Youth-Serving Organizations Sector

Who is the Youth-Serving Organizations Sector?

Youth-serving organizations include after-school programs, mentoring groups, youth ministries, and nonprofits that work with kids and teens. These groups support young people where they live, learn, and grow.

They are in a good position to notice early signs of mental health or substance use problems. They can also help build strong skills that prevent problems. ROSCs work with them to connect youth and families with the right help. Together, they reduce stigma, encourage people to ask for help, and support healthy growth into adulthood.

How can Youth-Serving Organizations support recovery?

Youth-serving organizations can play a strong role in recovery because they build trusted relationships with young people. They are part of daily life and can offer support early. They also help connect families, schools, and service providers.

To make the biggest impact, youth-serving organizations and ROSCs can:

- **Build strength and resilience:** Teach coping skills and create safe, supportive spaces for youth.
- **Notice concerns early:** Look for early signs of mental health or substance use problems and connect families with help.
- **Include youth and families:** Give young people and families a voice in planning and decision-making.
- **Normalize asking for help:** Talk openly about mental health and recovery to reduce shame.
- **Work together with others:** Partner with schools, families, and service providers to support youth.
- **Create smooth pathways to care:** Make it easy for young people to move between programs and get the help they need.

How can ROSCs work with Youth-Serving Organizations?

- Build strong, long-term partnerships with youth-serving groups.
- Include youth, families, and organizations in planning and decisions.
- Use youth-friendly and trauma-informed approaches in programs.
- Support these groups as trusted voices in the community.
- Share information to improve early support and show results.
- Make sure support is steady and fits each stage of youth development.

What is the Youth Organization Sector?

The Youth Organization Sector includes programs, agencies, and informal groups that provide structured opportunities for young people to learn, grow, and lead outside of the traditional school system.

Collaborations Leads to Better Outcomes

Shared vision, stronger impact	Increased access to resources	Diverse expertise and perspectives	Consistency and continuity of services	Improved engagement and trust with youth
Enhanced innovation	Collective data and evaluation	Empowers youth voices	Increases sustainability	Models healthy relationships

Why Does this Sector Matter in Prevention Programming?

- Direct access to youth
- Positive adult role models
- Skill-building opportunities
- Safe and structured environments
- Youth voice and empowerment
- Early identification and referral
- Collaboration with other sectors

Key Training Focus Areas for this Sector:

- Understanding risk & protective factors for youth
- Integrating evidence-based prevention programming
- Trauma-informed approaches for youth engagement
- Building youth leadership in prevention
- Partnering with families and other community sectors
- Cultural responsiveness and inclusion in youth work
- Evaluation and tracking of prevention outcomes

Let youth lead!



Let their voices guide design



Reflect community values

Examples of Effective Partnerships in Youth-Serving Work

Organization Type	Example
Schools + Community-Based Organizations (CBOs)	A local high school partners with a mentoring organization to provide after-school support, college prep, and leadership development.
Youth Organizations + Mental Health Providers	A youth center collaborates with a local behavioral health agency to offer on-site counseling and trauma-informed workshops.
Faith-Based Institutions + Prevention Coalitions	Churches or mosques partner with prevention coalitions to host youth substance misuse prevention events.
Juvenile Justice Systems + Workforce Development Programs	A juvenile detention center collaborates with a job training organization to provide skill-building and employment pathways for justice-involved youth.
Libraries + Tech Organizations	Public libraries team up with tech companies to offer coding camps and STEM programs for youth.
Local Government + Youth Advisory Councils	A city government partners with a youth council to co-design public initiatives and services.
Health Departments + Youth Advocacy Groups	A county health department works with youth advocates to create sexual health education that's socially relevant and far-reaching.
Nonprofits + Corporate Sponsors	A nonprofit serving underserved youth partners with a local business for funding, volunteer mentorship, and internship opportunities.