



CYSA

CONNECTICUT YOUTH
SERVICES ASSOCIATION

A practical tool for reflection, growth, and continuous improvement in performing Administrative Core Unit functions across Connecticut Youth Service Bureaus.

Originally developed in 2002 by the Center for the Advancement of Youth, Family & Community, Inc. to support quality assurance and performance assessment within the YSB network.

Updated in 2025 to align with the YSB Handbook and reflect CYSA's ongoing commitment to learning, collaboration, and organizational excellence.

SELF-ASSESSMENT FOR YOUTH SERVICE BUREAUS

CYSA- YSB Self-Assessment

Mandated by Connecticut General Statute section 10-19m, a Youth Service Bureau (YSB) is an agency operated directly by one or more municipalities that is designed for planning, evaluation, coordination, and implementation of a network of resources and opportunities for children, youth, and their families. In addition, YSBs are responsible for the provision of services and programs for all youth to develop positively and to function as responsible members of their communities.

This Self- Assessment for Youth Service Bureaus was designed to help Youth Services Bureaus (Director/Coordinators, community policy makers, advisory boards and constituencies) identify and focus on the specific activities associated with the Administrative Core Unit (ACU) Functions. This process is designed to help examine the elements of each ACU activity and reflect on how and why they are performed.

Youth Services work, like all professions are characterized by established criteria, standards, best practices, training and supervision as well as on-going professional development and methods to assure the delivery of the highest quality services with measurable outcomes.

Youth Service Bureaus:

- Are the lead local prevention agencies in Connecticut. Prevention is an active process of creating the community conditions that promote the well-being of young people.
- Mobilize their communities to encourage citizens, institutions, service organizations, and decision-makers to plan programs and strategies that foster positive youth and family development.
- Provide ongoing assessment of youth concerns/issues and coordinate communities to maximize the use of their resources to meet youth needs.
- Offer opportunities for youth involvement in community policy decisions affecting their development.

The key to Youth Services Work are the 5 ACU Functions. The ACU Functions have standards that strengthen the services that promote and advance the work of YSBs by providing a solid foundation and framework of best practices.

This Self-Assessment will focus on the areas of the statewide YSB goals related to legislated Administrative Core Unit Function (please read the Youth Services Bureaus Administrative Core Unit Training Manual).

The Five Administrative Core Unit Areas

Community Involvement	Resource Development	Research and Assessment	Advocacy	Management and Administration
Volunteering Recruitment	Networking	Needs Identification & Assessment	Voice for Youth and Youth Issues	Staff Recruitment and Supervision
Running Meetings	Providing Information	Program Evaluation - Existing and New	Media Relations	Staff Evaluation and Development
Statewide Networking	Fundraising	Grant Writing	Speaking at Public Hearings	Filing Regulations and Implementation
Regional Networking	Program Development	Program Selection	Contacts with Local & States Officials	Monitoring of Subcontractors
Gaining Entry into Systems	Knowledge of Foundations	Library/Resource File	State Funding	Maintenance of Organizational Structure
Community Organization and Outreach	Provide Technical Assistance	Statistical Analysis	Letter Writing	Financial Management - Budgets, Grants, etc.
Board and Task Force Involvement	Provide Consulting to Other Groups	College/University Interface	Endorsing/ Creating Legislation	Casework and Clinical Supervision
Empowering Community Organizations	State Funding	Program Development	Networking	Staff Morale and Burn-out Prevention
Youth Advisory Board	Professional Development		Proactive Trend Awareness of Youth Issues	Management and Information Services (MIS)
	State and National Awareness		Increase Community Awareness of Youth Needs	Board Management
				Marketing
				Facility Management
				Policy Development
				Decision Making
				State Funding
				Legal, Insurance & Tax Issues

CYSA- YSB Self-Assessment

Each of these 5 ACU function areas have been analyzed to pull out key elements/ activities for Youth Service Bureaus. As you go through this Self-Assessment you will discover primary areas of importance and a foundation for your Youth Service Bureau. The Self-Assessment process will also encourage you to add to the activities listed to tailor it to your unique YSB.

How to use the Self-Assessment of Youth Services Administrative Core Unit Functions:

As a reference to begin to examine the wide range of activities related to ACU functions and rank:

- How much time do you spend on each function?
- The importance for your YSB on each ACU function.
- Your enjoyment/satisfaction with each ACU function.
- Rate yourself on how well you do each ACU function.

As a way to reflect on the position of Youth Service Director/Coordinator in the operations of your YSB.

- Examines each element/ activity and think about what the function means to you in practical terms for your YSB.
- Reflect on Your own thoughts and beliefs about the ACU Functions.
- What are the challenges for you to implementing the ACU Functions?
- What training or next steps will you need to improve as a Youth Services Director/Coordinator?

This Self-Assessment process is:

- A partnership between the Connecticut Youth Services Association, the State Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the local Youth Service Bureaus to support the enhancement of the Administrative Core Unit Functions and assess how well local adherence is to state regulations regarding ACU functions.
- A process to accommodate a balance between local authority, state regulations and best practice standards established by DCF and CYSA.
- A process that enables DCF to assess and monitor regulations related to the institutions and agencies that they fund.
- A process that enables YSB to fulfill their mission as guided by state statute.

SELF-ASSESSMENT FOR YOUTH SERVICE BUREAUS

Administration & Management

1. Does your Youth Service Bureau have a written statement specifying its philosophy, purpose and program orientation (i.e. mission statement)?
2. Does the statement identify the kinds of services provided and the characteristics of the youth and families served?
3. Is this written statement available for distribution to clients, referral sources, funding sources and the public?
4. How are the Administrative Core Unit Functions specifically addressed in the statement?
5. Are the program and services offered based on the identified assets and needs in the community?
 - Do they support a youth development model or promote youth development?
6. When was the last time that YSB mission statement and goals were reviewed?
7. Is your YSB approach primarily reactive (intervention) or proactive (prevention)?
8. Does your YSB have formal and /or informal policies and procedures for practice in the following areas of management & administration?
 - Staff recruitment and supervision
 - Staff evaluation and development
 - Monitoring of subcontractors/ consultants
 - Maintenance of the organizational structure
 - Financial management, budgets & grants
 - Casework & clinical supervision
 - Staff morale and prevention of burn out
 - Board management
 - Marketing
 - Facility management
 - Policy development
 - Strategic planning
 - Information technology i.e. the application of computers and telecommunications equipment to store, retrieve, transmit and manipulate data
9. Are there other functions within management & administration that you perform?

CYSA- YSB Self-Assessment

10. How are the principles of youth development put into practice in the above list?
11. What system of monitoring and evaluation are in place to assess practices of management & administration?
12. Does your YSB have a suitable method for data collection, maintaining records, program evaluation and reporting? What are they?
13. Does your YSB operate with the approval and authority of a unit or combination of municipal government responsible to a chief elected official or a duly authorized representative?
 - What documents (municipal charter or ordinance etc.) reflect this authority?
 - When were these documents last viewed or revised?
14. What process does the YSB use for planning in programs, organization and policy?
 - Who is included in the planning process?
 - Is there a direct connection between the planning and the needs assessment/ asset mapping?
15. What steps have occurred in the past year to enhance the organization's capacity to improve services and policies for youth?
16. Does your YSB have an Advisory Board whose composition adheres to the state statute 10-19m- 2(a) (b) (1-3)?
17. In what ways does the Board advise and make recommendations on the overall policy and program direction for your YSB?
18. If your YSB does not have an Advisory Board or has a waiver for this requirement how are the functions of the Youth Advisory Board enacted in the community?
19. How often does the Advisory Board meet and are minutes available for public review?
20. Does the Advisory Board have a membership list that includes names, position of officers and terms?
21. How is the YSB Director/Coordinator appointed?
22. What is the recruitment and selection process and does the criterion for selection represent qualifications commensurate with the responsibilities of the position?
 - What are the positions requirements
 - Are certifications or licenses required?

CYSA- YSB Self-Assessment

23. Are the salary and benefits commensurate with the responsibilities of the position?

- Does it reflect the position's professional stature and is it in the range of similar positions statewide?

24. Are the Director/ Coordinator position and the bureaus located within the organizational structure of the municipal government or other agency that enables it to adequately perform their administrative Core Unit Functions?

- Does the Director/Coordinator have direct access to town and school leaders and policy makers?
- Who is the immediate Supervisor of the Director/ Coordinator?

25. What are the organizational supports that help to achieve the ACU functions (administrative i.e. secretary, equipment, space/offices, resources, supplies etc.?)

26. What are the organizational barriers to the performance of ACU Functions?

27. Does the YSB have job descriptions for all employees and volunteers?

28. What is the process of establishing employee goals and objectives and the process to continually monitor the progress towards accomplishing them?

29. Does the DCF grant that you submit reflect the function of the ACU especially related to the composition of goals, objectives, and measures of success, indicators and activities?

- How clear are the goals, measures and indicators?

Leadership: In Relations to staff and Board Members

30. What actions have the Director /Coordinator taken to build leadership capacity?

31. What actions have the Director/ Coordinator taken to build leadership or management skills among staff and the Advisory Board as well as youth and community members?

32. What type of decision making does the Director/Coordinator of the YSB choose to involve staff in making and what process do they use to ensure their full involvement?

33. How would staff and board members rank/rate the Director/Coordinator's willingness to involve them in the "re-inventing" of the organization to better serve the community?

34. Does the Director/Coordinator encourage staff to take leadership roles on specific tasks?

CYSA- YSB Self-Assessment

35. Does the YSB Director/Coordinator continually ask staff and board members for feedback?

36. Does staff have sufficient opportunity for professional and personal development? What trainings have they received?

37. What process is used to review organization's mission statement to determine if continued value and applicability to youth and the community?

38. What are the greatest accomplishments and challenges in collaborating with others to promote youth development and establish coordinated network of services for youth and families?

39. What are your greatest "fears" when thinking about collaborating with others for example loss of power, time constraints, etc.?

40. Do you as the Director/Coordinator "worry" about who will get credit for new ideas or initiatives with the agency or community?

Research and Evaluations

41. What are the formal and informal procedures for providing continual research which assesses the assets and needs of a community as well as those of the youth and families?

42. What are the formal procedures for developing resources to meet the needs of youth and families?

43. Does your YSB have formal or informal procedures for work in the following areas of research and evaluation?

- Needs identification and assessment
- Program evaluation
- Grant writing
- Statistical analysis
- Program development
- Asset mapping

44. How are the principles of youth development put into practice in the above list of research and evaluation?

45. Are there other functions that you perform within the area of research and evaluation?

46. What system of monitoring and evaluation are in place to assess your research and evaluation practices?

Advocacy

47. Does your YSB have formal or informal procedures for work in the following areas of advocacy?

- A Voice for children & youth issues
- Media relations: newspaper, web, social media etc.
- Contacts with local and state officials
- State funding
- Supporting/creating legislation
- Networking
- Proactive trends on youth issues
- Increasing community awareness of youth needs

48. What other functions do you perform within the area of advocacy?

49. How are the principles of youth development put into practice in the above list of advocacy functions?

Resource Development

50. Does your YSB have a formal plan to build a network of individuals and system to produce collaboration for productive working relationships?

51. Does your YSB have formal or informal procedures for work in the following areas of resource development?

- Networking
- Information
- Fund raising
- Program development
- Knowledge of local foundations
- Providing technical assistance
- Providing consultation to other groups or organizations
- State funding
- Professional development
- State and national awareness

52. What other functions do you perform within the area of resource development?

53. How are the principles of youth development put in to practice in the above listing for resource development?

Community Involvement

54. What are the formal procedures for providing continuing community involvement programs to promote public knowledge and understanding of youth assets and problems to foster positive community change of these conditions by identifying and engaging the community assets to help mediate conditions that contribute to the problems and needs?

55. What decision making does the Director/Coordinator choose to involve youth and the community in making and what process do they use to ensure their full involvement?

56. Does the Director/Coordinator provide opportunities for youth and community members to take on leadership roles?

57. What are the activities and indicators that reflect the YSB community involvement practices that include engaging people who are most impacted by what you are trying to do in the process of planning, developing and implementing programs which benefit youth and families?

58. Does your YSB have a formal or informal procedure for work in the following areas of community involvement?

- Volunteer recruitment
- Running meetings
- Statewide networking
- Regional networking
- Gaining entry into systems
- Community outreach
- Board and task force involvement
- Empowering community organizations
- Youth advisory board

59. What other functions with community involvement do you perform?

60. How are the principles of youth development put into practice in the above list of community involvement functions?

61. What does a coordinated community look like?

- Who is working with whom and what systems are working together?

62. What are the formal and informal agreements for collaborating and in what service domain?

63. What are the mutual areas of work?

64. How do systems and individuals resolve conflicts?

CYSA- YSB Self-Assessment

65. What are the community Characteristics necessary for ACU Functions to work effectively especially around community coordination (trust, respect, etc.)?

- How are these developed and maintained?

Youth Development

66. What is your organization's vision or mission with regards to implementing a youth development approach?

- Who was involved in creating this vision /mission?

67. What has the organization done to ensure that all programs are based on youth development rather than just a problem-centered approach?

68. How has your organization trained staff and board members about adolescent development and its relationship principles and practices of youth development?

69. What is the prevailing youth policy and how has the organization worked to inform policy process with regards to youth development?

70. Is the YSB Director/Coordinator the Municipal Agent for Children?

- *Connecticut General Statutes Title 7- Section 7-127c - Municipal agents for children. The chief elected official, or the chief executive officer of each municipality may appoint a municipal agent for children. Such agent shall be an elected official of the state or the municipality, a member of an agency that serves children, a youth service bureau in the municipality or a responsible resident of the municipality who has demonstrated an interest in children or has been involved in programs in the field of child development.*

71. How has the YSB worked with the community to create and communicate a vision of what is necessary for positive development of young people?

72. How has the YSB addressed issues related to cultural diversity?

73. How does the YSB collaborate with other Youth Service providers to develop strategies for moving forward towards a youth development approach to helping young people within the community, state and the region?

74. How has the YSB helped the community to shift its thinking about youth from a deficit/problem based to an attribute/asset-based approach?

75. What Outcomes have resulted from YSB Collaborative efforts in the past?

- What are outcomes the YSB is working on currently through its collaborative efforts?