Family & Youth Services Bureau

Runaway and Homeless Youth Training & Technical Assistance Center

Here for Good

Sustaining Your RHY Program with Local Support

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Runaway and Homeless Youth Training & Technical Assistance Center

Operated by: National Safe Place Network

Acknowledgments

Dozens of individuals and organizations assisted in the development of this resource. The following FYSB grantees contributed by sharing their wisdom and experience:

Bridget Alexander, Waking the Village (Sacramento, California)
Pauletta Red Willow, OST Emergency Shelter (Pine Ridge, South Dakota)
Judith Dittman, Second Story (Dunn Loring, Virginia)
Bess Nuland, YouthCare (Seattle, Washington)
Rachel Francis, Synergy Services (Kansas City, Missouri)
Carlee Smith, Oasis Center (Nashville, Tennessee)
Andrew Fike, LifeWorks (Austin, Texas)
Julian McGinn, Urban Peak (Denver, Colorado)
Paul Kosowski, Youth Continuum (New Haven, Connecticut)
Bethany Pombar, Vermont Coalition for Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs (Montpelier, Vermont)

The RHY grantee organizations below shared their resources and information:
Sasha Bruce (Washington, DC)
Northeast Kingdom Youth Services (St. Johnsbury, Vermont)
Karis, Inc. (Grand Junction, Colorado)
Daybreak (Dayton, Ohio)
Youth Services of Tulsa (Tulsa, Oklahoma)
Bill Wilson Center (Santa Clara, California)

Additional resources were contributed by:
Paul Neville, St. Vincent de Paul Society (Eugene, Oregon)
Meagan Downey, Youth Catalytics
Sharon Vardatira, University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute

Authors
Jennifer Smith, Youth Catalytics
Melanie Wilson, Youth Catalytics

Contributing Editors
Shauna Brooks, National Safe Place Network
Tammy Hopper, National Safe Place Network

December 2018
www.rhyttac.net

Funding provided by Health and Human Services via Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau to National Safe Place Network as operator of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Training and Technical Assistance Center (90CY6498-05-04).

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Foreword

Each year, approximately 600 non-profit organizations across the country receive funding from the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) to provide critical emergency shelter, basic needs, and transitional housing to homeless and disconnected young people. These runaway and homeless youth (RHY) program grantees provide services to young people who, for a variety of reasons, are drifting on their own, without the family support most youth take for granted. Through case management, individualized planning, and short-term provision of the basic necessities, including housing, these programs help young people stabilize, finish school, gain job skills, and transition successfully into adulthood. RHY grantees offer standard core services, yet they also vary in significant ways depending on the needs of the young people in their communities. Those needs are deep and growing in many places, and FYSB grants rarely cover all of a program's costs. For that reason, successful programs work hard to build other sources of support by cultivating private donors and foundations and by establishing cost-sharing collaborations with other non-profit organizations that can extend the reach of their services and even sustain basic services over time.

"Here for Good: Sustaining Your RHY Program with Local Support" offers an abundance of information, resources, tips, and promising practices on how to cultivate and grow strong local support for RHY services. The information you'll find here comes from many sources, some familiar but others less so. The notable practices described likewise come from a variety of programs and places. The report taps RHY grantees themselves, highlighting how many have grown programs by leveraging local resources in distinctive and creative ways. But this report also studies the impressive work of youth-serving agencies that are not FYSB grantees, many of whom have also built thriving programs.

Introduction

The work your RHY program does is vital. There's no question about it—you know it, the youth in your programs know it, your partners know it, and your funders know it. But over the years, the competition for federal support of RHY programs has grown fierce. Some long-time RHY grantees—grantees that have come to depend on their FYSB grants cycle after cycle, sometimes for decades—aren't getting re-awarded. Have their programs suddenly fallen apart? Did they write a poor grant? What happened?

Sometimes there are quality issues that affect a program's chance for re-funding. If that's the case for your program, you'll know about it. But often, nothing is wrong at all. Your program performed well, you submitted your reports on time, and you wrote a solid proposal for the next grant cycle. But still, you weren't re-awarded. You might already know this, but it's a point worth repeating: Failing to be re-funded doesn't mean your program is to blame.

The truth is RHY grants were always meant to fund startup projects in communities, not to be a primary, ongoing source of support. To get the most out of the limited pool of federal money available, FYSB has to spread it around, occasionally giving priority to new programs that also need and deserve support. That reality doesn't invalidate your program's importance.

This workbook is meant to prepare you for life without the federal grant you've been relying on. It reframes sustainability as an opportunity to continue doing what works best while shaping your program in new ways your community and local funders will enthusiastically embrace and support.

Sustainability is an opportunity to continue doing what works best while shaping your program in new ways your community and local funders will enthusiastically embrace and support.

Many excellent resources on program sustainability exist, and this workbook is not an attempt to duplicate them. Nor is it meant to examine in depth any one approach or technique, with all the attending pros and cons of each. Instead, it lays out a practical, easy, task-oriented approach to looking at your RHY program with fresh eyes, toward the goal of continuing, and even flourishing, with or without a FYSB grant. For readers who want to explore any particular concept more deeply, links to additional resources are provided at the end of each section.

Section 1 discusses the big questions your RHY program needs to ask itself and offers exercises that will help your staff hone in on your strengths and prioritize the services that are most important to your community. Section 2 is about the inherent, mostly non-financial assets your program already possesses—the human and reputational capital that are your biggest selling points. Section 3 outlines how you can build authentic and deep-rooted community support for your RHY program. Finally, Section 4 looks at ways to grow financial support for your program.

If you have been an RHY grantee for a long time, or if you have operated programs funded by other federal agencies, you may think you've done this type of thinking and planning before. Public funders have been stressing the importance of sustainability planning for at least 20 years, after all, and most grant proposals require you to describe how you intend to sustain your services into the future. But for many RHY programs, those plans may be an afterthought—secondary to your program proposal and often a perfunctory nod to a reality you hope you'll never have to face. At the very least, you may assume there's nothing left to learn about the topic. You've already thought it through, and your program already does whatever it can to plan for uncertainty. What more is there?

Actually, there is a lot. This workbook is for RHY programs in particular, with information and exercises narrowly crafted for the kind of services you provide and utilizing the resources you and your staff are most likely to have right now. So structure some meetings around this resource. Pull your key staff together, print out copies of sections, sharpen your pencils, and start talking. This workbook is intended to provide inspiration and guidance, along with one or two completely new ideas.

SECTION 1: DECIDING TO PLAN, STARTING NOW

Some RHY programs have deep wells of support in the community, lots of go-to foundation funders, and strong partners who are able and willing to collaboratively fundraise with them. For them, losing a federal grant isn't easy, but it's not the end of the world. But for other programs, operating without federal support may seem impossible. After all, how can a program keep doing everything it does without that one large chunk of dedicated money?

The truth is you may not be able to do everything you've been doing. And that's not necessarily a bad thing. Community-based social service programs continually change for all kinds of reasons, and your RHY program should evolve as well. Planning for life without a federal grant, even if that circumstance turns out to be only temporary, gives you a chance to focus on the core services your organization, and only your organization, can do well. You can tailor your program to fit your community's needs and at the same time make new partners while drawing your old ones closer. This isn't pie-in-the-sky thinking. You can sustain the most important elements of your RHY program without federal funding if you methodically build up support, from different sectors and at different levels of your community, over time. This workbook is full of examples of organizations that have done just that.

Planning for life without a federal grant, even if that circumstance turns out to be only temporary, gives you a chance to focus on the core services your organization, and only your organization, can do well.

It's great to start early—in fact, it's great to start immediately, the very day you get your grant award. But no matter where you are in your current federally funded RHY project, you can get serious about preparing for life without federal funding—a life where your program is still strong and healthy and meeting the most urgent needs of youth and families in your community.

What Your RHY Program Does Best

Consider this question from two perspectives—those of your staff, and your community.

Exercise: How Your Community Sees Your RHY Program

You probably think you have a good idea of how your community views your RHY program—and maybe you do. But it could be you've never had truly candid discussions with a range of stakeholders about your program. This is your chance to do that. Ask your board and top leadership to conduct most of these interviews.* It's a great outreach and public relations opportunity and will send the message that your program isn't an add-on to the community but part of its fabric.

1. **Who should be interviewed?**
   - Current and former youth in your program, plus families, as appropriate
   - Partner organizations such as schools, job programs, law enforcement, homeless advocacy groups, and housing organizations
   - Local political leadership, such as mayor and city council members
   - Donors and funders

2. **Generate a list of names associated with each of the groups above, and assign them along with a semi-structured interview template.**

Each interviewer prepares written notes that are then shared. Be sure to set a deadline. Ten days should be more than enough.

3. **Questions to ask community stakeholders.**
   1. What do you value about your relationship with the Sunrise RHY program?
   2. In what ways has the Sunrise program been most successful, in your view?
   3. In your opinion, what is the unique service Sunrise alone can offer, or it offers better than anyone else in the community?
   4. What are Sunrise's challenges, or what should the program be working on improving?
   5. What trends are you seeing that Sunrise should pay attention to?
   6. If you could change anything about Sunrise's services, what would it be?

4. **Convene to review. What are people telling you? What did you already know? What was a surprise—pleasant or otherwise? What new opportunities could be emerging?**

*As noted, there are great benefits to asking board members to make these calls. But there are times when your program should consider paying an outside consultant instead—for example, if a controversy is brewing and there is reason to believe a neutral interviewer could achieve more candid responses, if board members are new and unfamiliar with the organization's history and services, if board members cannot make the time to play phone tag with interviewees, or if you would like input from a source that has been critical of your program in the past.

Exercise: How Your Staff Sees Your RHY Program

Now that you've gathered information from the community and reviewed it together, ask yourselves these questions:

1. **As program insiders, what do we know for a fact that our program does exceptionally well?**

2. **If given the choice, what would we keep, improve, or outsource to some other program, or even get rid of altogether?**

Naming Your Core Priorities

If you're having a hard time prioritizing or trimming your current services, consider that not all standard elements of RHY programming fit every location. If your RHY program is located in an area with harsh winters, you know sending outreach workers onto the streets may not be particularly effective in the coldest months. Or perhaps you know your drop-in center has never attracted the young people most in need of shelter or supportive services. Now is the chance to take your experience and create a slightly different program, possibly one that is narrower but goes deeper in some important way.

And consider something else. Society, the economy, your community, and youth themselves are always changing, and your services should change as well. Is your RHY program addressing all the issues it could be, or is something going on locally you know you should take on directly but haven't? If there's a new underlying risk factor for young people, working on it (either alone or with a partner) can make you more relevant to your community and more competitive for new sources of funding.

Is your RHY program addressing all the issues it could be, or is something going on locally you know you should take on directly but haven't?

Exercise: Zeroing in on What You Do Best

Now that you've discussed these questions as a group, fill out the following table. The left column names typical RHY program components. No RHY program will do all of them, and your program may offer services not noted here. Find the ones your program offers, and consider how you would change them, if at all. Again, you're thinking about what you know your program does well and what is most needed and appreciated by the community.

BASED ON WHAT OUR RHY PROGRAM DOES BEST, WE SHOULD . . .					
	Maintain core service at the current level	Scale up or down	Begin sharing expenses across our organization	Begin sharing costs with outside partners	Drop service altogether
Academic tutoring					
Adolescent counseling					
Basic needs (hygiene items, socks, blankets)					
Case management					
Childcare					
Drop-in location / services					
Educational testing / referral					
Emergency housing (shelter, host home, etc.)					
Family counseling					
Food (pantry or meal site)					
Formal mentoring					
HIV/STI testing					
Jobs program					
Mobile crisis response					

Onsite health care (including mobile van)					
Prevention					
Recreation					
Relationship/sexuality education					
Service learning / youth volunteer projects					
Street outreach					
Substance abuse prevention					
Substance abuse treatment					
Transitional housing					
Transportation					
Truancy reduction					
Young parent education					
Youth social enterprise					
Additions and innovations					

Source: Adapted from Nonprofit Funding & Fiscal Solutions, University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute, 2017.

Your New Budget

If you and your colleagues have worked through the preceding section, you've just finished the hardest part, which is re-imagining your program. That's hard work, so congratulations! You've named the program you want to run and the one your community needs. Now you need to figure out what that program costs. This is different from the amount you spend on your program now, given that you're used to covering services and activities that may no longer be relevant.

To get started, try this mental exercise. Take your current grant amount and cut it in half. How would you continue providing your core services on this reduced amount? Hopefully you will never have to operate on half of your usual budget or trim it so dramatically. This is a "what-if" exercise to get you and your colleagues thinking about your non-negotiable priorities.

Exercise: How Much Funding Do You Actually Need?

The tool below, from GuideStar, presents the budget of a youth organization and poses a series of questions you can ask about your own program, such as how much of your budget is fixed, how much is flexible, and whether you are in a position to turn down funding that may take you off course.

Financial SCAN Report for Local Youth Group, GuideStar/Nonprofit Finance Fund (2013): https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/733304/docs/AnonymousReport-final.pdf?t=1503341477278

Once you've figured out what financial support you absolutely must have to run the program your community needs, you're ready to think about:

1. How you can operate those services at a lower cost, and/or
2. How you can raise new funds to support them.

Both topics are addressed in detail in Section 4.

Want to go deeper?

Resiliency Guide 2.0, S. D. Bechtel, Jr., Foundation (2016). This is a discussion of the seven factors of organizational resiliency, how to know if you have them, and what to do to strengthen them.
http://sdbjrfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/ResiliencyGuide.pdf

Building Sustainable Programs: The Resource Guide, Office of Adolescent Health (2014). Developed for teen pregnancy prevention grantees, this guide includes tips and exercises applicable to any youth-serving program. https://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/sites/default/files/sustainability-resource-guide.pdf

"When You've Got to Cut Costs Now," *Harvard Business Review* (2010). This is a discussion of how organizations can trim 10% or more of their budget without major ramifications.
https://hbr.org/2010/05/when-youve-got-to-cut-costs-now

SECTION 2: BUILDING TO YOUR STRENGTHS

RHY programs are good at seeing youth from a strengths-based perspective. They need to see themselves that way, too. No matter how concerned you are about financing your program without a large federal grant, it is vitally important that you take some time to think about all the resources you *do* have. Now is the time to take inventory, because these are truly the arrows in your quiver—what you bring to the challenge of sustaining your program. You may never have thought about your assets in this way. If not, you probably haven't utilized them to the fullest extent that you could. So let's break it down.

Your People

Your people are your greatest asset. You have staff at many levels with many different kinds of expertise; you also have advisors, board members, organizational leaders, and young people. All are ambassadors for your program, capable of spreading the good word about what you do and building important relationships in your community. But it's unlikely you've intentionally mobilized all of them to advance your mission. In fact, they may have never even considered the fact they are emissaries, representing the program to everyone in their social and professional circles.

Resilient programs need everybody on board toward the larger mission, from the board chair to the part-time overnight respite worker. Every individual on staff should know how to do two essential things:
(1) summarize your RHY program's work in compelling language, and (2) tell stories from your program.

Both of these issues are discussed at length in subsequent sections. [See Communicating About Your RHY Program on page 23 and Creating a Culture of Philanthropy in Your RHY Program on page 27].

Does Your RHY Program Have a Culture of Learning?

- As a program, we invest considerable time in reflection and learning.
- We're good idea generators and can name times we've experimented with new ways of doing things.
- We constructively examine mistakes and missteps.
- We have, and use, accountability mechanisms such as performance management systems.
- We regularly collect and analyze data to evaluate our performance.
- Our staff understands the basics of evaluation and why collecting quality data is necessary.
- We have a strong infrastructure to manage data and use it to track progress toward our goals.
- We invest in external evaluation.
- We use our data to inform decision making.

Source: Adapted from Resiliency Guide 2.0, S. D. Bechtel, Jr., Foundation (2016).

New Stories Your Data Can Tell

For the past decade, **Northeast Kingdom Youth Services** (NEKYS) in St. Johnsbury, Vermont, has been collecting data using a survey based on the Search Institute's developmental assets. The survey was designed by members of the statewide RHY coalition and refined over time, and it now includes 22 questions in three domains, with responses entered into a central database managed by the coalition. Agencies can run their own reports and use before-and-after youth scores to talk not just about what services they've provided but the differences they make in young people's attitudes, beliefs, and relationships to the community. Staff fill out the survey at entry, six-month intervals, and exit, based on what they've learned during case management meetings and interactions with clients. Statements young people respond to include: "I do at least one thing to be healthy," and "I have supportive relationships with one or more family members." NEKYS notes improvements in scores in grant applications as evidence of the protective factors its program helps to build.

Proof Your Program Is Effective

As a current or former FYSB RHY grantee, you have the data you've been required to collect and report, plus any additional data you've decided to gather over time. At a minimum, you know:

- How many young people you have served
- Their demographics and incoming status (educational, mental health, etc.)
- What services you provided to them
- Their status upon leaving your program

These are powerful indicators of your program's scope and impact, and you already have them. Use them! These statistics should go in your standard case statement and in your social media, newsletters, and other regular communications with stakeholders, donors, and current and potential funders.

As helpful as your RHY-HMIS data can be, other information can be powerful as well. Think hard about other data you have collected over time. What evidence do you have that your program helps young people stabilize, reunite with their families, or become successful adults?

Now think about what else you could be collecting going forward. If you're not already doing it, consider measuring growth in:

- Attainment of life skills (mastering self-care, home maintenance, budgeting, saving money, etc.)
- Social competencies like how to resolve conflicts peacefully or repair relationships with family
- Number of youth graduating from high school, entering college, or graduating from college
- Number of youth getting jobs, particularly living-wage jobs, and number of youth retained in jobs more than six months
- Number of youth reporting improved mental or physical health
- Post-exit housing stability

Return on investment (ROI)

Part of your effectiveness can be framed in terms of cost savings to society. For every dollar invested in your RHY program, how much is being returned to society in the form of salaries and taxes and in reduced public assistance costs? As complicated as such calculations can be, there is substantial evidence to support the idea that services to homeless youth do yield considerable social savings. The Jeremiah Program, a national program working in multiple cities, provides housing, education, job training, and childcare to poor, single-mother families. According to evaluators, the program's "two-generation" approach returns $2.47 in net benefits for each dollar invested (Diaz & Piña, 2013). Those savings come from the mothers' increased taxable income and lower reliance on public benefits. In the second generation, they derive from children's higher eventual wages and decreased costs associated with special education and crime. A similar analysis of a family-style housing program for homeless youth in Australia suggested even more impressive results, calculating that society as a whole reaped $12 for every dollar spent (Lighthouse Foundation, 2012). In that analysis, benefits to all stakeholders, including youth workers who grew in professional competence as a result of their employment, were estimated.

Your Expertise, Accomplishments, and Reputation

Chances are good that your RHY program does something in your community that no one else does or could do. Chances are also good that you've developed important processes or tools for your community or even for the RHY field in general. These are important markers of your expertise, and you should claim them proudly. The following exercise will help you identify your program's bona fides.

Exercise: Your RHY Bona Fides

Check all that apply:

1. Our RHY program has won:

☐ Awards ____

☐ Other official local, state, or federal recognition ____________________

2. Our RHY staff has created, produced, or collaborated with outside professionals on:

☐ Innovative practices in working with young people

☐ Research (self-published or peer-reviewed)

☐ Needs assessments

☐ Qualitative or quantitative program evaluations

☐ Innovative partnerships

☐ Conference presentations

☐ Media op-ed pieces

☐ Toolkits

☐ Case studies

☐ Tip sheets for youth, family, or caregivers

☐ Online mapping tools

☐ A blog

Now answer these questions:

3. Our RHY staff has taken leadership or been active in these coalitions or on these committees:

____

____

4. If our staff didn't provide ____________________, it simply wouldn't be available in our community.

Deep Knowledge of Your Community

Your RHY program may be one of many social service programs in your town, city, or county, but your expertise and experience are likely unique. Your staff understands homeless and disconnected young people and their needs in a way no one else does and has a keen appreciation for the array of supports your community currently does, and does not, offer. Your program also knows what new trends are creating opportunities and risks for young people. This knowledge makes you an important and respected voice.

So, knowing what you do, what can you demonstrate about current youth needs in your community? What can you say about what is going right and wrong for vulnerable young people, and what absolutely needs to be improved? Consider the **Bill Wilson Center** in Santa Clara, California. In 2017, its staff utilized a large-scale peer-report survey process to develop an estimate of the number of homeless young people in their area. The staff surveyed high school students in low- and high-income communities and found that 17% were either homeless or couch-surfing or knew someone under the age of 19 who was. The agency also surveyed students in two community colleges and found that an alarming 44% of respondents were unhoused or knew another student who was. The agency plans to use the data to persuade local partners to engage with these young people now, before their housing problems escalate and derail them. It also started an online campaign to get parents to talk to high-school-age couch-surfers. Finally, the agency plans to use the information to apply for additional funding to support programming for homeless youth and young adults in the county.

Partners, Allies, and Champions

Your RHY program likely has a large network of partners, allies, and champions—schools, advocacy groups, local employers, police, other social service providers, youth, and parents. Think about them. Who in this circle will actually notice and be upset if your program can no longer serve vulnerable young people? These are the individuals who will make calls for you, collaborate with you on new funding initiatives, and help you think through your options. Some of these friends will be obvious; you've known them a long time and have them on speed dial. Others may be people you have not been in frequent contact with but who have seen the benefits of your programming and will happily carry water for you if asked. Name them and their organizations, and then name any decision makers or funders with whom they are associated.

Exercise: Your Wells of Support

Name	Organization	Important Connections

Other Assets

Most RHY programs don't stand entirely alone. Usually they are part of more comprehensive services; perhaps they operate alongside programs serving youth in foster care, for instance. Contraction in one program area can sometimes be offset by expansion in another, and occasionally funding can be blended to serve populations with overlapping characteristics or needs. The property your organization may own—the multi-bedroom home that houses your maternity group home or transitional living program, for instance—can likewise find flexible uses between periods of active program operation, even purposes (such as providing low-cost rental housing) that generate income.

Finally, from consultant Sandy Rees, consider the assets you have that don't fit into any of the above categories:

- A compelling mission
- A large, active donor base
- Well-known staff or board members
- A facility that lends itself well to tours
- Organizational vehicles that are visible and driven around town regularly
- An attractive, active website and social media presence with many likes, follows, and visitors who post
- Opportunities for earned income
- A celebrity who supports your organization

Contraction in one program area can sometimes be offset by expansion in another, and occasionally funding can be blended to serve populations with overlapping characteristics or needs.

Want to go deeper?

"From Tokens to Leaders: Youth Perspectives on Youth Organizing" [Podcast], University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute (2017). This is a discussion with young people on youth advisory councils around the country. https://soundcloud.com/user-598962638/from-tokens-to-leaders-tpp-youth-leaders-share-their-experiences

"Boards: The Secret to Successful Fundraising" [Blog post], Amy Eisenstein (2011). This describes how to intentionally create dynamic boards, train board members in fundraising, and leverage their contacts. http://www.amyeisenstein.com/boards-the-secret-to-successful-fundraising/

Homeless Youth Estimation Project, Youth Catalytics (n.d.). This describes peer-report methodology designed to provide a reliable estimate of the number of youth in any given school district who have left home and are living somewhere else temporarily. https://www.youthcatalytics.org/tools/homeless_and_transient_youth_counting/

Youth Count! Initiative, U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (2012). This describes innovative strategies piloted for counting and understanding the needs of unstably housed youth populations. https://www.usich.gov/tools-for-action/youth-count

Voices of Youth Count, Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago (n.d.). This includes tools and resources for homeless service providers, including "Missed Opportunities: National Estimates," a research brief on the prevalence of youth homelessness issued in October 2017. http://voicesofyouthcount.org/chapin-hall/

Asset Mapping, UCLA Center for Health Policy Research (n.d.). These are training materials on the what, when, and how of asset mapping. http://healthpolicy.ucla.edu/programs/health-data/trainings/Documents/tw_cba20.pdf

A Super Simple Fundraising Plan Template, Network for Good & Third Space Studio (2017). This includes seven steps that help small, non-profit organizations set priorities and goals for individual giving plans (or any kind of fundraising). http://bit.ly/2xqqsv1

SECTION 3: SHAPING PERCEPTIONS TO GROW COMMUNITY SUPPORT

How is your program perceived? Is it a well-known institution in the community, recognized for doing vitally important work with young people who need urgent help? Or does it operate under the radar, known primarily to just a few community partners? If you have a great deal of support, good for you; keep going and grow it further. If you don't, you'll need to cultivate it, reaching out in ways you may never have done before. But before you ask for your community's help, consider what it is you truly want.

What Do You Want from Your Community?

Before you start promoting your program extensively, it is important to be clear about what you are asking from your community. Or, more precisely, what is it you are asking of the various groups within it. What are you trying to do, create, or grow? Who can help you, and what precisely do you want them to do?

For instance, your primary goal as an RHY program is undoubtedly to ensure homeless young people in your community make successful transitions to adulthood. For them to do that, they need a number of things, including a healthy place to live at least until they graduate from high school. To control the cost of your housing program, you may determine you need volunteer host homes. How many? Five? Twenty? Who are the people in your community most likely to be able and willing to provide host homes? Young people also need places to gain job skills and work in the community. What kinds of employers are the best matches for your youth? How many jobs or training sites would be ideal? How can you influence those who make hiring decisions?

All Communities Are Diverse

The key to crafting effective messages and requests is tailoring them to the intended audience. Aiming a message at "the general public" won't work—the general public, as such, doesn't even exist. Think of all the people in your community. You know they don't fit into one box, and you know they have varying assumptions about vulnerable youth and the work programs like yours do.

Different people also have very different things to offer your program. Some are in a position to improve state policy on housing and supports to homeless youth. Others are in a position to put vulnerable youth high on the local government agenda. Some can advance your cause with large donors or local foundations. Still others can refer their friends to your services.

Think about whose opinions matter the most to your success and who is closest to the individuals making important decisions. Is it young people ages 15 to 21, middle and high school administrators, juvenile justice workers, local small business people, or local foundations dedicated to improving education? Think narrowly. Each group needs a separate message and a separate "ask."

Getting to Know Your Potential Supporters

How do you persuade people in your community to care about homeless youth and the services you provide them? The short answer is by trying to see the world as they do. Staff in RHY programs tend to subscribe to a similar set of core beliefs and values. Not surprisingly, others may not share them. Since you're unlikely to fundamentally change anybody's worldview, you must learn to align your messages with the values of each particular audience.

Exercise: What Do Our Audiences Care About?

Spend some time getting to know your audiences. For each audience that is important to the success of your program, ask yourself the following questions. (The point is not to judge people for their attitudes but to identify those attitudes so you can approach your audiences in ways they can "hear.")

» **What media do they consume?** It's natural for people to tune in to news and opinions that reinforce their worldview. What are those news sources? Note the articles and videos your target audience members forward to friends and family and the sources of information they rely on to justify their positions.

» **What issues do they publicly associate with?** What causes do they support? What networks and associations do they belong to?

» **What do they care about and worry about most?** What's their fundamental concern when it comes to young people? Public health funders may be primarily interested in the spread of HIV among vulnerable teens. High school administrators may be interested in finding a housing solution for the young people in their schools who are drifting from couch to couch and sometimes approaching teachers or guidance counselors for help. Business people may mostly care about the readiness of the entry-level workforce. You will secure these groups' support when you offer to help them advance their own agendas, not just yours.

Communicating about Runaway and Homeless Youth

To be moved to action, people in your community must be persuaded of the following:

» Homeless youth aren't to blame for their own homelessness.
» Housing instability among youth is more common than most believe.
» Homelessness leads to adult poverty and greater social costs for everyone.
» The action you want them to take is consistent with their own values.

Personal stories about young people who have experienced homelessness—ones that explain why youth ended up on the streets, what they had to endure there, and how they've worked to improve their circumstances via your program—can get this message across better than any set of statistics.

"I Thought I Wasn't Meant for Anything More"

My name is Carol and I've been a resident at **Sasha Bruce's Transitional Living Program** for eight months now. Before I came here, I did not have a GED or diploma or job. I was involved in an unhealthy relationship, and was addicted to drugs. My family had even turned their backs on me. I felt at the time that that was how my life was supposed to be; that I wasn't meant for anything more.

The staff here has helped me deal with a lot and shown me there are people who care and who won't throw you away because you made a mistake. TLP has shown me that when a problem comes up, I can't react with a temper, and that I have to think about ways to resolve the issue. They've taught me how to live with other people, negotiate on things with my roommate, and how to appropriately stick up for myself. The staff helped me with finding a job and activities to get involved in.

Since finding out about this program and being here my life has changed significantly. I've been sober for almost a year. I got my GED in June. Once again, I have a relationship with my family and go to church every Sunday with my mom. I'm no longer in an abusive relationship. The staff here has helped me do things I never thought I'd be doing. I'm now enrolled at Gibbs College to get my Associates Degree in computer networking. I just know I wouldn't be where I am today without the TLP program and staff.

Source: Stories of Hope, Sasha Bruce (n.d.).

Characteristics of Compelling Stories about Young People

All stories are not created equal. Some are inauthentic-sounding or patently manipulative. Others are powerful and even life-changing. What's the difference between the two? Effective stories:

- Tell the true story of an individual, not a composite story.
- Focus on an actual person.
- Follow a narrative arc, presenting an individual in a bad situation that leads to crisis, which then leads to resolution.
- Tell the story from the perspective of the individual experiencing the crisis or a first-hand observer or helper.
- Don't use acronyms or social services jargon.
- Are short enough to tell in 1 to 2 minutes or even to post on Twitter.

Are you conflicted about telling stories about the young people receiving your services? Professionals in the field respect and honor young people and want to celebrate their strengths. Sharing sensational or lurid details about their lives denies youth dignity.

Using vague, sterile language to mask the reality of their experiences doesn't serve young people's interests either. Engendering support for youth requires speaking plainly and concretely—not to sensationalize or pander but to simply tell the truth. Just as you speak to young people in ways they understand; working hard every day to "meet them where they are," the same skills are needed to communicate with adults who may have misconceptions about youth experiencing homelessness.

The six primary types of stories described below put personal narratives front and center. Called the "Sacred Bundle" by corporate and non-profit communications consultant Andy Goodman, these are the six buckets every organization should be filling with stories.

- **The "nature of our challenge" story:** This story describes the problem you are trying to address with your services. Don't rely heavily on statistics. Stories mean more to people than numbers.
- **The creation story:** This is the "how we started" story—the story for internal or external use everyone in the program should know. (A good example of a creation story comes from **Karis, Inc.**, in Grand Junction, Colorado: http://thehousegj.org/index.php/history/.)
- **The emblematic success story:** This is the story that proves your program is having an impact, and in a way no other organization in your community could.
- **The values story**: How much do your services align with your values? Since many organizations proclaim similar values—collaboration, integrity, respect, etc.—you need to describe how your organization uniquely lives up to its beliefs.
- **The "striving to improve" story:** This story is for internal use. It says, "Sometimes we fall short, and sometimes we outright fail, but we always learn from our mistakes and do better next time."
- **The "where we are going" story:** This story presents an idealized vision of what the world would look like if your program were wildly successful. (This video, made for the British homeless charity Crisis, is a powerful example of this kind of story: https://lbbonline.com/news/new-crisis-film-imagines-waking-in-a-world-without-homelessness/.)

Source: Adapted from How to Create Nonprofit Stories that Inspire, Goodman, A. (2017).

The Power of Getting Personal

You're sitting in the stands at a local softball game, and you meet a person who asks you what you do for a living. You say, "I work for Sunrise Youth Services." The person says, "I don't think I've heard of Sunrise Youth Services." You say, "We offer an array of supports for vulnerable youth." The person says, "Oh."

Instead, you could have said the following: "Teenagers who have no homes come to us to get off the street. We take over the role of loving parent for a while, making sure the youth have a safe place to stay while we help them get healthy and finish school. Since they can't rely on their own parents, we teach them how to be adults, so they can go back out into the world and be independent."

This clearly isn't the only thing you could say, and it may not even reflect the central thrust of your work. Maybe your work is more about helping teens who have been sold for sex heal from the experience. Maybe it's about helping angry and fearful young people leave gang life and work toward something better. The point is to describe your work in simple and specific language—the language you would use, for example, with someone who knows absolutely nothing about your issue.

If you say, "We empower youth," instead of, "A 15-year-old girl came to us last week who had been living in a car with her boyfriend," you're missing a chance to convey the life-and-death importance of your work. Be specific and convey the details.

Talking about your program and clients in lay terms doesn't necessarily come naturally. The first step is recognizing some of the language you routinely use—with each other, with funders, and with the community—is insiders' lingo. For a clearer picture of do's and don'ts, try the exercises in "Words that Can Help Your Program, Words that Definitely Won't," a blog post from Youth Catalytics: https://www.youthcatalytics.org/8004-2/.

Resource: Storytelling Capture Tool

Most RHY programs understand they need to tell stories but don't have a way to consistently capture information on which those stories would be based. Ideally, your RHY staff should be developing many stories and banking them so you have them when you need them. This storytelling capture tool, developed by Youth Catalytics, is meant to help staff at different levels, and across sites, document the stories they see and follow up for more details if necessary. It also provides tips for documenting young people's consent to use their stories. Access a one-page printable PDF of this form here: https://www.youthcatalytics.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/story-capture-tool.pdf.

1. How did this young person come to your attention?
2. What did you initially notice about him or her?
3. What was his/her family situation like?
4. What was he/she struggling with?
5. What was his/her past like?
6. What did he or she do in your program—what actual activities?
7. How did you see him/her changing?
8. Was there a pivotal moment when you realized something had changed for the better? Describe if so.
9. What's his/her situation and attitude like right now?
10. What surprised you or impressed you about this change?

Source: Storytelling Capture Tool, Youth Catalytics (2017).

Formats for Stories

There are, of course, many ways to create stories about young people and many types of media in which they can appear. Today, storytelling technology is relatively cheap and easy to use. Digital stories, photovoice projects, and youth-led social media campaigns are all realistic possibilities for nearly any youth program.

For instance, *Health in My Hometown* was a youth photovoice project conducted in 16 communities in Minnesota, produced by Community Blueprint with funding from the Minnesota Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In it, young people received basic photojournalism training and then were asked to record the forces in their communities that kept them healthy and the forces that worked against their health. See the photos here: http://healthinmyhometown.org.

Digital stories by or about individual young people, such as *Jason & Ebony*, produced by Covenant House, can offer powerful portraits of young people navigating crisis and coming out the other side with new resources, opportunities, and hope. See the story here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4AohxX4LUvo.

Not all digital stories need to be professionally produced. Sometimes, lack of polish itself is a mark of authenticity. For instance, this digital story, made by a young Native American man seeking to reconcile his sexual identity with his religious faith, is compelling precisely because it looks so homemade. *My Calling: Isaiah's Story:* https://vimeo.com/142911828

Even public art can raise the profile of homeless youth. See this work, created as part of *Street Stories*, a creative partnership between Depaul, a British charity, and a London advertising firm: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/03/28/street-stories_n_5030021.html.

Communicating about Your RHY Program

You likely know you should have a written communications plan—one that lays out clear goals, overarching strategies, and tactical activities. If you don't have such a plan, it is probably because either you view communications as a secondary activity, or your program simply doesn't have the time and expertise to think much about it. To sustain your program, however, you need the active, ongoing support of key audiences and stakeholders. The right messages from the right messengers can persuade and build good will among your donors, legislators, community partners, and others.

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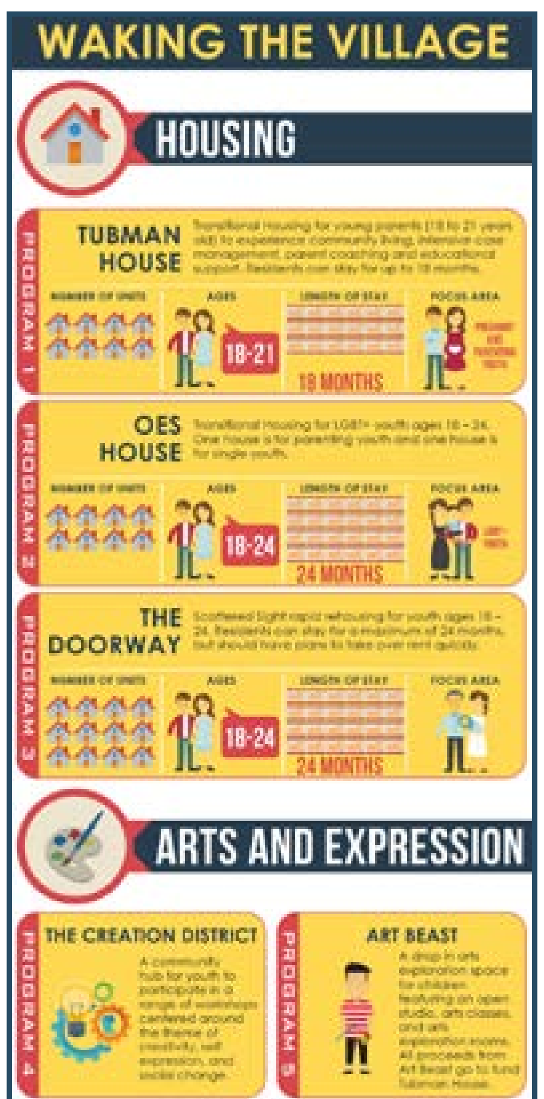
It isn't necessary to communicate with every audience about every aspect of your program, but it is important to identify your programmatic goals, the specific audiences that can help you achieve them, and the messages they need to hear to take action. Then and only then do you need to decide what tactics (e.g., video, mail, traditional and social media) to use to reach your target audiences. (To build a solid and practical communications plan, see *Smart Chart 3.0*, cited at the end of this section, along with many other tools and resources.)



Once you have crafted your plan, you'll need to devote some resources to executing it effectively. At a minimum, you will need:

» Internal agreement and alignment on the goals stated in your plan.
» At least a small budget and dedicated staff time.
» A staff person trained to speak to the media and a staff and board that know to direct questions from the media to the spokesperson.
» A way to measure progress toward communications goals.
» A crisis communications plan in case something comes up that could hurt your public reputation.

Using Statistics Effectively

For decades, federally funded RHY programs have been required to collect data on their clients and services. They have also been encouraged to use those data to educate their communities about the positive outcomes their programs achieve. A decade ago, this meant sharing bulleted lists of your most impressive statistics in every newsletter, program brochure, and grant application. Contemporary understanding of how human brains receive and process information indicates statistics rarely have the persuasive power once assumed. Indeed, brain and behavior science demonstrates that if you're trying to convince someone who doesn't already believe in your cause, leading with a statistical argument can actually backfire.

So should you throw data out the window when it comes to communicating with potential partners or supporters? No. But use it sparingly and present it in visually appealing ways. People in your community will be most persuaded by just one or two compelling statistics, ones that are carefully chosen because they relate to the story you're telling and the intention you have for your audience's response.

Data Visualization

Attractive, simple data visualization techniques, expressed as infographics, charts, or maps, are powerful ways to:

» Launch a fundraising campaign and provide updates.
» Express the scope of need
» Share a human story.
» Create annual reports that graphically summarize your work, clients, transformations, donations, and budget.
» Describe your services. See the example to the left from **Waking the Village** in Sacramento, California.

In Section 2, you considered the data you're already required to report, plus any additional information you may be collecting. Infographics are one potential vehicle for these data.

Even if you don't have access to a graphic design professional or advanced design software, there are a number of free or low-cost tools available online that can help. Additional resources with examples of data visualization approaches and tools are included at the end of this section. Learning to use appealing visuals can help programs capture an audience's attention and simplify complex issues.

Video

In these days of YouTube, Vimeo, and other online video sites, many RHY grantees find it simple to make and upload videos about their programs. Again, the most powerful videos you can create are those that tell stories—the stories of young people, the stories of their families, or the stories of your staff. Depending on how professional you need those videos to be—and, as noted, "polish" isn't always necessary or even desirable—you could spend almost nothing or several thousand dollars. (If you have a video producer on your board or among your friends, you're in luck!)

Again, the most powerful videos you can create are those that tell stories—the stories of young people, the stories of their families, or the stories of your staff.

See how **Daybreak Inc.** in Dayton, Ohio, and **Vermont Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs** offer very different examples of how to bring members of your community into your day-to-day work with young people. See Daybreak's video series here: http://daybreakdayton.org/index.php?/a/News/Videos.html. In Vermont, the coalition hired a professional ethnographer to capture stories. The coalition has used the videos in staff training and on social media, and is exploring entering them into the film festival circuit and airing them on public access channels. See the Vermont videos here: https://vcrhyp.org/site-snapshots.html.

Not surprisingly, one of the best ways to plan and create videos is by engaging young people themselves, particularly if the audience is other youth. In this Q&A, youth media consultant Kenny Neal Shults offers insight on how to harness the talents of young people to create powerful video campaigns: https://www.youthcatalytics.org/publications/interviews/qa_youth_digital_messages/.

Are you looking for additional inspiration? Focus Ireland released a video on youth homelessness that trended on Twitter immediately following its release. Take a look at *I Can't Sleep* to discover why: https://vimeo.com/233299441.

Want to go deeper?

Smart Chart 3.0, Spitfire Strategies (n.d.). This is a step-by-step guide for creating or upgrading a communications plan. http://www.spitfirestrategies.com/tools/#tab1

Digital S.M.A.R.T.S., Spitfire Strategies (n.d.). This includes tips for non-profit organizations looking to expand digital reach, understand different platforms, and engage effectively through digital formats. http://www.spitfirestrategies.com/tools/#tab5

Discovering the Activation Point, Spitfire Strategies (2006). This includes best practices for planning for persuasion, tailored to the unique needs of social change organizations. http://www.spitfirestrategies.com/tools/#tab2

Heartwired: Human Behavior, Strategic Opinion Research and the Audacious Pursuit of Social Change, Pérez and Simon (2017). This offers the latest research on audience research, storytelling, and persuasive communication. http://heartwiredforchange.com/download/

Free-Range Thinking, The Goodman Center (n.d.). This is a monthly newsletter devoted to helping non-profit organizations advance their strategic goals through effective storytelling. http://www.thegoodmancenter.com/resources/newsletters/

Project Zoom-In, Youth Catalytics (2009). This provides tools for youth-driven community needs assessments, plus a photovoice manual. https://www.youthcatalytics.org/tools/project_zoom-in/

"Data Visualization 101: How to Choose the Right Chart or Graph for Your Data" [Blog post], Hubspot (2017). This offers five questions to ask yourself when deciding which type of visual representation to apply to data. https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/data-visualization-choosing-chart

"Let's Get Visual: Nonprofit Data Visualization" [Blog post], Elevation (2016). This provides basic tips about how to add visual appeal to communications and where to find tools. https://blog.elevationweb.org/nonprofit-data-visualization

"The Top 9 Infographic Template Types" [Blog post], Venngage (2018). This explains the advantages of using different infographic layouts and includes examples of each version. https://venngage.com/blog/9-types-of-infographic-template/

SECTION 4: BUILDING YOUR PROGRAM'S FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Most RHY programs know diversity in funding and partnerships is the most effective way to build financial stability and long-term sustainability. And they also know it's important to start thinking about sustainability early, in fact immediately upon award of a federal grant.

Of course most programs do think about how they're going to fund their programs from year to year. In fact, many continually wrestle with financial worries, knowing that at least some of their programs are at risk of shrinking or even disappearing. But cultivating new, sustaining resources requires you to think in new ways, invest your time differently, and do different things. One of the most important strategies is to create a culture of philanthropy in your organization as a whole, or in other words, find ways staff and leaders at all levels can play a role in sustainability.

That's what this section is about.

Remember this: (a) It's never too early to start, and (b) it's never too late to start. No matter where you may be in your federal grant cycle, now is the time to jump in and begin creating a solid plan for life after your federal grant. You'll be stronger as a result.

Creating a Culture of Philanthropy in Your RHY Program

Some RHY programs rely on a dedicated development person or department to write grants, run annual appeals, and organize fundraising events. If that's you, and your program is embedded in a much larger organization, perhaps that development department is generally adequate for your needs. On the other hand, perhaps it can't spend as much time on your RHY program as you would like. Or maybe you don't have an actual development person at all and instead parcel out grant writing and fundraising duties to a small number of individuals in your leadership. If they're stretched, perhaps you keep small projects in-house but hire outside grant writers to do the heavy lifting on big grants.

Whatever your arrangement, it's likely you consistently find yourself needing more support to provide the quality or quantity of services you wish to offer. "More support" generally means support from without—more donors, for instance. But more support should also come from within. Generating adequate support for your program can never be the job of just one or two people. That doesn't mean every single staff should be soliciting donations, but it does mean everyone has to play an active role in representing the program in the community and building the support it needs.

Beliefs Common to Organizations with Successful Fundraising Programs

» Fundraising is a form of organizing and power-building, not merely a strategy for financing the organization's work.

» Development and communications are inextricably linked. Compelling communications are a powerful way to acquire, engage, and retain donors.

» With support, all staff can play important roles in fundraising.

» The conversation about fundraising goals and progress belongs everywhere. It's not contained in a single department or confined to a single team.

Exercise: Do You Have a Culture of Philanthropy? A Quiz

Ask your staff to consider these statements individually, and then share their thoughts in a group setting. Encourage everyone to be totally candid.

1. Fundraising is our development department's job; the rest of the staff is only involved in superficial ways.
2. Everybody in our program knows how to talk effectively about our mission.
3. Sometimes we have to take on projects that aren't really our specialty—financially, that's the only way to survive.
4. We contact donors during fund drives, but aside from that, we're not particularly engaged with them.
5. Our entire board is active in fundraising.
6. Our main goal is growing our donor list.
7. Our staff and board members interact frequently—they know and like each other.
8. We put particular focus on keeping the donors we have.
9. Every staff member in our program understands how to be a good ambassador to the community.
10. If I want to find additional money for my program, it's up to me. None of my colleagues can offer substantial help.
11. Outside of our federal grant(s), my RHY program doesn't really have a funding strategy.
12. In my program, we tend to work in silos; everybody has a particular role and sticks to it.
13. We make an ongoing effort to thoughtfully involve young people in our fundraising efforts.

In a truly philanthropic culture, answers should be: 1, no; 2, yes; 3, no; 4, no; 5, yes; 6, no; 7, yes; 8, yes; 9, yes; 10, no; 11, no; 12, no; and 13, yes.

Source: Adapted from Beyond Fundraising: What Does it Mean to Build a Culture of Philanthropy?, Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund (2015).

Making Fundraising a Part of Everyone's Job

Asking RHY staff to take a measure of responsibility for the well-being of the program as a whole is asking them to keep the big picture front and center. At the most basic level, the big picture will always be the organization's mission, vision, and values. It may sound corny, but you should laminate and post these in a highly visible location so staff and leadership alike can be reminded daily of your overarching goal—the reason you all come to work, the reason you work here instead of someplace else.

Below are specific points of entry where your program can acclimate staff to the idea that everyone is responsible for the program's quality and longevity.

Hiring

In a standard interview, applicants are asked why they are drawn to the position and to the organization itself. Even at this early point, they should be able to express the mission as they understand it and why the services being provided in the community are important and necessary. You might consider adding these two questions:

- » How would you describe the RHY population in our community to someone who doesn't know anything about them?
- » How would you describe our program and the work we do?

Orientation

If you're setting new expectations for hires, or formalizing ones that have previously gone unspoken, orientation is the most effective time to do it.

- » Include some time with the development and communications directors (in many cases, these duties fall to the same person). New staff should be thoroughly briefed in the messages the program has developed for particular audiences and stakeholder groups. There should never be a time when a staff person is stumped on how to describe the program to teachers, guidance counselors, businesspeople, or local city council members—or anyone else, for that matter.
- » During orientation, new hires should learn where and how they will be expected to assist development efforts—for instance, by selling tickets to fundraising events, representing the organization at community events on and off duty, noting and passing on information about potential volunteers and donors, or thanking supporters.

New staff should be thoroughly briefed in the messages the program has developed for particular audiences and stakeholder groups.

Job Description

All staff should have a section of their job description that makes plain the expectation that they are an emissary for the organization, and beyond the day-to-day work, they are expected to both initiate and accept any and all opportunities to educate the community about the organization and its mission.

Weekly Supervision and Staff Meetings

Each time you introduce your RHY program and its work to someone new, you're potentially introducing it to everyone that person knows as well.

The standard agenda for individual and group meetings should include time to review community outreach experiences staff members have had in the past week and anticipate those coming up. Staff should be reminded to think about and identify new opportunities in those interactions. Did a staff member attend a meeting with new people who are open to partnering on a critical new issue? Did someone meet a clergy person who mused out loud about how her congregation is trying to increase its engagement with young people? Did you run into a member of the local parent-teacher association who confided that the school district is struggling to serve more and more disconnected youth? Each time you introduce your RHY program and its work to someone new, you're potentially introducing it to everyone that person knows as well. Make the most of these chances to draw new supporters, donors, and volunteers into your orbit.

Annual Review

In most annual performance reviews, the supervisor and staff member reflect on their established goals, achievements, and any obstacles they experienced during the past year. It's unusual for an individual staff member (other than development personnel) to be held responsible for achievements that benefit the organization as a whole. This is a missed opportunity for praise where an employee stepped up, or encouragement where an employee could have done more. Include a section in the performance review that addresses this specifically.

How Different Fundraising Methods Stack Up

If your organization is already juggling multiple funding sources for a single program, you likely know each has its own benefits and challenges. For example, while state contracts might represent a reliable, ongoing source of revenue, they may be prescriptive and rigid in terms of program eligibility and requirements. Private donations are generally the most flexible, but soliciting them may feel like a never-ending chore. The table below details the pros and cons of a range of revenue sources.

Funding Sources: The Easy, the Difficult, and the In-Between

	Pros	Cons
Individual Solicitation	» Most effective of all fundraising methods » Fastest turnaround time » Cultivated and engaged donors often give repeatedly and increasingly over time » Builds community support » Creates a diversified funding stream	» Labor- and time-intensive, requiring high levels of board and volunteer engagement » Need to train and prepare solicitors to ask for money » Need clear case statement and purpose of ask » Requires ongoing, active program of donor research and cultivation to build support over time » Requires planning and follow-through to be successful
Large Private or Family Foundations	» Grants may be sizeable, sometimes multi-year » Clear, prescribed, and accessible application process » Initial letter of inquiry requirement can save time » May foster partnership with grantee, even guiding later-stage grant development	» Highly competitive » Time-limited grants; unlikely to provide ongoing support » Later-stage grant development can be time-intensive » Preference for innovative, replicable, high-impact projects » Unlikely to fund local direct service programs, unless the local community is a specific focus of the funder
Small Private or Family Foundations	» Simple, often unstructured written application process » Personal connections with foundation/family members may increase funding success » May provide ongoing funding over time	» Often without professional staff and thus less accessible » Awards are often small » Awards may go to predetermined organizations » Applicant may not receive award without personal connection

Large Corporations and Corporate Foundations	» May make sizeable grants » Clear, prescribed, and accessible application process » Initial letter of inquiry requirement can save time » May suggest or encourage cause-related marketing » May be influenced by employee recommendation	» Grantee's program may need to have "public appeal"/not be controversial » May have geographical requirement that program is located near businesses or corporate headquarters » Grants may be highly competitive
Community Foundations	» Clear, prescribed, and accessible application process » Good source for local, direct-service, non-profit organizations » May be dependable source of continuous funding	» Often award smaller sums of money » May focus giving on specific initiatives or purposes
Civic and Religious Groups	» Good source of in-kind donations or giving tied to a group project » Responsive to requests made by congregants or group members » May be a good source of volunteers to help with specific fundraising efforts/initiatives	» Unlikely to support issues that do not resonate with congregants' or group members' beliefs » Tend to focus locally » Not likely to be a major source of cash revenue
Local Businesses	» In-person approach or informal/brief written request » Accessible » Usually reliable source of support for special events/fundraisers	» Gifts tend to be relatively small » Repeated requests may result in giving fatigue » Often more success if solicitor is friend/patron of the business

Federated Funds (United Ways, United Arts)	» Steady source of relatively large awards » Clear process » Professional staff	» Generally don't fund start-up organizations » Lengthy entry process » Time-consuming and somewhat bureaucratic, with annual fundraising process and periodic in-depth review of agency recipients
Government (State or Federal)	» Grants often sizeable and awarded for multiple years » Public agencies often hold bidders' conferences to provide applicants with Q&A opportunities » Public agencies strive to create level playing field for potential applicants » Application process highly prescribed	» Grant proposals often lengthy, detailed, and time-consuming » Failure to adhere to even seemingly minor requirements may doom a proposal » Must adhere to complex reporting/fiscal tracking requirements » Government-funded programs are dependent on legislative approval and political interests; programs can be defunded » Service delivery must conform to government requirements » Usually highly competitive
Special Events	» Can be a good way to build community support and reinforce branding/purpose of program » May be a renewable or annual source of funding that builds over time » Brings together constituents and community » Can be a major source of revenue	» Labor-intensive and time-consuming » Requires strong cadre of volunteers » May not generate expected revenue » Annual events may take several years to begin generating substantial profits » Depending on the event, donors may make small contributions but fail to engage in a more substantial way with the organization

Professional Fees (speaking, consultation, technical assistance, and training)	» Validates expertise of staff » Promotes message and cutting-edge practices » May generate significant income if the product has wide appeal » Reinforces expertise and accomplishments of agency or program » Furthers mission/purpose through dissemination and replication of models, approaches, etc.	» Requires marketing and outreach » May not generate significant income depending on marketing/ outreach strategies » Expertise may be identified with speaker or trainer more than with the organization » Increasing focus on professional consultation may pull some agencies away from their mission
Sales* (promotional items, training manuals or videos, etc.) *See page 51 for information on social enterprise and entrepreneurial approaches.	» Depending on items being sold, can raise significant income » Can build community support, reinforce branding » Sale of items made by participants or staff/volunteers validates individual skills » For some organizations (such as arts programs), products can reinforce mission and teach marketing skills to participants » Avenue for volunteer involvement	» Occasional sale of promotional items may not generate significant income » Successful marketing strategies require expertise and dedicated staff or volunteers » Upfront funds are usually required for the production of sales items » Inventory needs to be maintained

Source: Adapted from Nonprofit Funding & Fiscal Solutions/UMass Donahue Institute (2014). Based on Overview of Nonprofit Fundraising Sources and Approaches, McNamara (1999).

Giving Circles

If there's a new kid on the funding block, it's giving circles. Giving circles are networks of individual donors who come together to pool their contributions. The circles are growing in popularity, particularly among women, people of color, and small donors, all of whom have historically been under-represented in the philanthropic sector. Giving circles create the opportunity for groups to decide which causes they want to support and then direct significant funding toward them. Some giving circles function almost like foundations, with well-defined interests and eligibility standards. Many even issue their own RFPs. If you don't know of any giving circles in your city or region, do a quick Internet search. If they don't exist in your area, or they don't focus on vulnerable young people, encourage your board, volunteers, or long-time donors to start one. By drawing in others interested in providing critical support to homeless young people, they can dramatically increase the impact of their gifts. Amplifier is one example of how a network of giving circles inspired by Jewish values created a website to maximize its impact: https://www.amplifiergiving.org/.

Giving circles create the opportunity for groups to decide which causes they want to support and then direct significant funding toward them.

In addition to understanding your organization's capacity to effectively pursue various sources of revenue, RHY programs should also consider what the likely ROI will be for its efforts. Every mature program should have a balanced fundraising portfolio, and one approach isn't inherently superior to any other. But, all things considered, some tend to yield a greater bang for the buck. The following table is standard in the fundraising field and is intended not so much to predict costs of any particular approach in your case, but to suggest that costs can vary tremendously.

Return on Investment by Fundraising Method	
Special Events	.35 to .50 cents per dollar raised
Direct Mail List Acquisition	$1 to $1.25 per dollar raised
Direct Mail Renewal	.20 cents per dollar raised
Planned Giving	.25 cents per dollar raised (eventually)
Foundations	.20 cents per dollar raised
Major Gifts	.05 to .10 cents per dollar raised

Source: Adapted from Fund-Raising: Evaluating and Managing the Development Process, Greenfield (1999).

A Note about Jumping at Opportunities

Savvy non-profit organizations generally review dozens of requests for proposals and funding opportunity announcements each year from a range of public and private funders. Every one of those grant competitions (unless they are unusually restrictive) will attract many more proposals than they can possibly fund. Since proposals can take an enormous amount of time and effort to prepare, it makes sense to consider very carefully (a) whether your program should expend the effort, and (b) whether getting the award would actually be a good thing for your program.

These are particularly important questions if you intend the new grant to partly cover some of the services your RHY program used to provide. Before looking for replacement support from a funder that might be able to support some of your RHY services, ask yourself these questions.

Exercise: Assessing the "Fit" Between Program Vision and Funding Opportunities

Program Delivery

1. **Which of the following statements is most true about the new funding opportunity?**
   a. The funded service would be core to our organizational mission, vision, and values.
   b. It would be complementary, even if it is not fully within the core mission.
   c. It is outside our mission focus as currently defined, but other benefits from this contract/award could support organizational goals (e.g., satisfying a stakeholder, such as a board member or political ally).
   d. It would be a substantially new service area for us.

2. **In the event our organization's application for this funding source is unsuccessful,**
   a. We will still provide (or seek to provide) this specific service.
   b. We will not seek to provide this specific service.

3. **Which of the following statements is most true about the service this opportunity will fund?**
   a. If we do not provide this service in our community, it is unlikely any other organization will.
   b. At least one other organization provides a similar service in this community.
   c. There are several organizations that provide a similar service.

4. **Which of the following statements is most true about the physical facilities required to deliver these services?**
   a. The service would be delivered in existing facilities our organization currently owns, leases, or has access to, or in facilities provided for by the contract/award itself.
   b. The service would be delivered in existing facilities our organization has identified but does not yet own, lease, or have access to.
   c. The service would be delivered in facilities our organization owns, leases, or has access to, but would require renovation.
   d. The service would require construction of new facilities by our organization.
   e. The facilities required to deliver the services are unknown or have not yet been identified.

5. **Which of the following statements is most true about the staff needed to deliver the service you're seeking to fund?**
   a. Our organization currently has all the personnel and expertise on staff necessary to manage and deliver the program/service.
   b. Our organization currently has the personnel and expertise on staff to manage the service but would require additional staffing to deliver the program/service.
   c. Our organization requires additional managers and direct-service staff.

6. **Which of the following statements is most true about the service you're considering seeking funding for?**
   a. Our organization currently delivers or has recently delivered a service equivalent to the one that is the subject of this contract/award.
   b. Our organization currently or has recently delivered a service similar to the service that is the subject of this contract/award.
   c. Our organization currently delivers or has recently delivered a service of this basic type, though of a significantly different scope from the one we're considering here.
   d. Our organization has never delivered a service in this area.

If the potential grant is a good fit, most of your answers will be a's or b's. If they are not, reassess whether you really want to spend your time on the proposal. Unless your program is applying in partnership with other organizations, the work may simply be too much of a stretch, pulling you away from your core area of expertise.

Source: Adapted from Fund-Raising: Evaluating and Managing the Development Process, Greenfield (1999).

Private Donor Development

Most RHY programs have private donors, of course, and large, well-established agencies may have scores of donors, including major donors who contribute large sums. If this describes your program, you no doubt already know how important it is to both maintain these relationships and cultivate new ones. If you don't have a particularly long donor list, however, and don't have many large donors, here's a bit of advice on how to get started.

What You Need

» **Training and staff support.** You might think you can skip this step, but unless you're a seasoned development professional, assume there's a lot you don't know. Free or low-cost resources can be found through BoardSource and the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP). AFP has chapters across the country with local networking opportunities, trainings, and referrals to consultants specializing in resource development. Visit CFRE International to search for fundraising professionals in your area.

» **Policies for gift acceptance and procedures for gift processing.** Having a board-approved gift acceptance policy in place is considered a best practice by the IRS and fundraising experts alike. Gift processing procedures create protocols for how to accept, process, and thank donors for gifts, and they include policies for storing and protecting donor information electronically. Donor database solutions range from simple, inexpensive systems such as Little Green Light to more robust systems with special modules for events, volunteers, and financial tracking, such as Blackbaud Raiser's Edge.

Sample gift acceptance policies can be found online at National Council of Nonprofits here: https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/tools-resources/gift-acceptance-policies.

» **A compelling case for support.** Not surprisingly, this is most important of all. No matter what vehicle you are using to raise funds, you must be able to communicate strong reasons why your program both needs and merits support. Here's a short checklist to use when creating or measuring the effectiveness of your current case for support.

An effective case for support:

» Is audience-centric (not organization-centric).

» Describes why your organization exists.

» Succinctly describes the problem you are trying to solve or vision you are trying to create.

» Clearly states how the donor can join or contribute to your work.

» Specifies benefits of participation to the donor.

The Ideal Prospective Donor:

- Is connected to your organization or a member of your board in some way
- Has demonstrated an interest in your issue or organization
- Has a history of making large charitable gifts, or has the means to make them

A would-be major donor doesn't have to meet all three of these criteria, but those who do are obvious additions to your portfolio.

Writing an audience-centric case for support can be difficult for two reasons. First, it requires internal alignment around organizational goals and priorities, which, depending on the complexity of your programming, can be more difficult than it sounds. Second, and this is perhaps even more important, many organizations simply struggle to see their organization from the donor's perspective. For this reason, consider recruiting a consultant to assess your organization's case for support. At the very least, talk with a range of current donors about why they give to your organization, and build your case for support based on what they tell you.

You also need a continually growing list of prospective donors from whom to cultivate and solicit gifts. Remember that "prospective donors" typically don't identify themselves as such. They may be volunteers, community leaders, or even former beneficiaries of your programs. While buying or sharing lists is common in sophisticated direct mail programs, building and carefully maintaining your own list is likely to be more effective. The better known you become in your community, the longer your list should become.

Once you have donors, it is critical you do everything you can to retain them. Why? Because the cost of acquiring a new donor is far higher than keeping an existing one. Simply put, ensure every donor has a positive experience when making a gift to your organization. At the minimum, making a donation should be simple, and every gift should lead to a timely, warm, and personal thank you.

Major donors

Cultivating strong relationships with potential major donors takes time and effort, but it is essential for a healthy development program. Strong fundraising efforts are built on these steps, in sequence: identification of donors, qualification, cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship. Use "The Five Intentions" exercise that follows to see if you are effectively covering all five aspects—not just one or even just four. Note what your organization is already doing and brainstorm new ideas.

Exercise: The Five Intentions

These questions will help your program document the ways you already approach and manage potential donors and additional things you could be doing. Spend some time on this exercise; it is rare to find a program that is doing everything it can in this area.

1. Identification. Research prospective major donors. For instance, you might ask board members for recommendations, review annual reports and donor lists of similar organizations, or review connections of supporters on LinkedIn.

Tasks:

a. List the identification activities your organization already engages in.

b. List the identification activities your organization could try.

2. Qualification. Determine the level and nature of a prospective donor's linkages, interests, and ability. Is he or she capable of making a major gift? If so, at what level? Remember that the best source of information about the donor will come from the donor personally, rather than from secondary sources. In this phase, you might, for instance, conduct Internet searches on charitable gifts the prospective donor has made to other organizations, and then meet with the prospective donor about where your organization falls in his or her giving priorities.

The best source of information about the donor will come from the donor personally, rather than from secondary sources.

Tasks:

a. List the qualification activities your organization already engages in.

b. List the qualification activities your organization could try.

3. Cultivation. Make direct, meaningful contact with the potential donor and test his or her level of interest. Does he or she have a particular connection to one or more aspects of your programming? Is your work a philanthropic priority for this person, and if not, what would it take to become one? Work in this phase might include sending the prospective donor news articles of interest or inviting him or her to exclusive calls or VIP receptions with agency leadership.

Tasks:

a. List the cultivation activities your organization already engages in.

b. List the cultivation activities your organization could try.

4. Solicitation. Meet with or write the donor to request a gift of a specific amount. The solicitation of a gift should never be a surprise to the donor. Instead, it should be a natural culmination of the interactions that have preceded it.

Tasks:

a. List the solicitation activities your organization already engages in.

b. List the solicitation activities your organization could try.

5. Stewardship. Thank the donor and communicate the impact of the gift privately and publicly, depending on the donor's preferences. You may send personalized acknowledgement letters, arrange phone calls from board members or leadership describing the impact of the gift, or share stories or profiles of those who have been helped.

Tasks:

a. List the stewardship activities your organization already engages in.

b. List the stewardship activities your organization could try.

Now that you've identified what your program already does or could, ask yourself which activities have been most effective or seem to be the most promising. Make a list. You may not be able to implement all of them at once, but ensuring you have at least a few meaningful activities expressing *each intention* is key. Engaging in each one gives you the best chance at building a strong development program.

Source: Adapted from "Beyond Fundraising: The Five Intentions" [Blog post], Praximity Consulting (2014).

Want to go deeper?

Fundraising Bright Spots: Strategies and Inspirations from Social Change Organizations Raising Money from Individual Donors, Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund (2016). This is a report on the habits, mindsets, and systems of organizations that excel at donor development and fundraising. http://www.haasjr.org/sites/default/files/resources/Haas_BrightSpots_F2_0.pdf

The State of Giving Circles Today, Collective Giving Research Group (2017). This is a report on the changing face of collective giving and how giving circles interact with recipient organizations. https://philanthropy.iupui.edu/doc/institutes/giving-circles2017-executive-summary.pdf

"Network Power: Giving Circles Are on the Rise and Engaging New Voices," *Inside Philanthropy* (2017). This describes results from a Gates Foundation study exploring how giving circles function and who participates. https://www.insidephilanthropy.com/home/2017/12/5/giving-circles-are-on-the-rise-and-engaging-new-voices

"Successful Endowment Fundraising," Garecht, J. (2013). This offers the five steps to raising funds for an endowment. http://www.thefundraisingauthority.com/endowment-fundraising/successful-endowment-fundraising/

Private Foundation Funding

Most RHY programs have received at least some local or family foundation funding. Those grants are usually small (under $25,000) but are obviously helpful. Better yet, they may be relatively easy to get. Not surprisingly, large foundations are a different story. Their grant programs can be astoundingly competitive, and on top of that, they frequently aim to seed innovative solutions with national replication potential rather than more standard, day-to-day interventions, however much they are needed.

Approach the quest for large foundation funding carefully, researching possibilities thoroughly before writing even a single word. Realize that most foundations want to know your organization before they commit funding to you, which means you may need to develop a relationship with them over time, submitting several well-written and on-target proposals before getting awarded.

Securing Stopgap Support

Community foundations familiar with your organization can come through for you in a pinch. When **Synergy Services'** street outreach grant wasn't renewed in 2017, the Kansas City, Missouri, agency immediately approached a local health foundation and said, "This program serves a vital need for youth in the community, and we need your help to keep it going until we can re-apply for federal funding." The result? A one-year grant that enabled the agency to maintain existing staff positions.

A general database (such as the Foundation Center's Foundation Directory Online) is a good place to start identifying potential private grant makers. When you have identified a foundation that gives in your geographic area and to your cause, go to the foundation's website and view its publicly available Form 990, which lists all its charitable donations for any given year, sometimes even detailing what those grants were meant to support. Does the foundation support programs like yours? Are the funded organizations comparable in size to yours? Even if, for example, a foundation says it focuses on "youth development for disadvantaged populations," it may exclusively support national-impact programs, meaning it is unlikely to support a local drop-in center for homeless youth. Consider whether something you are doing is new, innovative, or unusually effective given the population you serve. If so, you may be able to make the case for program funding as a demonstration project—but before you go down that path, make sure running a demonstration project (which could involve earmarking substantial funds for evaluation and packaging your model for replication) is really what you want to do. If ongoing operating support is actually what you are seeking, this isn't the foundation for you.

If the grant maker's guidelines allow you to contact and consult with foundation staff before submitting the grant, always do that. This gives you another avenue to make sure your request is a good fit for the foundation. Be prepared to pitch several ideas—or variations on your basic request—if it becomes apparent the grant maker has more interest in some aspects of what you do than others. Then be sure to take the staffer's advice when you prepare your request. The same goes for pre-proposal applications. Even if yours is rejected, use it as a springboard for further discussion with the foundation.

If the grant maker's guidelines allow you to contact and consult with foundation staff before submitting the grant, always do that.

By virtue of having prepared successful federal proposals, all RHY programs have shown the ability to follow grant guidelines and write clearly and comprehensively about their services. Those same skills are critical to writing cogent requests to private foundations. There are a few differences, however. Unlike federal proposals, which typically require copious amounts of information about how a program is to be delivered (often as much as 10–20 pages of detail), most private foundations ask for this information in extremely condensed form, sometimes just a page or two. Local funders may require less information about the community but more information about the need your program seeks to address. And because the private grant may be competing with hundreds (or, in the case of larger foundations, thousands) of requests, your narrative must be persuasive and succinct, painting a picture of the problem you seek to address in vivid, human terms. Unless the foundation specifically funds general program operations, consider requesting support for much-needed tangible resources. For example, a small family foundation may agree to replace an antiquated kitchen in a TLP apartment house or supply computers for a learning center.

Even if the private foundation rejects your request, that "no" can present an opportunity for further discussion and relationship-building. Ask what factors went into the decision, and be gracious in accepting the feedback. This is not the time to suggest the foundation read your proposal more closely. Instead, learn how your program and your proposal look from the foundation's perspective. If you still think the foundation is a good fit, add it to your newsletter and general mailing lists, "friend" the foundation on social media, and invite it to "like" your postings. Invite the foundation to open houses and special events, and if it welcomes the idea, set up dates to speak informally with project officers about the work your program does and new directions you may be considering. In other words, court the foundation. It will be time well spent.

Want to go deeper?

Foundation Directory Online, Foundation Center (n.d.). This is one of the largest databases of charitable foundations in the world and a respected source of technical assistance on seeking private foundation funding.
http://foundationcenter.org/

"Get Your House in Order: Spring Cleaning Your Fundraising Program" [Blog post], Praximity Consulting (2016). This provides tips for donor retention.
www.praximityconsulting.com/blog/

Creating Programs That Last: Foundations of Sustainability [Webinar], UMass Donahue Institute (2017). This is an archived webinar that offers step-by-step instruction in building a sustainability plan for non-profit programs.
http://tpptoolkit.strikingly.com/

"The One Secret to Winning Foundation Grants" [Blog post], Nonprofit Hub (2016). From a seasoned grant writer and consultant, this offers advice about the importance of being systematic when submitting funding proposals.
http://nonprofithub.org/grant-writing/one-secret-winning-foundation-grants/

Finding Friends in Unlikely Places

Many organizations fear they'll run into zoning issues or "not in my backyard" (NIMBY) pushback when trying to establish youth housing. In a surprising twist in Eugene, Oregon, it was actually the Council of South Eugene Neighborhoods that approached St. Vincent de Paul and asked the agency to establish housing there. Recent press about a growing homeless population and "tent cities" had made supportive housing a topic of discussion at neighborhood association meetings, so when a developer proposed turning the neighborhood's church into a gym, members called up a trusted organization—St. Vincent's—with the hope the organization had a better idea. The lesson? A good reputation with a small group of active citizens can be the spark for something great. And after successfully raising funds for the first house, St. Vincent received a $2 million corporate gift from CBT Nuggets, a local IT firm, to open a second home for boys.

New Partnership Models with Public and Private Entities

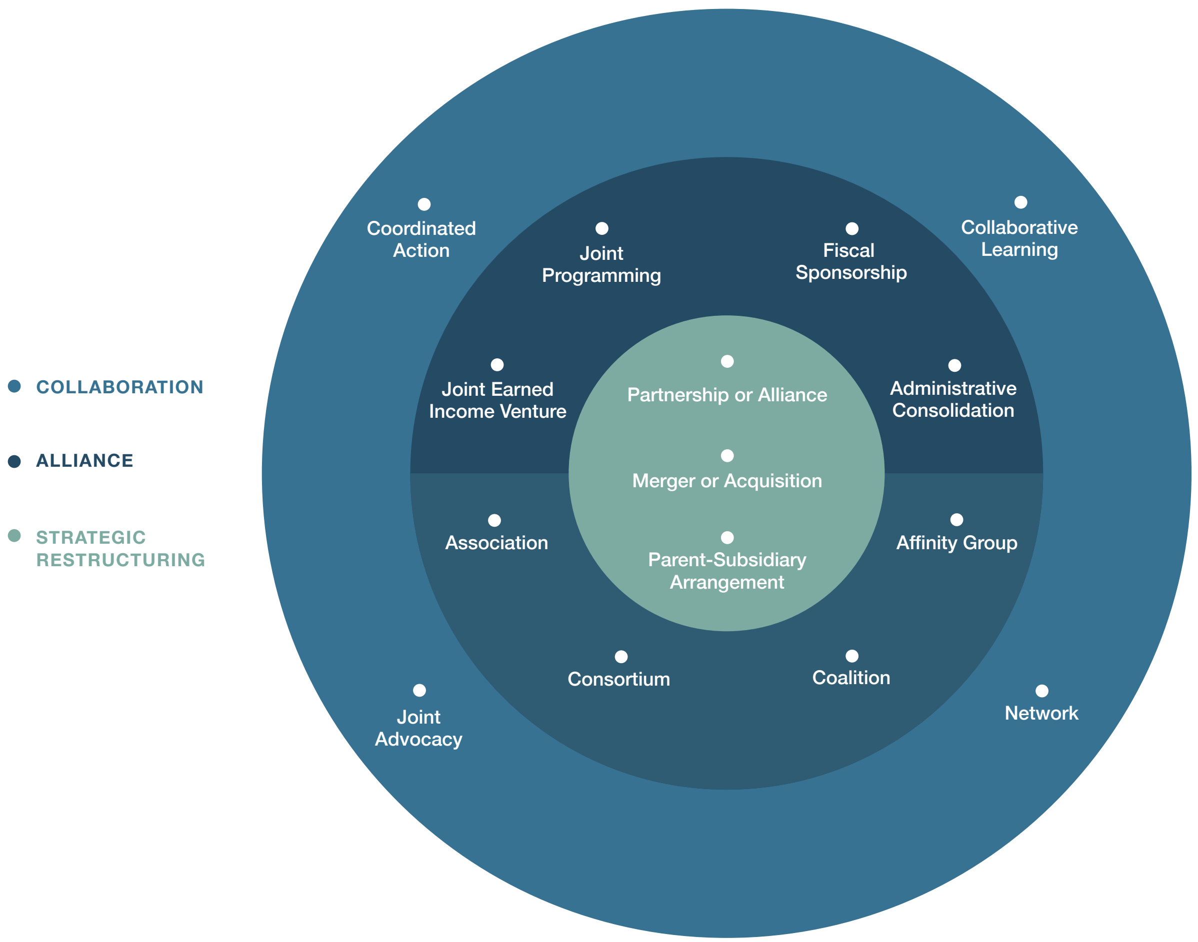
Across the country, RHY programs and agencies doing related work have forged unusual partnerships that have both cut their costs and extended their reach. Some of the partnerships are highly innovative, while others stretch more typical relationships—for instance with public schools and state child welfare agencies—into new and more effective shapes. Consider these examples:

- **Synergy Services** and **ReStart**, two agencies in Kansas City, Missouri, decided in 2013 that instead of competing against each other, they would apply jointly for a single street outreach grant. As the lead applicant, Synergy provides day-to-day supervision to street teams from both agencies. The agencies divided an eight-county service area based on outreach and services they already provided and assigned one staff member each to the largest county. Combining efforts meant there was only one federal application to prepare, and it was easier to maintain services when the grant was lost in a subsequent round. Each organization committed to raising the funds needed to maintain its own staff. For example, Synergy secured private foundation funding, and the partners are jointly applying for new funding through a county sales tax that is allocated to children's services.
- In New Haven, Connecticut, **Youth Continuum** collaborated with the Corporation for Supportive Housing and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to open seven permanent supportive housing and four rapid rehousing apartments for young people. The partnerships helped support construction of a building to house young people who need more structured, ongoing support. All units were filled when the site opened in January 2018. State and private partners, including banks and foundations, also contributed financially to the project. For example, the Community Foundation of Greater New Haven provided funding for all the furniture.
- Vermont's Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs worked with child welfare officials to secure state funding to support housing and services for 16- to 17-year-old youth who had been, or could have been, in state custody. The coalition, led by **Washington County Youth Services Bureau**, negotiated an annual appropriation from the state's Department for Children and Families budget and distributed funds through sub-grants to 13 coalition members that provide RHY services in the state's rural counties.
- In Eugene, Oregon, a multi-agency partnership between St. Vincent de Paul Society, Hosea Youth Services, and McKinney-Vento liaisons in three school districts created new housing for 15 to 20 homeless high school students in a renovated church. St. Vincent de Paul used a federal HOME grant to acquire and renovate the church into 14 efficiency apartments and will cover annual operations costs for the building, utilities, and supplies. Hosea Youth Services covers case management staffing, and school liaisons refer and support students. Young people are required to stay in school and graduate during the two years they live on-site, and they are employed by St. Vincent's retail outlets or other partners. The organization also engaged faith communities and service groups to provide $6,000 in program support per youth per year and to provide individual youth with coats, school supplies, and other necessities.
- **Second Story** (formerly Alternative House) in Dunn Loring, Virginia, began collaborating deeply with its school district in 2009 under its Homeless Youth Initiative. The initiative was designed to help homeless and unstably housed students who are without the support of a parent or guardian stay in school through graduation. Second Story recruits local families to provide host homes for homeless students at risk of dropping out and provides case management and other supports to promote students' well-being. The school district's McKinney-Vento staff coordinates educational services and refers youth to the program. Approximately 50% of necessary funding is provided by Fairfax County, and the rest is raised from the community. Rental assistance and rapid rehousing services help youth transition to more independent living after graduation.
- In Seattle, Washington, **YouthCare** partners with FareStart, a non-profit organization that provides culinary training to disadvantaged populations, to provide paid internships and employment opportunities for youth. The partnership, started in 2003, offers one month of barista training in YouthCare's drop-in center followed by one month of on-the-job experience in a cafe. Youth who do well can often be hired immediately upon finishing the program, and up to 70% of youth barista graduates have good jobs within 90 days of finishing the program. YouthCare says the keys to success are getting youth in quickly, providing meals and paying youth for participation, and starting with a "preview week" that is like an extended interview. The partnership has included Starbucks and other coffee companies over the years; at one point, Starbucks and YouthCare piloted a program offering mock interviews to youth. YouthCare's job training program for RHY is supported financially by the city of Seattle and private foundation funds.

Second Story recruits local families to provide host homes for homeless students at risk of dropping out and provides case management and other supports to promote students' well-being.

Exercise: Map Your Collaborations and Partnerships

The infographic below presents the range of ways independent organizations can come together in pursuit of a shared goal. Each of these concentric circles describes an entirely different level and type of relationship, each of which has possibilities for you when seeking to sustain your work. Who does your RHY program work with? Name each organization in the page margin.



Source: Adapted from The Collaborative Map, La Piana Consulting (2015).

Want to go deeper?

A Network Approach to Capacity Building, National Council of Nonprofits (2015). Case studies describe how non-profit organizations build their long-term sustainability via networks, rather than individual capacity-building. https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/sites/default/files/documents/a-network-approach-to-capacity-building.pdf

Using Volunteers to Extend Your Reach

Volunteers can benefit your program enormously, allowing you to provide both basic services and quality "extras" that you otherwise could not afford. Volunteers need to be recruited and managed carefully, though, and what your program ends up getting from them is directly related to how much effort you put into them. Read the examples below, and ask yourself if your own programs could use volunteers in new ways.

» At **Urban Peak** in Colorado Springs, Colorado, volunteers prepare a third of the meals served in the program's shelter, and for dinner they bring their own groceries rather than using supplies purchased by the agency. Volunteers conduct meditation classes, lead running and hiking clubs, and provide one-on-one tutoring. They facilitate classes on topics such as financial literacy, job readiness, and discovering your own learning style. They even represent Urban Peak at events in the community. The agency makes it easier for potential volunteers by posting extensive information about volunteer opportunities online, with applications and posted dates for volunteer orientations. Volunteers are also the primary link for the community's Safe Place network run by Urban Peak and the Pikes Peak Library District. Volunteers pick up and transport youth in crisis from libraries to the shelter.

» **LifeWorks** in Austin, Texas, partners with The Open Table, a national faith-based organization that trains small groups of mentors to meet weekly over the course of a year with people in poverty, including homeless youth and teens exiting foster care. Tables help young people work on self-identified goals, but they do so in ways that are less clinical and more like family support. For example, table volunteers invite youth home for holiday meals or let them practice driving in their own cars. The experience is non-proselytizing and starts with training volunteers in youth development and trauma. LifeWorks staff say they like how congregations work in tandem with them, so they continue to do what they do best without being asked to compromise boundaries or professional standards. See this video about Jessica, an Open Table "graduate" in Texas: https://vimeo.com/195853433.

» Volunteers at **Oasis Center** in Nashville, Tennessee, help youth in the emergency shelter get ready for school each morning, cook and eat meals with residents, talk with young people who attend the drop-in center, and check youth into the winter warming shelter. In addition, six volunteers—who make a year-long commitment and get trained in positive youth development and safety protocols—accompany

Questions to Consider Before Launching a Social Enterprise

» Have you conducted a market analysis to determine whether there is local demand for your service or product?

» Do you have, or can you afford to contract for, the expertise to run the business and supervise youth workers?

» Do you have enough startup capital to begin a business and see it through the early, lean phase?

» Will the business provide substantial opportunity for youth to build soft and hard skills?

» How important is it that the business eventually support itself? Or even turn a profit?

street outreach teams in the community. Staff say it's important to offer opportunities that match what volunteers can reasonably commit to (they have learned, for instance, to assign volunteers short rather than long shifts in the shelter and to steer first-time volunteers away from solo gigs and toward group activities). Staff know from the time they're hired that supporting volunteers is part of their job and represents the organization's commitment to connecting youth with healthy adults.

Staff know from the time they're hired that supporting volunteers is part of their job and represents the organization's commitment to connecting youth with healthy adults.

» **Oglala Sioux Tribe (OST) Youth Emergency Shelter**, located on the vast, rural Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, faces some daunting geographical challenges. The nearest affordable groceries and clothes are at least 50 miles away, and simply keeping buildings heated in sub-zero temperatures can be a budget-busting expense. The shelter is partly able to sustain itself through resource-sharing and giving campaigns run by Partnership with Native Americans and Friends of Pine Ridge Reservation, which solicit a wide variety of basic necessities, including clothes and bedding, from donors around the world. Local tribe members support the shelter as well, some by serving as volunteers who provide or support cultural activities on-site and off. Linking youth to important cultural opportunities can be time-consuming and even expensive, given the long distances between towns. In a typical recent outing, staff drove shelter residents 95 miles to a ceremony honoring an elder, followed by a community dinner and a winter solstice ceremony. Connecting displaced young people to their heritage is an indispensable aspect of the shelter's work and one that supports sustainability by ensuring the shelter is perceived as an integral part of the greater tribal community.

Want to go deeper?

The Hidden Workforce: Using Volunteers to Expand, Extend and Strengthen Your Services, Youth Catalytics (2010). This toolkit addresses benefits, challenges, and helpful strategies for implementing a robust volunteer program. https://www.youthcatalytics.org/publications/reports/the-hidden-workforce/

Insights That Make an Impact [Blog series], VolunteerHub (n.d.). This provides free online resources on recruiting, engaging, and managing volunteers effectively. https://www.volunteerhub.com/blog/category/best-practices/

Social Enterprise and Entrepreneurial Approaches

It is probably every RHY program's dream to be self-sustaining. Given that vulnerable youth often need help developing the job skills that will help them succeed as adults, social enterprise businesses would seem to be a win-win, especially if the business can mostly, or entirely, support itself.

Better yet are the cases—admittedly unusual—when youth enterprises actually contribute to the overall organizational budget. Such is the reality for the United Teen Equality Center (UTEC), in Lowell, Massachusetts, which has developed three social enterprise businesses whose profits cover a third of the organization's overall budget. The businesses include mattress recycling, a woodworking shop that produces cutting boards and merchandising displays, and a cafe. The organization also augments its income and provides skill-building opportunities for youth by renting out space for special events, in a large commercial kitchen it opened in 2017, and in its own historic downtown building for special events. UTEC will even provide catering for those events.

Detail Works, another social enterprise, operated by Spectrum Youth & Family Services in Burlington, Vermont, helps teenagers and young adults learn the soft skills they need to thrive in the workplace. The car detailing business, begun in 2017, purposely creates an environment where young people with challenges can learn attention, communication, and accountability in a safe environment. Donations got Detail Works up and running, but Spectrum hopes it will be self-sustaining within three years.

Waking the Village in Sacramento, California, had always wanted a "cottage industry"—some kind of side business that would put its small, perpetually underfunded agency on the local radar and that was fun for staff and the broader community alike. "We didn't want anything heavy," said Executive Director Bridget Alexander. "We wanted something we could really love doing." After a lot of exploration, the organization decided to make a "weird sideways move," opening a downtown arts exploration space for children it called Art Beast. The center, developed for an upfront cost of about $10,000 and with labor supplied by staff, family, and friends, was an immediate success. Why? Such spaces already existed in wealthier places like San Francisco, but Sacramento hadn't had anything like it. It appealed to parents across the economic spectrum, supplying their children with much-needed opportunities to engage deeply with the arts. Art Beast spun off an annual arts festival that has become so popular tickets sell out on the first day, and a second annual festival is in the planning stages.

Waking the Village in Sacramento, California, had always wanted a "cottage industry"—some kind of side business that would put its small, perpetually underfunded agency on the local radar and that was fun for staff and the broader community alike.

Having captured the attention of the public and funders, Waking the Village then decided on a second business—a licensed, 75-slot day care center, branded with the now-popular Art Beast name, run by a former co-founder of the agency and partially staffed by young parents from Waking the Village's transitional living and maternity group home programs. The center, which opened in October 2017 and was expected to reach capacity by mid-spring 2018, offers Waking the Village numerous advantages. It provides young people in its programs with real career opportunities in a profession that can pay a living wage. It also can provide the flexible scheduling young workers need to complete the college courses necessary to become certified preschool teachers. Because the center is state licensed, the agency can finally be reimbursed for the day care it had always provided for clients' children. Finally, and very intentionally, the center represents something of a positive social experiment, providing free slots to poorer parents while asking for market rate from more affluent parents. The result is children across the socioeconomic spectrum, so often segregated into different day care programs, will learn together in a single space. The center is expected to turn a profit of about $30,000 a year—money that will go straight back into Waking the Village's homeless youth services.

Want to go deeper?

Workforce Development: Employing Youth in Social Enterprise [Webinar], RHYTTAC (2017). Available to staff of RHY programs in RHYTTAC eLearning with course code RHYTTAC163. https://www.rhyttac.net/elearning

"A (Somewhat) Quick Guide to Social Enterprise Funding" [Blog post], Social Good Impact (2017). This explores ways to fund social enterprise start-ups, including information on foundations and public funders. https://www.socialgoodimpact.com/blog/social-enterprise-funding

"Empowering Proven-Risk Youth" [Blog post], Social Enterprise Alliance (2016). This describes United Teen Equality Center's social enterprise programs and what makes them work. https://socialenterprise.us/2016/08/15/utec/

"It's All in the Details: Spectrum Launches New Enterprise," The Other Paper (September 28, 2017). An article in local press describing Spectrum's Detail Works program. http://www.otherpapersbvt.com/its-all-in-the-details-spectrum-launches-new-enterprise.html

Pay for Success

Pay for Success is a relatively new funding mechanism that essentially seeks private investment to fund prevention programs that allow non-profit organizations to demonstrate they can produce results. The model was developed for organizations serving particularly hard-to-reach populations where success can be hard to achieve. One example of a youth-oriented Pay for Success project is taking place at ROCA, in Chelsea, Massachusetts, which uses private investment dollars to fund a program to keep previously incarcerated young people from going back to prison.

Pay for Success programs involve city, county, or state agencies; private investors of various sorts; direct-service organizations and partners; and an intermediary who pulls it all together. The players agree on an outcome—for instance, improving high school graduation rates among homeless or disconnected young adults ages 18 to 21 in a particular county—and set numerical benchmarks that will indicate progress. If the direct service provider has an innovative model for increasing high school graduation rates among homeless youth, and has already captured data demonstrating its success, even if on a smaller scale, then the private investor may agree to fund a demonstration project up front. If the provider is successful in improving graduation rates as promised, and that success is verified via an external evaluator, the public sector entity (the state department of education, for instance) repays the private investor, sometimes with interest and sometimes without. As Pay for Success evolves, new "private" investors, such as foundations that may or may not require repayment, are emerging.

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The Urban Institute offers a trove of information on Pay for Success on its website, including readiness quizzes and technical assistance aimed at answering the first question any RHY program is likely to have: Is Pay for Success right for us?

Want to go deeper?

Pay for Success: A New Way to Fund What Works, Urban Institute (n.d.). This offers free online resources including expert tips, foundational training, and reports on Pay for Success. http://pfs.urban.org/

Pay for Success/Social Impact Bonds, American Institutes for Research (2017). This is a brief explanation of the Pay for Success model, followed by examples of current projects and links to further reading. http://www.air.org/resource/pay-success-social-impact-bonds

"What's the Future of 'Pay for Success'?" [Blog post], Youth Catalytics (2015). This describes a Utah Pay for Success pilot program and lists pros and cons youth-serving organizations should consider before applying. https://www.youthcatalytics.org/pfs/

Social Media and Apps

Digital fundraising tools have made asking for donations easier and cheaper, but there's a big caveat. Relationships with donors and potential donors will always be the vital, indispensable element of any fundraising effort. Digital media can help extend and support those relationships and help you listen to what others are saying about your work. But it cannot create relationships where none exist.

Popular fundraising tools include:

» **Donation apps.** You can register with a generic charity platform (either for a small fee or for free) and donations to your organization are routed to you. Or design your own app to be issue-, city-, or organization-specific. For example, WeCount, launched in Seattle in 2016, allows homeless individuals to ask for donations of specific items, such as sleeping bags. Organizations partnering with WeCount to provide drop-off and pick-up sites include the City of Seattle's Human Services Department, Union Gospel Mission, the YMCA, United Way of King County, and other social service provider.

» **Crowdfunding.** Typically used to fund new ventures or initiatives, crowdfunding platforms vary in emphasis; sites designed for non-profit campaigns include FirstGiving and Crowdrise. One campaign, featured on YouCaring, sought $80,000 to complete a home for homeless LGBTQ youth at Lucie's Place in Little Rock, Arkansas.

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» **Text-to-give.** Text-to-give programs usually involve texting a keyword to a phone number using a mobile device. There are many text-to-give services; read a comparison in "Top 11 Text-to-Give Services" by Double the Donation here: https://doublethedonation.com/tips/nonprofit-software-and-resources/text-to-give-tools-for-nonprofits/#favorite.

Tips for digital or mobile fundraising

» Create a communications plan before you start—know how much you expect to raise, via which platforms, and over what time period.

» Make it easy to give. Smartphone or tablet users don't want to fill in long forms or give away lots of details in order to donate, and they'll be put off by having to navigate from one page to the next.

» Make sure your website is mobile-enabled, at the very least. (Note websites can be web-enabled, mobile-optimized, or responsively designed. Web-enabled sites look exactly the same on your smartphone as they do on a laptop or desktop, just in miniature. Web-optimized and responsively designed websites reformat and rescale content, making them easier to read and navigate on handheld devices.)

» Tell people what their donation will buy in concrete terms.

» Offer fixed donation amounts but always include an "other amount" option.

» Publicize your progress using a donation tracker.

» Use social media to promote your campaign. Craft messages, videos, and tweets that are simple to share.

» Say thank you to all of your supporters—both throughout the process and when you reach your target.

Create a communications plan before you start—know how much you expect to raise, via which platforms, and over what time period.

Want to go deeper?

Crowdfunding for Nonprofits, National Council of Nonprofits (n.d.). This describes what crowdfunding looks like for nonprofit organizations and important regulatory considerations. https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/tools-resources/crowdfunding-nonprofits

"9 Unique Crowdfunding Platforms for Nonprofit Fundraising" so please replace the current title with this. Also the date is now 2018. This includes unique features of a range of online crowdfunding sites and their associated costs per campaign.
http://blog.capterra.com/top-crowdfunding-platforms-for-nonprofits/

"14 Innovative Online Fundraising Ideas for Nonprofits & Charities" [Blog post], CauseVox (2016). This offers ideas for online fundraising campaigns that can capture the attention of existing and new donors or supporters. https://www.causevox.com/blog/online-fundraising-ideas-nonprofits-charities/

“Seven Online Donation Tools to Delight Your Donors” [Blog post], Nonprofit Hub (2017). This compares tools non-profit organizations can use on an ongoing basis to accept online donations, including how features affect donor experiences and behavior. http://nonprofithub.org/nonprofit-technology/5-online-donation-tools-to-delight-your-donors/

“Best Charity Donation Apps—Our Top 5 for Mobile Giving” [Blog post], White Fuse (2015). This provides examples on mobile apps used for donations, including those that allow people to earn money for non-profit organizations by taking actions they already do in their daily lives. https://whitefusemedia.com/blog/our-top-5-charity-mobile-apps

“An APPealing Strategy to Raise More Money for Your Nonprofit” [Blog post], Clairification (2017). This post tells why having your own organizational app is important and how to solicit donations using it. http://clairification.com/2017/08/25/appealing-strategy-raise-money-nonprofit/

“Mobile-Friendly vs Mobile-Optimization vs Responsive Design for Websites” [Blog post], Torspark (n.d.). This helps readers understand which approach is best for their nonprofit giving program. http://torspark.com/mobile-friendly-vs-mobile-optimized-vs-responsive-design/

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