

# YOUTH DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE



## YDI MISSION

The Agriculture Program and Agrilife Extension Service have provided funding for initial formative development of what in the future would be a Youth Development Institute.

- Meet needs of public and not-for-profit agency managers, staff, and researchers for science-based information to improve youth program staff competencies, program design and evaluation
- Serve as a resource for further developing, improving, and evaluating the impact of current youth development programs and services

## THREE MAJOR COMPONENTS

Components	Descriptions
Applied Research and Evaluation	The Initiative will develop a research agenda that can be promoted with cooperating departments and agencies. The agenda can serve as the basis for external grant proposals and provide a basis for graduate student research projects. The YDI will also implement a fee-based evaluation service for youth development agencies and organizations.
Youth Development Information Dissemination	The Initiative will develop and populate an information portal to provide ready access to available youth development best-practice and research information. The YDI will develop materials that translate existing information into user-friendly and quick reference formats.
Training and Education and Materials	The YDI will develop a series of trainings and train-the-trainer programs for youth development agencies and workers throughout Texas using online and site-based training delivery systems. Training will also be available for community leaders and policy makers. In addition, the YDI will develop and administer a youth workers certificate program for non-degree-seeking youth workers.

## YEAR 1 GOALS

1. Confirm or refine the mission, vision, values, and goals for the Youth Development Initiative. This might be accomplished through consultation with internal and external advisory committees, through a survey of leaders of youth serving agencies, through focus groups with those leaders, or other “voice of the customer” techniques that leaders of the initiative consider to be appropriate.
2. Identify key project outcome metrics and standards of performance that are critical to internal and external stakeholders. One set of metrics should be for the overall initiative and the other should address calendar year projects and offerings. Consistent with AgriLife Extension Service priorities, the initiative should try to achieve higher level outcomes such as measureable effects and implementation frequency and efficacy.
3. Analyze and select strategies that would most effectively and efficiently accomplish the project goals.
4. Develop a youth development research agenda that specifies priorities to be addressed and suggests resources that might be acquired to pursue research in those areas.
5. On a scale commensurate with resources made available to the initiative, implement at least three experimental offerings. These might, for example, include development of a website to disseminate information about best practices, training or consultation with select leaders of youth programs, contract acquisition, proposal writing, and/or research.
6. Verify the efficacy of the strategies that are implemented using the identified metrics through formal evaluation or research.

*For more information contact:*

Dr. Chris Boleman, [cboleman@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:cboleman@ag.tamu.edu)

or

Dr. Peter Witt, [pwitt@tamu.edu](mailto:pwitt@tamu.edu)