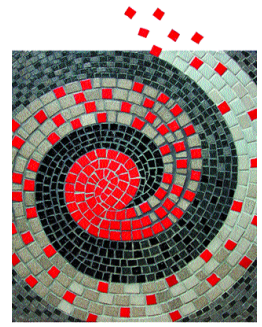


Collect Information on the Frontline Youth Worker



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The San Francisco Beacon Initiative

**“... keeping
community roots
and developing
neighborhood-
specific youth
centers makes
a difference
in the response
from the youth
in that
neighborhood.”**

THE BEACON WORKFORCE STUDY

As part of a five-year strategic plan, the Beacon Initiative is in the process of completing a study of frontline youth workers in the San Francisco area. The study explored four key areas that have been identified as challenges to recruiting and retaining quality staff for youth programs.

Recruitment. As after-school programs expand, recruitment of quality staff becomes a key challenge that may slow the growth and development of the program. Since each Beacon Center is neighborhood-based and managed by a different lead agency in the community, recruiting high quality staff who are reflective of the full diversity of the youth being served becomes an important part of the strategy.

Staff Professional Development and Training. Like many after-school programs, the Beacon Initiative provides a wide range of youth development training. But the Initiative, like other programs that have recently instituted Quality Standards, must now take a deeper look at the staff training and professional development program to ensure that it aligns with and supports the Quality Standards outcomes.

Staff Retention. The problem of staff turnover is endemic to youth development programs, as it is in the non-profit sector as

a whole. Interestingly, however, the Beacons have retained a core cadre of experienced staff for 3-5 years, despite low pay and the challenges of the job. This study will provide insight into what factors really influence the decision of a staff person to remain in a position.

Wages and Compensation. Compensation is a sensitive area, but by looking at current wage rates for different job categories and other compensation incentives, there is good potential to produce some important guidance for establishing a strong workforce.

VALUE CULTURE

The Beacons Initiative believes that their programs need to reflect the diversity of the neighborhoods in which they work. One way they avoid programs becoming “cookie-cutter” replicas of every other program offered is by networking in the community. By the conveying the value of the neighborhood’s cultural roots to the youth in the program and to the community, those roots can be maintained.

The San Francisco Beacon Initiative serves 7,500–8,000 youth in eight neighborhood-based centers located in public schools throughout the Bay area. They serve a wide array of ages and race/ethnicities, including Asian-Americans, African-Americans, Hispanic and white youth. After-school programs are offered for youth and parents that provide training in education, health, arts and recreation, leadership, and career development.

