Preparing Youth for Success: A Comprehensive Model for Career and College Readiness

April Goff Brown
Director Comprehensive Youth Services Department
Catholic Charities, Hartford, CT

May 2012
Goals for the Workshop

- Provide an overview of career competency development work as part of school reform efforts in Hartford CT
- Provide a framework for bringing a comprehensive career competency approach to your high school
- Provide opportunity for discussion, questions, brainstorming for your next steps
System Alignment

Hartford Public Schools Strategic Operating Plan

- Goal 3 (High School): College Readiness
- Focus is on preparing students for college
- Develop skills to prepare the for success in college
- Have a college and career readiness plan for all students

Capital Workforce Partners

- Long term outcomes for youth include graduation from high school on time and entering a post secondary career education program
- Career Learning Plan
- Youth will achieve career competencies
School-To-Career programs

- CWP short term outcomes:
- Youth will gain career competencies
- Youth will gain insight into career interests, various careers and related educational pathways
- Youth will identify personal assets and how these affect both learning and working
- Youth will remain in school and progress to the next level
The Career Competencies

- Basic Skills (math and reading)
- Customer Services
- Computer literacy
- Problem Solving and Decision making
- Interpersonal Communications
- Personal Qualities
- Job Seeking Skills

Resource: Capital Workforce Partners, Hartford, CT
CWP Career Competency System

- Four Tiers I through IV
- Begins at age 14-15
- Sequential and developmental
- Summer
- School Year
- Student Portfolio
- On line
- Paid Internships
Tier I

- Summer youth employment
- 20 hours a week for 6 weeks
- All training based
- Stipend for participation
- Initial assessments to set baseline
- Link to employers through work site visits
- Speakers from businesses
Tier II

- Summer youth employment
- 20 hours a week for 6 weeks
- 1 week of orientation
- 4 hours each over 5 weeks of training
- Project based/simulated work experience
- Minimum wage work experience
- Sector related field trips
Tier III

- School year program of 60+ hours of training after school
- Paid internships of 48-60 hours
- Individual summer work experience of 6 weeks
- 1 week of orientation and job matching
- 20 hours weekly with 4 hours of training
- Employer feedback on performance
Tier IV

- Senior year program
- Junior Achievement Success Skills curriculum
- Speakers from a human resource personnel collaborative
- Job shadow days
- Skills challenges
- Invitational job fair
Components: Assessment

- Assessments
  - Harrington O’Shea career interest inventory
  - CASAS Math and English
  - Personal Development profile
  - Career Learning Plan
  - Tiers II - IV Employer feedback
Components: Data Collection

- Hartford Connects II using the Efforts to Outcomes platform
  - Allows for central registration and data collection
  - Tracks participants over time
  - Tracks growth and achievements
  - Tracks contract compliance efforts
  - Focus on building quality system that promotes career competency development in high school youth
Components: Employer Engagement

- Guest speakers (all tiers)
- Company tours (all tiers)
- Job shadowing (tiers I & II)
- Career mentoring (all tiers)
- Participate in curriculum activity (tiers II – III)
- Internships (tier III)
- Employer led workshops (tier IV)
- Career fairs (tier IV)
Catholic Charities at the Nursing Academy

- Provides summer youth employment in Tiers I-III for 100-120 youth
- Provides school year Tier III for up to 40 youth
- Provides Tier IV for up to 25 youth
Tier I Program

- Baseline Assessments
- 6 weeks of classroom instruction
- Focus on communication skills, teamwork, social skills, anger management, self discovery
- Public speaking
- Dream Resume
- Basic resume and cover letter
Tier II Program

- Partnership with the Central Area Health Education Center (AHEC)
- Instruction and project based employment focused in health area
  - Community health education – HIV
  - Design a nutrition activity book for younger children
- Create disaster survival kits
Tier III School year

- Targeted to juniors who have completed a Tier II summer program
- Assessments
- Instruction in personal qualities and customer service, resume and cover letter refinement, interviewing skills, practice interviews
- Paid internships at local health related placements
Internships

- Local federally qualified health centers
- Local hospitals
- Chiropractic office
- Assisted living facility
- Child care
- City Health Department
- After school programs
- Community based health agencies
Challenges with Internships

- Office hours of agencies not necessarily conducive to after school placements
- Connecting to private physician practices
- Conflict with hospital policies related to volunteer internships only
- Age issues for some placements
- HIPAA & background checks
- Leadership changes
Tier III Summer

- Priority is those who completed the year round Tier III
- Juniors and seniors
- Placements in health and human services related work experiences
- Worksite monitoring and employer feedback
Tier III Summer Placements

- Federally qualified health centers
- Catholic Charities
- YMCA – fitness
- Chiropractic office
- Summer camp programs
- Assistants in the SYELP
- Early childhood programs
- YWCA
Tier IV: Career Connections

• Targeted to seniors who have completed Tier II year round and summer
• Finalize their portfolio
• Prepare for skills challenges related to interviewing, dress for success, extemporaneous speaking
• Corporate partnership with Aetna Talent Acquisition department
• Invitational Jobs Fair
Career Competencies & Workplace Skills Comparison

- **Capital Workforce Partners**
  - Interpersonal & Communication Skills
  - Problem Solving & Decision Making Skills
  - Customer Service Skills
  - Personal Qualities
  - Computer Literacy
  - Job Seeking Skills

- **National Academy of Foundations**
  - Collaboration & Teamwork
  - Communication
  - Creativity & Innovation
  - Critical Thinking & Problem Solving
  - Information Management
  - Initiative/Self Direction/Resourcefulness
  - Professionalism & Ethics
  - Quantitative Reasoning
  - Technology
  - Workplace context & culture
Crosswalk

- **Capital Workforce Partners**
  - Tier I
  - Tier II
  - Tier III
  - Tier IV

- **National Academy of Foundations**
  - Career Awareness
  - Career Exploration
  - Career Preparation
  - Internship
How do you begin a program?

- Be focused – what sector will you focus on?
- Connect to your local workforce investment board to learn careers of growth for your area
- Identify business partners who are interested in having youth come to their site – build the pipeline
- Identify what your area employers believe are the critical skills for entry level workers
Building a Program

- How will you assess the baseline and results?
- What tools will you use to assess?
  - JIST Publications
  - Search Institute Developmental Assets
  - CASAS (www.casas.org)
  - Harrington O’Shea Career Interest Inventory
  - Others?
Selecting the Content/Curriculum

- Team Work
- Accepting Feedback
- Stress Management
- Handling Responsibility
- Interviewing Techniques
- Time Management
- Effective Listening
- Telephone Etiquette
- Presenting a Professional Image
- Completing Employment Applications
- Problem Solving
- Learning About Yourself
- Meeting Customer Needs
- What Employers Expect
- Keeping and Friends and Work Separate
Funding

- Workforce Investment Board – in school youth funding through US Department of Labor
- Corporate giving if connected
- Local community foundations
- Local United Ways
- Integrate into your community school funding
Start small and be focused

- Our first program was for 25 youth
- Selected topics and lessons from different curriculum
- Summer program started for those youth
- Expanded to 55 youth
- Last year, 165 youth in summer program
- Two groups of youth in school year
- Employers
Resources

Social Skills Curriculum – Boys Town
Book: 104 Activities That Build Self Esteem, Communication, Teamwork, Anger Management, Self Discovery and Coping Skills

Junior Achievement curricula
Young Person's Career Skills Handbook, JIST Publications

Workforce – Building Success, Personal Development, Steck-Vaughn Publishers
More Resources

*Essential Skills for the Workplace: Obtaining Information and Using Resources,* available through Amazon

*Skills That Work: Communication, Book 2* (www.glencoe.com)
Thank You

And good luck
as you develop your program
to help prepare youth for success
in the workplace

April Goff Brown
agoffbrown@ccaoh.org