



## Partners for Impact, LLC

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# NextGen Career Center Redesign: Final report with recommendations and development plan

## BACKGROUND

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The Capital Area Workforce Development Board (CAWDB) hired Partners for Impact, LLC to contract services to improve the hub of career readiness services available to youth throughout Wake and Johnston County. The CAWDB has successfully been reaching a number of young people across both of these counties and providing them with job readiness skills and connections to employment opportunities. Yet there are still eligible young people not being served and there are gaps in the current services.

This document outlines the results of continued conversations around the activities that are being considered in both Wake and Johnston County around the redesign of their NextGen Centers. As a result of previous elements of this assessment it was agreed that each county had enough unique aspects to their workforce development systems and county structures that they would be treated separately. As a result, Partners for Impact held planning meetings in both Johnston and Wake County as opposed to one regional summit that had been proposed in the original scope of work. This report describes significant activities, findings, next steps and development strategies for each county.

We started this process with the hypothesis that space plays a major impact in the engagement of young people. What we discovered is that space is important, and the relationships between staff and young people are likely to be more crucial in the long-term engagement and success of youth seeking services. Nevertheless, we have provided a section of space design recommendations as a final element in this report.

This report serves as the fourth and fifth deliverable of the contract between Partners for Impact and the Capital Area Workforce Development Board.

## JOHNSTON COUNTY

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As a result of the stakeholders meetings in Johnston County, Partners for Impact convened two different planning sessions. The first session included providers who examined the system. Through the use of journey maps and simple system assessments, the providers were able to find some key

leverage points to consider in the future. The second session began discussions about space and how the NextGen Center can be more youth centric.

### Systems Assessment and Leverage Points

The first session was made up of staff from the primary service providers for those seeking workforce development services. Participants were asked to think of a young person that they have worked with and complete a journey map for that young person. The journey map asked them to say how they met the young person, how did the young people come into the agency for services, what assessments were done, when and what referrals were made, where are they now? Because the participants were service providers, the goal was to see where and when the providers overlapped and what gaps might appear. Each one of the participants shared a story of a young person.

At the end of the session, the Partners for Impact consultant asked about why there was only one young man as the typical client. The majority were young women with at least one child., There followed a bit of discussion acknowledging that there are fewer services in general for young men. There is a greater expectation of self-sufficiency among these young men. The providers also shared a concern that many of these young men resorted to criminal activity in order to get their needs met.

As the group talked about the strategies for keeping all of these young people engaged in services, they all agreed that **staff relationships and relationships with peers were critical**. The participants talked about the importance of building the young person's **sense of pride**. Ensuring they were acknowledged for accomplishments and received positive rewards for their successes. They talked about the participation and how to move beyond "money as a motivator." Providers shared their sense of disappointment when young people were motivated to participate so that their name would be on the "angel tree at Christmas time for presents."

The providers talked about the **self-interest** that many of the young people have. These young people seem to want to **help others and work with others** only when **they get something out of it** or it makes them **feel valued**. There was a sense that if providers could understand what the underlying motivation is for young people to participate in programming that they could better meet a young person's needs. This led to the quick mention of **motivational interviewing** as an important technique that helps assess the motivation of young people.

One of the big issues that emerged was Medicaid transformation in the State of NC. The changes in Medicaid will create a **standard and tailored care pool of insurance benefits**. The standard benefits will go through big, traditional insurance providers. All of the young people will likely be in the standard pool with the exception of the young people who have some of the most severe physical and behavioral health needs. The concern is that some of the care that is really needed may not be available in the standard pool of services. It was the groups understanding that the insurance providers will have community relations staff who are supposed to relate with the local communities and discuss differences between standard and tailored services. The agreement was to think about how to prepare for these changes and advocate for the best outcome so that young people have the resources they need for success.

Through the conversation participants began to fully understand all the parts of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The group discussed which agencies in the room are receiving funding and support from the various titles. Agencies receiving Title 1, 2, and 4 funding

were in the room. As an observer of the discussion, it was interesting to see that **not all participants understood some of the other elements of the WIOA.**

As the participants talked about the Workforce Development System, a leverage point emerged. Johnston County could **leverage more Title 2 funding** if the county can improve the **retention rate at Johnston County Community College** and/or demonstrate the measurable supportive gains. If young people enroll and then leave school they are required to be disenrolled in 90 days. The coming and going nature of the young people makes the success changes and numbers difficult to maintain. There are still some programs that “skim the cream” and only enroll students who are likely to succeed. However, all agreed that finding strategies to keep young people engaged is the ideal option in Johnston County.

As the conversation came to a close, the participants agreed that the only reason Johnston County NextGen does not serve more young people, is because they do not have the additional resources. This means that providers are uncomfortable promoting their services. They are concerned that if they promote services and do not have the capacity to deliver those services, young people would be more discouraged with the agencies providing services and be demotivated to seek help and improve their employment situation. When asked about what they would do with unrestricted funding, they were quick to brainstorm the following:

- Some sort of transportation system that enables ride sharing.
- Housing Specialist - who could help leverage a combination of transitional housing and community based living for young people
- Prepare the next generation of providers to understand the workforce development system and support them in developing new and innovative ideas
- Design and implement a MIS that would enable providers to communicate.

### Space Redesign

As part of the overall project, Partners for Impact proposed an experiment that brought together young people, providers and employers. The goal was to envision a redesigned space for Johnston County’s NextGen Center. The group was divided into three smaller groups, with all three stakeholder groups represented in each small group. Through a series of discussion questions the participants were guided through a conversation that eventually led to simple floor plan designs for an ideal space for young people to receive services. The guided questions were as follows:

1. Make notes of what would be good to have in a center designed for young people to achieve their education and employment goals?
2. Are there other services that really need to be considered besides what are currently found here at the NextGen center?
3. On a piece of flipchart paper and using post-it notes design the space. Please take the time to walk around the space and see what you would change.
4. Look at the drawing, are there spaces that enable young people to interact and work with each other?
5. Are there spaces for interaction both privately and in the larger community for youth to interact with staff?

6. What special things might be needed for employers?

Photos of the groups' work are found in Appendix 1.

As the groups reported out to each other the following common elements of a youth friendly space emerged:

- Child Care
- Meeting Rooms
- Space to secure stuff, ie., lockers
- Cafeteria/Food/Kitchen - for both training, meals and pantry
- Lounge
- Center office space
- Recreation area
- Signage inside/outside - employers as sponsors and acknowledgement
- Lighting and windows that make the space inviting instead of institutional
- Flexible technology-check out equipment
- WiFi
- Security
- Study/quiet space for counseling too
- Parking
- Designs and color on the floor instead of the concrete
- Classroom and computer lab
- Playgrounds for kids

*Recommendations (including next steps in funding)*

The Johnston County NextGen Center is poised for growth and change. The partners are engaged with each other and the young people. Employer engagement could be improved. Some employers seem to be more community oriented than others. They see the opportunities represented by this population and are willing to take risks. The challenge is to help more employers understand how these young people can benefit their workplace and community in the future.

Some specific next steps for Johnston County include:

1. Training local youth providers on trauma informed care and motivational interviewing.
2. Building a community of practice to sustain processes and lessons learned in the training.
3. Developing a system wide plan to address student retention at JCCC.
4. Continue exploring the workforce development system, educating program staff about the system and continue to uncover leverage points.
5. Identifying system-wide metrics and consider a shared management information system.
6. Developing a communication plan that educates policymakers and other stakeholders about the opportunities presented by these young people.

Johnston County NextGen Center could benefit from additional resources. Unrestricted funding that provides **backbone support** would enable the NextGen Center and its partners to develop systems that improve youth outcomes. A small investment between \$7,000-\$8,000 per year would likely yield

significant returns in the coming 2-3 years. As an initial step, Partners for Impact worked with CAWDB to submit an application to Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation (See Appendix 2) to support some of these backbone activities.

**Housing services** are sorely needed for youth in Johnston County. Partners for Impact suggests working with the [Region 7 Balance of State Continuum of Care](#) and local officials to leverage funding opportunities for housing. Both the Principal Consultant and Senior Advisor at Partners for Impact have extensive experience with this process.

Johnston County Industries, Inc (JCI) currently receives the contract from the Capital Area Workforce Development Board for the NextGen Career Center. They are a strong and effective agency in Johnston County. Currently, they have a facility that receives some support from the CAWDB. Because the funding is competitive, the CAWDB can not make commitments beyond the regular contracts that are signed. However, JCI is in a strong position to take the local lead on designing a space for services, including workforce development services, for opportunity youth in Johnston County.

## WAKE COUNTY

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As a result of the stakeholder meetings in Wake County, we brought together providers to discuss the availability of funding from the State of North Carolina for Enhancement Funding. These funds would begin to help us implement and pilot some specific activities identified in previous stages of this assessment. The stakeholders that met agreed that CAWDB should pilot the following activities:

1. Creating a Youth Advisory Council. This is a key principles of positive youth development and ensures that young people are helping make decisions for the program. The CAWDB would like to have this council meet regularly.
2. Providing staff training and professional development with youth providers in the community around trauma informed care.
3. Hiring, training and placing youth navigators in youth serving agencies. They would be responsible for helping their peers navigate the workforce development system.
4. Adding some small services to the existing space, especially a food pantry and child care of some sort.
5. Convening a systems alignment council. This would be a group of providers who meet regularly to begin figuring out how Wake County can be more aligned regarding the self-sufficiency of the young people in the county.

### *Strategic Alternatives for CAWDB*

Services for opportunity youth in Wake County are characterized by a large number of providers, no agreed upon goal for youth beyond program/agency goals, focused revenue streams that promote a siloed system, and limited coordinated activity between the providers. Below we have described two alternatives for the CAWDB given the local environment for youth services. First, the **CAWDB could take a lead role in developing a comprehensive master plan for opportunity youth across Wake**

**County.** The second alternative is for the **CAWDB to work with EDSI and prepare to find a new space that is more flexible, engages young people and adds some additional critical services.**

### ***Community Planning Alternative***

Youth Thrive is Wake County's collective impact initiative designed to improve the overall well being and success of children and youth. Their current Strategic Planning Blueprint outlines a number of strategies for the county. While there are 2-3 strategies that target the general success of young adults, the majority of their current efforts are focused on emotional and social well-being and educational success, especially early school-age children. In addition, there are a growing number of community collaboratives that target young children and early childhood education, but none that directly work with this at-risk population. There is **no real plan that targets specific outcomes for young adults** in Wake County who are not in school and/or not working.

**Agencies and programs focusing on young people obtaining work and a reliable income are natural leaders in creating this plan.** At the same time, a more comprehensive plan addressing multiple domains that lead to overall success may seem like it is outside the mission of most local agencies because it would go beyond just workforce and career development to cover things such as housing, health, food security, child care, etc. Based on previous reports for this project, it is vital to think about more than one domain for outcomes when it comes to ensuring the continued success of these opportunity youth. Partners for Impact recommends exploring what two other workforce development boards have done with regard to leading more comprehensive plans. Conversations with these two groups would be a key next step. Austin, TX and Hartford, CT have workforce development boards that have taken a lead in building plans for opportunity youth in their community.

An initial convening of 15-20 stakeholders could begin the process of **creating a common agenda** for this population. The group can spend time making agreements on the overall values that guide the group, discuss and define the common problem to be addressed, and creating a community level goal based on the common vision that emerges from the process. Once this is accomplished then the group of stakeholders including the CAWDB are able to define their role and respective strategies within the plan. As part of the planning process, it is important to discuss the role of space in working with these young people. It is possible that an option where agencies share space could emerge as a key strategy.

At this juncture, the **CAWDB can determine its own role in moving this plan forward.** It may be possible to serve as the lead agency/backbone for the implementation of the plan. It may be that the only role is to focus on the education and employment outcomes that emerge out of the plan. As the space discussions emerge the CAWDB could determine what role it might play. Whether or not CAWDB leads a new space initiative, it would have the relationships and partnerships necessary to colocate employment and education related services in ways that improve the diversity of services available to young people and increase their likelihood of success. Regardless of the choices around implementation, the CAWDB will have played a critical leadership role in the plan development and it will be positioned to play a lead role, a partnership role, or even a sole organization role in the mix of providers.

### ***Supporting EDSI and finding new space***

A second alternative is for the **CAWDB to work directly with their current contractor, EDSI**, focusing solely on improving the employment and education outcomes of these young people. Simultaneously, the **CAWDB can search for a more suitable space**. Ideally, a group of young people can be a part of this discussion. Having youth voices represented in the form of a Youth Advisory Council will add information about the space needs in Wake County. It is possible at this juncture to engage young people in helping find the new space and engage some of the key providers in co-locating some services. Child care and food pantry services have already been identified as key components that need to be incorporated and available. This is also the time to consider adding other types of services and youth engagement activities that we have seen in other communities, such as a virtual reality platform or a recording studio.

### ***Resource Development***

There are several things to begin considering with regard to fund development for Wake County. First, is to apply for the **Enhancement Grant** (see Appendix 3). Partners for Impact recommends that a portion of this grant, if received, be invested into a Systems Council that will function as the long term planning group identified in the first alternative.

Once stakeholders and partners are aligned with a collective vision, partners can leverage funding from the various other systems. For example, an agency that interacts with HUD may be in a position to apply for HUD funding for this population. An agency that interacts with mental health services may be able to leverage Medicaid or other health related funding. The important part is that the individual partners begin to align to the longer term and bigger picture outcome of youth success, and in doing so they promote the capacity for these young people in succeeding with long term education and employment goals. A comprehensive plan with more alignment would also enable a more deliberate approach to leveraging philanthropic dollars, private sector sponsorships and public sector support.

Another strategy is to consider corporate sponsors. These sponsorships would be a way to engage local corporations in creating a new and innovative service or skills development like the virtual reality platform being discussed by the CAWDB staff. This type of engagement could also improve the corporate sponsors participation in employing some of these young people. It also frees up any unrestricted funding to be used by CAWDB. It would be important to ensure that this type of sponsorship is possible given CAWDB's connection to the public sector.

## **SPACE DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS**

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Based on all the data collected for this entire project, Partners for Impact has the following recommendations for CAWDB when considering space decisions moving forward.

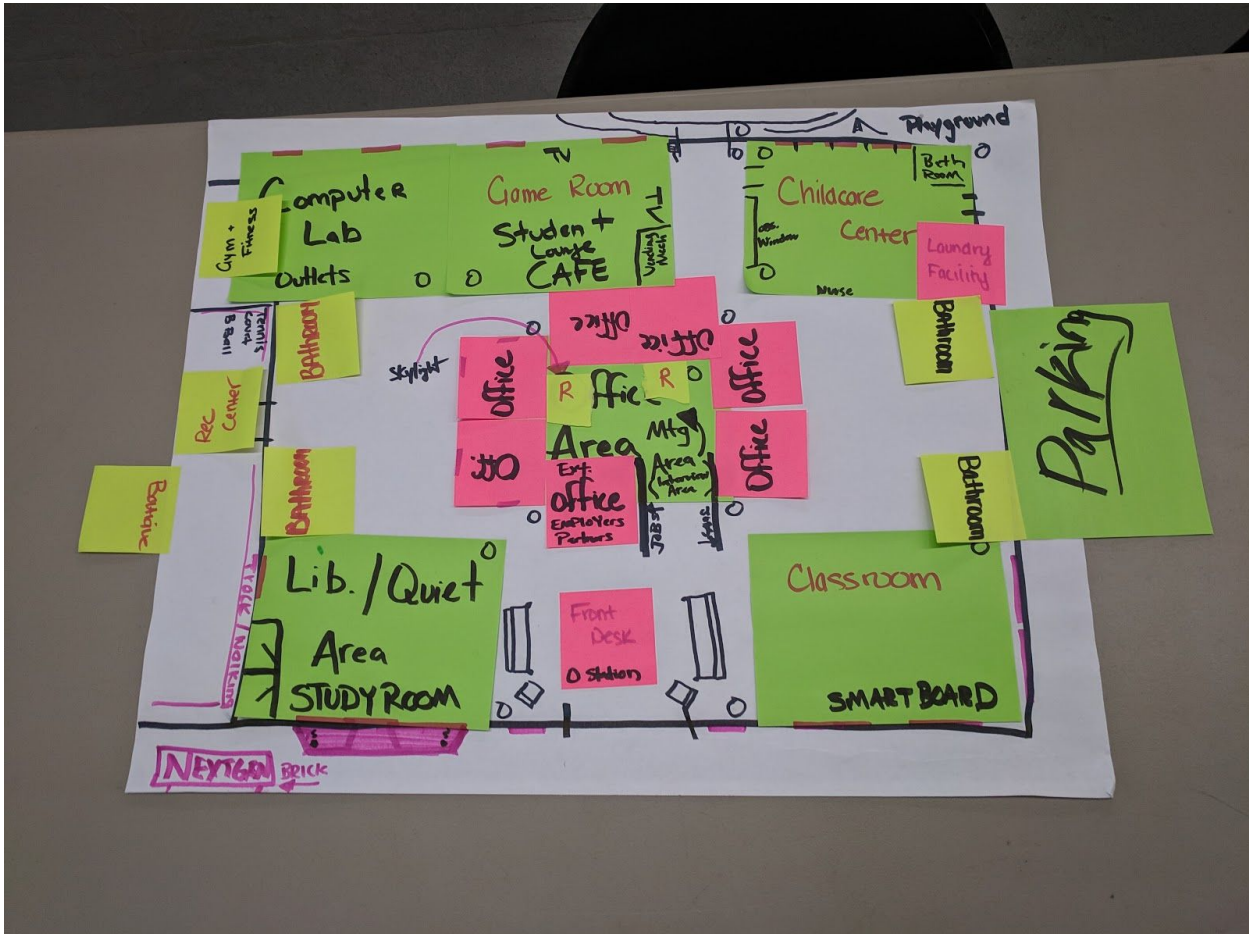
1. The space should be large enough to accommodate all the staff, any colocated services and the predicted volume of young people seeking services.
2. Provide a food pantry or some other means of feeding young people who find themselves hungry and without food.

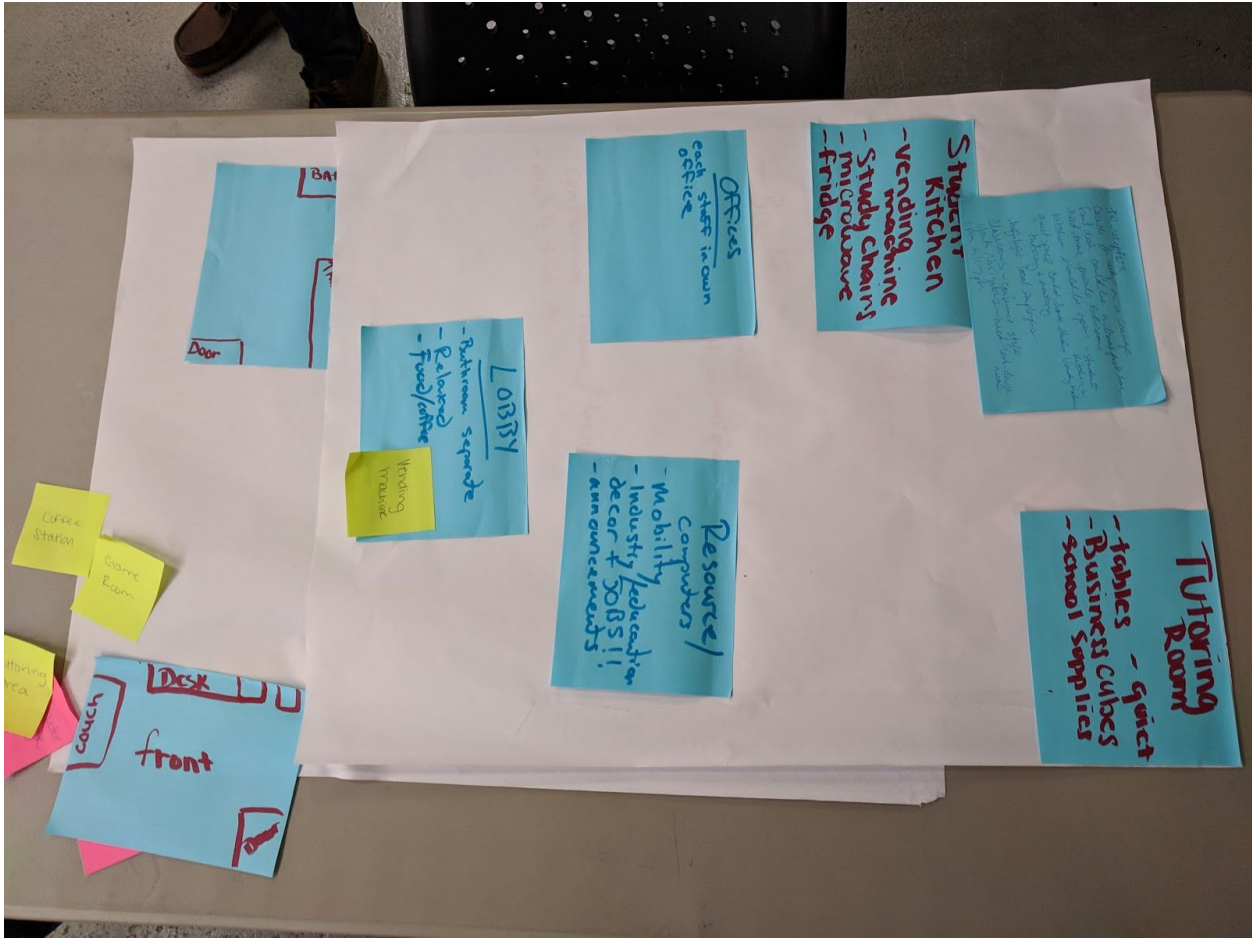
3. Create spaces that allow adult/professional modeling and experiential activities for youth. For example, a multi-use kitchen space may be appropriate for use by staff and young people. Not only could food be stored, but if staff are making spaghetti for lunch, youth can help and learn to cook.
4. Depending on the number of young people who are parents, ensure that there are child friendly spaces that allow for age appropriate activities to take place. When possible be able to provide child care for activities at the space.
5. Create some open spaces that allow staff to interact and work with youth. Some of the spaces may include tables with chairs, others may be couches and comfortable chairs. Staff who work in the open space can serve as a model for young people, and they can interact with them in casual and purposeful ways.
6. Ensure that there are private spaces for private/sensitive conversations in addition to private staff offices (these could be shared).
7. Design all spaces through the lens of trauma informed care. Such spaces will increase the feelings of safety and comfort from the young people receiving services and the staff providing services.
8. Depending on additional services or engagement activities, make sure the space can accommodate those. For example, if you want to create a recording studio, then you have to have a space that accommodates that activity.
9. Provide Wi-Fi and charging station access for young people to use.
10. Make sure signage and decor reflect the multicultural nature of the youth being served, including signs that the space is LGBTQ friendly.
11. Minimize any sort of institutional feel, ie, school and/or jail.
12. Have a alternatives that allow young people to secure valuables.
13. When possible engage a Youth Advisory Council in helping lead and design the space to support the services.

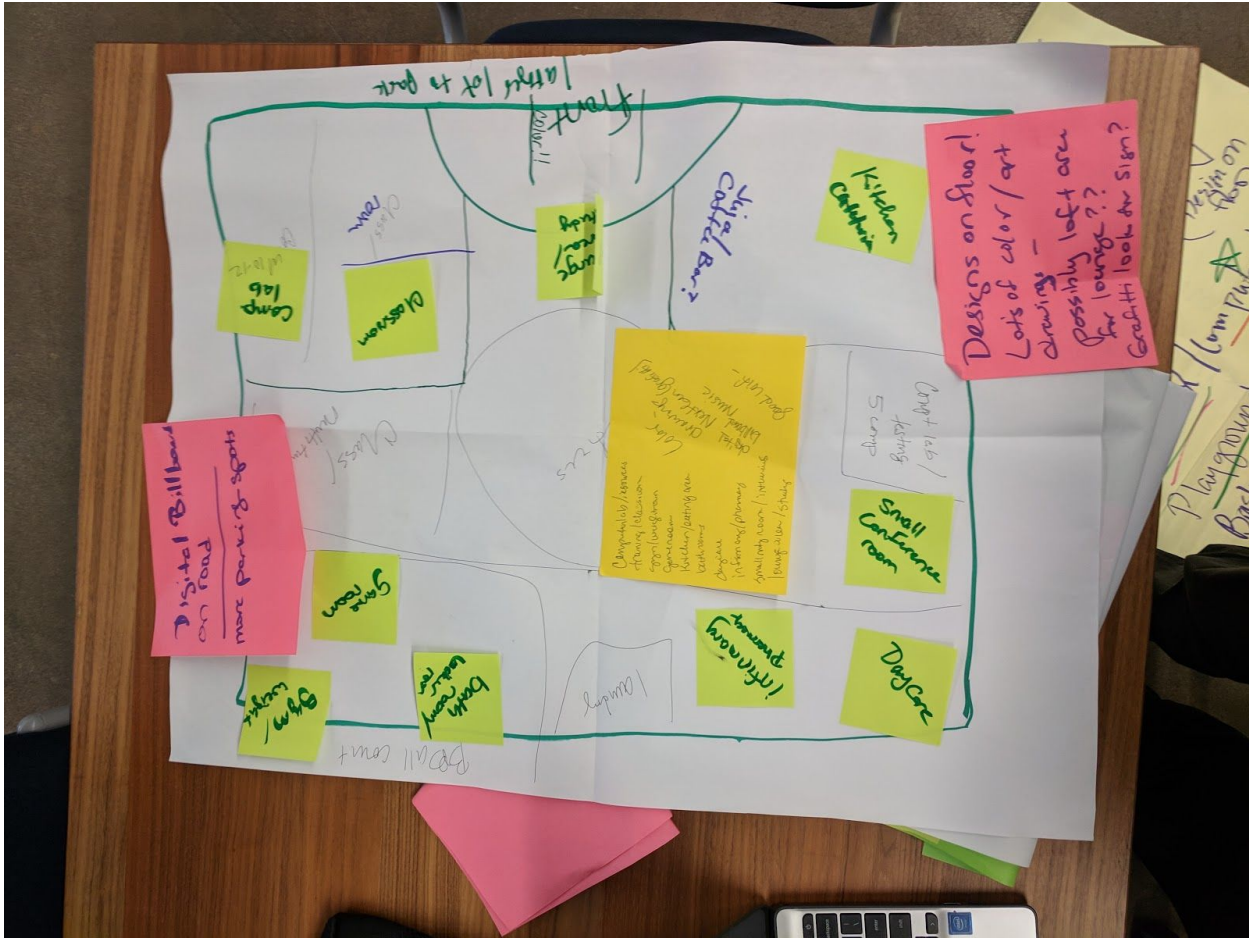


# Appendix 1.

## Photos of Johnston County Space Redesign







## Appendix 2.

# Z. Smith Reynolds Application

**What community issue are you addressing, or do you plan to address? In your explanation, please include information about the following:**

- **The location or geographic scope of the work;**
- **A statement of need and brief description of the work you hope to accomplish; and**
- **The demographics or other relevant information regarding the people who will be impacted by the work (525 Words)**

There is an average of 3,000 opportunity youth in Johnston County each year. An opportunity youth is between the ages of 16-24 and are not working and/or enrolled in secondary or post-secondary education. They have the potential for creating economic and social “opportunity” within our communities. The big challenge is that they need support. In Johnston County 64% (1,900) of these young adults have recognized barriers to employment. Furthermore, jobs have become more competitive. During the Great Recession youth employment opportunities in Johnston County declined and have not returned to previous levels.

The Johnston County NextGen Center is a program of the Capital Area Workforce Development (CAWD) and run by Johnston County Industries (JCI). JCI is a nonprofit organization that provides training and employment services to disadvantaged and disabled individuals. Specifically, the NextGen Center works with young people with existing barriers in their life, and/or need support to attain gainful employment and to achieve educational goals. Youth participate in basic skills tutoring, leadership development, employment and Life Skills workshops, work experiences, On-the-Job Training, community service and other academic and work-based learning activities.

JCI has provided successful services to the opportunity youth who seek services. Since 2015, JCI has served 430 students. Fifty-nine percent of those have been between the ages of 19-24 and 51% are out of school youth who have dropped out of school. These young people have a wide variety of employment related barriers including having a disability, being a young single parent (including being a pregnant or parenting teen), and having been convicted of a criminal offense. However, the single largest common factor is that these young people have deficits in their basic literacy skills, which may be the same reason they were not able/willing to stay in school.

Recently the CAWD completed an assessment of the Johnston County NextGen Center. Stakeholders from across Johnston County were brought together to build on the current strengths of the NextGen Career Center and identify strategies that 1) engaged more young people in workforce readiness solutions, 2) sustained that engagement in ways that increased the long-term success of these young people. The stakeholders included young people, service providers, and employers throughout Johnston County.

The stakeholders identified that young people need more support systems in order to succeed. Employers observed that they do not see the familial or other support needed that would enable success. Service providers described a variety of supports. However, there was a growing number of young people who needed them, and the providers were bound by restrictions in funding resulting in young people falling through the crack. Young people shared their desires. They want adults to help them “sell themselves” when competing with adults for a limited number jobs, They want people to stick with them over time. They wanted to see and talk with young people who looked like them and had similar experiences.

WORDS SO FAR -- 483

**Describe existing momentum for the work outlined in this proposal. What would be different if a Community Progress Fund grant were to be awarded? How would ZSR funds be used? (350 words)**

ZSR funding would be used in two overarching ways. First, CAWD would support the Johnston County NextGen Career Center in building the social capital young people need in order to improve their success in obtaining and sustaining employment. One of the first steps is to build a youth advisory council so that youth guide the work of the NextGen Career Center in Johnston County. In addition, we would explore hiring “youth” navigators who reflect the experiences of seeking services. The navigators would be paid by the NextGen Career Center and share experiences and help support young people seeking services. Finally, training Johnston County providers that are part of the system on providing trauma informed care will be the final element.

The second big goal is to position the NextGen Career Center to provide more comprehensive services over a period of time. Through the recent assessment process the CAWD has seen the power of facilitating discussions between community partners and having them identify key leverage points within the system that could improve the resources available to these young people. In a recent session, they identified the following:

1. Young people need access to a variety of affordable housing options.
2. Once enrolled in Johnston County Community College, if young people can avoid dropping out, JCCC has the ability to leverage more funding for young adults through Title 2 funding of the Workforce Innovations and Opportunity Act.
3. As Medicaid expands in North Carolina, young people will be eligible to receive insurance through typical insurance providers. However, it will be important to advocate with these providers so that there can be a “tailored pool” of reimbursable care for this special population as opposed to the “standard pool” of reimbursable care.

It is important to begin to figure out how to put those recommendations into actionable items. A temporary, part-time position or consultant who supports and facilitates the current Johnston County Network would provide backbone support needed to improve the system and leverage additional resources.

WORD COUNT- 332

# Appendix 3.

## Enhancement Grant for Wake County

### WIOA Program Enhancement Grant Application

December 31, 2018 Draft

1. **Application Project Name:** Building Youth Engagement and Success
2. **Area Served (Counties/Cities/Region):** Wake County, NC
3. **Workforce Development Board(s):** Capital Area Workforce Development Board
4. **Funding Level Requested:** \$199,993
5. **Requested Duration of the Grant:** Two years
6. **Brief Description of the Project:** The Capital Area Workforce Development Board will be increasing the engagement of Wake County opportunity youth in workforce development services through the creation of a Youth Advisory Council and the piloting of a Youth Navigator program. The staff of youth serving agencies will increase their competency and ability to support young people as they improve their adaptive skills. Finally, at the end of the first year, Wake County will have a plan that outlines a comprehensive approach to the success of opportunity youth.
7. **Project Contact Person (Name/Title/Phone Number/Email):** Malinda Todd, Strategic Initiatives Director, 919-856-2716, Malinda.Todd@wakegov.com

# Application Contents

NOTE: The points in parentheses are the weight values given to the questions and will be used by staff to score the proposal.

## 1. Problems and Challenges (10 Points):

### a. Describe the problems and challenges this grant will address.

There are nearly 10,000 opportunity youth in Wake County. These young people are between the ages of 16 - 24 and are not in school and/or employed. Once labeled “at-risk” or “disconnected,” these young people have enormous potential and represent a social and economic opportunity in our community. All they need is a little bit of support and direction.

Sixty-four percent of these young people have a recognized challenge to employment. During the Great Recession in 2008, unemployment in this age group reached an all time high and this particular age group has been very slow to recover. This is especially true for young people who do not have a high school diploma.

Wake County’s NextGen Career Center has been very successful over the past few years. They have been reaching roughly 350 young people annually. Unfortunately, that is just a small percentage of young people who need the services. CAWDB would like to use the enhancement grants to increase the number of young people who seek services from the Wake County NextGen Career Center as well as increase the success of those who receive services.

The single largest challenge is the diversity of needs presented by these young people who are transitioning into adulthood. For this age group, it can be a time when adult support systems are disappearing. For example, for youth in foster care, an 18th birthday can mean an abrupt end to a home. For a young person who doesn’t have the option to stay on a guardian’s insurance, a 19th birthday means an end to health insurance. For young adults involved in the courts, it is a transition to a harsher, more punitive justice system. And for many under-skilled young adults, finding a job that pays a living wage can feel out of reach.

### b. Describe how current gaps in available services or funding fails to address the identified need of job seekers and businesses in the defined region.

During the summer and fall of 2018, the CAWDB completed an assessment of the Wake County NextGen Career Center. While the center has been achieving its outcomes, there were still challenges with ongoing youth engagement and the growing demand for services. As a result of the assessment young people were consulted and shared the following:

- While not always needed, young people identified that sometimes the struggle for basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, transportation and child care were barriers to employment.
- The connection to professional staff and the “vibe” where they received services determined whether they remain engaged in services. Several young people acknowledged the importance of staff consistency and the challenges they directly experience when professional staff turns over.

- Young people struggled with the balance necessary to meet immediate needs (work with cash in hand) with the desire to invest in their long-term future (associate or bachelor's degrees).
- Young people wanted to be "respected" and "understood" and wanted to see people like them and/or who had similar experiences to their own.

In addition, professional staff from multiple youth serving agencies in Wake County identified the following challenges

- Youth come in and are able to manage their crisis with assistance and as they begin to succeed and think about long term success, they do not have the skills to sustain long-term success.
- It can be difficult to really identify the motivators for the young person and their commitment to improving their circumstance.
- Providers consistently said you have to address the whole youth and support them through multiple systems and not limit to trying to achieve one outcome, ie., employment only.
- Many challenging behaviors are a result of trauma that youth have experienced previously in their life.
- Providers generally believed that the challenges of co-locating services that are supported by multiple systems (ie., basic needs, employment, education, justice, health) would be offset by the benefits that it would bring to young people
- Providers are often times unable to maintain contact with young people after they exit programs after about 6 months.

**c. Describe the solution(s) that funding from the WIOA Program Enhancement Grant will implement during the grant period**

In order to improve the overall success of young people who are receiving workforce development services, the CAWDB would like to do the following:

1. Create a youth advisory council for the CAWDB;
2. Pilot a youth navigator program;
3. Support the development and retention of youth service providers with specific training;
4. Add services that meet some basic needs and encourage youth engagement; and
5. Support the development of a county-wide plan that engages multiple systems and leverages additional resources to ensure the overall self-sufficiency of opportunity youth.

**d. Describe the impact the solution will have on identified communities or populations.**

The activities above are designed to improve the results of Wake County's workforce development services targeting young adults who are not in school and/or employed. They will increase the number of youth who are providing leadership that supports and guides this



project, and enables young people to work with successful peers. As staff become more effective and gain professional development they increase their ability to remain in positions longer with attitudes and behaviors that demonstrate ongoing support of the young people receiving services. Sometimes critical services such as food and/or child care for appointments and programs offer enough incentive for young people to engage in services. Finally, in order for Wake County to maximize the large variety of funding resources available in the community, a plan that engages multiple youth serving systems could increase the coordination and efficiency of resources available to opportunity youth throughout Wake County.

## **2. Enhancement Grant Framework/Strategic Approach (50 Points):**

**In this section, describe the outcomes to be achieved and the strategic approach to be used to achieve those outcomes and address the problem(s) or issues identified above.**

**a. Identify how the project is an enhancement of the current programs/services delivered in the area.**

Within Wake County roughly 350 youth, out of over 6,000 that are eligible, are receiving services from the Capital Area Workforce Development Board each year. The growing demand increases the need for providers to be creative and efficient in what they are able to deliver. Furthermore the focus of these services are on education, career development, mentoring and leadership development. Continued education for the staff is focused on obtaining certificates such as the Certified Workforce Development Professional and Career Development Facilitator. Limited resources prohibit the workforce development staff from deepening their understanding of positive youth development principles and other approaches, such as motivational interviewing and trauma informed care, that can address deficits in adaptive skills that undermine the success of young people. Furthermore, working directly with opportunity youth can be a stressful environment that results in staff turnover; turnover that was noticed and discussed by young people in the CAWDB assessment. The proposed project activities focusing on professional development are designed to support the staff and integrate strategies that increase the success of the young people receiving services.

At this time, there is not a youth advisory council that guides the CAWDB on policy/program decisions. Having the youth voice and perspective ensures a more accurate context to the workforce development services provided by the CAWDB. In addition, young people specifically identified in the recent assessment the need for peer mentors who would assist them in navigating the workforce development system based on their own experiences.

In order to scale services to improve the long-term self-sufficiency of opportunity youth in Wake County, a more coordinated approach between youth service providers and government programs needs to be considered. There is not a current comprehensive plan for these youth within Wake County, yet there are numerous agencies representing different systems trying to address the needs of these at-risk young people. Coordinating systems' activities and understanding the wide variety of restricted and unrestricted funding streams

could dramatically improve the efficiency of the youth services systems in a way that increases both the number of young people served and their overall success in achieving self-sufficiency,

**b. Demonstrate the appropriateness of the method to be used to address the issue/opportunity.**

While the CAWDB in Wake County has had remarkable success with many of the technical skills youth need to obtain training and jobs, there is a need to deepen the more adaptive skills necessary to sustain those jobs. These same skills are mirrored with the engagement between young people and agencies providing services. Developing relationships that are positive and long-term are key aspects of long-term success. Emphasizing and deliberately integrating the principles of Positive Youth Development are crucial to the learning and positive behavior change that can take place.

The Federal Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs provides the following definition of Positive Youth Development:

*Positive youth development is an **intentional, pro-social approach** that **engages** youth within their communities, schools, organizations, peer groups, and families in a manner that is productive and constructive; recognizes, utilizes, and enhances youths' **strengths**; and promotes **positive outcomes** for young people by providing **opportunities**, fostering **positive relationships**, and furnishing the support needed to build on their leadership strengths.*

Creating a Youth Advisory Council and piloting a Youth Navigator project are both key strategies that promote Positive Youth Development. These two activities within the project will enable young people to participate in design, delivery, and evaluation of the services. Adults and youth will be working in partnerships. It will also enable young people who are receiving services to see young people like themselves.

Training the staff on how to integrate these principles is an additional activity of this project. Staff will receive two days of training on these principles and with two other essential frameworks: motivational interviewing and trauma informed care. Motivational interviewing is designed to engage young people in identifying solutions to some of the challenges they experience and supporting them as they try those solutions. The notion is that as a young person identifies a solution they will be invested in this choice because they have more ownership of trying new things.

Finally, trauma informed care has recently been used in a wide variety of human service agencies. Adding this framework to the successful technical training provided by the CAWDB, would also increase the adaptive skills that young people need to improve relationships and sustain employment. Furthermore, many young people who are unsuccessful and unable to complete workforce development programs have experienced trauma. Using a lense of trauma informed care has demonstrated that service engagement, retention and outcomes improve. There are also fewer instances of crisis.

Organizational outcomes have also improved when integrating trauma informed care. Staff skills and morale grow. They collaborate more within and outside their agencies. Vicarious trauma, trauma that providers experience in dealing with their clients, decreases.

When providing services, training needs to find its way into practice. In order to accomplish this, the project is proposing that a community of practice be created. This community of practice will meet monthly between training activities. Youth serving providers will discuss how training is incorporated into practice across the community, challenges to sustaining the practice and solutions to implementation challenges.

Based on the assessment completed by the CAWDB in the summer and fall of 2018, providers across the community stressed the importance of providing multiple supports to youth. Some explicitly indicated that if you are only focused on one outcome, failure is imminent. For example, success will be limited in employment if the young person has challenges with housing. If there are few positive adults in the life of a young person, they may not have the support they need for success. CAWDB acknowledges this important factor and believes that the large network of providers in Wake County could improve the holistic nature of services received by young people. A more deliberate plan in how these providers relate with each other as a system with a common outcome of youth success would be the first step in improving the overall system of services. It would allow agencies to rely on their service delivery strengths while making sure that young people have other challenges in their life addressed.

**c. Provide a description of the goals and objectives of the project. (The specific goals, measures, and objectives will become part of Attachment B).**

Ultimately, this project will improve CAWDB's overall results in their workforce development activities. There will be a growth in the number of young people who participate in workforce development services, they will remain engaged with providers after they have completed their program, and the overall success rate of these young people will increase. In addition, CAWDB believes that there will be an increased number of young people who are using community based resources, such as NC Works online, that may achieve a measure of success without the be able to move through. However, for this specific project, there are three very important goals.

**Youth leaders will provide guidance, leadership, and direct support in the delivery of workforce development services.** The CAWDB will create and use a Youth Advisory Council to provide advice on projects undertaken by the board. They will meet 12 times over the two year period. Some of the young people may be involved in reviewing funding applications and reports from contracted providers. All of them will interact with the adult board members in different ways over the course of the two years.

In addition, the CAWDB would like to create a contractual relationship with a provider to pilot a youth navigator program. The idea is to have young people who are likely graduates of WIOA programs to become employed staff. They would then be trained in the workforce

development tools such as NCWorks. They would be placed in other local youth serving agencies where they would interact with other opportunity youth.

**Youth serving staff will increase their ability to provide safe supportive environments that increase youth engagement and success.** Training on positive youth development, motivational interviewing and trauma informed care will be provided to youth providers in Wake County. In addition, the contracted trainer will also organize a community of practice that will support the long term integration of the tools and techniques learned from training.

**Wake County will develop a multisystem plan designed to increase the overall success of opportunity youth in Wake County.** This plan will identify a common agenda for Wake County opportunity youth. It will develop strategies that enable agencies to use their strengths while providing more holistic services to young people. It will also allow the coordination and leveraging of funding from a variety of revenue streams.

**d. Provide a description of the scope of work and the tasks involved in accomplishing the project, and indicate how this project may be coordinated with other programs, funds, and grants existing in the local area. This section should include, if appropriate, expected number of job seekers to be served and how they are to be served.**

The CAWDB would devote .1 FTE staff to developing and implementing a Youth Advisory Council. The staff person would work with providers from across the community to identify 5-7 young people who would participate in the Youth Advisory Council that meets once every other month. The role of this advisory council will be to offer suggestions based on challenges experienced by those providing services to young people in Wake County. It will be important to ensure that these young people are incentivized and compensated for their time and perspectives. CAWDB would provide \$50 gift cards for each young person to attend the 12 sessions over a two year period. The staff person would be responsible for reporting to the CAWDB on a semi-annual basis the results and any necessary quality improvement activities that need to be implemented.

As part of this enhancement grant, CAWDB would like to pilot the use of Youth Navigators. A .5 FTE staff person would coordinate a series of activities which would include identifying youth service providers who would house a part-time youth navigator, and hire, train, and support three youth navigators. The youth navigators would learn how to access NC Works and the contracted workforce development provider in Wake County. They would be trained to meet young people who are interested in jobs at local youth serving agencies. The navigators would support young people who enter those agencies for services and are interested in working. They would help them access NC Works and engage with the contracted workforce development provider.

Staff development and training will be contracted through a local youth services organization that has a history of working with extremely high risk youth, including those with mental

health and substance abuse disorders. They would provide the two-day training on trauma informed care, positive youth development, and motivational interviewing. Each of these two day trainings would occur twice over the two year period for a total of six trainings. In addition, the provider would host a monthly community of practice meeting that supports the implementation of these practices beyond the training. Finally, this training will be made available to other youth serving providers who are critical partners in providing services to the young people seeking services from the CAWDB.

In order to build a more comprehensive plan that improves the overall self-sufficiency of opportunity youth, CAWDB would contract with consultants to develop that plan. They would provide support over a 9-12 month period to gather input, build local support and draft a comprehensive plan. This plan can then serve as a guide for leveraging multi-system resources targeting these young people.

**e. If appropriate, define the role that partnerships with local non-profits, partner agencies, and government members had in the development of the proposal and the relationship that will exist if the project is approved.**

During the summer and fall of 2018, the CAWDB's assessment of the NextGen Center in Wake County engaged other nonprofit partners, government providers, young people and employers. Services for opportunity youth in Wake County are characterized by a large number of providers, no agreed upon goal for youth beyond program/agency goals, focused revenue streams that promote a siloed system, and no coordinated activity between the providers. Recommendations from the assessment process are encouraging the CAWDB to consider developing a long term community wide plan that targets opportunity youth.

While there are a growing number of collaborative projects in Wake County, they tend to target young children and early childhood education. There is no comparable collaborative planning process with opportunity youth. Because long term self-sufficiency for these young people includes income from work, workforce development organizations are the natural lead in these type of projects.

The initial focus would be building a common agenda for this population. Building this common agenda would require engaging a group of 15-20 stakeholders to spend time making agreements on the overall values that guide the group, discuss and define the common problem to be addressed, and creating a community level goal. Once this is accomplished then the group of stakeholders including the CAWDB are able to define their role and respective strategies within the plan. This would include the available restricted and unrestricted resources that would be available to implement some of these strategies.

**f. Describe what resources are available within the community for additional collaboration purposes. (This information will be outlined and briefly described in #4 below, the Partnership/Collaboration Chart). A letter of support should be provided only by main contributing partners. (Note: The letter of support should state the commitment to the project and what is being contributed to the project by the partner, not just a statement that the project is a good idea).**

### 3. Goals, Outcomes, and Measures (25 Points):

#### a. Provide a summary of each goal of the WIOA Program Enhancement Grant, showing its relationship to the issues identified in #1.

Project Goal 1. Youth leaders will provide guidance, leadership, and direct support in the delivery of workforce development services.

Objective 1. By December 2020, the CAWDB Youth Advisory Council would have met 12 times and provided advice on program policies and procedures that increase the youth engagement in workforce development services.

Measure: Attendance sheets at each of the advisory council meetings.

Measure: Minutes of meetings.

Objective 2. By December 2020, five part-time Youth Navigators would have supported the enrollment of approximately 150 young people into the NextGen Career Center.

Measure: Time sheets of youth navigators.

Measure: Monthly reports from youth navigators of who receives services.

Project Goal 2. Youth serving staff will increase their ability to provide safe supportive environments that increase youth engagement and success.

Objective 3. By December 2020, 45 staff that work with opportunity youth in Wake County will have completed at least two of the three training modules provided.

Measure: Training attendance sheet with names and total number of attendees.

Objective 4. By December 2020, 65% of those who participate in training will participate in at least half of the monthly community of practice sessions.

Measure: Attendance sheets for monthly meetings with names of participants.

Project Goal 3. Wake County develops a multisystem plan designed to increase the overall success of opportunity youth in Wake County.

Objective 5. By December 2019, the CAWDB would have completed a planning process resulting in a county-wide, multi-system plan designed to ensure the success of opportunity youth and leverage diverse revenue streams.

Measure: Completion of plan

**b. Identify measurable and quantifiable outcomes of the project.**

Overall Impact: Young people receiving workforce development services will increase their success and remain engaged with services.

Measures: Baseline percentage of those contacted at the one year mark and employed in 2018, compared to those contacted at the one year mark and employed in 2019 and 2020.

Measure: Baseline percentage of young people contacted at the one year mark and reporting they have worked for a single employer for at least six months during 2018, compared to these percentages in 2019 and 2020.

Measure: Baseline number of young people who remain in contact with workforce development providers one year after they exit services during 2018, compared to these percentages in 2019 and 2020.

**c. Complete the Implementation Goals, Outcomes, and Measures form (Attachment B).**

**4. Partnerships and Collaboration (5 Points);**

**Identify any partners in the project and briefly describe their roles and responsibilities by completion of the chart (may be expanded as needed). The information on this chart should be clearly explained in the narrative of 2.f.**

<b>Partner/Organization/Agency</b>	<b>Role and Responsibility</b>	<b>Resources Contributed</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Haven House Youth Services	Potential Trainer	Training expertise on positive youth development and trauma informed care	
Haven House Youth Services	Potential Youth Navigator Host	Space and support for a youth navigator	
Wake County LINKS program	Potential Youth Navigator Host	Space and support for a youth navigator	
EDSI	Potential Youth Navigator Provider and Navigator Host	Program coordinator for the youth navigator and youth navigator space and support	
Hope Center at Pullen	Potential Youth Navigator Host	Space and support for a youth navigator	



## 5. Budget and Budget Narrative (10 Points):

Category	Narrative	Justification	Total
Contracted Services	Contractor to support the development of a countywide plan that improves the overall success of opportunity youth in Wake County	\$1,000/mth for 12 months	\$12,000.00
	Trainers and supplies for six trainings over a two year period	\$500/session * 6 sessions	\$3,000.00
	Contractors to facilitate monthly community of practices to ensure the ongoing utilization of skills received in the training	\$55/hour *3 hours/month*21 months	\$2,970.00
	Incentives and compensation for time and travel to participate in the Youth Advisory Council	\$50/session * 7 youth * 12 sessions	\$4,200.00
	Training for Youth Navigators		\$1,300.00
Staff Salary	.10 FTE to coordinate the Youth Advisory Council,	\$50 K/year * 2 years * .1 FTE	\$10,000.00
	.5 FTE to coordinate the Youth Navigators	\$40K/year*2 years at .5 FTE	\$40,000.00
Youth Navigators	5 youth navigators to be placed at youth serving agencies who would provide workforce development support to youth coming into those agencies	\$15/hour*16 hours/week* 76 weeks *5	\$91,200.00
Staff Benefits	31% of total salaries, includes FICA, Medicare, Health Insurance and Retirement		\$15,500.00
	Youth Navigators FICA/Medicare (9.1%)	\$91,200 * 9,1%	\$8,299.20
Travel			\$2,000.00
Direct Total			\$190,469.20
Local Area Administrative Fee (5%)			\$9,523.46
Total			\$199,992.66

**ATTACHMENT B.****Implementation Goals, Outcomes and Measures****Project Name: Building Youth Engagement and Success**

<b>Goals</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Tools used to measure</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Young people increase success	Young people increase their success	Employed at the one year mark	Completed each month for youth who exited one year ago
Young people increase success	Young people increase success	Maintained employment with one employer for at least six months after one year	Completed each month for youth who exited one year ago
Young people increase success	Young people increase success	Percentage reached at the one year mark	Completed each month for youth who exited one year ago
Youth leaders guide program	Youth Advisory Council Formed	Number recruited	Jan - March 2019
Youth leaders guide program	Youth Advisory Council Meets 12 times	Attendance at every other month meetings	April 2019 - December 2020
Youth leaders guide program	Contractor for Youth Navigator Program	RFP completed and contractor approved	Jan - March 2019
Youth leaders guide program	Youth recruited, trained and placed in partner agencies	Employment applications, training attendance sheets, time sheets	April 2019 - December 2020
Youth leaders guide program	Navigators serve 150 young people	Monthly service reports	April 2019 - December 2020
Staff training	Trainer secured	Contract	Jan - March 2019
Staff training	6 trainings (2 each on PYD, MI, and TIC)	Calendar schedule	April 2019 - December 2020
Staff training	45 people trained	Attendance sheets at training	April 2019 - December 2020
Staff training	Community of Practice meets monthly	Calendar schedule	April 2019 - December 2020
Staff training	65% of those trained will participate in at least half of the monthly sessions	Attendance sheets for Community of Practice	April 2019 - December 2020
Plan Development	Completed plan	Completed Plan	Jan - March 2019

## ATTACHMENT C.

<b>WIOA Program Enhancement Grant</b>				
<b>Application Budget</b>				
<b>Category</b>	<b>Grant Funds Requested</b>	<b>Leveraged Resources</b>	<b>Other: In-kind or cash</b>	<b>Total</b>
Contracted Services	\$23,470.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$23,470.00
Staff Salary	\$50,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$50,000.00
Youth Navigators	\$91,200.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$91,200.00
Staff Benefits	\$23,799.20	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$23,799.20
Travel	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,000.00
Direct Total	\$190,469.20	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$190,469.20
Local Area Administrative Fee (5%)	\$9,523.46	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$9,523.46
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$199,992.66</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$199,992.66</b>