

Youth Crossroads

Strategic Plan
Goals and Values

Goals Overall

Goal 1: Youth Crossroads is the premier source for youth mental health and development services in Chicago's near west suburbs.

Goal 2: Youth Crossroads creates and implements policies, procedures, and organizational structures that enhance and sustain staff capacity to respond to community needs.

Goal 3: Youth Crossroads builds and sustains collaborative relationships with other community entities, institutions, and coalitions for sustainable cross-sector service delivery to youth and families.

Goal 4: Youth Crossroads builds its brand as a vital community resource for the specific and changing communities served.

Goal 1

GOAL AREA: SERVICE PROVISION

GOAL 1: Youth Crossroads is the premier source for youth mental health and development services in Chicago's near west suburbs.

Objectives

1. **Equitable access:** Recognize and break down the barriers to access for youth and their families to receive services and participate in programs.
2. **Community engagement:** Identify and steward long-term community partnerships that give youth leadership roles in addressing social justice and community development.
3. **Mentorship:** Recruit and develop community and alumni mentors from different career sectors and of differing ethnic/racial backgrounds and other identities to advance the personal and professional growth of youth.
4. **Program responsiveness:**
 - A. Solicit feedback from current and alumni youth, families, and community stakeholders to best respond to community needs and adjust programming toward overall wellbeing and future success of program participants.
 - B. Expand-metrics to measure effectiveness of YC programs and address larger social and community issues.

Goal 2

GOAL AREA: OPERATIONS

GOAL 2: Youth Crossroads creates and implements policies, procedures, and organizational structures that enhance and sustain staff capacity to respond to community needs.

	Objectives
1.	Human resources: Promote and maintain a healthy and welcoming work environment through policy and procedure, equal opportunity, and professional growth.
2.	Staff growth & career pipeline: Recruit, develop, and retain highly skilled staff that are representative of communities served by providing training opportunities and career pathways.
3.	Fundraising: Diversify the funding portfolio and prioritize general operating funds that sustain organizational staff and programmatic capacity.

Goal 3

GOAL AREA: PARTNERSHIPS & RELATIONSHIPS

GOAL 3: Youth Crossroads builds and sustains collaborative relationships with other community entities, institutions, and coalitions for sustainable cross-sector service delivery to youth and families.

	Objectives
1.	Engagement and partnerships: Utilize the collective experience of community members, partner organizations, schools, and government institutions to strengthen and co-deliver services.
2.	Community presence: Establish YC as a thought-leader and decision-maker in identifying solutions to local issues alongside policymakers, businesses, and community leaders and members.
3.	Stakeholder development: Develop increased opportunities for individuals, families, and community leaders to participate and support YC's work.

Goal 4

GOAL AREA: EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

GOAL 4: Youth Crossroads builds its brand as a vital community resource for the specific and changing communities served.

	Objectives
1.	Marketing: Develop additional culturally responsive marketing materials that reflect and use the languages of the youth and families served.
2.	Social media: Further create engaging social media content that drives traffic, increases engagement, and influences individuals to become involved with YC, targeting our various diverse communities.

Mission & Vision

MISSION

Youth Crossroads **supports** youth and their families, **guiding** them through life's challenges, and **inspiring** them to discover new opportunities for personal development, healthy relationships, and positive community involvement.

VISION

Youth Crossroads envisions a future **where equitable outcomes are not just a goal, but a reality**. We seek to remove barriers that prevent youth from reaching their fullest potential and envision a society where all youth thrive.

Organizational Values

1. Equity and Racial Justice
2. Trauma Informed
3. Youth Empowerment
4. Belonging and Connection
5. Adaptability, Collaboration, and Innovation

VALUES: Definitions + Descriptions

EQUITY AND RACIAL JUSTICE

Definition

Equity is a process of eliminating disparities by changing policies, practices, systems, and structures.

Racial Justice is the product: a transformation of society when people of color have dignity, resources, power, and self-determination.

Description – We demonstrate this value at YC by:

- Committing ourselves to creating diversity, equity, and inclusion amongst our employees and the communities we serve.
- Dismantling barriers that prevent youth and families from diverse backgrounds from participating in our programs and services.
- Providing leadership and educational services to support equitable and systemic change resulting in positive health, education, and economic outcomes.

VALUES: Definitions + Descriptions

TRAUMA INFORMED

Definition

YC approaches **Trauma Informed Care** as an organizational structure and treatment framework where all individuals within the organization work to build physical, psychological, and emotional safety for both the people we work with and for each other by:

- Learning about what trauma is and the affects it can have on individuals, families, and communities,
- Learning the signs and symptoms of trauma and being able to provide a trauma informed approach to all services and interactions,
- And resisting re-traumatization by actively working towards practices and policies that avoid compounding the impact of trauma.

Description – We demonstrate this value at YC by:

We commit to ensure the physical, psychological, and emotional safety for both the people in our services and for each other by:

- Providing yearly training and regular supervision to ensure the staff understand, recognize and respond to trauma in an immediate and healthy manner.
- Regularly evaluating all of our services and interactions to ensure an atmosphere that creates a feeling of safety for the people we work with and our staff.
- Providing consistency to the best of our ability in all of our interactions including but not limited to – personal boundaries, communication of process, expectations and tasks clearly.
- Teach and provide opportunities for individuals to experience developmentally appropriate choice and control.
- Role modeling how to build and maintain healthy relationships.
- Creating opportunities for collaboration and sharing of power through policy and procedure, activities and trauma informed care.
- Focus interactions on identifying strengths, building resiliency, and prioritizing an individual's building and mastering of their personal power and growth.

VALUES: Definitions + Descriptions

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

Definition

Empowerment means providing youth, families, and the community with the guidance, support, and inspiration they need to achieve success in school, at home, and in life.

We help others build solid support structures in their lives to foster emotional resiliency, sound decision-making skills, social responsibility, and leadership to maximize personal growth, healthy relationships, and positive community involvement.

Description – We demonstrate this value at YC by:

- Using community service to build the capacity of youth for self-sacrifice, self-confidence, social responsibility, and teamwork.
- Giving youth an opportunity to create programs that reflect their concerns and interest.
- Exposing youth and families to new opportunities for personal enrichment and professional development that can open new horizons.
- Providing college and career preparation, employment readiness activities, and life skills.
- Providing youth, families, and the community with hope and opportunity to build a brighter future
- Connecting families with resources to promote all areas of well-being: financial, emotion, physical, etc.
- Providing counseling services that allow youth and families to practice healthy communication, learn to healthily regulate emotions, and pursue fulfilling life goals

VALUES: Definitions + Descriptions

BELONGING AND CONNECTION

Definition

Creating safe spaces for the youth and families we serve to access the help and support they need regardless of their race, gender, identity, life experiences or financial circumstances.

Description – We demonstrate this value at YC by:

- Reflecting and celebrating the diverse cultural experiences of the community we serve.
- Eliminating the barriers to participation.
- Providing true acceptance that goes beyond tolerance. We recognize that we thrive on our connections to schools, families, and the community.

VALUES: Definitions + Descriptions

ADAPTABILITY, COLLABORATION AND INNOVATION

Definition

Adaptability and innovation is having the capacity to anticipate and respond quickly and effectively to individual and community needs, including public health issues, the economy, social change, and community violence and trauma.

We define **collaboration** as maximizing opportunities for youth and family development through strong, effective partnerships with community resources.

Description – We demonstrate this value at YC by:

- Actively listening to community members and stakeholders regarding what is needed.
- Developing programming around community needs.
- Seeking partnerships with schools, community organizations and other stakeholders to maximize resources for youth.
- Quickly responding to changing circumstances to ensure that the needs of our youth are met.