

YOUTH SHIFT

**Action Team 1: Engagement and Inclusion
Final Recommendations
September 2016**

Action Team Objective

By September 2016, compile a list of recommendations derived from feedback and insight from community stakeholders (including youth, parents, youth development staff, youth advocates and other concerned stakeholders) to increase the meaningful engagement and inclusion of young people, families, community members and leaders of youth serving organizations.

Action Team Activities

- Hosted **3** action team meetings
- Hired a youth co-facilitator (Myron Miller-VAYLA) to lead the work of the Engagement and Inclusion Action Team
- Engaged over **100** community stakeholders, from **12** community organizations/youth-serving programs
 - Attended standing meetings for several community organizations
 - Facilitated group dialogues on engagement and inclusion
 - Solicited feedback to inform final recommendations on engagement and inclusion
- Follow-up reporting to all engaged stakeholders for feedback
- Disseminate final report (October)

Action Team Contributors

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Eric Cherrie, Cowen Institute- EMPLOY

Damekia Morgan, New Orleans Health Department

Chip Patterson, The First Tee of Greater New Orleans

Tarase Carter, Boys Town

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Darren Aldridge, Children and Youth Planning Board

Gina Womack, Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children

Monique Robinson, JOB1

Shaun Kelly, Louisiana Center for Children's Rights

Troy Glover, Louisiana Center for Children's Rights

Emily Wolf, Broadmoor Improvement Association

Lawrence Raymond, University of New Orleans Upward Bound

Lynette Bates, University of New Orleans Upward Bound

Erica Buher VAYLA

Huong Nguyen, VAYLA

Additional Contributors include youth, parents, community members and staff from the following:

EMPLOY Youth Action Team

Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children

Fauborg St. Roch Community Improvement Association

God's Doll House

Kids Rethink

Louisiana Center for Children's Rights- Juvenile Justice Leadership Council

My Passion Breathes Life

Orchid Society

Pink House

Serving Our Families Together

University of New Orleans Upward Bound

Youth Empowerment Program

Defining Engagement & Inclusion

- *Engagement* refers to the involvement of youth, families and community members in youth programs and in the *program participation, leadership, advocacy, decision-making, work, and capacity-building* efforts of youth serving organizations.
- *Inclusion* refers to the establishment of intentional practices, structures and organizational cultures that facilitate the *safe* involvement of key stakeholders (e.g., youth, families local community members from various populations represented in the city).

Who should be included at the table?



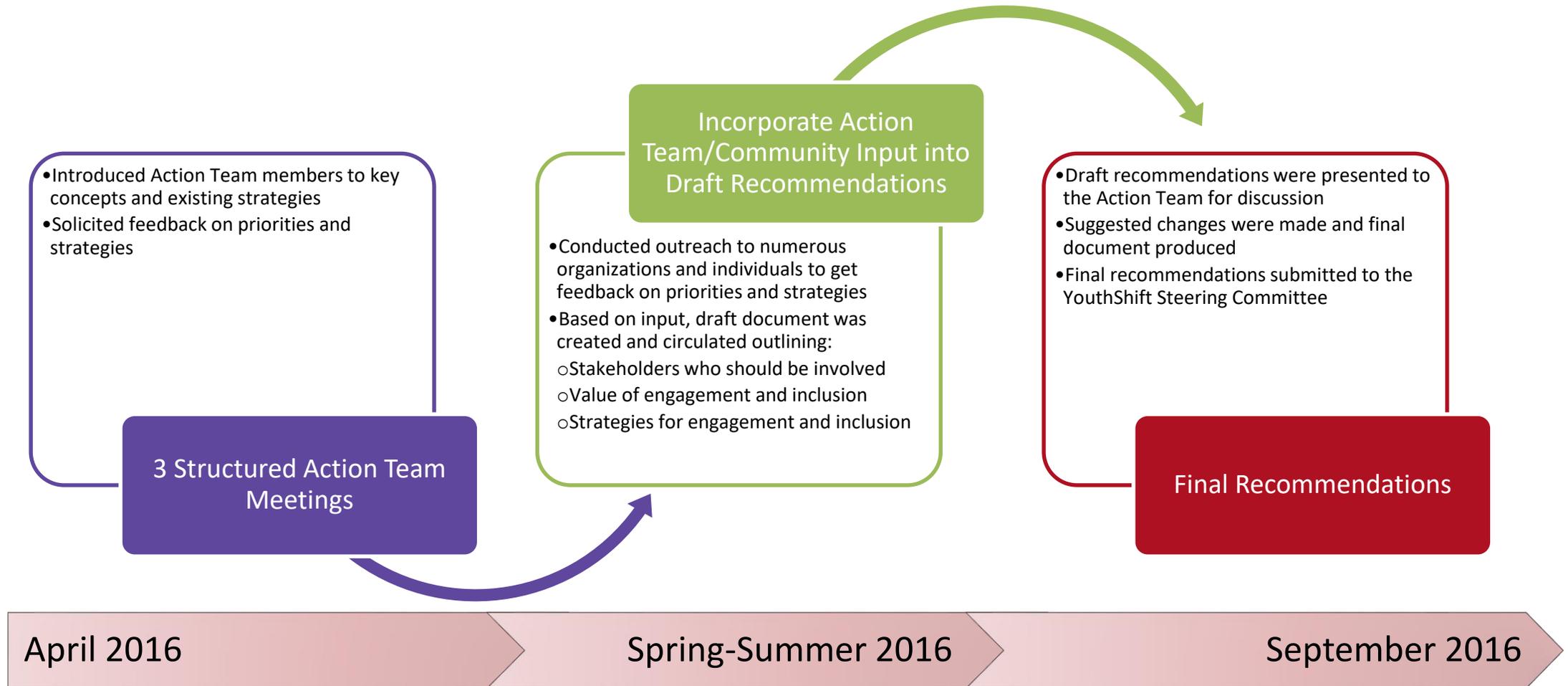


Increase the meaningful engagement between leaders of youth-serving organizations, young people and parents themselves.

PROPOSED ACTION STEPS

- Integrate youth and family voice across the city's existing committees and taskforces that benefit children and youth. Welcome participants in the governance and decision-making for these initiatives and ensure that those who are affected by programming and policies have legitimate voices and choices.
- Support citywide efforts to engage youth and parents in a structured, continuous and authentic way. For example, the New Orleans City Health Department is exploring ways to engage youth in a leadership program that would allow them to identify, develop and advocate for policies that directly affect them.
- Mobilize resources, both technical assistance and financial, to be used by organizations or coalitions seeking to authentically engage with youth and community members. For example, make funding available to offset barriers like renting space in locations convenient to working parents, provide childcare, or offer transportation to participants. Also, ensure organizations have the training and support they need to engage children, youth and parents authentically and effectively.
- Increase participation of groups, such as faith-based organizations, people of color, and parents and children, that YouthShift research suggests are under-represented in decision-making bodies for children and youth. These groups directly experience many of the challenges our children and youth face. They are important contributors to our neighborhoods and communities and their perspectives are essential to our success.
- Ensure that communications about programming are accessible and culturally competent.

How Were Recommendations Developed?



Recommendations (Participation/Decision-Making)

- Provide transportation to youth and families to increase opportunities for them to be engaged in youth programs and leadership opportunities.
- Engagement and inclusion efforts should involve youth-serving organizations interfacing with youth and their families in their communities.
- Establish community agreements for all engagement and inclusion efforts to maintain safe and comfortable environment for all participants.
- Establish organizational structures that create a feedback loop to influence program design and decision-making in youth-serving organizations.
- Incorporate feedback from youth, families and community in the design of youth programs and initiatives.
- Implement recommendations made by youth, families and community members during engagement and inclusion efforts.

Recommendations (Leadership/Advocacy)

- Leadership in youth serving organizations and youth-focused initiatives should be reflective of the populations served.
- Include parent/family, youth and community representatives on boards of youth-serving organizations.
- Provide incentives for youth to participate at leadership tables focused on youth in New Orleans.
- Youth-serving organizations and youth-focused initiatives should have transparency in their leadership structure and their decision-making processes.
- Include youth, families and community members in youth advocacy efforts.

Recommendations (Work/Capacity-Building/Accountability)

- Employ young people to work as subject matter experts on youth-focused initiatives and pay them a living wage.
- Increase youth-led programming, advocacy and leadership within youth-serving organizations.
- Engage staff and leadership from youth-serving organizations in trainings on adultism, diversity, racism, oppression, culturally relevant and trauma informed interventions.
- Provide youth and families with requisite training to facilitate their success in leadership roles in youth-serving organizations and boards.
- Funders should include an engagement and inclusion requirement for all youth-focused grants that is informed by the work of the Engagement and Inclusion Action Team.

Next steps

- Develop a toolkit on engagement and inclusion for youth-serving organizations to support improvements to their engagement and inclusion efforts with youth, families and communities
- Provide leadership training for youth and families to prepare them for leadership on boards and with youth-serving organizations
- Expand trainings for staff and leadership at youth-serving organizations and youth-focused initiatives to prepare them for more inclusive leadership within their organizations
- Include authentic and effective engagement and inclusion efforts in criteria for youth-focused grant making opportunities

How to get/stay involved...

YouthShift will continue to post updates on the implementation of these recommendations on our website:

www.nolayouthshift.org