



August Funding Tip

The Finance Project is pleased to announce the next installment in a new series of [monthly funding tips](#) for youth programs. These tips will cover different approaches to help programs finance and sustain their work.

Tip: Form Public-Private Partnerships

A public-private partnership exists when the public sector—federal, tribal, state, or local officials and agencies—joins with the private sector—families, employers, citizens philanthropies, the media, civic groups, service providers, and community-based organizations—to pursue a common goal. Across the nation, innovative efforts are under way to form public-private partnerships to improve supports, services, and opportunities for youth.

The following 10 principles provide a useful framework for establishing successful public-private partnerships:

1. **Have clear goals** -- Collectively defining goals gives all partners ownership of the partnership. This increases the likelihood that partners will stay committed.
2. **Focus on results and measure progress** -- Defining and setting benchmarks of success are an important way to measure your progress but also to identify challenges and make smart decisions, based on how and where the initiative is going.
3. **Involve youth and families in developing programs** -- Engaging youth and families in planning and evaluating programs helps ensure partnerships achieve their purpose and maintain high quality services. They can also insure that they're culturally appropriate and meeting the needs of communities.
4. **Engage diverse stakeholders from the start** -- Establishing a diverse stakeholder group—youth, parents, non-profits, and other community groups, as well as business and foundation leaders and local government representatives—helps gain broader public and private support through the constituencies that each partner represents and supports.
5. **Rely on champions for support** -- Cultivating key champions—religious and other community and non-profit leaders, government officials, foundations, and business leaders—can bring stronger interest and visibility to your initiative, both through media and other public events.

6. **Establish clear governance structures** -- Whether relying on existing leadership or developing new governing structures—either new non-profit entities or temporary bodies, such as committees, commissions, or advisory boards—partnerships benefit from defined roles and communication and decision making processes.
7. **Adapt to changing conditions** -- Being flexible enough to take advantage of changing conditions or resources could mean adapting your partnership's scope to take advantage of new local, state, or federal funding or creating or changing services in response to a foundation's specific guidelines or serving a particular population.
8. **Enable all partners to benefit** -- Draw on the strengths of individual members while remaining sensitive to the different corporate, government, or community cultures. When all partners perceive they have something to gain, they remain actively involved—recognize and celebrate partner contributions through media and other regular public events.
9. **Work to maintain momentum and sustain your efforts** -- Celebrate even the small successes and generate public awareness and media attention whenever possible. It's also important to plan for financial sustainability and to recognize that dedicated staff may be needed to support your partnership, both initially and over time.
10. **Support like-minded community partners** -- Remain aware of and connected to the work of other community partners to enable the partnership to use resources more efficiently. Youth, families and communities benefit from coordinated efforts.

Example from the Field: Forming Successful Partnerships

In Hartford, Connecticut, a system-building initiative known as the Future Workforce Investment System is taking steps to improve the readiness of the city's youth for employment and postsecondary education. This effort brings together the leaders of Hartford Public Schools; Capital Workforce Partners, the capital area workforce development board; the United Way; the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving; the mayor's office; the city's office for youth services; business leaders; and several local community-based organizations. Together, these partners articulated 10- shared priorities for youth in Hartford and developed a coordinated system of referring, serving, and tracking data on youth across separate systems and agencies. For more information, visit http://www.capitalworkforce.org/youth_job/future_work-force_investment_system.shtml.

For more information on this financing strategy and the role of intermediaries and policymakers in helping youth programs to access public revenue sources, please see The Finance Project's publication, *A Guide to Successful Public-Private Partnerships for Youth Programs* (http://financeproject.org/publications/PublicPrivate_PM.pdf) and visit the Youth Programs Resource Center (<http://www.financeproject.org/irc/yp.asp>).

Within the Youth Programs Resource Center you will also find an online clearinghouse (see <http://www.financeproject.org/irc/youth/index.asp>), jointly developed by The Finance Project and The Forum for Youth Investment. The clearinghouse contains a wealth of information and

resources for supporting and sustaining youth programs and initiatives. It is designed to help you learn about data, tools, policies, practices, financing strategies, coordination efforts and technical assistance resources developed by organizations in the field that aim to improve the lives of youth.