

Collaborative Bodies in Communities Survey

Overview of Responses

June 2012

In Spring 2012, the [Forum for Youth Investment](#) and the [National Collaboration for Youth](#) (NCY) issued a brief, voluntary survey distributed through NCY member channels (including America's Promise and the Forum's Ready by 21® e-newsletter) asking what types of collaborative bodies working on child and youth issues are active in their communities. We received 87 responses, across 30 states and 75 communities. Respondents included representatives of NCY affiliates and other national organizations, as well as city government departments, school districts and local nonprofits. For a breakdown of the states from which responses were received, please see the Appendix on page 4.

Respondents were asked to identify the types of collaborations in their communities and to provide information on two specific types of collaborative bodies: Leadership Councils/Children's Cabinets, which typically include representation by public officials and funding agencies, and broad-based Youth Development Partnerships, which typically have representation from a cross-cutting mix of youth service providers.

To encourage participation in the survey, the request did not ask potential respondents to conduct research or a comprehensive scan, but rather to share what they already know about collaborations. Different respondents had different levels of awareness about collaborations in their communities and might have used their own definitions for a particular type of collaboration. For example, in the six communities with multiple responses, there was variation in whether respondents identified the same Leadership Council, Youth Development Partnership or set of issue coalitions.

With that caveat in mind, we present our findings in terms of observations about the mix of youth-focused collaborations in communities, rather than as a definitive picture of what is available. These results should be useful to NCY members in understanding the local collaborative landscape and supporting local collaborative efforts.

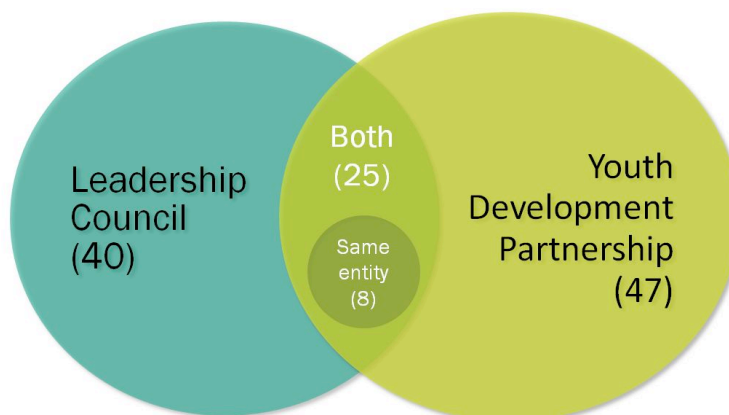
Most communities have a number of collaborative efforts underway that are focused on children and youth, including multiple coalitions focused on specific types of issues, populations, or age groups. Approximately half of the survey respondents reported that their communities have a Leadership Council, a Youth Development Partnership with involvement of a broad group of service providers, or both. Respondents whose communities have Leadership Councils or Youth Development Partnerships indicated a range of other collaborative activity related to children and youth.

Leadership Councils and broad-based Youth Development Partnerships

Of 87 respondents in 75 communities, 65 communities were reported to have a Leadership Council, a Youth Development Partnership or both.

In eight communities, respondents identified a single group in their community serving both functions, while 17 others reported that they have both a Leadership Council and a Youth Development Partnership that are separate entities.

Leadership Councils and Youth Development Partnerships in Respondent Communities (n=75)



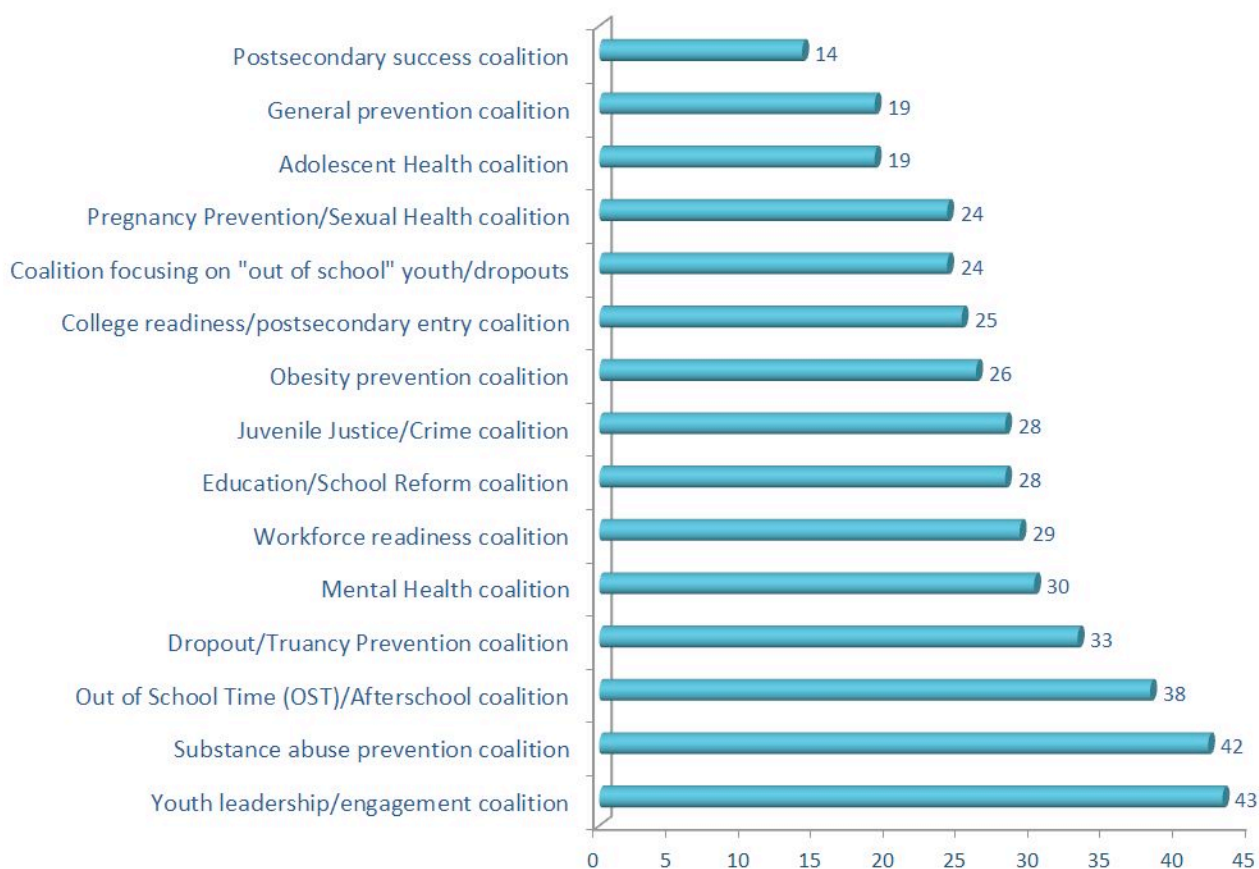
Communities with issue-focused coalitions

All respondents reported at least one kind of coalition or collaborative group dealing with youth issues in the community, with some identifying more than a dozen with a focus on one or more issues. The chart below shows the number of communities where respondents identified these common types of issue-focused coalitions.¹ The five types of issue coalitions listed most frequently were: youth leadership/engagement, substance abuse prevention, out of school time, dropout or truancy prevention, and mental health.

Other types of issue coalitions identified included those focused on infant mortality, housing, entrepreneurship, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) career exploration, mentoring, bullying or violence prevention, and promotion of youth experiences with nature or the environment.

In addition, some communities noted coalitions focused on specific youth populations, such as those who are homeless, GLBT (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual or Transgender) or transitioning from the foster care system. On average, respondents identified more than five issue-focused coalitions per community, not counting educationally-focused action teams organized around the education pipeline.

Issue-focused coalitions in respondent communities (n=75)

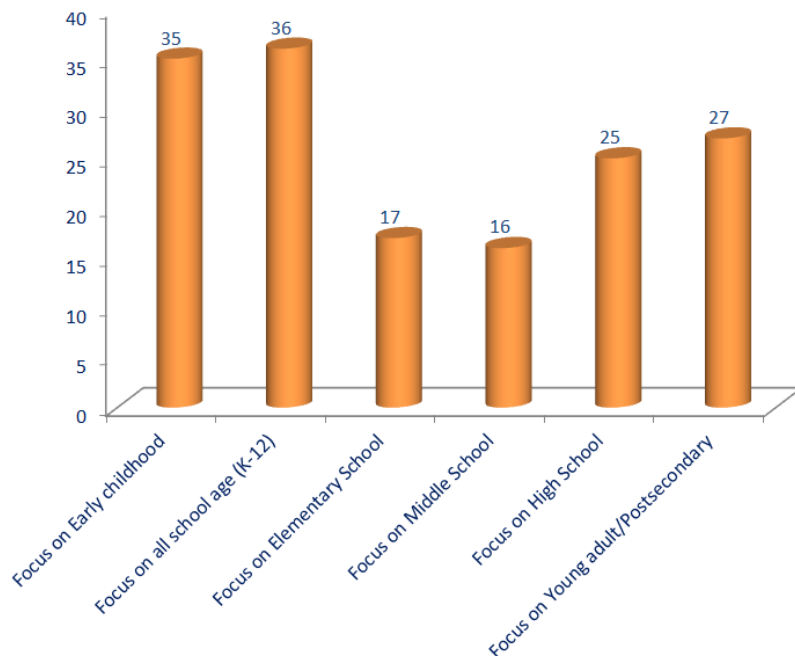


¹Six communities had multiple (2-4) respondents (Chattanooga, Los Angeles, Denver, Chicago, Lansing, and Kalamazoo.)The responses were not identical, indicating different perceptions and awareness about coalition work underway. This chart consolidates responses for each of those cities into one entry so as not to overstate totals.

Communities organizing collaborative work by age group or the education pipeline

In addition to having coalitions focused on a broad range of issues, some communities also organize collaborative efforts for youth at certain ages, particularly for education-related work. Most communities noted one or more action teams focused on the education pipeline, or at least a “section” of it, such as an early childhood team and/or a team focused on high school.

Communities reporting educational action teams (n=75)



Summary observations

In our respondent communities – and, we suspect, in most communities – multiple coalitions and collaborative efforts work on behalf of children and youth. These collaborations present both opportunities and challenges to program providers and organizations that have a broader focus on youth development. On the plus side, they provide opportunities to connect with other organizations that have expertise in a specific area. On the downside, the sheer number of coalitions represents a challenge to staff-stretched organizations that care about multiple issues. As one respondent reflected, “There is a definite need for collaboration of the issue-focused coalitions. Currently they are working in silos somewhat unaware of one another’s initiatives.” Fortunately, other communities reported having a broad, cross-cutting leadership or service provider collaboration through which they can consolidate meetings about multiple youth issues and facilitate overall coordination among providers and coalitions.

About us

Ready by 21® is a set of innovative strategies developed by the **Forum for Youth Investment** that helps communities and states build effective partnerships as part of an effort to get all children and youth ready for college, work and life. Ready by 21® and the Ready by 21® logo are registered trademarks of the Forum for Youth Investment, www.forumfyi.org.

As a member of the Ready by 21 National Partnership, the **National Collaboration for Youth** is committed to helping to leverage the work of its member organizations exponentially – at both national and local levels – by helping members and their affiliates catalyze or strengthen broad, cross-cutting service provider partnerships to improve conditions and results for youth in communities around the country.

NCY published a resource guide, [An Invitation to the Big Picture: Implementing a Local Collaboration for Youth \(LCY\) in Your Community](#), which is available at www.collab4youth.org.

Appendix: Distribution of respondents by state

Below is a breakdown of responses by state. States with no respondents are not listed. Of the 87 responses, 30 states and 75 communities were represented. (Six communities had multiple responses, ranging from two to four respondents.)

Responses by state (n=87)

