



Together, we're changing lives.

2010 to 2015 Strategy Guidance Letter B-101 Youth Engagement

United Way Windsor-Essex County
300 Giles Blvd. East, Windsor, ON N9A 4C4

A. Priority Area: Positioning kids and families for success.

B. Strategic Area of Focus: Youth engagement. **Strategy Definition:** Youth engagement opportunities that are integrated with existing youth activities and connect youth across Windsor-Essex County, and promote:

- o Civic engagement, philanthropy, decision-making and governance;
- o Youth involvement in meaningful leadership roles; and Goal setting.

C. Priority Population

All strategies that receive funding must serve the following population(s):

- o Windsor-Essex County youth and "at-risk" youth.

D. Intended Outcome: Windsor-Essex County youth and "at-risk" youth will participate in programming that promotes active community engagement and improvement through philanthropy, decision-making and governance.

Outcome Definition: Youth will gain from participating in positive trusting relationships with peers and adult role models, will gain from new learning opportunities that develop leadership skills, decision-making and positive risk-taking and will gain a sense of community pride and self worth. The intended outcome focuses on *Engagement* as described by Torjman's (2007) Resilience Framework.

E. Strategy Paths

To be considered for funding, strategies must address ***all Strategy Paths***, as indicated below:

Strategy paths	Potential Results
A meaningful contribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth identify key areas of concern and their contributions meet a genuine community need. • Youth feel a sense of accomplishment and their contributions are recognized and celebrated by the community.
Adventuresome Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth engage in real life experiences that challenge individuals to step outside of their comfort zones to learn and grow.
Peer Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An atmosphere is created that fosters a strong peer team where individuals feel connected, appreciated and supported by others.



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Adult youth partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth gain inspiration, support and guidance through a relationship with an adult(s) of mutual caring and respect.
Empowering culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities are provided that empower youth to initiate, commit, plan and choose the paths to work together with peers and the community as equal and active partners.

F. Preferred Strategy Components

In addition to the required components, preference will be given to those strategies that are able to demonstrate Preferred Strategy Components, as indicated below:

Preferred Program Components— (policies, practices and/or activities)	Examples
Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know which youth communities are marginalized or are not being heard and create mechanisms to connect with them. Recognize and validate different learning styles by employing multiple strategies to engage youth in governance.
Scheduling and transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide transportation or public transportation vouchers. Schedule meetings and activities to accommodate youth of all participating ages and include food when meetings occur during lunch or dinner. Provide child-care for youth with children.
Adult capacity building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participating adults needs to have an understanding of youth culture in order to work with youth in authentic and meaningful ways. Adopt youth-friendly language and operations. Build participatory skills ie. relationship building, to encourage communication between adults and youth.



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Youth capacity building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Youth need adult mentors who can consistently be available to them and promote self discovery, confidence building and participatory skill development.
Demonstrate the inclusion of civic engagement in the program design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide/maintain calendar of youth volunteerism and/or civic leadership training opportunities • Connect youth and families to local community events and promote civic involvement • Have relationships with other organizations that promote and provide volunteer and civic leadership activities

F. (cont'd) Preferred Strategy Components for all strategies

Preferred Program Components for all strategies	Examples
Staff/volunteers are trained and well-prepared	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff and volunteers have relevant training, knowledge and skills • Staff keep up-to-date with current developments in the field, including promising and evidence-based practices • Volunteers are provided with strong supervision including screening, orientation and recognition.
Client-centered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active efforts to be inclusive and to connect with client populations in program planning, delivery, evaluation • Services provided are determined by participant needs and priorities • Operate from an accessible, identifiable location that facilitates access to other participant opportunities.



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Diversity is acknowledged and respected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitive to issues of diversity, transportation and childcare • Staff must be culturally competent and aware of diversity issues. • Staff and volunteers reflect the community
Monitor progress and evaluate outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct ongoing program evaluations to ensure program effectiveness • The evaluation includes various methods for measuring potential results as outlined in the strategy paths • Willing to participate in organized learning communities with other strategy partners.
Maintaining success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Measures will be taken to encourage continue positive results after initial implementation ▪ E.g., by offering “booster” sessions; providing follow-up resources; tying the strategy with activities of other relevant community groups & programs.
Demonstrate effective collaboration and partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve a range of community partners • Leverage resources and support from an array of stakeholders, e.g., other not-for-profit organizations, private or public sector organizations, and other groups. • Written memoranda of understanding with other organizations to ensure that roles and responsibilities are clear.
Integrated and coordinated approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy is linked with other community services, group, and initiatives in an effort to enhance services.
Standard safety policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protocols are in place that ensure the safety of children/youth and address family situations of abuse and neglect • Conduct screenings for family violence issues & provide participant links to appropriate services. • Establish specific policies of what constitutes acceptable and non-acceptable interactions, e.g., standards of volunteer behaviour



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Accessible / affordable / wrap around services that are place-based, strength-based & family-focused	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delivered in accessible locations with availability of transportation• Emphasis that builds on individual and family strengths
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Recommended Resources:

Building Safer Communities: Youth/Adult Partnerships as Agents of Change, The Centre of Excellence for Children's Well-being. www.engagementcentre.ca

Create a Youth Council in Your Community, The Ontario Rural Council (TORC) in partnership with Endeavour Volunteer Consulting Network (EVCN) www.evcn.ca

Klindera, K. and Menderweld, J. (August 2001). Issues at a Glance: Youth Involvement in Prevention Programming. Advocates for Youth. www.advocatesforyouth.org

Kumpfer, K. L. and Alvarado, R. (June/July 2003). Family Strengthening Approaches for the Prevention of Youth Problem Behaviours. *American Psychologist*.