

The Youth Involvement Checklist



Helping your organization uncover its potential for youth leadership at the individual, community and policy levels.

www.youthmovemaine.org



A Continuum Of Youth Involvement



Youth-Guided

Means That Youth and Adults are aware and engaged as they explore the ideas and skills of youth leadership and begin to value youth experience as integral to the decision-making process.

Youth-Directed

Youth begin to make recommendations and fill steady, meaningful roles in decision-making bodies. Youth and adults collaborate to create and prioritize goals and develop strategies for positive change.

Youth-Driven

Youth have self-awareness and skills to initiate change, as well as the intrinsic motivation and sense of purpose necessary to follow through. Youth have a mutually respectful relationship with adults and other youth in the community as they partner for the change desired by the youth.

This assessment is designed to be a self-reflection tool to help your group or organization see how involved youth really are, and to highlight some goals for how you can infuse even more youth voice into your programming!

There are three simple tools here for reflecting on the engagement, preparation and involvement of:

- 1.) **Individual** Youth at your Organization
- 2.) Your Organization's **Community**
- 3.) Your Organization's **Policy** Structure

You can discover where your organization stands at each level of youth involvement and develop ideas for goals as well.

Youth Involvement At The Individual Level



Youth-Guided

Youth-Directed

Youth-Driven

- Youth is engaged in the idea that change is possible in his or her life and the systems that serve him or her.
- Youth is finding ways to feel safe, cared for, valued, useful and spiritually grounded.
- Youth is ready to learn and build skills that allow them to function and give back in their daily lives.
- Youth have opportunities to develop and practice leadership and advocacy skills.
- Youth can identify a place in your organization where equal partnership is valued.
- Youth are empowered in their planning process from the beginning and have a voice in what will work for them.
- Youth receive training/education on systems players, their rights, purpose of the system and youth involvement and development opportunities

- The Young person is:**
- Still in the learning process.
 - Forming mutual relationships with people who are supporting them
 - learning effective ways to communicate with team members.
 - Developing a deeper knowledge and understanding of the systems and processes.
 - Able to make decisions with team support in the treatment process and has an understanding of consequences.
 - In a place where they can share his or her story to create change.
 - Not in a consistent period of crisis and his or her basic needs are met.

- The youth describes his or her vision for the future.
- The youth sets goals for treatment with input from team.
- The youth is aware of his or her options and is able to utilize and apply his or her knowledge of resources.
- Youth fully understands his or her roles and responsibilities on the team.
- The youth and all members of the treatment team are equal partners and listen and act upon youth decisions.
- The youth facilitates open lines of communication and there is mutual respect between youth and adults.
- The youth is able to stand on his or her own and take responsibility for his or her choices with the support of the team.
- The youth knows how to communicate his or her needs.
- Youth are mentors and peer advocates for other youth.
- Youth are giving presentations based on personal experiences and knowledge.
- The youth is making the transition to adulthood.

Youth Involvement At The Community Level

← **Youth-Guided**

Youth-Directed

Youth-Driven →

Community partners and stakeholders have:

- An open minded viewpoint and there are decreased stereotypes about youth.
- Prioritized youth involvement and input during planning and/or meetings.
- A desire to involve youth.
- Begin stages of partnership with youth.
- Begun to use language supporting youth engagement.
- Taken the youth view and opinion into account.
- A minimum of one youth partner with experience and/or expertise in the systems represented.
- Begun to encourage and listen to the views and opinions of the involved youth, rather than minimize their importance.
- Created open and safe spaces for youth.
- Youth are compensated for their work.

- Youth have positions and voting power on community boards and committees.
- Youth are recruiting other youth to be involved throughout the community.
- There is increased representation of youth advocates, and board and committee members throughout the community.
- Everyone is responsible for encouraging youth voice and active participation.
- Community members respect the autonomy of youth voice.
- The community is less judgmental about the youth in their community.
- Youth are compensated for their work.

- Community partners are dedicated to authentic youth involvement.
- Community partners listen to youth and make changes accordingly.
- Young people have a safe place to go and be heard throughout the community.
- There are multiple paid positions for youth in every decision-making group throughout the system of care and in the community.
- Youth are compensated for their work.
- Youth form and facilitate youth groups in communities.
- Youth provide training in the community based on personal experiences and knowledge.

Youth Involvement At The Policy Level



Youth-Guided

Youth-Directed

Youth-Driven

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <input type="checkbox"/> Youth are invited to meetings. <input type="checkbox"/> Training and support is provided for youth on what the meeting is about. <input type="checkbox"/> Youth and board are beginning to understand the role of youth at the policy-making level. <input type="checkbox"/> Youth can speak on their experiences (even if it is not in perfect form) and talk about what's really going on with young people. <input type="checkbox"/> Adults value what youth have to say in an advisory capacity. <input type="checkbox"/> Youth have limited power in decision making. <input type="checkbox"/> Youth have an appointed mentor who is a regular attendee of the meetings and makes sure that the youth feels comfortable to express his or herself and clearly understands the process. <input type="checkbox"/> Youth are compensated for their work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Youth understand the power they have to created change at a policy making level. <input type="checkbox"/> Youth are in a place where they understand the process behind developing policy and have experience being involved. <input type="checkbox"/> Youth have an enhanced skill set to direct change. <input type="checkbox"/> Youth have understanding of the current policy issues affecting young people and are able to articulate their opinion on the policy. <input type="checkbox"/> Policy makers are in a place where they respect youth opinions and make change based on their suggestions. <input type="checkbox"/> All parties are fully engaged in youth activities and make youth engagement a priority. <input type="checkbox"/> Youth receive increased training and support in their involvement. <input type="checkbox"/> There is increased dialogue during meetings about youth opinions and action is taken. <input type="checkbox"/> There is increased representation of youth and a decrease in tokenism. <input type="checkbox"/> Equal partnership is evident. <input type="checkbox"/> Youth are compensated for their work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Youth are calling meetings and setting agendas in the policy making arena. <input type="checkbox"/> Youth assign roles to collaboration members to follow through on policy. <input type="checkbox"/> Youth hold trainings on policy making for youth and adults. <input type="checkbox"/> Youth inform the public about current policies and have a position platform. <input type="checkbox"/> Youth lead research to drive policy change. <input type="checkbox"/> Youth have the knowledge and ability to educate the community on important youth issues. <input type="checkbox"/> Youth are able to be self-advocates and peer advocates in the policy making process. <input type="checkbox"/> Youth are compensated for their work. <input type="checkbox"/> Community members and policy makers support youth to take the lead and make changes.
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Where are you? Where do you aim to be?

Youth MOVE Maine provides support, consultation, training and technical assistance to help you involve youth in meaningful roles that build the strength of your organization, the community and the youth themselves!

As you work to improve youth involvement at the individual, community and policy level for your organization, you are not alone. Youth MOVE Maine is here to help with experienced staff, knowledgeable youth, and a network of providers — all here to support you in your journey toward increased youth involvement.

To learn more about our training opportunities for organizations, providers and youth, see our website:

www.youthmovemaine.org

Or Call Us at 1-207-782-5783 x1615

**Based on our organizational self-reflection,
some of our STRENGTHS are:**

**Based on our organizational self-reflection,
some of our GOALS are:**

This checklist was adapted from a list of signs of youth guided systems developed by youth and young adults in collaboration with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).