

2010-2015



# Transitional Age Youth Strategic Plan



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**TEAM TAY STRATEGIC PLAN (FY 2010-2015)****INTRODUCTION**

This document represents the Strategic Plan for the TAY Authority, covering the period 2010-2015. The TAY Authority serves transition age youth (ages 16-24) in Los Angeles County. Many of the youth we serve are aging out of the foster care system, some have been involved with the juvenile justice system, and all will have faced some sort of challenge in moving toward a productive adulthood. All youth we serve are low or very low-income. The purpose of the TAY authority is to assist youth to transition to adulthood successfully.

There are over 1.5 million transition age youth in Los Angeles County. Of these, 11,000 16-22 year olds have active Department of Children & Family Services cases, 5000 are homeless, and over 10,000 of the minors have active probation cases (LA County, 2010). Team TAY believes that providing these youth with the tools they need to integrate themselves into society will help them to lead successful and healthy adult lives. By encouraging them to envision a promising future and equipping them with practical life training and support, we will help them to tap their unlimited potential.

In order to meet this goal, it is important for us as an organization to strive to better accomplish our mission through managing strategically and in a fair, accessible, transparent manner. So, with the help of our Strategic Management team, we present to **you** our Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2010 to 2015. The purpose of this paper is to communicate Team TAY's Strategic Plan, which includes a re-clarification of our stakeholders, vision, mission, and values; assessing TAY's internal and external environments; identifying the strategic issues we are facing; formulating and adopting goals to manage these issues; and developing an implementation plan and evaluation process.

## **RE-CLARIFICATION: STAKEHOLDERS, VISION, MISSION, AND VALUES**

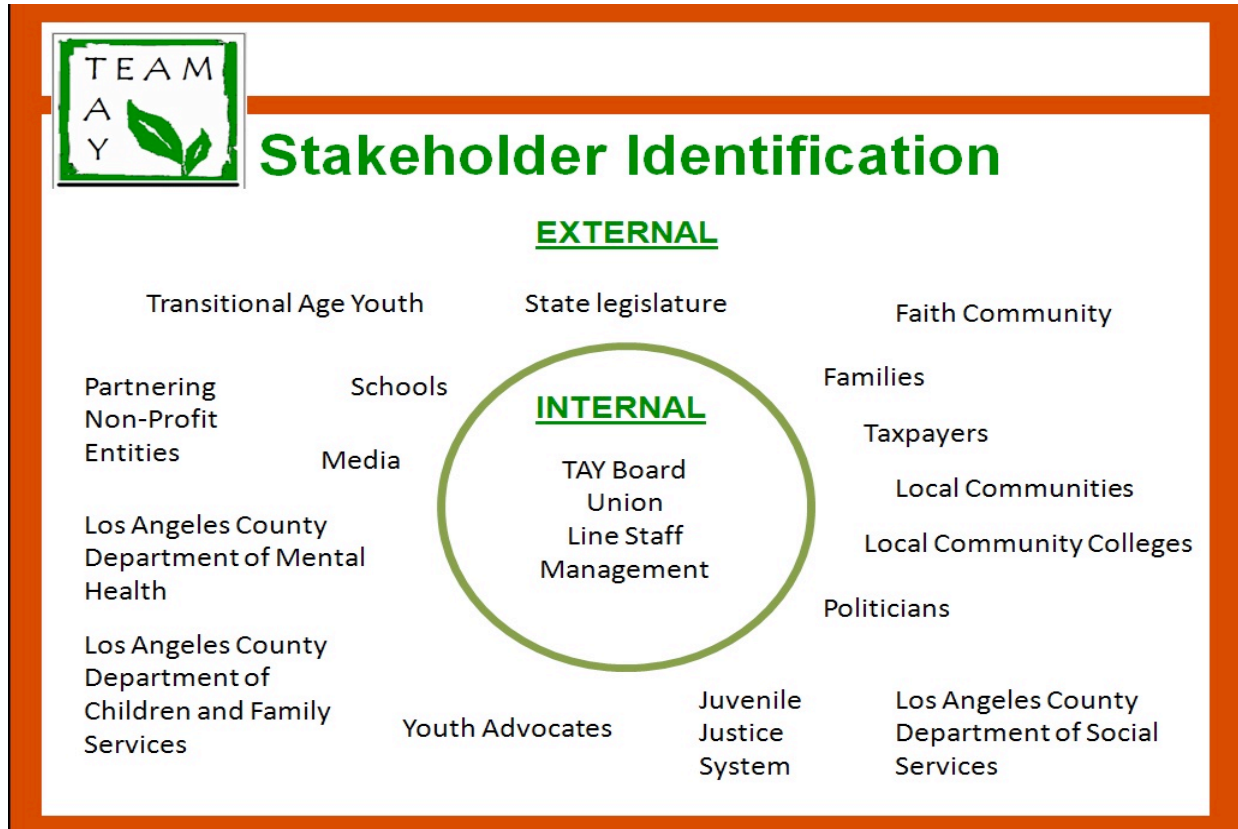
### **Stakeholders**

To get to where our organization must go, we must first assess where we are currently. To ensure a thorough analysis of our environments, we looked at our internal and external stakeholders, as the basic success of our organization depends on those who have a stake in what we do. (Bryce Yokomizo, 2010) Our organization understands that instead of maintaining norms, leaders must challenge “the way we do business” and help others distinguish immutable values from the historical practices that have become obsolete. (Heifetz and Laurie, 1997)

Our internal stakeholders are those internal to our organization that will need to implement our Strategic Plan and ensure that we provide the best possible service to the transitional age youth we serve. Our management team has identified these stakeholders as being the TAY Board, the Union-represented employees of our organization, and general line and management staff.

Our external stakeholders are those who influence our mandates, TAYs’ funding, and the overall public perception of our organization. Below is a comprehensive list of those stakeholders, but is by no means exhaustive: Transitional Age Youth, families, Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services, Los Angeles County Department of Social Services, Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health, juvenile justice system, partnering non-profit entities, media, schools, local communities, taxpayers, youth advocates, the faith community, politicians, State legislature, and the local community colleges.

Table 1



### Vision

The Vision that Team TAY has adopted upon its founding and continues to recognize is stated as follows: “Empowering transitional age youth to tap their unlimited potential.” This vision expresses where we want to go as an agency. It represents our aspirations for ourselves as an agency.

### Mission

The mission statement provides us a path to reaching our vision and is stated here: “To facilitate the transition for transitional age youth, one youth at a time; with care, understanding, and encouraging support.” The aim of mission clarification is to specify the purposes of the organization and the philosophy and values that guide it (Bryson, 2004).

## Values

At TAY, our bottom line is transitional age youth empowerment, and this is demonstrated by our core values. Youth need to be educated toward autonomy and gain the confidence to do tasks independently. By providing understanding, steady leadership, and a compassionate approach, we ease the transition of our youth through this turbulent phase in their life. Collaborating with our partner agencies, we expand the available resources and broaden the opportunities for our youth. In this digital era, we need innovative technical solutions to effectively communicate among our youth and our partnering agencies. Each staff, counselor, and/or partner in contact with our youth is committed to instill awareness of their limitless potential. With the proper guidance, each youth will have the opportunity to successfully take the next step into adulthood and be prepared to make sound decisions that shape their future. Thus, these core values have been identified and are the building blocks on which Team TAY operates:

**Empowerment** - we strive to give our youth the knowledge and tools that will empower them for life

**Compassion** - caring for those we work with and serve are priority

**Collaboration** - doing together what we can't do alone

**Innovation** - we strive to search for improved ways to make our programs more effective and efficient

**Commitment** - staying focused and dedicated achieves great results

**Awareness** - making youth aware of their potential to shape their future

**Education**- we believe everyone can continue learning and advancing in their career and

everyday life

**Leadership** - we create opportunities for youth to find their potential and give them the tools to succeed.

### **ASSESSMENT OF INTERNAL & EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENTS**

In order to be proactive in our approach to better serve our youth, we have assessed our internal and external environment to identify the areas in which potential improvements could be made. This analysis is known as a SWOT Analysis, and it assesses the internal strengths and weakness that affect the achievement of our mission, as well as all external opportunities and threats. It was also meant to ensure that everything we do as an agency is consistent with our vision, mission, and core values.

#### **Strengths**


As an organization, these are the areas that we have identified as being our strongest internal assets:

1. Partnering with other community agencies to collaborate
2. Skilled staff that are adaptable to change
3. A group of alumni staff mentors that represent living success stories of our work
4. Creative staff that find innovative solutions to produce results
5. Youth-facilitated group sessions that are unique among other agencies similar to us;
6. A focus on imparting basic and practical life-skills;
7. Educated staff with advanced degrees in public administration, social work, or education
8. The guidance we provide speaks of the experience that we've gained over the course

of many years

9. We provide a high level of customer service as often time, many of our employees were TAY youth at one time or another and believe in what we do.

Table 2

 <h2 style="display: inline;">Internal Strengths</h2>	
Strength & Description	Preserving/Enhancing
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Partnering with other community agencies to collaborate</li> <li>2) Skilled staff that are adaptable to change</li> <li>3) Group of alumni staff mentors that are living success stories of our work</li> <li>4) Creative staff that find innovative solutions to produce results</li> <li>5) Youth facilitated group sessions that is unique among other agencies similar to us</li> <li>6) Focusing on imparting basic and practical life-skills</li> <li>7) Many of our staff are educated and have advanced degrees in public administration, social work, or education</li> <li>8) The guidance we provide speaks of the experience that we've gained over the course of many years</li> <li>9) We provide a high level of customer service as often time, many of our employees were TAY youth at one time or another and believe in what we do.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Continuing to cooperate with community agencies to collaborate</li> <li>2) Challenging staff to change to do better</li> <li>3) Maintaining contacts with individuals we've helped</li> <li>4) Encouraging innovation</li> <li>5) Supporting group sessions and working to bring more youth into them</li> <li>6) Remembering to keep the practical in mind</li> <li>7) Encouraging continued staff development</li> <li>8) Continue to hire experienced professionals</li> <li>9) Great customer service is the status quo, accept nothing less.</li> </ol>


### Weaknesses

As an organization, these are the areas that we have identified as being deficits to completing our mission. Though we find them to be fewer than our strengths, they are very

important and have profound effects on our ability to deliver service. These have been identified as the following:

1. Limited funding to expanding our current programming
2. There exists a lack of cohesiveness among staff
3. There exists a lack of transitional youth participation
4. Many of our current employees often move on professionally to other non-profit or government agencies.

Table 3

 <b>Internal Weaknesses</b>	
<b>Weakness &amp; Description</b>	<b>Minimizing/Overcoming</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Limited funding to expanding our current programming;</li> <li>2) There is exists a lack of cohesiveness among staff</li> <li>3) There exists a lack of transitional youth participation</li> <li>4) Many of our current employees often move on profession to other non-profit or government agencies.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Looking for other sources of funding or creating volunteer positions</li> <li>2) Enhancing teamwork and encouraging cooperation</li> <li>3) Responding to concerns effectively that are important to youth</li> <li>4) Enhancing retention by reevaluating work functions, assignments, and obstacles to jobs enjoyment</li> </ol>




### Opportunities

External to our organization, these are the areas that we have identified as being potential resources and opportunities to enhance our services:

1. There is an expanding network of non-profit, public, and private agencies that we can further connect with to offer more services and programs for our youth
2. Favorable state mandates that allow more protection and/or funding for our youth are available to us if we apply ourselves
3. The more community awareness of our programs and services creates more resources and public support.

Table 4


 <h2 style="display: inline;">External Opportunities</h2>	
Opportunities & Description	Taking Advantage of Opportunities
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) There is an expanding network of non-profit, public, and private agencies that we can further connect with to offer more services and programs for our youth</li> <li>2) Favorable state mandates exist that allow more protection and/or funding for our youth are available to us if we apply ourselves</li> <li>3) More community awareness of our programs and services creates more resources and public support.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Grow our contacts to maximize future return</li> <li>2) Have staff explore these new protections/or funding sources and use what can put us ahead</li> <li>3) Enhance our outreach efforts to maximize visibility and public support</li> </ol>

**Threats**

External to our organization, these are the areas that we have identified as being potential threats or challenges to service enhancement:

1. There is always that threat that Negative outside influence (gangs, drugs, etc.) will get to our youth before us
2. State budgetary issues that would reduce programs and support from limited funding sources
3. Economic conditions facing our ability to successfully match youth with employment and/or accessibility to higher education
4. Archaic data systems that prevent us from obtaining/transferring accurate data that leave some youth from receiving help.

Table 5

 <h2 style="display: inline;">External Threats</h2>	
Threats and Description	Minimizing/Overcoming
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) There is always that threat that Negative outside influence (gangs, drugs, etc.) will get to our youth before us</li> <li>2) State budgetary issues that would reduce programs and support from limited funding sources</li> <li>3) Economic conditions facing our ability to successfully match youth with employment and/or accessibility to higher education</li> <li>4) Archaic data systems that prevent us from obtaining/transferring accurate data that leave some youth from receiving help.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Reaching out to them first and working with partners to help those most at risk</li> <li>2) Enhance private and donor partnerships to offset funding deficits from the state or federal programs</li> <li>3) Work with employers to ensure that jobs and educational opportunities exist for transitional age youth</li> <li>4) Enhance systems to ensure that we have a full picture of the youth we serve</li> </ol>

## **IDENTIFYING THE STRATEGIC ISSUES**

Team TAY's SWOT Analysis provided many insight into where the organization stands in its visions to empower youth to tap their unlimited potential. However, also identified were some strategic issues that could potentially thwart our mission and reaching our aspirations. It was felt that unless these strategic issues were addressed, it would be unlikely that we could ever be fully accountable to the values we deem necessary to serve transitional age youth.

### **Strategic Issues**

The top three issues that Team TAY will be charged with the next five fiscal years are listed here:

1. Communication between community partner agencies is lacking. Critical information is often missing, resulting in ineffective or incomplete services being provided
2. A disconnect exists between youth and TAY Staff. There are issues with properly assessing youth and their current issues and/or lack of resources. Youth need to receive proper assistance to successfully join society as an adult
3. Not enough practical skills are available to TAY youth to be fully autonomous in today's society.

Issue one is a strategic issue because if we cannot communicate with other agencies effectively, we will fail in our ability to provide adequate service to transitional age youth. Not addressing this issue will jeopardize our vision and mission. However, it will also give us a chance to review the way we do business to assure that we have added value to the transitional age youth we serve. Issue two is a strategic issue because if we inadequately match transitional age youth with resource, we fail to address what is truly important for them, which is, to tap their

unlimited potential and we waste resources that could be used for others. Issue three is strategic because we must ensure that long after our youth exit this program, they will be able to stand on their own and be a resource to themselves.

### **Strategic Questions**

As required of the strategic planning process, it was also important for us to ask ourselves some hard questions based on these strategic issues:

1. How can we communicate more effectively with our partner agencies to ensure that we provide the most effective and complete services?
2. How can we assess and/or pair the youth successfully to the specific needs they are lacking?
3. How can we enhance our services to include practical skills needed in today's society?

### **FORMULATING & ADOPTING GOALS TO ADDRESS ISSUES**

In response to our strategic questions, TAY's Strategic Management Team came together and devised the following goals that would alleviate our current strategic issues. These defining goal statements are stated below and will, upon achievement, result in the continued success of our organization:

1. Communicate more effectively with our partner agencies through technology and shared planning.
2. Develop and implement assessment tools that will accurately pair youth with the resources they are lacking such as housing, job placement, and emotional support.

3. Establish programs that ensure practical skills are developed for all youth within the program.

### **DEVELOPING AN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN & EVALUATION PROCESS**

Now that Team TAY's Strategic Goals were in place, it was important that we be able to match these goals with an implementation plan. The things considered in the implementation plan were if management would commit the necessary budget and staff, that the implementation would be aligned with our vision, mission, and values, and that our objectives were meaningful with measurable outcomes. The result of these considerations led to the adoption of the implementation plan highlighted below:

#### **Goal #1**

Communicate more effectively with our partner agencies through technology and shared planning. Jeremiah Smith, Executive Liaison, is the goal lead for the following objectives:

- Objective 1: By March 30, 2011, Team TAY's Technical Services will work with Eco Youth, the CRAP Internship Program, and other partner agencies to ensure that 100% of information exchanged is compatible with Teams TAY's current IT infrastructure.
- Objective 2: By July 1, 2012, each Team TAY Agency Liaisons will ensure 90% of all youth cases newly accepted have a complete case history prior to transferring the case to a Team TAY Counselor with a 5% increase each fiscal year thereafter.

### **Goal #2**

Develop and implement assessment tools that will accurately pair youth with the resources they are lacking such housing, job placement, and emotional support. Kitty Meeps, Social Service Manager, is the goal lead for the following objectives:

- Objective 1: By **June 30, 2011**, each Team TAY Transitional Counselor must establish 70% of their current youth cases into permanent housing with a 5% incremental increase each fiscal year thereafter.
- Objective 2: By **August 30, 2011**, each Team TAY Transitional Counselor must place 50% of their current youth cases into a permanent job position with a 2% incremental increase each fiscal year thereafter.

### **Goal #3**

Establish programs that ensure practical skills are developed for all youth within the program. Elana Lasco, TAY Special Projects Manager, is the goal lead for the following objectives:

- Objective 1: By June 30, 2012, TAY Special Projects must secure 5 volunteer staff members to establish a transitional age youth driving program.
- Objective 2: By June 30, 2013, Team TAY Gifts and Grants must secure 10 retired financial professionals to implement a Personal Budgeting Program for all permanently TAY Youth.

### **Evaluation Process**

Team TAY will monitor the progress of the Strategic Goals and Objectives through regular bi-weekly meetings with all Team TAY Management Staff, Board Members, and all

transitional age youth currently part of the program. Team TAY will also conduct exit interviews with youth to assess that all goals and objectives were met and determine if any readjustments need to be made. Quarterly, Team TAY will hold a strategic planning retreat to revisit the plan and make any adjustments determined necessary.

### **CONCLUSION**

Through this strategic plan, team TAY is taking charge of its future and that of the youth we serve. Ample analysis of our stakeholders, our environment, and the issues we face has been a great contribution to our learning about our organization and those we serve. This plan was crafted with the intent to secure measurable outcomes with the work plan and programs we offered. This will ensure that our youth receive the best possible care and assistance to reach self sufficiency successfully.

## REFERENCES

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