

# Steps for Implementing a Youth Leadership Development Program

## 1. Evaluate Your Organization's Capacity

Before you start planning, examine whether your organization:

- Values youth
- Has opportunities for youth to serve
- Is willing to support a program
- Has funding/time to develop and carry out a program.

It might be helpful to do a S.W.O.T. analysis to identify the *strengths*, *weaknesses*, *opportunities*, and *threats* regarding your organization's ability to develop and sustain a youth service program.

## 2. Determine Program Purpose

Clearly define and articulate the program's goals and objectives. Drafting a statement of purpose will help you make future decisions.

## 3. Decide on Target Population

Identify the youth that will be participating in your program. Select adult leaders for the group based on the age, ethnicity/race, gender, socio-economic status, and life experiences of the targeted youth. Finding adult leaders who come from the same communities as youth volunteers can provide a common starting point for partnerships to develop. Ask the young people you are working with if they can nominate someone from their community to be an adult leader. Remember sometimes all it takes is for someone to ask them to get involved and who better to do the asking than the youth volunteers.

## 4. Identify and Involve Key Leaders

Determine key "decision makers" and leaders in your organization, congregation and community and invite them to participate. Typically, when people are involved in a program, they will be supportive of it. These stakeholders can provide key insights about program operations, and they can publicize and promote your program.

## 5. Create Budget and Explore Funding Options

Create a budget, estimating the cost of supplies and training materials, space (if you are renting or leasing), equipment, and labor. Estimating the number of participants, staff and volunteers is important as this will affect cost. Determine how much funding can come from within your organization and explore potential outside funding from private organizations or government agencies if necessary.

## 6. Determine Leadership Strategy

Determine your leadership strategy by asking *how* and *what* you want to teach your youth as you engage them in service. Program strategies vary widely and can include skill building, character development, or specific "competency arenas."

## **7. Determine Volunteer Standards and Expectations**

It's important to create a simple application and screening process for adult leaders or volunteers that includes checking references. Create "job descriptions" that outline the roles and responsibilities of youth, staff and other volunteers. (For helpful information and sample forms, check out FASTEN's **Volunteer Toolkit** <http://www.fastennetwork.org/qryArticleDetail.asp?ArticleId=505F4A0F-9A91-442B-A272-425DE088DBE5>)

## **8. Provide Training and Support for Staff and Volunteers**

Once you identify and select your youth and adult participants it is important to help *them* grow in leadership. Continually equip your adult staff to teach, model, nurture, and develop young people as leaders.

## **9. Evaluate the Program**

Assess the effectiveness of the program from all perspectives: youth, staff, and volunteers.