for available resources to ensure that young people who qualify for housing and services are not inappropriately turned away.

**Strategy 8.3** CDLA and ACHY will identify and implement effective housing and services models including best practice and culturally responsive models, such as family engagement services, positive youth development including peer to peer efforts, and trauma-informed care into all aspects of the youth response system.

**Strategy 8.4** CDLA and ACHY will increase coordination of services and housing across systems, funding streams, and regions, including improving connections between homeless youth service providers and mainstream homeless services and resources to ultimately connect more youth to housing more efficiently.

**Strategy 8.5** CDLA and ACHY will increase housing and service resources, including federal, state, and local funds, targeted towards youth experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

**Expected Outcome:**

- The ultimate goal is to make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring for any youth within Colorado by 2020, in line with the Federal goal. To do so, we must simultaneously increase housing placements by 25 percent each year and reduce the number of youth living in homelessness per the annual PIT counts.

**Recommendation #9: Improve the well-being of youth and young adults who are in the care and/or custody of the state and counties.**

**Purpose:** While all of Colorado's youth are the responsibility of the community, a focus on improving the well-being (holistic well-being including: belonging, independence, education, physical, and behavioral health) for those youth who are in the custody of the county and state is especially pertinent. Improving their well-being will not only reduce long-term costs to the state, it will also improve the long-term outcomes.

**Recommendation:** Improve the well-being of youth who are in the care and/or custody of the state and counties; this includes youth in the foster care system and in youth corrections. Solutions to developing policy and practices should meaningfully include youth and integrate a PYD approach.

**Strategy:**

**Strategy 9.1** CDHS and HCPF will partner to reduce over-reliance on psychotropic medications.

**Strategy 9.2** CDHS will ensure youth in (and exiting) foster care or youth corrections have permanent connections.

**Strategy 9.3** CDHS will identify sustainable funding for youth-driven mentoring and permanency models.

**Strategy 9.4** CDHS will partner with youth to collaboratively develop policy and practice.

**Strategy 9.5** CDHS and CDE will improve secondary and post-secondary educational attainment of youth in or exiting foster care and youth corrections.

**Strategy 9.6** CDHS will continue to increase accessibility of services for families and youth with developmental disabilities without having to relinquish to the child welfare system.

**Strategy 9.7** CDHS will work in collaboration to increase access to wraparound services, including mental health and substance abuse treatment services and in-home family services, for youth transitioning from youth corrections, especially for youth in rural areas.

**Expected Outcomes:**

- Maintain or improve the engagement of family members in case planning: The youth engagement rate will be maintained at 99.9% for three out of four quarters each year for a five year period. The mother's engagement rate's baseline, 91.4%, will increase by 5% every year through FFY 2018. The goal will be re-evaluated in FFY 2019. The father's engagement rate's baseline, 80.8%, will increase by 5% every year through FFY 2018. The goal will be re-evaluated in FFY 2019.<sup>14</sup>
- For youth aged 16 and older, increase the percentage of youth who are on track to graduate and/or complete high school from 76.6% in 2015 by 5% every year through FFY 2018.

**Recommendation #10: Provide educational alternatives and wraparound supports for youth with complex needs.**

**Purpose:** Generic traditional educational approaches to youth with complex needs often result in greater achievement gaps and poorer long-term outcomes for these youth. Poor educational attainment and lack of workplace skills lead to decreased economic security of the youth over their lifetimes and adversely impact the state and local economy.

**Recommendation:** Provide viable educational opportunities that promote innovations, creative pathways to postsecondary and workforce readiness, and credential attainment for youth with complex needs. Educational access and viable options are especially needed for Colorado youth who are not engaged in school and may be experiencing school and college disruptions, homelessness, poverty, family instability, correctional detainment, or other impacts for youth in underserved populations.

**Strategy:**

**Strategy 10.1** CDE and partners will implement a re-engagement system of supports for out-of-school and unemployed youth.

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<sup>14</sup> Data from the Child Welfare Annual Progress and Services Reports, Submitted to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, June 30, 2016

**Strategy 10.2** CDE and partners will provide support for alternative education and training, such as General Education Development (GED) or high school equivalent, concurrent enrollment, career and technical education, remediation, and credit recovery.

**Strategy 10.3** CDE and partners will enhance support for innovative student engagement strategies including Next Generation Learning and service-learning.

**Strategy 10.4** CDE will partner with youth to create strategic cross-systems identification and wraparound supports for youth with complex needs.

**Strategy 10.5** CDE will strategically engage families, community organizations, youth, and business partners to target supports to youth who are behind in learning and training and/or who have been traditionally underserved.

**Strategy 10.6** CDE will enhance and expand Preschool-20 individual and career and academic plans, inclusive of financial literacy, digital literacy, vertical transitions, postsecondary/work force exposure, exploration, and readiness.

**Strategy 10.7** CDE and partners will expand access to digital technology and digital literacy.

**Expected Outcomes:**

- Reduce the dropout rate from 2.5% in 2012 to 2.2% by July 2018.
- Increase Colorado's graduation rate from 78.5% in 2012 to 86% in 2016 with the goal of 90% by July 2018.

#### **Recommendation #11: Strengthen strategies for a youth friendly health system.**

**Purpose:** In addition to having healthier citizens, improved youth health has a positive impact on the overall health system and community.

**Recommendation:** It is important that the health care system strategically engage youth in an effort to increase their investment in their behavioral, medical, sexual, and dental health. The existing collaboration between the health system with the community, youth, and state agencies should strengthen strategies for developing a health care system that is strategic in their comprehensive and holistic approach to youth and young adults as well as increase their engagement to the system.

**Strategy:**

**Strategy 11.1** Kaiser Permanente and partners will continue to partner with youth to explore innovative approaches for youth to engage in shaping their own health.

**Strategy 11.2** Kaiser Permanente and partners will enhance the annual well-health check for youth and young adults using positive youth development and national best practices for interviewing youth to encompass a holistic approach for youth health.

**Strategy 11.3** CO9to25 will develop or adopt best practice guidelines for professionals on youth and young adult health care, including a toolkit for engaging youth in shaping their own health including health care rights for youth and young adults.

**Strategy 11.4** Kaiser Permanente and partners will collaborate with statewide health professional trade associations and training institutions to include youth and young adult best practice guidelines in the training of health care providers in Colorado (medical, dental, sexual, and behavioral health).

**Strategy 11.5** CDHS and partners will increase integration of behavioral health care services with housing assistance and programs that are clinically and developmentally appropriate.

**Expected Outcome:**

- By 2018, a youth will create a toolkit for health professionals for engaging youth in their own health. By 2019, health professionals will show increased confidence in their abilities to interview and engage young people in their health decisions as measured by a confidence survey created by YouthCHAT.
- By 2019, move from 61% (2012 data) to 80% of eligible Medicaid youth ages 10 years to 20 years receiving annual well health checks.

VI. Work Plan

Figure 4: 2016 Work Plan

Rec #	Recommendation Title	Page #	Lead Party	Affiliated Parties	Due Date
1	Engage influential leaders to support Colorado’s youth system CO9to25	10	CO9to25	CDHS, CDPHE	07/2018
2	Establish a formal process for regional integration of CO9to25. Increase youth and adult connectedness to 86%.	11	CO9to25	OCYF, CDPHE	12/2018
3	Develop a sustainable funding source to support Colorado’s youth system.	11	CO9to25	CDHS, CDPHE	07/2018
4	Increase the number of programs and organizations across the state that are trained on and utilizing a positive youth development approach. 80% of youth serving organizations trained on PYD.	12	CDPHE	CDPHE	07/2018
5	Expand eligibility and capacity of a wide variety of service systems to meet the comprehensive needs of young people.	12	HCPF	HCPF, CDHS	07/2017
6	Create a comprehensive report on strategies and recommendations for improving service eligibility. Increase public awareness of available youth services and organizations.	13	CO9to25	CDHS	07/2018
7	Implement a phone/text and web-based interface public by June 2017. Align data systems that impact youth, and collect a common set of data indicators that are critical to youth and young adult well-being.	13	CDHS	CDPHE, CO9to25	07/2018
	Set data collection standards for youth and young adult related indicators.				06/2017
	Implement data collection standards to better track common indicators across the youth system.				06/2018
8	Improve the quality, availability, and accessibility of housing, services, supports, and relationships to provide solutions to youth who experiencing or at risk for homelessness statewide.	14	CDLA	ACHY	2020
9	Improve the well-being of youth and young adults who are in the care and/or custody of the state and counties. Maintain or improve engagement of families in case planning.	15	CDHS	CDHS	06/2016
	Improve percentage of foster youth on track to graduate or complete high school.		CDHS	CDE	07/2018
10	Provide educational alternatives and wraparound supports for youth with complex needs.	16	CDE		01/2018
11	Strengthen strategies for a youth friendly health system.	16	Kaiser	CO9to25, CDPHE, CDHS, HCPF	07/2019

<p>CDE – Colorado Department of Education          CDHS – Colorado Department of Human Services          CDPHE – Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment          HCPF – Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing          CO9t25- Colorado 9to25 GPS, Council, or Action Teams</p>	<p>CDHE – Colorado Department of Higher Education          CDLA – Colorado Department of Local Affairs          GOIT – Governor’s Office of Information and Technology          ACHY-- Advisory Council on Homeless Youth</p>
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**VII. STATUS UPDATES ON 2014 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The recommendations are revised for 2016 and represent the input of youth development system experts, including youth. This report provides a concise update on each recommendation and recommended revisions for the 2016 Plan, see Figure 4 on page 19. The complete 2014 Plan is available on the Division of Child Welfare (DCW) website (<https://sites.google.com/a/state.co.us/cdhs-dcw/collaborations-initiatives/colorado-statewide-youth-development-plan>).

Figure 5: Table of Status Updates on 2014 Recommendations

Recommendation & Lead Agency	Status on Recommendation	Recommendations Updates
<p>Establish a legislatively recognized Colorado Council on youth development. Lead by CDHS and CO9to25.</p>	<p><b>Rec 1 Completed with Revisions and Removed</b></p>	<p>The introduction of HB 15-1268 in April 2015 establishing the CO9to25 Youth Development Council passed 7-6 in the Public Healthcare and Human Services Committee with amendments (3-25-15). The main amendments established the council within CDPHE with a fiscal note of \$80,000 to support the council. The bill passed in the House Committee on Appropriations on 4-2-15. The bill cleared the House on 4-7-15 as amended. It was assigned to the Senate State Veterans and Military Affairs Committee on 4-9-15. Youth advocates and professional advocates provided testimony. It did not pass the Senate.</p> <p>2016: In the spirit of collaboration, reducing duplication, and creating efficiency, the Council on Youth Development is voluntarily convening without legislation. CO9to25 modified their documents and structure to become the Colorado 9to25 Council. CO9to25 may pursue Legislation in the future.</p> <p>Sub recommendation 2.1.1.1 will remain active in Rec 2: Amend the purpose of the Council to reflect aforementioned changes, including establishing a regional model across the state (see page 11).</p> <p>Recommendation 1 is completed and removed from the 2016 version of the Plan.</p>
<p>Establish a formal process for statewide integration of the CO9to25 Youth Development Council. Lead by CO9to25 GPS.</p>	<p><b>Rec 2 Active with Revisions</b></p>	<p>The merger between the Statewide Youth Development Plan and CO9to25 took considerable thought and effort. The CO9to25 Council needs more time to create authentic statewide regional representation. CO9to25 is hopeful to collaborate with new regional efforts to promote PYD and youth engagement across the state. CO9to25's expertise in systems building will be essential to helping regional partners create sustainable structure. This recommendation remains active. CO9to25 action teams completed Sub Rec 2.3 to establish standards for Colorado PYD/youth engagement. The document can be found at: (<a href="http://co9to25.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/YouthEngagementStandards_CO9to25_2-11.pdf">http://co9to25.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/YouthEngagementStandards_CO9to25_2-11.pdf</a>).</p> <p>At this time, in order to prioritize a regional system, sub recommendation 2.4 (to Promote Colorado Adolescent Developmental Guidelines in alignment with the new Early Childhood Developmental Guidelines) is removed until bandwidth is available.</p>
<p>Create a youth services division or branch within a State Department. Lead by CDHS.</p>	<p><b>Rec 3 Revised and Removed, Replaced with new Rec 3 (see page 11)</b></p>	<p>The purpose of this recommendation was to coordinate funding and programmatic efforts between state agencies to increase the blending of existing funds and reduce fragmentation of efforts. Due to the intensive nature of creating a new branch of government, CO9to25 is shifting focus to seek alternative ways to achieve buy-in and sustainability (see new Rec 3 page 11).</p> <p>Recommendation 6, to align funding, is now condensed and combined with this new Rec 3 in the 2016 Plan.</p>

<p>Increase the number of programs and organizations across the state that are trained on and utilizing a positive youth development approach. Lead by CDPHE.</p>	<p><b>Rec 4 Active</b></p>	<p>2016: Sub recommendation 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3, which designed a Training and Technical Assistance Plan for positive youth development, is completed. With funding and support from experts at Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), the first pilot of this training and technical assistance program will commence in the spring of 2017. They are developing the evaluation, recruitment, and training systems in the fall of 2016. CDPHE should track data on the number of individuals, agencies, and nonprofit professionals served. Recommendation 4 is active in the 2016 Plan.</p>
<p>Establish a review system to determine if youth-focused programs, organizations, and funding requests are efficient and effective. Lead by CO9to25.</p>	<p><b>Rec 5 Completed and Removed; funding needed for implementation</b></p>	<p>CO9to25 Action Teams (Youth Endorsement System, YES, team) finalized the criteria used to evaluate youth-serving organizations. In July 2015 The CO9to25 Youth Endorsement System action team partnered with the CDPHE Sexual Violence Prevention (SVP) Unit and the CDHS Tony Grampas Youth Services (TGYS) Program in creating a rubric that could be used on site visits with grantees around the state. The purpose of the rubric is to evaluate programs and provide coaching on PYD practices. (The website is now live: <a href="https://sites.google.com/a/state.co.us/pydtool/">https://sites.google.com/a/state.co.us/pydtool/</a>) All partners are benefiting from the rubric tool; utilizing the YES's developed criteria enabled SVP and TGYS to start much further ahead of schedule, and CO9to25 YES team anticipates using the tool in the future. When creating the tool, youth and adults from grantee organizations considered what each of the 15 YES criteria might look like in programming. SVP and TGYS pooled funding to hire an evaluator who created a rubric that identifies if an organization is in an emerging, growing, or excelling stage of their PYD practice. Additionally, the evaluator is assisting SVP and TGYS in identify ways to continue to improve. The Youth Endorsement System needs proper funding and staffing for a statewide impact. New Rec 3 (see page 11) involves seeking appropriate funding for this system. Finally, there is progress on promoting the Youth Advisor (YA) Model. The YA model can be found here: <a href="https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/PF_Youth_Value-of-Youth-Advisors-report.pdf">https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/PF_Youth_Value-of-Youth-Advisors-report.pdf</a>). Many state and community agencies are adopting the Youth Advisor Model. Appendix D provides a list of organizations that are utilizing various Youth Engagement strategies (see page 31). Recommendation 5 is completed and is removed from the 2016 version of the Plan.</p>
<p>Align funding across evidence-supported youth programs and services. Lead by CDHS and CO9to25.</p>	<p><b>Rec 6 Revised and removed to be condensed with new Rec 3 (see page 11)</b></p>	<p>In 2016 a finance work group is convening a meeting of fiscal partners to identify fiscal resources and map activities across the socio-ecological model and the continuum of prevention, intervention, and treatment. The group is discussing potential ways to collaborate, align funding, and support systems. These recommended funding alignments for longevity are integrated with new Rec 3 (see page 11). Appendix E provides a summary of the project (see page 32). Recommendation 6 is removed from the 2016 Plan.</p>

<p>Expand eligibility and capacity of service systems to meet the comprehensive needs of young people. Lead by CDHS and HCPF.</p>	<p><b>Rec 7 Active with revisions on deadlines</b></p>	<p>The Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF) continues work with existing systems to maximize services provided to Colorado youth. The Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (CHIPRA) Quality Demonstration Grant is recommending expanded screening of adolescents for a variety of health and behavioral risk factors and to counsel or refer adolescent patients as needed. Additionally, Health First Colorado (Colorado's Medicaid program) is providing health care services for eligible youth through a buy-in program for children (under age 19) with disabilities and also provides an exemption from the five year waiting period for lawfully residing, qualified non-citizen children (under age 19) and/or pregnant women for Medicaid/CHP+ eligibility.</p> <p>Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) is asking the Administration of Children and Families (ACF) to advocate for additional populations, including adopted youth or youth in the Relative Guardian Assistance Program (RGAP), to be eligible for Medicaid up to age 26.</p> <p>The proposed H.R. 5456 - Family First Prevention Services Act of 2016 would expand Title IV-E John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program from a mission to provide financial support for youth "who are likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age to prepare for and enter postsecondary training and education institutions," to youth "who have experienced foster care at age 14 or older to engage in age or developmentally appropriate activities, positive youth development, and experiential learning that reflects what their peers in intact families experience." The Colorado Chafee Program is working towards a model that supports this philosophy within the limits of current law. However, if passed, HR 5456 will mandate the change requiring that some counties engage youth working with the program differently. The language in H.R. 5456 requiring Chafee workers to assist youth in making a permanent connection with a "caring adult" will be a new requirement. This aspect has historically fallen on the caseworker and would require changes to the current Chafee rules and additional training on the best approach to ensure a permanent connection.</p> <p>Recommendation 7 is active with revisions to deadlines.</p>
<p>Align data systems that impact youth and collect a common set of data indicators that are critical to youth and young adult well-being. Lead by CDHS and Healthy School Collective Impact Data.</p>	<p><b>Rec 8 Active</b></p>	<p>The 5 year project of the Interoperability Road Map continues in developing a Request for Information (RFI) for vendor input on how to implement the road map. The focus for State Fiscal Year 2016-17 is proceeding with planning only. Procurement for planning vendors is underway and it is scheduled for October 2016 through March 2017. The next stage is to request approval for implementation funding in June 2017, with the goal to have a functional environment two years after implementation approval.</p> <p>The Healthy School Collective Impact Data and Evaluation Work Group is developing a Shared Measurement System (SMS). The SMS is a short list of key indicators/measures designed to encourage alignment of local and state data collection efforts as well as collectively track and evaluate their progress. There are three phases to develop the SMS: design, develop, and deploy. The work group is currently working on phase one.</p> <p>Recommendation 8 is active in the 2016 Plan.</p>

<p>Increase public awareness of available youth services and organizations. Lead by CO9to25 and CDHS.</p>	<p><b>Rec 9 Active</b></p>	<p>CO9to25 continues to promote youth services and organizations through their network and social media. A website collaborative with members from Systems of Care, Pathways to Success, Chafee, Kaiser Permanente, and CO9to25 are pooling funding for the creation of a phone based application that will connect youth with youth-serving programs. This connection will serve as a way to connect youth to needed services, leadership and engagement opportunities, and youth advisory councils. The prototype is expected be functional by January, 2017.</p> <p>CO9to25 conducts an annual partner survey. The survey is intended to examine how positive youth development (PYD) principles are currently understood and applied in youth-serving organizations throughout Colorado. A map of service areas for programs is available at <a href="http://www.co9to25.org">www.co9to25.org</a>.</p> <p>The CO9to25 finance work group is conducting a survey of government-funded youth-serving programs and including key information about youth-serving grantees, number of youth served, and their current geographical reach. Funding is needed to maintain and update a list on an ongoing basis. An overview of the project is available in Appendix E (see page 32).</p> <p>Recommendation 9 is active in the 2016 Plan.</p>
<p>Create formalized multidisciplinary treatment teams in every community in Colorado. Lead by CDHS</p>	<p><b>Rec 10 Removed</b></p>	<p>This recommendation is removed because creating multidisciplinary treatment teams is identified as a wraparound best practice. Programs such as Systems of Care, Collaborative Management Program, and others continue work on this goal at individual levels. Currently, at least 15 counties in Colorado are providing system of care services using high-fidelity wraparound services, and many more are interested. Colorado's system of care initiative is developing a youth peer support partner training curriculum to prepare young adults to support youth who are transitioning to adulthood. The State of Colorado is also developing a sustainable training infrastructure for the system of care workforce. This is work is being done by numerous other programs across the state. Recommendation 10 is removed from the 2016 Plan to reduce duplication of efforts and focus the Plan and CO9to25's limited resources on other priorities.</p>

<p>Improve the quality, availability and accessibility of services, supports, and relationships to provide solutions to youth who are at risk for homelessness. Lead by DOLA and ACHY</p>	<p><b>Rec 11 Active and Revised</b></p>	<p>Work continues across Colorado including the following achievements: first, a new demonstration project combining the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Family Unification Program (FUP) and Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) programs will expand FUP vouchers for participating youth from 18 months to five years and adds an escrow savings account to support families and youth to create economic self-sufficiency. Simultaneously, Congress passed a bill to extend all FUP vouchers to three years. Next, the Metro Denver Homeless Initiative will receive 33 extra permanent supportive housing vouchers for chronically homeless youth with special needs. The Next Step program, which provides two-year vouchers to homeless students and their families, is expanding from three to five communities. Also, the Pathways to Success Initiative, funded by the Children's Bureau, is moving from the planning to implementation phase of their program to support youth exiting foster care and successfully transition to adulthood; the programs provide a navigator to coordinate enhanced services for youth. The Governor's Office is supporting a Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Pathways Toolkit for adults and families to increase PSH units throughout Colorado. In the past two years, over 400 units of PSH are awarded and in development. The upcoming Toolkit will focus on PSH for particular populations, including youth. The Medicaid Academy, which teaches providers how to bill Medicaid for allowable services and supports that mirror permanent and supportive case management, is expanding specifically for youth. Finally, the Denver Metro Area is piloting a coordinated assessment and housing placement system for all youth.</p> <p>Funding Related updates: Housing and Urban Development (HUD is now prioritizing youth and families with the ultimate goal to end homelessness for youth and families by 2020 throughout the country. HUD provides key funding for this purpose through the Continuum of Care (CoC) local competitive application process. "Ending homelessness" defined as preventing homelessness where possible, but when it occurs, ensuring it is rare, brief, and non-recurring.</p> <p>The 2014 listed outputs include revisions to be more specific, measurable, and aligned with the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness's (USICH) amended federal strategic plan geared toward preventing and ending homelessness. The outcome utilizing the Point in Time (PIT) survey to measure reducing homelessness is seen as a misleading measure. While the goal is still to reduce homelessness, a more accurate account for youth who are homelessness is a priority. Increasing efforts focused on improving the PIT survey will temporarily result in an increase in the number reported of youth who are experiencing homelessness. Thus, one of the strategies 8.1 for 2016 is to obtain more accurate data about youth who are experiencing homelessness through combining PIT measures with school and local data, as well as data regarding the number of youth connected to permanent housing each year throughout the state. The goal is to increase the number of communities that participate in the count as well as increase the geographic coverage of area surveyed during each PIT.</p> <p>Recommendation 11 is active in the 2016 Plan.</p>
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<p>Improve the well-being of youth and young adults who are in the care and/or custody of the state and counties. Lead by CDHS.</p>	<p>Rec 12 Active</p>	<p>The Psychotropic Medications Steering Committee is making significant progress updating guidelines for reducing over-reliance on psychotropic medications: the goal is completing the updates to the Psychotropic Medication Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Colorado's Child Welfare System by Fall of 2016. Child welfare teams, foster families, psychiatrists, and primary care physicians in Colorado will receive the updates through the Statewide Integration Model (SIM). One of the main goals is to conduct a longitudinal study for tracking prescriptions for adolescents in the Division of Youth Corrections (DYC) and Division of Child Welfare (DCW) and then complete a state by state comparison. The group is tightening oversight methods for prescribing psychotropic medication. Additionally, the committee provides consultation to child psychiatrists on concerning cases in collaboration with Colorado Psychiatric Access and Consultation for Kids (C-PACK) while providing education on best practices to caregivers in collaboration with Project ECHO.</p> <p>DYC is working towards the National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCHC) accreditation achievement of a nationally accepted standard of care in health services delivery. DCW's support of the accreditation ensures that 2013 guidelines guarantee access to care for youth in Affordable Care Coordination (ACC) including a medical home and primary care physician.</p> <p>DCW is pursuing youth-driven mentoring and permanency models for youth in foster care. The "Choice" program is designed to increase the connections for youth. Adams County agreed to pilot the program in their county and match adults with youth for mentorship efforts. The goal is to build relationships with caring adults as well as the adults' friends and families. Any of these adult connections could naturally move forward and create permanency, up to an including adoption.</p> <p>HB 14-1273 created the Colorado Human Trafficking Council (CHTC). The purpose of the CHTC is to bring together leadership across various levels of government and the community to form a collaborative coalition to help combat human trafficking. CHTC is expected to improve comprehensive services for victims and survivors of human trafficking, to assist in the successful prosecution of human traffickers, and to enhance human trafficking prevention efforts in Colorado. Since the formation of the CHTC is completed, Sub Rec 12.4 is removed.</p> <p>Finally, DCW is doing tremendous work enhancing access for youth with developmental disabilities. Youth ages 18-21 are identified as in need of developmental disabilities services and are now transitioning into adult developmental disabilities services; DCW is enrolling over 81% of these identified young people into supportive services.</p> <p>[Updates continue on next page.]</p>
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<p>Improve the well-being of youth and young adults who are in the care and/or custody of the state and counties. Lead by CDHS.</p>	<p>[Continued from previous page]</p> <p><b>Rec 12 Active</b></p>	<p>The outcome measure 9.9 "Increase the percentage of children and youth who are legally free for adoption that achieve permanency from 92.2% in July 2014 to 98% by January 2016" is revised. In December 2015 the federal measure for permanency was 96.7%. It is important to include other forms of permanency not recorded in the federal measure such as living with other relatives or kin, other guardianship, living on own, and other planned placement living arrangement. The measure as of March 2016 was 96.1% for "Permanency for Children Served in a Child Welfare Case." The new outcome measure to "Maintain or improve the engagement of family members in case planning" is more reflective of the goal. Represented in the following measures: The youth engagement rate will be maintained at 99.9% for three out of four quarters each year for a five year period. The mother's engagement rate's baseline, 91.4%, will increase by 5% every year through FFY 2018. The goal will be re-evaluated in FFY 2019. The father's engagement rate's baseline, 80.8%, will increase by 5% every year through FFY 2018.</p> <p>For youth aged 16 and older, increase the percentage of youth who are on track to graduate and/or complete high school from 76.6% in 2015 by 5% every year through FFY 2018.</p> <p>The following outcomes are completed: Outcome 9.10 Youth in DYC will be enrolled in a full/part time program at discharge (education, employment, or other form of pro-social community engagement) 85% of the time for three consecutive months by January 2016.</p> <p>Recommendation 12 is active in the 2016 Plan.</p>
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<p>Provide educational alternatives and wraparound supports for youth with complex needs. Lead by CDE and CDHS.</p>	<p><b>Rec 13 Active and Revised</b></p>	<p>The Colorado Re-engagement Network began work on developing a network of district, school, and community partners to share best practices, information, and support around the re-engagement of out-of-school youth. The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) continues to hire youth advisors serving in various capacities in CO9to25. CDE hosted the 6th annual summit on dropout prevention and student engagement in Aurora on May 2016. More than 200 educators and alternative education stakeholders attended. The summit includes field trips to an alternative education program and a focus on trauma-informed care and student re-engagement. The Alternative Education Campus Accountability Working Group is established in state statute and made recommendations to the Commissioner, the education committees of the House of Representatives and the Senate, and the State Board of Education regarding performance indicators for the next iteration of the Alternative Education Campus School Performance Framework (AEC SPF).  <a href="http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/2015_aec_awg_final_report">http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/2015_aec_awg_final_report</a>  Recommendations for work-based learning in concurrent enrollment (per House Bill 15-1275) are now posted and include information for implementing coursework related to pre-apprenticeship programs and internship programs as part of concurrent enrollment. For more details visit <a href="http://www.cde.state.co.us/postsecondary">http://www.cde.state.co.us/postsecondary</a>. In 2015-2016 the Colorado State Board of Education approved the high school equivalency examinations in Colorado to measure major outcomes and concepts associated with high school education. There are three state board-approved high school equivalency examinations in Colorado: GED, HiSET, and TASC. The Colorado High School Equivalency Diploma is awarded for successful completion of one of these approved examinations. For more details visit <a href="http://www.cde.state.co.us/postsecondary">http://www.cde.state.co.us/postsecondary</a>.  The expected outcome 13.10 is removed as the focus at this stage is on youth in the secondary education system. Future goals may include higher education.  Recommendation 13 is active in the 2016 Plan.</p>
<p>Strengthen strategies for a youth-friendly health system. Lead by HCPF and Kaiser Permanente Arts Integrated Research.</p>	<p><b>Rec 14 Active</b></p>	<p>HCPF’s Healthy Communities Program continues to coordinate community resources and access to care for families, children, and youth with insurance coverage distributed under multiple benefit plans (Health First Colorado and CHP+).  Work continues on the youth-lead training system called YouthCHAT. Sponsored by multiple agencies including Kaiser Permanente, Children’s Hospital, Denver Health, HCPF, and CDPHE, the purpose of YouthCHAT is to increase the number of wellness checks for youth ages 14-18. Statistically, 14-18 year olds do not attend wellness checks, especially in non-traditional family units. YouthChat completed five pilots of youth-delivered training on effective practices for health care professionals in interacting with youth. The final program is anticipated to launch statewide in 2017. One outcome is a youth-created public service announcement (PSA) to promote other youth going to their annual wellness checks. Health care providers can utilize the PSA in their clinics and on their websites. The PSA can be found at publicly at:  <a href="http://artsintegratedresources.org/programs/youth-engagement/">http://artsintegratedresources.org/programs/youth-engagement/</a>  Revisions to the sub recommendations were added for clarity.  Recommendation 14 is active in the 2016 Plan.</p>

VIII. APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. Current Colorado 9to25 Structure

Who is involved with this effort?

Youth and young adults; families; public and private, state, local, and community leaders including the Colorado Departments of Public Health and Environment, Public Safety, Human Services, Education, Higher Education, Labor and Employment, Local Affairs, and Health Care Policy and Financing, and local public health and human service and community-based organizations. For a complete list, please visit <http://co9to25.org/>.

How COto25 Works:

As shown in Figure 4 below, Colorado 9to25 uses PYD to connect youth and adults engaging them in strategies to mobilize partnerships, raise public awareness, promote best and promising practices, share accountability, and promote policy and environmental change across the spheres of influence to ensure all youth are safe, healthy, educated, connected, and contributing.

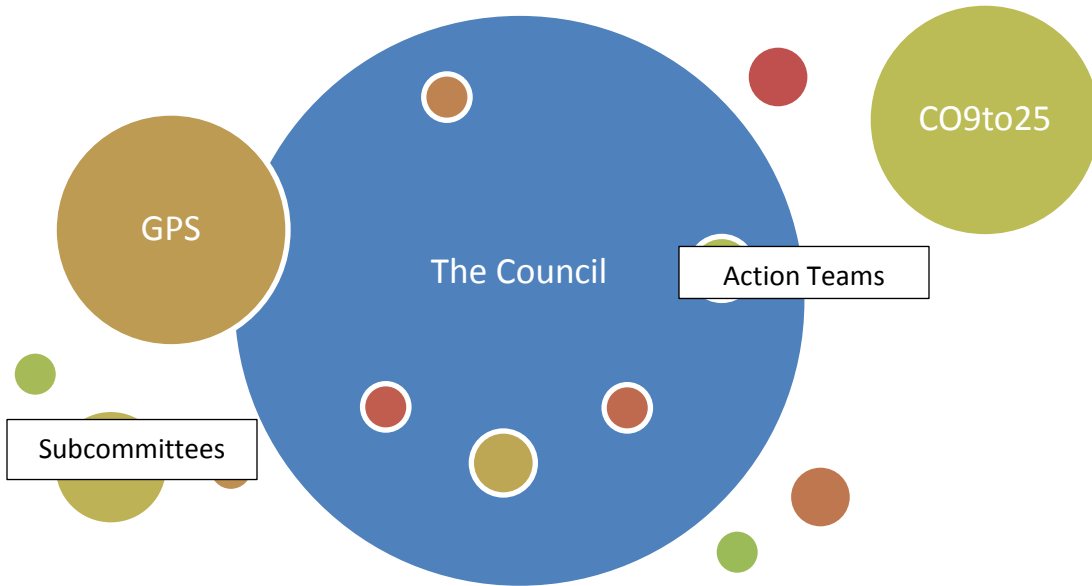
Figure 6: CO9to25 Infographic



The CO9to25 Structure:

Figure 7: CO9to25 Structure

As shown in Figure 5 above the GPS Team sets the strategic direction, vision, and goals for Colorado 9to25. This team acts



as the Board of Directors for the Colorado 9to25, overseeing and guiding the Council, Action Teams, and subcommittees. GPS makes all strategic decisions for the Colorado 9to25 network.

The Colorado 9to25 Council (**the Council**) is made up of diverse people and interests. The Council advises the direction of CO9to25 by providing guidance on issues brought to them by GPS. The Council brings their expertise about their communities and their concerns by advising GPS on gaps in services to youth as well as pressing community issues. Council members serve as chairs and members of the Action Teams.

**Actions Teams** work on initiatives and projects that advance the strategies of the Colorado Statewide Youth Development Plan and youth systems change map. The work of Action Teams is set by GPS. Action Teams are made up of Council members, GPS members, youth, and invested community members.

## APPENDIX B: Message from Colorado Youth 2014

This letter is archived from the 2014 version of the Plan.

To the Colorado General Assembly,

There seems to be a common belief in the power of a single voice. Belief in its power alone to transform our world. It's a belief that strong voices lead movements, spark revolutions, and inspire change. The power of voice is indeed the important connection between brilliant minds or thoughts and the real world, but no great change answers back to a voice screaming into the void. Opinions, ideas, and beliefs become something bigger only when someone listens, only when conversations erupt. It's this beautiful connection--this interaction--that turns one's brilliant thought into cathedrals, empires, and brilliant leaps of human achievement. It's when there is give and take, and respect for diverse opinions that we change the world. The Colorado Statewide Youth Development Plan gives us, the youth, a chance to be heard.

Our voice is powerful. As youth, we understand our vibrant, dynamic culture. We want to use this understanding to advocate for ourselves and help advocate for change everyone wants to see. Come feel the power of our voices. Come see the infectious passion in our beliefs and ideals, that we care, and that with the right guidance we will dedicate ourselves to making this a better world for young people. Our voices are strong, and yet we don't know where to go with our bold ideas and opinions. We can utilize our creativity to come up with unconventional yet effective solutions. We can think outside of the box. We don't know everything, and we accept support and direction from adults. Come help us learn, grow, and contribute. You'll gain insight into the young population; you'll better understand how to approach, interact with, and utilize the youth perspective. We all have a common goal: helping youth reach their full potential, but who better to help decide what is best for us than *us*? We are eager to share our opinions and ideas if we know there is someone listening. We are willing to learn and grow if we know we can be a part of something bigger than ourselves. Give us a chance. Let us show you that the solutions lie with us. We need to know that you believe in us, and we need to know that we are equals; we're not spilling our hearts and minds into the void. We may seem naive, but our ingenuity will surprise you. Adults can't create *effective* change for youth by themselves, and--to be honest--neither can we. But, together we can combine our assets and transform Colorado.

This Plan advocates for just that. A youth system in Colorado would mean youth are involved the right way. It would mean that we are a part of identifying problems as well as engineering and implementing solutions. Utilizing adult advice, resources, and experience while incorporating youth voices, abilities, and talents creates effective change. A youth system in Colorado means walking the walk. Adults and youth need to work together, but how can that happen if nobody knows how to approach a cooperative youth-adult partnership? Specific strategies must be utilized to ensure authentic youth engagement. We helped create this Plan. We had a say. We were valued. This Plan is the first step to transforming Colorado and spearheading a positive change.

I hope that you consider this Plan with the youth in mind. I believe that this Plan can break down the barriers youth face, as it is built on a foundation that ensures youth involvement and creates a system prepared to guide us towards our full potential. This Plan values the impact youth can make and understands the importance of collaboration between youth and adults as well as from system to system. Together we have the means to accomplish our goals, we just have to come together the right way. This Plan is the map to help youth navigate the path to their full potential, let us explore with its guidance.

Connect, Improve, Inspire,

Yashna Eswaran (Colorado Youth, 17yrs)

## APPENDIX C: Message from the Committee 2014

This letter is archived from the 2014 version of the Plan.

To the Colorado General Assembly,

Thank you for the opportunity to create this Plan. This committee brought together voices of those representing youth and young adults in Colorado with a goal to investigate the existing, and explore potential, systems, policies, and practices that will nurture the greatest potential of each and every individual youth, as well as strengthen our families and communities across Colorado.

Our intentional approach included understanding multiple sectors to examine positive programs and initiatives supporting youth and young adults. One unexpected benefit was facilitating connections with wonderful and effective programs. At almost every meeting presenters made connections with other service providers and committee members who can enhance and complement their intersecting missions. Unfortunately, many presentations emphasized the urgent and compelling need for expanded services, often highlighting significant gaps due to uncoordinated systems and limited resources. The following Plan recommendations address the need for macro-level system changes (e.g. access, equity) to micro-level changes (e.g. training and technical assistance).

What might not be obvious when you read the report is that the committee employed a positive youth development (PYD) approach in our work. As a committee we quickly realized that authentic youth engagement, one of the cornerstones of PYD, takes time. Although this committee felt the pressure of evaluating a large scope of work in an aggressive timeframe, we also felt a deep responsibility to not only deliver a report on time, but to do it in a way that honors the tenets of the PYD movement – focusing on positive outcomes; authentically partnering with youth throughout the process; ensuring the work is culturally responsive and relevant; and ensuring collaboration and sustainability.

We redesigned the agenda to include young adult input. We created real connections and worked through difficult conversations. We empowered youth to actively participate in presentations and challenge our assumptions. This intentional and thoughtful process allowed us the benefit of experiencing powerful moments of insight from wise young adults. This direct experience with authentic youth engagement informed this robust Plan.

As you read this report, we encourage you to consider our responsibility to youth and their families. We encourage you to set aside the automatic response to resist change. And, we encourage you to take the time to actively talk with and listen to youth and young adults in your lives. You will be amazed at how the world will change.

We learned that language matters, and have tried to ensure that this Plan and its proposals are couched in terms of asset-building and hope and the great potential within all Colorado's youth.

Sincerely,

Connie Rule  
Committee Co-Chair

Robert Werthwein  
Committee Co-Chair

## **APPENDIX D: List of Community and State Youth Advisors**

### **Paid Youth Employees**

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment  
Children, Youth and Families Branch  
Violence and Injury Prevention - Mental Health Promotion Branch  
Colorado Department of Education- Project AWARE  
Colorado Department of Human Service (share youth advisor with CDPHE)  
Colorado Youth Matter  
Kaiser Permanente- Arts Integrated Resources Youth Engagement Programs  
Businesses such as Little Details  
Shiloh House  
Maple Star  
Denver Public Health  
Tu Casa, Inc (San Luis Valley)  
Rise Above Colorado  
Denver Chamber of Commerce  
MiCasa  
Project Pave

### **Youth on Boards or Steering Committees**

CO9to25 GPS  
CO9to25 Council  
Tony Grampas Youth Services  
All school based health centers funded by CDPHE  
CDPHE State Board of Health  
Healthy Schools Collective Impact  
Pathways to Success  
The Civic Canopy (in process)

### **Youth Advisory Councils**

Colorado has over 60 plus youth advisory councils including:  
Youth Partnership for Health (CDPHE)  
Colorado Youth Leadership Network- Child Welfare Youth Advisory Councils (CDHS)  
Boulder YOAB  
Jefferson County Public Schools  
Denver Public Schools- Student Board of Education  
Mayor's Youth Commission Denver  
Colorado School Safety Resource Center Youth Advisory Council

## APPENDIX E: Strategic Youth Programs Mapping Project

CO9to25 and the Plan, in partnership with the Governor's Office of Budgeting and Planning, CDPHE, and CDPS, convened a meeting of fiscal partners that represent youth programs in Colorado that impact youth ages 9 to 25. As represented in Figure 6 below participants were asked to identify where they fit on the template. Their goal was to identify fiscal resources and map programming across the socio-ecological model (Individual, Relationship, Community, and Societal & Policy Levels) and the continuum of prevention, intervention, and treatment. The group discussed potential ways to collaborate, align funding, and support systems. An interactive web resource is being developed and will be available online

to serve as a baseline and as a reference about the project. <http://coyouthprogrammapping.silk.co>.

**Figure 8: Youth Systems Template**



This is the first step in alignment with "Recommendation #6: Align funding across evidence-supported youth programs and services."

Over 100 state agency programs were invited, and over 60 attendees participated from CDHS, CDPHE, CDPS, CDE, CDHE, DOLA, CDLE, Judicial, and OSBP. Representatives from the Early Childhood System were invited in hopes of bridging the gap between systems. The survey and participation was voluntary, and, therefore, the mapping is an imperfect representation of the youth programs and initiatives that impact youth.

Dr. Larry Wolk, Executive Director of CDPHE, kicked off the event with talking points on the importance of collaboration and coming together across systems to support youth. He agreed to be an advocate for the Colorado youth system within the Tri-Agency meeting and when working with other executives from state departments.