Sustaining Your Youthbuild Program without Federal Dollars

An Interview with Connie Ferris Bailey of Operation Fresh Start

Even before the Department of Labor announced its Youthbuild grantees last November, Operation Fresh Start knew it was not going to receive funding due to the technical problems encountered during submission. Faced with such a devastating blow, most Executive Directors would panic or think about shutting down. Lucky for Operation Fresh Start, Connie Ferris Bailey is no ordinary Executive Director.

Established in 1970, Operation Fresh Start is a non-profit organization that uses home renovation and construction projects to provide vocational training to at-risk youth and adults in Dane County, Wisconsin. Completing its circle of service, the organization then sells the completed homes to low-income, first-time home buyers.

Part of Operation Fresh Start for over 32 years, Ms. Ferris Bailey is committed to carrying out the mission of her organization. The events of this past year have made that task difficult, however. Between the loss of their federal funding and the crash of the housing market, Operation Fresh Start is facing its most stressful year yet. Despite this, Ms. Ferris Bailey, the board directors, and the staff continue to find ways to help their organization survive.

You Can’t Do It without Community Support

Operation Fresh Start attributes its continued survival to never forgetting its original goal to serve its community. This goal is evidenced in how they do business. Operation Fresh Start begins its projects by identifying areas that are in need of its services. It then enlists the community’s help in its home-building efforts, while simultaneously providing education and support services for out of school youth and youth under supervision. This approach has allowed the organization to become part of the fabric of the community it serves.

Its efforts have not gone unnoticed. In October, the Madison Club will bestow a long sought after honor on the organization. Each year, the Madison Club, which is comprised of local business people and community leaders, donates the proceeds of their annual gala to one charity. This year, the Madison Club will recognize local Operation Fresh Start for its community efforts. The recognition will be a great honor and provide much appreciated validation for almost 40 years of service to the community.

In addition to the Madison Club gift, Operation Fresh Start will receive community funding from a variety of other sources, including HUD CDBG; Purchase of Service contracts for adults and juveniles under supervision, and individual donations.

New Partners and Initiatives

Operation Fresh Start currently has 65 funding sources. They hail from the community, the state, national organizations, and the private sector. When the organization lost its run of federal funding, it focused on new ways to utilize these partnerships and forge new alliances. The results were a new approach to an age-old problem.
Sustaining Your Youthbuild Program without Federal Dollars: An Interview with Connie Ferris Bailey of Operation Fresh Start (Cont.)

Private and Corporate Foundation Support
Funding for program development and operations will continue to be provided by generous grants from both the private sector and Corporate partners. Rethinking also brought about new ways for these partners to be involved. The expanded role now includes tutoring and mentoring for youth, as well as, providing funding for construction crews made up of program’s participants.

Board Support
A huge plus for Operation Fresh Start is its strong Board of Directors. The Board of Directors continually expands upon private sector funding, while also pushing for the acknowledgement and resolution of community issues that directly impact the organization’s efforts.

Participant Needs
Participant’s needs after graduation from Operation Fresh Start are a vital part of the organization’s purpose. Partnerships were created with several different bodies to address this need. They include The Great Lakes Higher Education Board, which assists non-traditional students students to transition to secondary education, and a close working relationship with the United Way and their Workforce Investment Board (WIB), which provides short term credential programs (e.g. Certified Nursing Certificate) at the local technical school.

Another source for potential partnering also exists with the Federal Registrar’s green collar employment opportunities for youth under supervision.

Business Initiatives
A major revenue generator for the program is the development, construction, and selling of homes to low and very low income home buyers. The struggling housing market, however, coupled with receiving no funding from the Department of Labor’s Youthbuild program, has created debt issues and new initiatives had to be developed to address them.

To do this, Operation Fresh Start brought together their eleven lending institutions, banks, to assist in reviewing the situation. This coming together created new ideas to deal with the crisis including new marketing plans, ways to lower interest rates, and forgiveness of outstanding loans.

One major initiative is the Workforce Housing Initiative. Operation Fresh Start works closely with the Human Resources departments of local corporations to facilitate the purchase of homes by income eligible employees. Operation Fresh Start provides the house and the corporations assist employees with the mortgages.

The Program
Operation Fresh Start also implemented Gateways, a new framework within its training program. Gateways were established by the youth policy committee. The committee sets several gateways for participants to meet their goals and accomplishments. These measurable accomplishments can include: attendance, educational advancement, living skills, and because many participants are under supervision, restitution, either through community service, repayments, or any other additional means.

Forging Ahead
Through creativity, Operation Fresh Start has reworked funding initiatives, expanded the role of their partners, and sought innovative ways to meet the needs of their participants. Living true to their mission, they have shown what a little heart and a lot of dedication can do.

Would you like to nominate a program for HUD Youthbuild Effective Practices? Please see the nomination form on page 4 of this newsletter.
Sustainability is a major concern for training programs. Sustainability includes everything from seeking additional (or sometimes adequate) funding, improving organizational structure, and ensuring long term staff retention and training. Resources exist for each of these areas, but they can be difficult to locate – that is why Partners for Community Solutions has put together this Resource Guide.

The web resources mentioned in this guide include:

- Potential funders – from federal and state governments to the private sector;
- Professional Affiliations;
- Volunteers;
- Board Development; and
- Statistical data and youth services.

Partners will periodically update this guide with new and useful resources.

**Government Funding**

- [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov), sign up to receive RFP announcements for youth from all government agencies.
- [www.hhs.gov](http://www.hhs.gov), lists grants for substance abuse programs, adjudicated youth, young mother and fathers, and locate your state TANF office.
- [www.doj.gov](http://www.doj.gov), for grant posting for adjudicated youth, and manuals and “How To’s” on working with adjudicated youth.
- [www.doleta.gov](http://www.doleta.gov), for grant information, training materials, Youthbuild resources, and WIA and WIB, One-Stop contact information.
- [www.hud.gov](http://www.hud.gov), for grants, housing information, and state contacts.

**AmeriCorp Funding**

AmeriCorp funding is often provided by YouthBuild USA, but is also available in each state. To find your state contact information go to [www.americorps.org](http://www.americorps.org). Organizations who partner with AmeriCorp have access to members and volunteers to assist your agency in the revitalization of your community. AmeriCorp is a great source for additional funding. The AmeriCorp also has The Resource Center which is an online resource of trainings and tools.

**Private Sector Funding**

[www.fconline.fdncenter.org](http://www.fconline.fdncenter.org) lists information for both private and corporate foundations. Various membership level give different access to the main database. The Foundation Center funders website is available for free at major libraries around the country.

[www.se-alliance.org](http://www.se-alliance.org), for private funders and venture capital. The Social Enterprise Alliance also provides information on starting social enterprises, creating business plans, and trainings.

**In-Kind Donations and Assistance**

[www.techsoup.org](http://www.techsoup.org), for software and hardware donations. TechSoup offers Microsoft products, Adobe, Quicken, Norton, and many more. Fees range from $2 to $25 to $200.

[www.giftsinkind.org](http://www.giftsinkind.org), Gifts in Kind partners with many retail stores including Office Depot, HP, Home Depot, Bed Bath and Beyond for donated products through their RDP program.

[www.charityadvantage.org](http://www.charityadvantage.org), for website design, and non-profit services.

**Volunteers**

[www.volunteermatch.org](http://www.volunteermatch.org) for volunteers for tutoring and mentoring, development, and other staff positions.

[www.idealist.org](http://www.idealist.org), for volunteers, and permanent staff positions.

Fortune 500 companies. Many companies have links from their website to volunteer coordinators for staff and retirees. Some companies provide matching donations to organizations where their staff volunteer.

**Board and Staff Development**

[www.boardsource.org](http://www.boardsource.org) BoardSource increases the effectiveness of nonprofit organizations by strengthening boards of directors through publications, tools, and membership program. The website has several books and tools to be used, a calendar of events, and a very helpful knowledge center.

[www.foundationcenter.org](http://www.foundationcenter.org) This website has funding leads, full day training schedules, grant writing information, on-line trainings, and non-profit management.

[www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org) Encourages non profits to share information about their organization completely and openly. Non profits who register in the guidestar database can update its report with information about its agency. Registration is free.

**Information and Report Resources**

[www.mdrc.org](http://www.mdrc.org), MDRC is a publication that reports on youth, employment, and many other initiatives.

[www.sssreview.org](http://www.sssreview.org), The Stanford Social Innovation Review offers reports and information on programs, seminars, trainings, and articles for non-profit practitioners.

[www.philanthropy.com](http://www.philanthropy.com), The Chronicle of Philanthropy provides articles on fundraising, grant makers, and others involved in philanthropic enterprises

[www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), The U.S. Census provides demographic information broken down by state, county, and zip code.

[www.harvarddiversity.org](http://www.harvarddiversity.org), The website Harvard Diversity.org was created by Harvard University, like the U.S. Census demographic information can be easily obtained. Both websites are useful in grant writing.

[www.foundationcenter.org](http://www.foundationcenter.org), The Foundation Center offer information on grant makers, reports on giving, and products for organizational and board development.


[www.careervoyages.gov](http://www.careervoyages.gov), Career Voyages offers information broken down by state on high growth industries and projections future employment openings.
Professional Affiliations

**National Association of Workforce Development Professionals**, NAWDP is a national organization whose mission is to be the national voice for the profession and meet the individual professional development needs of its membership. www.nawdp.org

**National Council for Non-Profit Associations**, NCNA is a network of state and regional non-profit associations serving over 20,000 members in 41 states and the District of Columbia. NCNA links local organizations to a national audience through state associations and helps small and mid size non profits: manage and lead more effectively; collaborate and exchange solutions; engage in critical policy issues affecting the sector, and achieve greater impact in their communities. www.ncna.org

**Association for Fundraising Professionals**, AFP the Association of Fundraising Professionals represents nearly 28,000 members in more than 190 chapters throughout the world, working to advance philanthropy through advocacy, research, education and certification programs.

The association fosters development and growth of fundraising professionals and promotes high ethical standards in the fundraising profession. www.afpnet.org

**Alliance for Non-Profit Management**, The Alliance for Nonprofit Management is the professional association of individuals and organizations devoted to improving the management and governance capacity of nonprofits - to assist nonprofits in fulfilling their mission. The Alliance is a learning community that promotes quality in nonprofit capacity building. The Alliance convenes a major annual conference, networks colleagues year-round online, and provides member discounts on books and other publications. The Alliance provides visibility to its members in the online “Find a Consultant or Service Provider” directory, the People of Color Roster, Alliance Insights eNewsletter, Member Spotlights and membership directory. www.allianceonline.org

**Youth Resources**

The National Youth Employment Coalition (NYEC) is a membership network that improves the effectiveness of organizations that seek to help youth become productive citizens. Toward this end, NYEC sets and promotes quality standards; tracks, crafts and influences policy; provides and supports professional development and builds the capacity of organizations and programs. http://www.nyec.org/

Youth Today, a monthly print publication with 24/7/365 online access, is the only independent, nationally distributed newspaper that is read by thousands of professionals in the youth service field. www.youthtoday.org

The National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center, NYVPRC is a Federal resource for communities working to prevent violence committed by and against young people.

The mission of the NYVPRC is to provide key leaders in communities—city managers/leaders and community leaders—with dynamic resources to help support their efforts to plan, develop, implement, and evaluate effective youth violence prevention efforts. See About Us for more complete details about the NYVPRC. www.safeyouth.org


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**Would you like to nominate a program for HUD YouthBuild Effective Practices?**

Please Check the Area to be Evaluated

- [ ] Entire Program
- [ ] Workforce Development
- [ ] Organization and Management
- [ ] Retention Services and/or Alumni Program
- [ ] Youth Development

Please describe your initiative and why it should be recognized as an "Effective Practices".

Name ___________________________________________

Title ___________________________________________

Organization ____________________________________

Phone (____) ____--______

E-mail _________________________________________

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