

Strategies for Effective Youth Engagement and Outreach



Connecting ^{the} Dots

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantees now have the option to enroll eligible migrant and seasonal farmworker (MSFW) youth, ages 14 to 24. Some grantees may view recruiting youth as a challenge, but serving youth can be a great way to expand educational and training opportunities, enhance performance outcomes, and develop community partnerships.

This tool consists of tips and strategies for NFJP grantees to increase enrollment and expand services and employment/educational opportunities to MSFW youth.

MSFW Youth Definition

Eligible MSFW youth means an eligible MSFW aged 14-24 who is individually eligible or a dependent of an eligible MSFW. Grantees may enroll participants aged 18-24 as either a MSFW adult or a MSFW youth participant (described in § 685.110), but not in both categories. See [Training and Employment Guidance Letter \(TEGL\) NO. 18-16, Program Eligibility and Enrollment Guidance for the National Farmworker Jobs Program](#) for additional eligibility determination procedures.

WIOA Youth Elements

WIOA under Section 129(c) (2) and 20 CFR § 681.420 contains descriptions for each of the 14 WIOA youth program elements that supports an integrated service delivery system and provides a framework through which NFJP grantees can leverage other Federal, state, local, and philanthropic resources to support in-school youth (ISY) and out-of-school youth (OSY). See the table below.

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WIOA Youth Reference Tools (explains 14 Program elements and more):

- <https://youth.workforcegps.org/resources/2017/04/05/11/21/ReferenceTool>
- <https://youth.workforcegps.org/resources/2017/03/22/09/55/WIOA-Youth-Program-Resources-Page>
- <https://youth.workforcegps.org/resources/2017/01/19/13/56/WIOA-Youth-Program-Element-Resources>
- <https://www.careeronestop.org/GetMyFuture/default.asp>



| WIOA Youth Program Element | Examples of Potential Partnerships |
|---|--|
| 1. Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and dropout recovery services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sylvan Learning Center ● Local Public School, High School Equivalency program |
| 2. Alternative secondary school services or dropout recovery services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Local Public School, High School Equivalency Program ● City Campaigns on Adolescent Pregnancy ● Substance Abuse Prevention Coalitions ● Local Court Service Units |
| 3. Paid and unpaid work experience | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Local Employer Referrals from American Job Centers' Business Services Teams ● Local Chamber of Commerce |
| 4. Occupational skills training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Regional Workforce Council, Eligible Training Provider List |
| 5. Education offered concurrently with workforce preparation and training for a specific occupation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Regional Workforce Council, Eligible Training Provider List |
| 6. Leadership development opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Local Mentoring Partnerships ● Local Court Services Unit ● Local Service-Learning Network |
| 7. Supportive services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● American Job Centers ● Department of Human and Community Services ● Legal services ● Local Area Transit Authority |
| 8. Adult mentoring | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Various Partnerships with local and regional mentorship-focused organizations |
| 9. Follow-up services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● American Job Centers ● Department of Human and Community Services |
| 10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Various Partnerships with local and regional counseling-focused organizations |
| 11. Financial literacy education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Financial institutions/banks; community outreach programs ● State Cooperative Extension network |
| 12. Entrepreneurial skills training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Chamber of Commerce ● Financial institutions/banks; community outreach programs ● State Cooperative Extension network |
| 13. Services that provide labor market information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● American Job Center's Business Services Team ● State Employment Commission |
| 14. Postsecondary preparation and transition activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Local Public Schools ● Volunteer Organizations |

Design an Outreach Plan: Build Your Story

Let's Get Started

Developing an outreach plan is a high-priority and an on-going task for recruiting youth. Start with the following:

- Set measurable goals for participant enrollment and participation and tailor by age group.
- Research businesses, organizations, community influencers, and media in your community to target.
- Determine promising strategies for connecting with youth and potential partners.
- Set timelines and create an outreach calendar.

Gather information about your program that will be relevant to various stakeholders and the public. Tout your program's potential, its effectiveness, benefits, and success stories. The wider a net you cast in your community, the more support your program will receive.

Youth Recruitment Messaging

Tailor your recruitment strategy to the specific needs and interests of the target population, identify where your target audience interacts and focus your efforts there. Set a weekly task list that includes time for building your network, creating content and engaging. Examples of messaging tools include: **word-of-mouth**, **electronic newsletters**, **social media**, and **podcasts**.

- **Word-of-Mouth:** Referrals from NFJP participants leveraging word of mouth not only between program participants and other disconnected young adults, but also through relatives and friends of program participants and staff members.
- **Electronic Newsletters:** Consistent communication is the best way to motivate current and potential partners and inform community members. Build a mailing list and demonstrate your impact with regular updates.
- **Social Media:** Program staff can use social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter to communicate in ways disconnected young adults are comfortable with. Upload video testimonies, photos of program activities, and posts about the importance of the NFJP program.
- **Podcasts:** Encourage youth participants to create podcasts about their experience with NFJP and what they hope to accomplish after completing the program.



Cultivate Relationships

The heart of recruitment and community outreach understands the significance of relationships. Cultivate partnerships and coalitions that can serve as catalysts for youth recruitment and outreach.

Examples include:

- Youth Councils
- High schools and counselors
- State and federal partners, (i.e. Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Juvenile Justice)
- Civic groups and community service organizations
- Community recreation centers and libraries
- Homeless Shelters
- Foster Care
- Religious communities (i.e., Catholic Charities, etc.)
- Chamber of Commerce and local businesses

TIP!

Outreach Assistance: Encourage MSFW youth participants to suggest outreach strategies and develop materials. Not only are you giving them ownership in the program, you are giving them a chance to develop and strengthen their networking and leadership skills. This could also be an excellent extra credit opportunity.

Leveraging Advertising: Develop promotional materials to place in coffee shops, stores, recreation centers, and hair salons or promote at speaking engagements.

Recruiting Employers: Utilize the Chamber of Commerce as a direct pipeline to a wide variety of employers. Coordinate a meeting to speak with Chamber Councils and invite a MSFW youth participant to share his or her story.

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- 1 Agricultural Connect - Youth in Agriculture: Serving Young Farmworkers:
https://farmworker.workforcegps.org/resources/2014/06/09/20/24/Youth_in_Agriculture-Serving_Young_Farmworkers
- 2 Marketing and Community Outreach are Key to Sustainability Planning:
https://youthcareerconnect.workforcegps.org/announcements/2018/03/27/16/57/Marketing_and_Community_Outreach
- 3 Youth Build - Rethinking Recruitment: Partnerships and Strategies:
https://youthbuild.workforcegps.org/Blog/Case_Management/2018/07/23/15/00/Rethinking_Recruitment-Partnerships_and_Strategies
- 4 Youth Career Connect, Strategies for Recruitment and Community Outreach:
https://youthcareerconnect.workforcegps.org/resources/2016/06/22/16/42/Strategies_for_Recruitment_and_Community_Outreach

Keeping Participants Engaged: Think Outside the Box

Create an atmosphere where participants feel staff are invested in their success and that they are always welcomed back to the program and don't have to restart services from the beginning. Accommodate activities to participant needs, finds ways to be accessible and available.

Join Clubs

Provide support after school, host recruiting opportunities with employers, and provide connections to careers through field trips, internships, and job shadowing.

Incentives

Grantees may offer reasonable incentives to encourage youth participants to participate in and complete NFJP activities. Incentive payments are permitted for recognition and achievement directly tied to training activities and work experiences. Tips for using incentives:

- Ensure that incentive payments are tied to the goals of the specific program; outlined in writing before the commencement of the program that may provide incentive payments; align with the local program's organizational policies; and are in accordance with the requirements contained in 2 CFR part 200.
- WIOA federal funds must not be spent on entertainment costs. Therefore, incentives must not include entertainment, such as movie or sporting event tickets or gift cards to movie theaters or other venues whose sole purpose is entertainment.
- Incentives paid for with WIOA federal funds must be connected to recognition of achievement of milestones in the program tied to work experience, education, or training. Such incentives for achievement could include improvements marked by acquisition of a credential or other successful outcomes. Local areas may leverage private funds for incentives that WIOA cannot fund.



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- 1 Engaging Youth Resources from Out-of-School Youth Cohort Challenge Review:
<https://youth.workforcegps.org/resources/2018/07/02/17/24/Engaging-Youth-Resources-from-Out-of-School-Youth-Cohort-Challenge-Review>
- 2 Division of Youth Services - Youth Resources on Engagement:
<https://youthsummerjobs.workforcegps.org/resources/2017/04/06/19/05/Engagement>
- 3 Sample Individual Career Plan:
<https://reo.workforcegps.org/resources/2016/01/07/12/19/Sample-Individual-Career-Plan-Tool>
- 4 Soft Skills to Pay the Bills (also available in Spanish): Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success:
<https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills/>
- 5 My Next Move (also available in Spanish):
<https://www.mynextmove.org/>