

**Career and Postsecondary Development**

**Follow up Services Tip Sheet**

Through follow up services, YouthBuild programs provide assistance and support to young people after they leave the program, encouraging their success in postsecondary and employment placements. It is recommended that YouthBuild programs provide follow-up services to young people for at least 12 months after they leave the program. This allows programs to report program outcomes to funders accurately, and to gain a sense of the effectiveness of their program practices. In addition, through follow-up services, staff member are better able to address the inevitable issues that arise for students as they exit the program environment and enter the market environment of work and school. Follow-up ensures that students focus on their longer-term goals in work, learning and leadership.

Program staff must conduct follow-up frequently enough to address the range of issues facing program graduates, and must provide services based upon the needs of individual participants. Follow-up is critical to ensure successful, long-term retention in postsecondary education and employment.

The purpose of providing follow-up services is to:

* Provide a check-in point for problem solving underlying personal issues that get in the way of steady progress towards career/educational goals.
* Encourage graduates to reflect on their experiences in their work and postsecondary worlds.

**Follow Up Outcomes**

**For students**

* New strategies to enable youth to follow their post-program plans
* Assistance in overcoming barriers to maintaining, refining and eventually achieving career objectives
* New interventions and prevention strategies
* Help staying on track towards reaching their long-term goals
* Help implementing and refining their individual career strategy

**For programs**

* Identification and anticipation of problems that could undermine post-program placement and retention outcomes;
* Identification of support service needs
* Greater continued success for program graduates
* Troubleshoot employment and personal issues
* Insights into future intervention and prevention strategies
* Continuous improvement of services

**Guiding Principles for Follow Up[[1]](#footnote-1)**

1. Match follow up services to the participant’s characteristics, needs and personal situation:

Consider:

* Age
* Needs
* “At Risk” Status
* Family/School/Personal Support System
* Workplace hours

1. Develop a follow up assessment tool to determine the kind and amount of follow-up needed.

Consider:

* + - Work history
    - Reasons youth has previously left jobs or
    - Social skills
    - Life skills
    - Crisis and Stress Management Skills
    - Attitude towards work School
    - Family/life situation
    - Barriers: Transportation, childcare, substance abuse, mental health issue

This information should be gathered while the young person is participating in the YouthBuild program. Do not wait until the participant is ready to exit the program to assess the readiness of the participant and the kinds of follow-up supports they may need.

1. Develop a written follow-up plan with the participant prior to his or her ending the program. The plan should be agreed to and signed by the young person and his/her case manager.

Include:

* The young person’s retention or follow up assessment
* A list of people/resources the participants could turn to when tempted to quit school/job
* Goals to reach on the job before quitting
* Goals to reach in school before graduation
* Plans to address barriers to success
* Back up plans for addressing barriers
* Name, address, phone, email of six people to contact if the case manager cannot locate program participant
* Retention Services provided by YouthBuild or partners
* When, where, who, and how follow-up will occur and what services will/can provided based on need.

1. Follow the plan and hold the participant accountable for his/her signed agreement. Be persistent. Maintain the agreed schedule of contact. You may wish to develop a reminder system for follow-up services based on your quarterly data reporting schedule.

**Strategies for Reaching Program Graduates**

* Make sure that students have e-mail accounts before they exit; keep e-mail addresses on record.
* Communicate through social networking tools like Facebook ©.
* When students enter the program, get the phone numbers and addresses for at least five people who can reach the individual graduate.
* Schedule regular meetings with graduates at their workplaces or schools.
* Establish an alumni organization with graduates. Use social, recreational or cultural activities led by graduates and supported by staff as platforms for checking-in with grads.

**Keeping Graduates Engaged for Twelve Months**

The following are a list of ideas for keeping graduates engaged throughout the year after they end the program.

* Leadership Development opportunities that encourage responsibility and other positive social behaviors
* Alumni councils
* Peer Mentoring
* Alumni as tutors
* Alumni as guest speakers
* Volunteers as tutors
* Peer support groups (young mothers and young fathers)
* Peer centered activities
* Community and learning service projects
  + Assistance with job retention career advancement
* Referral letters
* Resume Updating
* Assistance securing another job
* Career counseling
* Job search assistance
* Assistance in addressing work-related problems
  + Supportive Services activities
* Linkages to community services
* Referral to medical services
* Assistance with childcare, housing, transportation and/or uniforms or other appropriate work attire and work related tools
  + Other Ideas
* Financial literacy/ Money Management Skills Development
* Tax Preparation
* Emergency loans
* Electronic Newsletters designed and produced by Youth (achievements of graduates, tips/comments from graduates who are working or in college)

**Tools**

[YouthBuild Site Placement Readiness Assessment Tool](https://youthbuild.workforcegps.org/resources/2014/08/21/10/12/youthbuild-site-placement-readiness-assessment-tool)

1. These recommendations are based on The Workforce Investment Act youth programming. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)