



# DOL YouthBuild TA Collaborative

## Retention Practices

# Retention



Stability means finding people who regulate you well and staying near them.

-- Lewis, Amini, and Lannon,

A General Theory of Love

Don't let go of the youth at graduation; after graduation they need YouthBuild more than ever to successfully enter the world of work and PSE.

# 4 Key Elements to include in Retention Component (written document and active practice)



- Philosophy—wrap in the youth, the program, and the partner (employer and/or PSE institution) with goals for all 3
- Practice (hands on activities connected to seeing skills in action—happens throughout)—have to be measurable (youth, program, and partners)
- Products (projects, documents, objects—happens throughout)—have to be measurable (youth, program, and partners)
- Progress (Assessment/Evaluation—from youth, from program, from partner—happens throughout)—have to be measurable for all (youth, program, and partners)



(one sentence each)

- 1) Specific formal practice and benefit for your youth participants
- 2) Specific formal practice and benefit for your program
- 3) Specific formal practice and benefit for your employer partner
- 4) Specific formal practice and benefit for your PSE partner

# Retention Component

YouthBuild



1. Ensure that each placement pathway selected by the youth has a specific set of deliverables that need to be met/achieved by that youth **DURING THE RETENTION TIME PERIOD** and that youth, staff, and partners know what deliverables are. These should include a recognized set of competitive and essential work skills and practices that can be measured

# Retention Component

YouthBuild



2. Establish and implement a strong set of follow up services **DURING THE RETENTION TIME PERIOD** that tie in both with the particular placement pathway and with the specific youth participant and partner needs. These may include how to handle substance abuse, behavior, timeliness.

What other follow up services can you think of that link to specific pathways, whether employment or post secondary?

# Retention Component

YouthBuild



3. Establish and implement a clear, reasonable substance abuse policy that ties into each placement pathway (what are partner requirements? What are the participant's needs?) and which is a required part of the follow up services **DURING THE RETENTION TIME PERIOD.**

# Retention Component

YouthBuild



4. Establish and implement a specific calendar of staff/youth/partner follow up contacts and the specific expectations for those contacts (i.e. meet once weekly for 12 months following exit date of \_\_\_\_ and turn in copy of paycheck stub. What others can you think of which would apply to the specific pathways of employment or post secondary education?



Youth have to be passionate about a pathway; their choice can't be a whim. Three caring adults have to be involved in mentoring the youth throughout the retention period for that youth to be successful; three seems to be the magic number. (YouthBuild Guadalupe)

# Retention: Practice



Slowly and steadily from Day One, create a culture of expectation, but be prepared for setbacks—the two key factors to get on top of are cultural and poverty issues. We have a regular meeting with them weekly to discuss setback as back to step 5 as opposed to back to step 1 every time something happens. We connect them with our Entrepreneurship student mentors at MSUN who work with them on career and business planning during regular class time and during lunch parties. (YouthBuild Montana State University Northern)

# Retention: Practice



We are developing our own construction LLC, given our past successful agency and YouthBuild program experience with construction with the local Housing Authority, and could potentially hire a handful of our graduates, approximately six (6), to be placed there.

(Project ReBuild, Inc. YouthBuild)

# Retention: Products

YouthBuild



- Documentation: proof of employment, Career Development Plan (CDP), application materials, testing
- Portfolio—needs to be pathway specific, reflect specific employer needs, demonstrating specific work skills for competitive entry level positions through actual activities AND professional products
- Homework (PSE), progress reports

# Retention: Progress

YouthBuild



- Help the youth to establish their own progress assessment
- Use a formal “I see...,” “I think...,” “Next steps are...” review structure with your youth (see the YBUSA Case Conferencing Model as a model); have them use this structure to relate what is happening at their work/PSE placements.
- Review these individual, student based case conferences into the regular case conferencing meetings with staff.
- Meet with partners and take the initiative to require and offer specific employment/PSE training and support of and to your youth, pre-and post-exit.
- Collect and record required documentation on a specific schedule that is adhered to by both staff and youth.



- What would signify a successful retention philosophy/practice/product/progress to you?
- What is one key thing you could be doing to get your YouthBuild to that point?
- What in your successful example depends on the youth's output? What on the employer's/PSE institution's output? What depends on the YouthBuild staff's output?