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Task 8: Youth Engagement Literature Review

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Youth Engagement Literature Review

1.0 Overview and Purpose

The MayaTech Corporation produced this review under contract to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Office of Adolescent Health (OAH). The document summarizes the results of a systematic search and literature review of published and grey literature on equitable youth engagement, with a focus on young people who are not traditionally the focus of such initiatives. The purpose of the search was to identify best practices for ensuring equitable youth engagement to inform the development of training and technical assistance (TTA) products on this engagement to support efforts by OAH and OAH-funded grant recipients. The search was specifically directed toward best practices for creating equitable and inclusive opportunities for young people ages 10-24, who are representative of the populations OAH serves, but who are less likely to participate in real opportunities to improve their own and other adolescents' health. Therefore, it is important to note that "equitable" in this search did not pertain to equity in terms of youth and adults as partners in collaborative efforts, which has been traditionally explored in the literature. Rather, in this search, equity referred to engagement strategies designed to ensure that youth of all backgrounds and lived experiences, particularly those who are the most vulnerable, have opportunities to participate, be empowered, and have their voices heard along with other youth in decisions that affect their lives.

Thus, in this search, equitable involvement or engagement applies to, but is not limited to, factors that facilitate optimal engagement and barriers that disproportionately limit the participation of youth who are typically not adequately engaged (e.g., low-income, historically underserved, disconnected, and opportunity youth). One objective of this search was to identify definitions in the literature for equitable youth engagement from this perspective. The search also was focused on identifying literature that described the barriers to these young people's participation, incentives, and motivational tools to encourage and maintain their participation/engagement, and accommodations that level the playing field for these youth to meaningfully participate and be engaged.

Through the agency's national call to action, *Adolescent Health: Think, Act, Grow*[®] (TAG), OAH provides resources for youth-serving professionals and organizations, parents, and youth to improve adolescent health. OAH's TAG[®] *Playbook* includes five essentials for getting involved in this initiative. Essential #4 is *Opportunities for teens to engage as learners, leaders, team members and workers*.¹ Therefore, this search included published and grey literature that reported on strategies to engage youth in roles such as developers, implementers, evaluators, advisors, or other decision makers of/in programs, services, and activities that positively affect adolescents' health and well-being.

This document includes the research questions, a synopsis of the search strategies used, a summary of the results of the search findings for each research question, conclusions, and

¹ Resources for *Adolescent Health: Think, Act, Grow*[®] (TAG) can be found on the OAH website at <https://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/tag/resources/index.html>.

recommendations for TTA products. Also included (in Appendix A) are the search strategy and key parameters. The citations for literature, websites, and other resources reviewed are compiled in a separate document.

2.0 Research Questions

The key questions included the following:

1. How is “equitable youth engagement” defined or described in extant literature, specifically with regard to inclusion of low-income and other vulnerable or historically underserved or underrepresented youth in engagement efforts?
2. How does the extant literature define the youth least likely to be adequately involved in youth engagement efforts? What are the barriers limiting their involvement?
3. What strategies are utilized to effectively engage historically underrepresented youth who experience barriers to participating in various roles related to the development, implementation, and evaluation of services, programs, and activities that affect their healthy development?
4. What strategies work best (i.e., have been identified as best practices in youth engagement)? Which strategies or approaches have been identified as problematic?

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Key Parameters

The following inclusion criteria were used to guide multiple search strategies:

- Country of origin for the publication: United States, Canada, other international
- Age of target population: youth ages 10-24
- Sex and gender of target population: All
- Race/ethnicity of target population: All
- Publication dates: 1998 to 2018

We excluded products that were not written or otherwise produced in English, and products that did not specifically focus on how to engage, empower, involve, or foster participation of young people in efforts that could improve their healthy development and social, psychological, or emotional well-being. More important, we primarily included material that described strategies for the active engagement of youth as decision makers, activists, advocates, and other roles as primary agents of individual- and system-level changes to improve adolescents’ health and well-being. We were less interested in material that described the passive connection of youth to programs and services or adults’ delivery of programs and services to youth for the purpose of (re)engaging them in or (re)connecting them to educational or community opportunities to achieve individual-level outcomes without involving youth representatives in the design, implementation, or evaluation of programs/services. We reviewed the references of materials identified in the preliminary search to identify articles or products that might be relevant to understanding equitable youth engagement as perceived for this review (i.e., efforts directed toward historically underserved or nonengaged youth).

3.2 Key Words/Search Terms or Phrases

We searched on synonyms for “adolescents,” “adolescence,” “youth,” and “young people” using single words or phrases or in combinations with keywords such as “opportunity youth,” “minority youth,” “homeless youth,” and “disconnected youth.” We also searched for specific racial/ethnic minority groups and groups of youth traditionally underrepresented in youth engagement efforts (e.g., runaway and homeless youth, LGBTQ+ youth, low-income youth). The search was also guided by constructs we identified in the preliminary review of literature that appeared in guiding frameworks and models of youth engagement (e.g., terms such as voice, empowerment, advocacy, involvement, and participation in the positive youth development literature). Appendix A lists the keywords and phrases used to focus the search. The secondary terms appear with an asterisk (*).

Primary terms were searched first and combined with secondary terms to narrow search results. For example, “opportunity youth” as a primary term resulted in more than 59,000 articles; however, combining that term with “youth engagement approaches” narrowed the results to fewer than 1,000 articles. Because such an approach would still yield a substantially large number of results to manage, we used additional search strategies described in the “Procedures” section to further filter out some material.

3.3 Types of Material

The search included peer-reviewed journal articles as well as grey literature (reports or articles not published or indexed by the databases searched but identified through consultants and others). The latter set of materials was expected to include technical reports, reports to funders, and other documents and publications that do not typically appear in peer-reviewed journals or edited books in the field. Grey literature was also found on OAH’s and other federal and nonfederal agencies’ websites.

3.4 Procedures

Search Procedure: Researchers conducted the review using the search terms along with the parameters indicated previously (e.g., the publication’s date, language, country of origin, and target population characteristics). Using Boolean search terms (OR, AND, NOT) and strategies allowed the researcher to limit or combine terms in online searches to specify discrete relationships among the search terms that reduced results to include articles most relevant to the purpose and research questions. For example, entering the search terms “minority” AND “youth” OR “adolescent” AND “engagement” yielded 6,283 results. Searching for “minority” AND “youth” NOT “adolescent” yielded only 33 articles. More detail about the use of Boolean commands and search strategies can be found in Appendix A along with the key terms. The research team documented the yield of each search (see Appendix B).

Data Abstraction: Trained research assistants abstracted the material and categorized the abstracts as “Relevant,” “Irrelevant,” or “Undecided.” For all relevant articles, researchers also tagged the article as relevant to one or more of the research questions by including “Q1,” “Q2,” etc., to indicate for which question(s) the article was relevant. An additional review parameter was used to indicate whether the strategy discussed in the article/material was identified (in the article or elsewhere) as a best, promising, evidence-informed, or evidence-based practice.

This information was recorded and placed into an Excel database along with, where available, other information such as:

- Description of program/intervention/youth engagement strategy
- Topic(s) of focus (e.g., pregnancy prevention, smoking cessation)
- Target population characteristics (e.g., youth ages, sex, gender, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic indicators)
- Sample size
- Processes/strategies to engage youth
- Setting (United States, Canada, or other international)
- Evidence of best, promising, evidence-informed, or evidence-based practice

Analysis and Reporting: There were several types of literature, including material that focused on: youth engagement frameworks, youth-serving programs with documented engagement strategies, OAH's partner organizations' youth engagement efforts, peer-reviewed journal articles based on positive youth development and community-based participatory research (CBPR), and youth engagement activities of other federal agencies. The findings for each research question are summarized in the next section.

4.0 Findings

4.1 Summary by Research Question

4.1.1 Definitions of "Equitable Youth Engagement"

Q1. How is "equitable youth engagement" defined or described in extant literature, specifically with regard to inclusion of low-income and other vulnerable or historically underserved or underrepresented youth engagement efforts?

Although several materials on websites referred to the concept of equitable youth engagement (and a related term, "authentic youth engagement"),² the search did not yield any literature with a specific definition of equitable youth engagement from the perspective sought by OAH (i.e., equitable engagement of traditionally or historically underserved or under-involved youth). To assist OAH with developing such a definition to guide the development of TTA products based on this search, we provide several definitions of other concepts that were found in the literature. Although some definitions were focused on youth-adult partnerships where the goal was equitable, intergenerational relationships, we also selected definitions that were included in materials reporting on work that sought to engage the often marginalized or historically underrepresented youth groups that are the focus of this review. The extant literature uses terms other than "engagement" to define their guiding frameworks, principles, or theories of change. However, most still were based on models that derived from the widely used "positive youth development" framework (which posits how engagement is associated with youth outcomes); the ladder of engagement from R. Hart (which focuses on a bottom-up

² Everyday Democracy. (n.d.). *More than a seat at the table: A resource for authentic and equitable youth engagement*. Retrieved from <https://www.everyday-democracy.org/tips/authentic-and-equitable-youth-engagement>, pp. 1-8.

approach with more intensive engagement at the upper rungs of the ladder);³ and a more recent derivative Rings of Engagement⁴ (which de-emphasizes a bottom-up or top-down approach to engagement in youth-adult partnerships).

Also, of note is that youth *involvement*, youth *participation*, youth *empowerment*, youth *voice*, and youth *engagement* are terms that are sometimes used interchangeably when addressing the inclusion of youth in matters that directly affect them. There are several examples in the literature of how these terms are combined when describing youth engagement strategies. A few strategies follow:

- The United Kingdom’s National Children’s Bureau’s interpretation of youth *involvement* states that it is “the means by which children and adolescents influence decisions that bring about change in them, others, their services and their communities.”⁵
- Youth *participation* has been identified as a key strategy for designing health-related programs. However, because most of the programs are adult-led with an adult-focused lens, the youth voice is ignored. Youth voice is described as occurring on a spectrum and ranging from absent (meaning no voice at all) to management (meaning youth have the decision-making power, set the agenda, and decide on issues).
- “Youth *participation* is the ‘active, informed and voluntary’ involvement of young people in their communities and in all decision making that impacts them locally, nationally and internationally. It means that young people are actively involved in, or are leading programs and work that impact them, as opposed to others working on their behalf.”⁶
- Appalachia: The University of New Hampshire conducted a project in Central Appalachia and defined youth *participation* as “a process of involving young people in the institutions and decisions that affect their lives. It is a process that builds the individual capacities and abilities of youth while contributing to collective community development.”⁷
- Another youth *engagement* philosophy was “grounded in the belief that children and youth are best served when they are active participants in their relationships and activities with adults and other youth, when their input influences decisions made about them, appropriate to their age and maturity, and when they can shape those relationships as much as they are shaped by them. Youth engagement moves the philosophy from ‘children should be seen and not heard’ (children are a blank slate on

³ Hart, R. (1992). *Children’s participation from tokenism to citizenship*. Florence, Italy: UNICEF Research Centre. Retrieved from https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/childrens_participation.pdf.

⁴ Sullivan, T. K., & Saito, R. N. (2008). *Rings of engagement framework*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, Center for Youth Development. Retrieved from <https://conservancy.umn.edu/handle/11299/194949>.

⁵ Aceves-Martins, M., Aleman-Diaz, A. Y., Giral, M., & Solà, R. (2018). Involving young people in health promotion, research and policy-making: Practical recommendations. *International Journal for Quality in Health Care*, 31(2):147-153.

⁶ Action Aid. (2015). *Action Aid’s approach to youth programming: A fundamental force for development*. Retrieved from <https://actionaid.org/sites/default/files/aa-approach-to-youth-programming.pdf>
<https://actionaid.org/publications/2015/actionaids-approach-youth-programming-fundamental-force-development>

⁷ O’Doherty, R., Smith, A., Spangler, B., Williams, E., & Richards-Schuster, K. (2015). *Strategies to strengthen youth leadership and youth participation opportunities in Central Appalachia*. Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire Carsey School of Public Policy. Retrieved from <https://www.issuelab.org/resources/34517/34517.pdf>

which adults write who the child will become) to ‘children benefit by actively participating in their own development.’”⁸

- K. K. Maynard, in an earlier systematic review of youth engagement projects, summarized the definitions she found as overlapping in their use of terminology and defining statements. Instead she offered the following definitions:⁹ Youth voice is giving youth the opportunity to communicate and validate what they say. Youth *empowerment* is adults relinquishing power to youth. Youth *participation* is the act of what youth do when they are able to exercise the power given to them. Youth *engagement* is the culminating feeling youth have about being involved with an organization. What is apparent in these definitions is a mixture of foci, with some definitions and philosophies focused on traditional youth engagement models to engage youth as equal partners with adults on issues/activities that affect young people’s lives. Another focus appears to be on the motivation and feelings that youth have about being involved or participating. Therefore, traditional strategies have focused on how to get young people involved, and once at the table, how to maintain their involvement and meaningful participation. However, such strategies have not proven effective with youth who are more challenging to reach and bring to the table (as evidenced by low recruitment and retention or high dropout rates in adolescent health interventions). Another focus was found in definitions from models that sought to improve young people’s lives and their communities through increased youth responsibility for decision making and governance. What is still missing, however, are definitions that focus on young people as primary change agents and empowering inadequately engaged youth in equitable relationships with their peers and adults to design, implement, and evaluate programs, and services.

Although these examples provide no clear definition of equitable youth engagement consistent with OAH’s perspective, several other resources identified key principles to address the point made about the missing focus. Although several articles recognize the need to engage marginalized, disconnected, racial/ethnic minority, low-income, homeless and runaway, and opportunity youth, these materials only offer principles focused on getting youth least likely to be adequately engaged to the table, and once there, emboldening them. Definitions from selected examples of these materials along with the population of focus, where it was available are as follows:

- The Freechild Project (2013) defines youth engagement as a “powerful way for community-based organizations and government agencies to include the young people they serve in moving their work forward and results in young people being involved in responsible, challenging, actions to create positive social change.”¹⁰ Adam Fletcher,

⁸ Human Service Collaboration. (2016). *Final research report on youth/young adult engagement* Concord, NH: Endowment for Health. Retrieved from

http://www.endowmentforhealth.org/uploads/resources/id115/Youth_engagement_best_practices.pdf.

⁹ Maynard, K. K. (2008). *Fostering youth engagement: A model of youth voice, empowerment, and participation*. Master’s thesis. College Station, TX: Texas A&M University. Retrieved from

<https://oaktrust.library.tamu.edu/bitstream/handle/1969.1/ETD-TAMU-2830/MAYNARD-THESIS.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

¹⁰ Fletcher, A. (n.d.), *The diversity of youth voice*. Retrieved from <https://freechild.org/the-diversity-of-youth-voice/>.

founder of the Freechild Project, goes on to state that youth engagement is most successful when it is authentic and supported by youth-adult partnerships.

- Similarly, the ACT for Youth Center of Excellence defines *youth engagement* as “the result when young people are involved in responsible, challenging actions to create positive social change. This means involving youth in planning and in making decisions that affect themselves and others. Youth engagement happens in youth-adult partnerships that are structured so that both groups contribute, teach, and learn from each other.”¹¹ ACT involves youth in empowerment evaluation and states, “It means that young people are actively involved in, or are leading programs and work that impact them, as opposed to others working on their behalf.”
- In Canada, Education Democracy in their *Walking the Talk Youth Engagement Toolkit*: define youth *engagement* as follows: “[It] is about empowering all young people as valuable partners in addressing and making decisions about issues that affect them personally and/or that they believe to be important.”
- In articulating their key principles for what seems akin to equitable youth engagement in the OAH sense, the Forum for Youth Investment recommends the formation of youth councils, which includes the following principles:
 - determine council membership (to reflect the diversity of the youth who will be served or on whose behalf the council will operate);
 - ensure a sound infrastructure (with a clear organizational and communication structure as well as adequate resources to support youth-initiated and youth-led activities);
 - provide a supportive work environment (with training for others on the importance of valuing youth and their ideas, providing critical spaces for the work to take place);
 - build youth capacity (through mentors who can help them navigate professional settings);
 - deepen youth motivation (by soliciting their ideas and providing support to implement them);
 - and negotiate opportunities for access (e.g., consult with youth prior to engagement to determine opportunities in which they are interested and approaches to outreach, education, and participation they perceive as relevant and valued; serve as fiduciary for youth-led funding opportunities).

There is no specific mention of youth-adult equity or youth-adult partnerships or youth-youth equity. This “council” strategy has been employed by several other groups in the literature in various forms—youth advisory councils, youth action councils, participatory action committees, and youth advisory boards.

We suggest, based on this review, that OAH might explore developing its own definition for equitable youth engagement that considers the definitions provided in this section as well as the results of this search. To facilitate adoption of that definition, we provide recommendations

¹¹ ACT for Youth. *What is youth engagement, really?* (n.d.). Retrieved from http://actforyouth.net/youth_development/engagement/.

at the end of this report for OAH to consider in developing TTA products to foster equitable youth engagement in OAH-funded programs/services.

4.1.2 Defining Least/Inadequately Engaged Youth and Barriers Limiting Their Involvement

Q. 2 How does the extant literature define the youth least likely to be adequately involved in youth engagement efforts? What are the barriers limiting their involvement?

Youth least likely to be adequately involved

After our review of research articles and other web-based youth engagement materials, we found that research studies and programs took place in both urban and rural settings, engaging both adolescent males and females, young women, and young men. Most of the relevant studies identified worked with disadvantaged youth or youth living in poverty (defined by poor neighborhoods) who were of diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds, as well as youth from various races/ethnicities across socioeconomic statuses. Most programming focused on engaging high school and college age students, with few engaging younger children. The participants across the studies were ages 13-24. Some studies focused on the youth of interest for this search. For example, one study identified engaged HIV+ youth, a group that is often marginalized and has expressed feelings of being silenced when in the presence of those in power. Another study focused on youth in Appalachia; some were focused on opportunity youth (variously defined in the next section), youth in the juvenile justice system, runaway and homeless youth, and impoverished black and Hispanic youth. Many of the studies focused on health-related outcomes, including sexual health, teen pregnancy, obesity, stress, depression, substance use, mental health, body image, and overall well-being.

Opportunity youth

The Aspen Institute reports that “there are currently 4.6 million opportunity youth—defined as young people between the ages of 16 and 24 who are neither enrolled in school nor participating in the labor market.”¹² A search on this term yielded nearly 60,000 hits, and a perusal of several abstracts suggested that these materials are more about reconnecting youth to school or work environments and less about equitable involvement in planning, implementing, or evaluating programs/services. Therefore, little is reported herein about models to engage this group, because most focus on formal employment training and structured tracking through school systems. However, some of the barriers to engagement for opportunity youth are similar to those in the general literature on youth engagement (transportation, childcare, and criminal safety), but there are a few additions not mentioned in the general literature (housing, mental health, and food insecurity).

Because of the diverse backgrounds of other marginalized youth, it could be that these three latter barriers are also present among the larger group, but the literature has not yet included these samples in research or programs. This suggests that there is a large number of not engaged or poorly engaged youth in the general population even though they are housed or in school. Although the populations are overlapping with other inequitably engaged youth, the

¹² Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions. (2019). *Who are opportunity youth?* Retrieved from <https://aspencommunitysolutions.org/who-are-opportunity-youth/>

focus is on reconnecting opportunity youth (and, relatedly, disconnected youth described in the next section) to existing systems to improve their lives. The community-based organizations (CBOs) that are youth-serving and focus on positive youth development are many times the same as these that serve opportunity youth. However, these CBOs, while the anchor for these programs, are connected to a wider spectrum of collaborators, including funders, who can support and complement their work. Therefore, when working with opportunity youth and disconnected youth it is important to work with the systems that connect these youth to services that can support their basic needs before we can expect full/authentic engagement with them.

Disconnected youth

The Center for High Impact Philanthropy defines these youth similarly to the Aspen Institute's definition for opportunity youth but uses the terms interchangeably, stating: "Often called 'disconnected youth' or 'opportunity youth,' many of these [young people ages 16 to 24] have experienced homelessness, substance abuse, and teen pregnancy. Still others have dropped out of the mainstream school system or been tangled up in the courts or foster systems—all of which contribute to work-limiting mental and physical disabilities and unemployment."¹³ The center highlights efforts to reconnect these youth to school or work in urban and rural low-income groups, but the models of engagement are not instructive for this search, because, like the Aspen Institute, they are systems-level strategies that require intensive resources. Because these programs/initiatives focus on older adolescents and young adults, there are also developmental needs and transitions of these youth that must be considered. For example, "for youth in foster care, an 18th birthday can mean an abrupt end to a home. For a young person who doesn't have the option to stay on a guardian's insurance, a [26th] birthday can mean an end to health insurance. For young adults involved in the courts, it is a transition to a harsher, more punitive justice system. And for many under-skilled young adults, finding a job that pays a living wage can feel out of reach." These issues require a different strategic approach to youth engagement that is beyond the scope of this paper. However, we reviewed "best practices" information for this group and found that they focus on best practices for selecting the anchor CBO, not on retaining or engaging participants in programs/services. The best practices include, for example: 1) "Focus on the 'trivial' details so they don't become insurmountable barriers. Seemingly small barriers, such as not having money for public transportation or to purchase a work uniform, can quickly lead to job loss or homelessness for youth." The strategy to address this barrier include "wrap-around services, partnerships and referral services, and/or dispensing of small grants or loan funds" to help youth buy bus passes, work uniforms, and school supplies. If these barriers are insurmountable, participants cannot afford work clothes, materials, or transportation for work or school and could lose their job or slot in the college course. In traditional youth engagement sense, we would be trying to "simply" improve attendance at events and the level of engagement in the program. 2) Best programs provide work, training, and a paycheck. Another example that might apply more widely is to "Invest in ongoing, reliable relationships," which seems on face value to relate to traditional youth engagement. However,

¹³ Center for High Impact Philanthropy. (2019). *Why opportunity youth?* Retrieved from <https://www.impact.upenn.edu/opportunity-youth-toolkit/why-opportunity-youth/>

this too is an expensive, system-level strategy to implement as it applies to “training staff, fair wages, and low staff to client ratios.”

Racially/ethnically underrepresented youth

Several articles were focused on this set of youth, including black, Hispanic, and American Indian youth. For example, CADCA (Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America) provides several resources to assist local coalitions using youth engagement in substance abuse prevention. These include webinars on strategies to engage Hispanic, tribal, and black youth. Fletcher offers additional guidance on applying a diversity lens to equitable youth engagement, and we have summarized these in a later section and in Appendix C.

Barriers limiting involvement

There are several barriers that young people face that can limit their engagement, involvement, or participation.

Inconvenient meeting places, unsafe environments, and other logistical barriers.

Barriers such as limited access to a convenient meeting location or lack of transportation to a meeting/event site can be addressed by locating events and meetings in the community or on public transportation routes and/or providing share ride vouchers or bus passes. Another barrier is inappropriate meeting times in communities where safety might be an issue, which could be addressed by pairing participants to arrive and depart together or having law enforcement or a security organization as a partner. Challenges due to community violence can be similarly addressed as well as engaging youth through interviews or focus groups to provide insights on places in their community perceived as safe. When engaging law enforcement and security organizations, it is also important to engage with community residents (including youth) to determine if this is an appropriate means to ensure safety. For example, for some marginalized populations, there might be sensitivities that need to be considered because of previously troublesome interactions with law enforcement officials.

Relatedly, sometimes facilities are lacking that are perceived as safe places in the youths' community. This can be addressed by working with community leaders and youth to identify facilities that could be improved and made safe places, and that change would be facilitated by the activities in which youth were engaged. The following are several other barriers indicated in the literature, and for some, we also provide the authors' suggested resolutions:

Only privileged young people have opportunities.

U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) Youth Engagement in Development identified the challenge of “exclusivity, wherein only the most privileged young people have opportunities to participate. This results in a lack of representativeness where young people from disadvantaged groups have few or no opportunities to provide input and are excluded

from decision-making processes.”^{14,15} To address this challenge the USAID recommended using an action-oriented strategy such as selecting youth from higher and lower socioeconomic statuses as representatives to an advisory board to work on adolescent issues that cut across groups.

Keeping youth engaged for an extended period when they have competing demands.

Youth often have competing demands that interfere with their availability to participate in activities designed for their positive development; for example, some are babysitters for younger siblings or have to work to support their families. A suggested strategy was to provide on-site childcare for parents and/or provide a stipend or honorarium as an incentive to cover childcare costs or offset lost wages from paid employment. Some guidance as to the amount can be gleaned from the table in Appendix D that reports on compensation models.

Outreach activities do not consider that youth have circumstances and characteristics of their lived experiences that also limit their capacity to participate as traditionally organized.

These circumstances and characteristics include living in a rural location, living with a disability, questioning sexual identity, a lack of funds to attend events that require fees, and living in a crisis-affected community. To address this barrier, some suggestions were made to identify a budget item that provides funds for transportation to and from remote areas, locate facilities¹⁶ with accommodations for disabilities, and engage youth in leading discussions about the stigma associated with questioning one’s sexual identity.

Technology challenges.

Although social media and the Internet have been touted as effective ways to engage youth, not all youth have access to the emerging and fast-changing technologies. In essence, some youth are limited by the “digital divide.” To address this gap, youth can be engaged in conducting individual and community needs and assets assessment to determine the extent to which there is indeed a divide and identify resources to fill this gap. For example, multiple modes of communication and distribution of materials can be identified—the Internet, social media, texting, and manual distribution. It is important to determine which technology modes fit best with youth to be engaged. For example, a community-based research project that sought to engage Hispanic youth found that texting was more effective than web-based postings or phone interactions. Similarly, during a recent group call with OAH Pregnancy Assistance Fund (PAF) grantees, a shared lesson learned was that mobile apps, texting services, and mobile badging are useful tools for staying in contact with youth. Emails and phone calls were not viewed as culturally relevant to youth. Grantees reported that having access to youth

¹⁴ U.S. Agency for International Development. (2014). *Youth engagement in development: Effective approaches and action-oriented recommendations for the field*. Washington, DC: USAID, Office of Education in the Bureau for Economic Growth, Education, and the Environment.

¹⁵ O’Donoghue, J., Kirshner, B., & McLaughlin, M. W. (2003). Moving youth participation forward. *New Directions for Youth Development: Theory, Practice and Research*, 96. San Francisco: Jossey Bass. Retrieved from https://www.colorado.edu/education/sites/default/files/attached-files/O%27Donahgue%20et%20al_Moving%20Youth%20Participation%20Forward.pdf.

¹⁶ Noone, J., Sullivan, M., Castillo McEnnis, N., Allen, T. L., Regalado, C., & Esqueda, T. (2016). Latino youth participation in community-based participatory research to reduce teen pregnancy disparities. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 63, 36-39.

through their preferred modes of communication technology has increased participation rates and success in their programs/services.

Intersectionality of social disadvantage, structural racism, individual- and community-level trauma, LGBTQ+ status, HIV status, and other disparities and inequities.¹⁷

Workshops and creative experiences (e.g., theater performances created by youth, visual art, musical and oral expressions at “Roc the Mic” [open-mic] events and poetry slams) can be used to explore and expose sensitive topics related to the intersectionality. These activities could be organized by youth and led by youth—to express themselves, discover their truths, share how they are coping with the intersectionalities, and pose solutions. Additional suggestions for addressing equitable youth engagement through a diversity lens are included in Appendix C.

4.1.3 Strategies to Engage Historically Underrepresented Youth

Q3. What strategies are utilized to effectively engage historically underrepresented youth who experience barriers to participating in various roles related to the development, implementation, and evaluation of services, programs, and activities that affect their healthy development?

Applying a diversity lens in youth engagement

As mentioned earlier, a critical barrier to equitable youth engagement is the intersectionality of social disadvantage, structural racism, individual- and community-level trauma, LGBTQ+ status, HIV status, and/or other disparities and inequities.¹⁷ Fletcher¹⁸ provides several ways in which young people identify themselves, many of which suggest complexities that are not always obvious. He states that youths’ “race, social class, sexual orientation, economic level, educational attainment, attitudes, religions, families, and many other backgrounds help form their identities.” So, for example, even though some disengaged or unengaged youth identify as a particular racial/ethnic group, they also might identify by the worldview of their race/ethnicity (e.g., Africentric or Hispanic), language of the family’s country of origin, neighborhood, school, social clubs or gangs, or spiritual or religious beliefs. Even if youth are from lower socioeconomic statuses, there might be protective factors in their culture’s worldview that position them to take advantage of positive youth development opportunities, once “at the table.” Additional strategies and approaches are discussed later sections summarizing community-based participatory research (CBPR) and participatory action research. Appendix D, adapted from Fletcher’s Freechild Project, displays other categories of youth who are disengaged or often inequitably engaged in prevention and intervention activities and some suggested strategies to ensure more equitable youth engagement when applying a diversity lens.

¹⁷ Tan, E., & Barton, C. (2018). Towards critical justice: Exploring intersectionality in community-based STEM-rich making with youth from non-dominant communities. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 51(21), 48-61.

¹⁸ Fletcher, A. (n.d.), *The diversity of youth voice*. Retrieved from <https://freechild.org/the-diversity-of-youth-voice/>.

Other operating principles for engaging historically underrepresented youth

In addition to specific mechanisms of engagement described previously, other operating principles in these materials go beyond an emphasis on youth-adult equity toward more equitable engagement of marginalized youth with their peers and their use as experts, staff, and decision makers. The focus was on youth-led efforts such as civic engagement, advocacy, and peer education. Noticeably, additional principles (other than those in traditional positive youth development or engagement models) are added, and include suggestions, for example, to:

- View youth as primary agents of social change.
- Promote meaningful and authentic participation through respect for and embracing young people’s culture. The Center for Nonprofits at the University of Wisconsin-Madison produced a report entitled “Strengthening Communities through Youth Participation: Lessons Learned from the ACT Youth Initiative.” In one of its sites, the Borough of Queens ACT, mentoring was considered to be a mutually beneficial relationship. Youth and adults were paired together to learn about, and from, one another. Adults were required to bring two to three youths from their organization to the ACT meetings. Youth were responsible for making sure that the adults came and carried out their commitments. The Queens ACT found that this level of mentorship and the personal connection strengthened engagement. Youth were also allowed to bring adults and other youth who were important to them. This recruitment strategy enhanced the quality of participation while also engaging a more diverse group of people.
- Use youth voices to shift power in evaluation efforts (e.g., rather than as participants in a focus group, co-leading a focus group).
- Engage youth in a range of real-world roles and activities (community service, Photovoice, decision making to improve families or schools).¹⁹ Engagement in unconventional spaces might include local libraries, youth recreational facilities, and homeless shelters. Youth engagement strategies should include ways to reach youth (up to age 24) outside of school settings as many are graduates or have dropped out. A good idea is to look in places that do not necessarily serve youth. Spaces might include the Department of Human Services, health clinics, and places of employment that hire teens and young adults. Canvassing the community to identify areas where teens socialize is also a good strategy to recruit and engage adolescents.
- Pay youth for their participation (vs. identifying volunteer roles)—see Appendix D for various compensation models.
- Provide welcoming, comfortable, trusting, and safe places for youth to express their opinions, share experiences of trauma, or how they are feeling especially when they are in a nondominant group.

¹⁹ Gavin, L. E., Catalano, R. F., David-Ferdon, C., Gloppen, K. M., & Markham, C. M. (2010). A review of positive youth development programs that promote adolescent sexual and reproductive health. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 46*, S75-S91.

- Recognize underrepresented youth are not monolithic; just because there is one on a youth council, peer educators' team, or evaluation team does not mean you are capturing all lived experiences of similar youth.
- Provide supportive mentors and coaches (adults and/or peers) with similar lived experiences for inadequately engaged youth (e.g., engaged in their own youth councils or advisory boards); research shows that this is more meaningful than trying to have youth and adults be equal or equitable partners in a top-down (adult-led) or bottom-up (youth-led) partnership.
- Provide transportation and hold activities at easily accessible facilities in safe locations.
- Identify community champions who live or used to live in the area or neighborhood, and who youth and other community members trust. This can be accomplished through canvassing, attending community events, and genuinely discussing your goals with community members and youth. These champions can serve as role models/mentors as well as vouch for the program when entering the community. Youth are likely to participate more readily when there is a trusted community member who supports the project than when there is not.
- Consider that the term "youth" varies among cultures and contexts and so will the ways to engage youth. Potentially, spend time talking to youth about language and terminology and their preferences for how they want to be addressed. Specific ideas about engaging ethnic minority youth follow.

4.1.4 Strategies that Work Best and Strategies that are Problematic

Q4. What strategies work best (i.e., have been identified as best practices in youth engagement)? Which strategies or approaches have been identified as problematic?

Strategies that work best

Several federal and nonfederal agencies and organizations provide toolkits, best practices briefs, and evidence-based or evidence-informed reports on the best practices for youth engagement. However, we found few resources specifically tailored for engagement of youth who are the focus of this search. The following is a synopsis of what the search yielded. Some are evidence-informed strategies, but most are not.

Youth leadership.

- Organize and mobilize young people for individual and collective action
- Develop young people's capacities, leadership, and critical awareness of their situation through participatory action research (PAR) based methods (see the later section on "Youth Participatory Action" for illustrative strategies)
- PAR is defined as self-reflective inquiry that researchers and participants undertake to understand and improve upon the practices in which they participate and the situations in which they find themselves; this reflective process is directly linked to action,

influenced by understanding of history, culture, and local context and embedded in social relationships²⁰

- Engage young people in monitoring public policies and budgets
- Develop communication skills and platforms for young people to interact, learn, and act
- Build young people’s skills and capacities to plan, lead, implement, monitor, and evaluate programs and campaigns

Youth empowerment.

- Ontario—Walking the Talk Youth Engagement Toolkit: Guiding principles of youth engagement:
 - 1) Value youth as community assets (identify any implementation barriers and engage youth in how these can be overcome), 2) Commit to participatory leadership (develop an agency policy on youth engagement, find roles [paid and unpaid] in the organization for youth participants, and provide mentors and other supports to work alongside youth), 3) Build authentic relationships (interact with youth in informal as well as formal settings, such as mealtimes to share personal stories and reflections), 4) Strive for health equity (recognize that some youth will need additional supports to participate/realize program benefits because they have inadequate housing, food insecurity, or lack access to quality care), 5) Meet youth where they are (be flexible and adaptable to where and when meetings or activities are held; adjust activities to youth’s developmental phase and cultural preferences), 6) Use a whole community approach (involve sectors not typically engaged in youth-serving activities but that are needed to provide support—industry and businesses that can provide job opportunities, space, or mentoring as well as philanthropic organizations that provide funding for youth-led initiatives), 7) Put safety first (protect youth’s social, emotional, and physical well-being through policies and program supports that reduce the likelihood of abuse, bullying, and criminal activity).

Youth workforce development.

The youth workforce development literature suggests hands-on, real-world work experiences, and mentoring opportunities for youth where they can learn tangible skills to gain employment. A sample of these strategies follows:

- Youth-led evaluation activities of the Stand Up! Help Out! (SUHO) program:²¹ SUHO is a leadership development program geared toward black urban youth living in socioeconomically disadvantaged neighborhoods. The major goal of SUHO is to provide youth with the skills to actively and constructively deal with the challenges of living in an impoverished neighborhood. The SUHO program supports students in their professional development by treating program participation like employment. Youth interview for positions, are paid a stipend (\$400 at the time the research was conducted), and are

²⁰ Baum, F., MacDougall, C., & Smith, D. (2006). Participatory action research. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 60(10), 854–857.

²¹ Bulanda, J. J., Szarzynski, K., Siler, D., & McCreary, K. T. (2013). “Keeping it real”: An evaluation audit of five years of youth-led program evaluation. *Smith College Studies in Social Work*, 83(2-3), 279-302.

expected to maintain professional conduct. SUHO is youth led; youth plan program goals and activities evaluate the program and contribute to program design. In addition, youth who have expressed experiencing trauma are offered counseling. The SUHO program offers a promising strategy that compensates youth for their time.

- Youth engagement strategies for workforce development programs in the state of California:²² First, youth development is defined as “Youth development... envisions youth as partners in progress, rather than simply recipients of services. Projects and programs using a youth development approach enable youth to build skills, exercise leadership, meet high expectations, form relationships with concerned adults and improve their communities.” Strategies in the article correspond to the planning, execution, and evaluation activities of the policy and program planning process. Key strategies include: 1) designing work experience programs that engage cohorts of youth in public work projects; 2) engaging youth in evaluating youth workforce programs; and 3) giving youth seats on local youth councils, the policy, and planning body for youth programs. Additional information about this latter strategy follows.

Youth advisory boards/youth councils.

Although the literature reviewed offers no specific mention of “equitable youth engagement” or “youth equity,” what seems akin to equitable youth engagement is reflected in the key principles of some projects and organizations. A few examples follow:

- Forum for Youth Investment (FYI). A key FYI principle that can be applied to promote equitable youth engagement is to determine council membership will reflect the diversity of the youth who will be served or on whose behalf the council will operate. This should ensure that youth of various socioeconomic statuses, racial/ethnic groups, and other diversifying characteristics are represented in the composition of the group.
- A few strategies to address the barriers to engaging youth in advisory board/youth council type engagement. These include: 1) give young members an engaging hands-on job to do, something with short-term goals and the potential to make a difference in the youth community; 2) treat them as expert consultants, as ambassadors from a foreign land, and listen to what they have to say about local youth and about issues before the youth council; 3) pair them with an adult mentor, someone they can admire and emulate, and around whom they can be themselves; 4) review the youth council agenda with youth members before the meeting, so they know what is coming, can make suggestions of their own, and can more fully engage; and 5) give them alternatives to attending the full youth council meetings, such as serving on an active subcommittee with finite, tangible goals.
- Additional strategies include: 1) offering youth the opportunity to learn new skills, 2) the chance to participate in work they can be proud of, and 3) compensating them for their time. One example paid the youth minimum wage, and they were able to learn skills in the areas of basic construction, repairs, painting, safety, etc.

²² Campbell, D., Lamming, J., Lemp, C., Brosnahan, A., Paterson, C., & Pusey, J. (2008). Engaging youth as active citizens: Lessons from youth workforce development programs. *Journal of Extension*, 46(2). <https://www.joe.org/joe/2008april/a5.php>

- In one study,²³ more than half engaged youth in advisory boards. The studies that engaged youth on an advisory board provided them opportunities to play major roles in identifying priorities, goals and research questions, conducting needs assessments, participating in data analysis, conducting program evaluation activities, and disseminating the results to the community. When youth were invited to participate on youth advisory boards, they were able to build and learn new skills, participate in an interview process, work with others, and receive mentorship from well-meaning adults. The overall goals of the projects were focused on outcomes for the community, such as a reduction of teen pregnancy or sexual transmitted disease (STD) rates, and youth who participated in the decision-making process reaped positive benefits that were not expected.

Thus, there are several strategies to consider from the youth advisory/council literature. However, missing are strategies about how to ensure equitable peer-to-peer engagement among more and less privileged youth so that youth with less experience in formal meetings or councils will feel comfortable, supported, and receive constructive feedback and context from individuals they trust. Examples from other segments of the literature review follow and may provide some insights.

Youth participatory action

Several articles in this literature review focused on engaging youth as activists or advocates to pose solutions to young people's issues. Other articles focused on participatory research or action research methods, strategies that engaged youth as part of the processes to develop, implement, and evaluate programs that addressed their issues. Examples follow:

- Coalitions and cross-sector collaboratives that engage with youth.²⁴ This document on Youth Voice in Coalitions presented a few generalizable lessons learned that include:
 - compensate youth for their contributions;²⁵ meet at times and locations that work for youth;
 - ensure there is strategic and high-level commitment to youth voice with dedicated resources (e.g., transportation, childcare for parenting teens, funds for youth-initiated events);
 - train adults in youth development practices prior to engaging youth;
 - acknowledge how institutional racism, sexism, and ageism impact the work;
 - communicate with parents;
 - actively listen to youth and prepare to share power equally;
 - provide larger support systems for youth;
 - promote community among youth;
 - and build strong and sustainable relationships with youth and community partners.

²³ J Jacquez, F., Vaughn, L. M., & Wagner, E. (2013). Youth as partners, participants or passive recipients: A review of children and adolescents in community-based participatory research (CBPR). *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 51(1-2), 176-189.

²⁴ Ready by 21 St. Louis and the UMSL Community Innovation and Action Center. (2018). *Youth voice in coalitions*. Retrieved from https://readyby21stl.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Youth-Voice_combined.pdf

²⁵ Although a specific amount of compensation was not offered, see Appendix D for a synthesis of other literature that reported on their compensation models.

This document closes with an assessment for organizations to use to understand where they fall on the youth voice spectrum.

- Youth participation in decision making:²⁶ A few strategies include: conducting age-appropriate activities, providing food/refreshments during meetings, setting goals, addressing barriers and limitations, evaluation (including the acceptance of nonverbal communication, such as drawings), diversity, transportation and appropriate workspace (youth should be safe at all times, and should feel comfortable sharing thoughts and ideas), meeting in accessible places, awareness of latest trends (adults who engage youth must be up to date on the latest trends to build a genuine connection), addressing power differentials, and offering incentives (does not have to be monetary compensation, it could be an award for participation). Youth involvement in health-related activities should be planned carefully, and at every stage, encourage synergy between youth and researchers, policy makers, and health promoters.

Youth involvement in community-based participatory research

This literature helped to identify studies that engaged youth in the various aspects of the research process. This empowered youth, introduced them to a new skillset, and allowed them to use the experience of being decision makers in a research setting to pursue other career interests, which fell in line with the youth workforce development literature.

- Strategies from a review article on CBPR with youth.²⁷ This review included 399 CBPR studies. CBPR was defined as “an orientation to research that places value on equitable collaborations between community members and academic partners, reflecting shared decision making throughout the research process.” Studies were grouped based on five phases of engagement: 1) Youth actively gave input into the research through a youth advisory board or other formal group/council mechanism; 2) Youth were involved in identifying priorities, goals, and research questions through a needs assessment or similar process; 3) Youth were involved in designing and conducting the research; 4) Youth participated in data analysis, summarizing the data and/or interpreting and understanding the research findings; and 5) Youth participated in disseminating and translating research findings. Most of the studies included youth in Phase 2. Fifty-nine percent engaged youth in the form of an advisory board. Of the 399 CBPR articles identified in the review only 15 percent (n=56) of the articles actually engaged youth in one of the five phases of the research process. Studies engaged youth at various levels and introduced strategies such as compensation, school assignment credits, and other engagement compensation strategies that supported youth as leaders.
- Youth engagement through community-academic partnerships. Another example of the CBPR strategy was a community-based academic partnership formed to develop an action plan to address the increase in teen pregnancy rates among Hispanics in Jackson

²⁶ Aceves-Martins, M., Aleman-Diaz, A. Y., Giralt, M., & Solà, R. (2018). Involving young people in health promotion, research and policy-making: Practical recommendations. *International Journal for Quality in Health Care*, 31(2):147-153.

²⁷ Jacquez, F., Vaughn, L. M., & Wagner, E. (2013). Youth as partners, participants or passive recipients: A review of children and adolescents in community-based participatory research (CBPR). *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 51(1-2), 176-189.

County, Oregon.²⁸ The Latina Health Coalition recruited high school age students to collaborate and support the efforts of the coalition. One of the goals of the coalition was to build community capacity in research methodology. During partnership formation, the coalition implemented youth engagement strategies to incorporate youth into their research partnership. Youth participated in a logo contest for the coalition to use on t-shirts and coalition related materials. Contest instructions were disseminated to Hispanic middle, high school, and college youth. Gift cards were available as prizes and more than 30 entries were received. The contest was the initial draw to engage youth and raise community awareness and introduce the coalition to the community.

High school and college students were invited to become full members of the coalition and were offered \$500 educational stipend per year for their participation in coalition activities. High school students ages 14-24 were recruited through school postings and direct invitation from coalition members. Interested youth participated in an interview process, including a group interview. Four students (two high school and two college) were selected to be members of the coalition. Most youth stayed on the coalition for one or two years, with two remaining in the coalition for four years.

Youth participated in a community assessment, including a photo voice project. They also created a youth theater group that shared sexual health information with their peers. The youth coalition members shared that the experience helped them feel empowered and that they could make a difference. It also built their confidence in public speaking, promoted leadership development through role modeling, and career development. The experience opened the door for students to become research assistants on other projects to present their work at national conferences.

- Engaging youth living with HIV (the Positive Youth Project). This was a CBPR project that sought to improve the conditions of the Canadian population living with HIV.²⁹ The project was started by a working group of three academic researchers-clinicians, and two community-based organizations, with one mandated to serve HIV-positive youth and the other to provide treatment to People Living with HIV/AIDS.
- HIV+ Youth Advisory and a Service Provider Advisory group. The focus of this synopsis is on the youth advisory group experience. The Youth Advisory group contributed knowledge of the community, “lived experience,” devotion, recruitment assistance, hands-on work, analysis, and dissemination. Overall, the youth felt that participation on the youth advisory council was beneficial. Youth were able to learn new research skills and information and received financial remuneration. Additionally, youth mentioned that it felt good to be heard and to feel useful. Nearly all of the youth involved identified being a current or past member of a socially excluded community (e.g., LGBTQ+, injection drug using, or homeless). Their feelings of respect and inclusion were

²⁸ Noone, J., Sullivan, M., McKinnis, N. C., Allen, T. L., Regalado, C., & Esqueda, T. (2016). Latino youth participation in community-based participatory research to reduce teen pregnancy disparities. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 63, 36-39.

²⁹ Flicker, S. (2008). Who benefits from community-based participatory research? A case study of the Positive Youth Project. *Health Education & Behavior*, 35(1), 70-86.

appreciated and wanted. Many described prior feelings of disempowerment and feeling silenced especially in previous situations with health professionals and others in positions of power (e.g., academia). The most important benefit of their experience was gaining feelings of empowerment with these professionals. Not only did participation allow the youth participants to be heard, it also increased their knowledge and introduced them to new opportunities. Some youth mentioned returning to school based on their experience with the youth advisory board. Finally, youth described the \$20-weekly honorarium as a major financial benefit, because most of them lived on fixed income. Although the money was helpful, youth indicated that it would not have been not enough to sustain their participation. Their enjoyment of the experience made up for the difference. Youth expressed that had they not enjoyed their experience, regardless of the amount of the honorarium, they would not have continued their participation. The youth continued to participate because they felt respected and the honorarium was an added incentive. Overall, there were many benefits; however, as with other community-based research, it takes time and a substantial labor investment for projects to be successful.

- Engaging youth to improve access to sexual health services. The Toronto Teen Survey is a CBPR project with the focused goal of gathering information on the accessibility and relevance of sexual health services for diverse, urban youth ages 13-17.³⁰ The results were used to inform a citywide strategy to improve sexual health outcomes for Toronto adolescents. A Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) was created to take the lead in developing a youth-friendly survey and study protocol. YAC members were recruited from partner agencies of Planned Parenthood Toronto that included supportive housing organizations, community, and recreation centers, and child protective services. Youth applied by completing an application form. Twelve teens (2 males, 10 females) between the ages of 13 and 17 were selected for participation. YAC meetings were a mix of training and survey study design workshops. YAC members received training on qualitative and quantitative methods, anti-oppression analysis, and the social determinants of health. Working with youth brought up several important concerns, including acknowledging their contribution and limiting any potential barriers to their participation. Youth on the council received \$20 honoraria at the end of each session (6 sessions) regardless of their level of participation and were reimbursed for transit and childcare expenses when necessary. The settings for the meetings were informal, youth friendly, and located near major public modes of transportation (subway, bus, etc.). Dinner was provided at all the meetings and the times were set to accommodate their school schedules (afternoon around 4:30 pm). Staff engaging with the youth paid careful attention to ensure that research involving adolescents was conducted with the utmost sensitivity to ethical issues, including minimizing harm and maximizing benefits. This same principle should apply in any relationship involving youth, not just those in the research setting. Youth were able to gain new research skills, meet new friends who

³⁰ Flicker, S., Guta, A., Larkin, J., Flynn, S., Fridkin, A., Travers, R., Layne, C. (2010). Survey design from the ground up: Collaboratively creating the Toronto Teen Survey. *Health Promotion Practice, 11*(1), 112-22.

were “different from them,” and also use the experience as leverage to enter postsecondary education.

- Engaging youth to assess their health service’s needs. The University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) conducted a comprehensive evaluation of a community-based school health initiative, the School-Based Health Center Coalition (SBHC Coalition).³¹ The SBHC Coalition is a group of middle and high school health centers providing health services to students. The Student Research Team (SRT) project allowed the SBHC Coalition and the UCSF to engage youth in the evaluation process. The SRT took a youth development approach to actively engage adolescents in the health research and evaluation process. Ethnically and economically diverse youth were exposed to professional opportunities in health care as well as conducting research and policy advocacy. Nineteen students were recruited to conduct research on health-related issues at their schools. Topics ranged from stress, depression, suicide, body image, and sexual health.

Each SRT chose their own data collection instruments. Adult partners provided feedback to SRTs and allowed them to revise their work. SRTs learned to summarize their research findings and provide recommendations in written reports. Youth received a stipend of \$250 after each full semester of participation to recognize their work. Most of the youth participants were female (75 percent), in 8th through 11th grade (more than 90 percent), with black youth overrepresented among the SRT members. The SRT provided opportunities to engage underrepresented youth in research-related activities early in their educational experience, prompting interest in research-related careers. Pursuing strategies that help provide youth with a purpose boosts their self-confidence and achievement.

The model used by the SRT represents an exciting practice that can be replicated. Though this model was beneficial, there were a few challenges, including: difficulty implementing the model, students reported challenges learning new research skills, time (it takes time to develop partnerships), students have other responsibilities, and attendance may lag or decrease during certain times. One important strategy identified to reduce some of these concerns was to allow trained adults to work with the youth to create clear and realistic timelines and to also tie the stipend to certain deliverables to keep the students engaged.

Strategies or Approaches Identified as Problematic

There were limitations and barriers to each of the suggested youth engagement strategies suggested by Campbell et al.³² They found that there were three barriers to youth participation

³¹ Soleimanpour, S., Brindis, C., Geierstanger, S., Kandawalla, S., & Kurlaender, T. (2008). Incorporating youth-led community participatory research into school health center programs and policies. *Public Health Reports*, 123(6), 709-716.

³² Campbell, D., Lamming, J., Lemp, C., Brosnahan, A., Paterson, C., & Pusey, J. (2008). Engaging youth as active citizens: Lessons from youth workforce development programs. *Journal of Extension*, 46(2). <https://www.joe.org/joe/2008april/a5.php>

that affected all of the workforce development youth councils they studied: 1) competing demands from young people's other commitments (school or work) during the times that the youth council meetings were held; 2) transportation to meeting sites; and 3) meeting topics that were not interesting to young people. As noted in Q3, these authors addressed these barriers in several ways, including mentors, a strategy that has been shown to be effective if mentors are used as coaches with supportive, welcoming roles to provide direction, particularly for vulnerable youth.³³

- Although Photovoice has been identified as an effective strategy to engage youth, in particular in health-related topics such as obesity,³⁴ this methodology has been shown to be challenging for some youth subgroups. For example, middle school age children, might not be developmentally ready to implement the requirements of Photovoice. They cannot move around freely and would require more adult-child supervision than older adolescents and may not have the requisite writing skills nor cognitive capacity to extrapolate from a photo to a short written statement advocating for a policy, system, or environmental change.
- The UCSF school-based health coalition used effective engagement strategies that resulted in positive gains in workforce development and personal development for ethnically and economically diverse youth.³⁵ However, there were a few challenges, including: difficulty implementing the model, students reported challenges learning new research skills, the time it took to develop partnerships, students' other responsibilities led to attendance lags or decreases during certain times. One important strategy identified to reduce some of these concerns was to allow trained adults to work with the youth to create clear and realistic timelines and to also tie the stipend to certain deliverables to keep the students engaged.
- Fletcher suggests that there are many barriers to fully engage all youth equitably into programming to improve their health and well-being. Appendix C displays the categories of disengaged or inequitably engaged youth for which additional support is needed to ensure they are authentically involved. Among the categories are racial/ethnic minority youth, disengaged/disconnected youth, younger adolescents, girls/young women, youth with special learning issues, incarcerated youth, homeless youth, and LGBTQ+ youth. For each of these categories at least one strategy is suggested to overcome their barriers.

4.2 Limitations to the Literature Review

This review was limited by its focus on a facet of youth engagement that does not have much evidence-informed attention in the literature. Most of the materials that acknowledge the problem of equitable youth engagement as envisioned by OAH merely report on principles to which programs/services should adhere, but there is scant research on whether the recommended approaches are effective. The inclusion of a wide array of search terms in an attempt to capture the variation in least likely engaged youth yielded a substantial number of

³³ Soleimanpour, S., Brindis, C., Geierstanger, S., Kandawalla, S., & Kurlaender, T. (2008). Incorporating youth-led community participatory research into school health center programs and policies. *Public Health Reports*, 123(6), 709-716.

³⁴ Findholt, N. E., Michael, Y. L., & Davis, M. M. (2011). Photo voice engages rural youth in childhood obesity prevention. *Public Health Nursing*, 28(2), 186-192.

³⁵ Soleimanpour et al. (2008).

articles that could not realistically be reviewed for their relevancy to this search. Therefore, decisions were made to eliminate articles and other materials that focused only on reconnecting youth to their schools or to work (i.e., opportunity youth and disconnected youth literature). Although this might be an important population for OAH to learn about, because of the focus of some of their initiatives, the resources for this search would not permit a thorough review of nearly 60,000 such entries.

Instead, we reviewed other systematic reviews for this population and drew conclusions from this. Searchers selected their own material review without the added step of double reviewing to ensure 80 percent accuracy in coding and extracting. The senior researcher on the project then reviewed all content that was included in this report against the original material from which it was paraphrased or quoted to ensure that the material met the inclusion test and was not taken out of context. Despite these limitations, this review might represent one of the few attempts to collate information on a group of youth who are inadequately engaged in adolescent health initiatives funded with our nation's resources. More in-depth examinations of ways to connect with and engage these youth is sorely needed.

5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations for Technical Assistance Products

5.1 Conclusions

Youth engagement occurs on a spectrum and full engagement can be time consuming. The search identified several best practices for youth engagement, including strategies to fully engage youth who are often marginalized or disconnected from such efforts. It should be noted, however, that the evidence-based literature is very scant on this latter point. Most strategies identified were based on the reported experiences of advocacy and activist organizations, nationally, and internationally, who work to empower youth to improve their communities and life circumstances. Overall, youth engagement has been identified as a key strategy to improve services for organizations that serve youth. Most of the authors cited that the process to engage youth is a long one; and it takes time to develop meaningful relationships. This means that it may take more money to effectively incorporate the youth. Adults who work with the youth should understand contextual factors and barriers that may inhibit full participation, which would enhance their ability to mentor or coach them. Many of the authors cited attendance as an issue, with youth often having other responsibilities or losing interest in the program/research. The strategies to mitigate this were less clear, but some suggestions included connecting deliverables to a stipend (Appendix D has a summary of compensation models) or supporting youth with transportation. Other selected barriers and suggestions to overcome them are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Selected Barriers to Equitable Youth Engagement and Suggested Strategies to Overcome Them

Barriers	Suggested Strategies
Exclusivity—only privileged youth have opportunity to participate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host meetings frequented by marginalized youth • Work with local cultural or racial/ethnic pride organizations • Identify youth leaders from marginalized groups • Make stipends available to all youth

Barriers	Suggested Strategies
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sponsor travel and expenses • Rotate appointments to committees or representation at activities • Staggering membership on committees so that experienced youth can help train new youth • Have more than one representative from various subgroups for peer support
<p>Lack of culturally relevant promotional and educational activities/materials</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop materials that are easy to understand and connect to youth’s lived experiences • Adapt strategies for culturally and contextually appropriate implementation • Train youth and community on implementation of strategies • Make sure the staff (adults) and setting (location, environments) are youth friendly and culturally sensitive
<p>Lack of capacity or needed attributes of existing staff/volunteers to meet mentoring needs of youth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use community champions as mentors who can make youth feel comfortable and supported in professional settings • Match identified champions/mentors and youth on selected attributes to foster communication and build trust before introducing into larger group or professional setting • Allow youth to introduce peers into a setting under mentor’s guidance so that youth can feel comfortable and more youth get exposed to mentors • Train existing staff/volunteers on effective mentoring strategies
<p>Keeping youth engaged for an extended period when they have competing demands; youth lack adequate fiscal resources to participate fully and may have other competing demands perceived as of higher priority than noncompensated participation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most important, when engaging youth in any program in leadership, program, and research and evaluation roles (as data collectors, interviewees, focus group participants, etc.), they should be compensated for their time. Most authors cited compensating their youth advisory board members (Appendix D displays various compensation models) • Childcare may be needed for some youth who are parenting or have responsibilities for caring for younger children. Vouchers to pay appropriate childcare providers or substitute caregivers can be provided as incentives; or program staff can arrange for on-site provision of care (with adequate staff-to-child ratios based on the ages and number of children).
<p>Inadequate incentives to attract youth to meetings, events, or ancillary activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide food or other refreshments at all meetings • Provide transportation or reimburse for it • For parenting teens, reimburse for or arrange for on-site childcare • Arrange for academic credit for the work done on the advisory council or other engagement activities; many high schools have co-op programs where students earn credits through on-the-job training

Barriers	Suggested Strategies
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange for other incentives (e.g., workforce development activities to prepare for professional opportunities) for out-of-school youth, incarcerated youth, or other youth who are otherwise disconnected from their families and communities • Host activities to accommodate youth schedule (e.g. after school, evenings, and weekends)
<p>Lack of effective strategies to engage younger youth or to engage youth in developmentally appropriate ways, regardless of age</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select developmentally appropriate engagement strategies (e.g., Photovoice has been identified as a best practice for engaging youth; however, it may be more advantageous for older youth [high school and older] compared to middle school age children who may not understand how taking photos would connect to the goals and objectives of the project/program) • Using explanatory language and prompts that are developmentally appropriate and account for youth with cognitive disabilities (e.g., using photos instead of text when appropriate)
<p>Insufficient fiscal resources of sponsoring organizations to support resource-limited youth and tailor program features (location, duration of time, supportive services) to respond to their needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the highest possible level of participation for youth that is consistent with their socioeconomic status (e.g., consider what youth can afford to do and where and whether there are fiscal resources from the program to support their full participation); educational and developmental capacity (e.g., are there learning styles, language, or literacy considerations?) and competing demands for other aspects of their lives (e.g., do they have jobs, childcare duties, or other household responsibilities?)
<p>Limited range/scope of activities in which youth are engaged</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve youth in every aspect of project development, implementation, and evaluation with the goal of building skills and enhancing their potential for professional opportunities • Gather youth feedback on a regular basis • Keep youth engaged in projects for longer periods so they can see the impact of their early contributions and increase their connection with the program
<p>Limited capacity of sponsoring organization to provide authentic leadership experiences for youth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide leadership and other training to promote youth governance to adult program staff and volunteers as well as youth • Provide mentorship opportunities with adult allies in the organization or community so that youth can see leadership modeled and can get direct support and feedback from a trusted adult
<p>Technology: Although social media and the Internet have been touted as effective ways to engage youth not all youth have access to the emerging and fast-changing technologies; in essence, some</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the technology needs of youth participating in your program • Youth can be engaged in conducting individual and community needs and assets assessment to determine the extent to which there is indeed a divide and identify resources to fill this gap; for example, multiple modes of communication

Barriers	Suggested Strategies
youth are limited by the “digital divide”	and distribution of materials can be identified—the Internet, social media and manual distribution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Allow youth the access to wi-fi during program activities to download materials for later use
Unsafe environments due to, for example, community violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hold events in the community with volunteer protection from law enforcement or security sector and focus on reducing the violence ● Ensure there’s a buddy system for staff, volunteers, and youth to attend events in high-violence areas ● Host and transport youth to known safe environments
Logistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide transportation, childcare for parenting teens, and facilities in safe spaces ● Ensure meeting locations are accessible (e.g., near public transportation, ADA compliant)
Intersectionality of social disadvantage, structural racism, individual- and community-level trauma, LGBTQ+ status, HIV status, and other disparities and inequities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cultural awareness training for all staff, board youth, parents to destigmatize, dispel myths, and dismiss stereotypes ● Focus organized activities periodically on addressing the “elephants in the room” and how they intersect ● Provide supportive resources for marginalized youth, staff, volunteers to cope with trauma, stigma, discrimination, racism ● Review policies and procedures to ensure that programs/services do not show bias/prejudice/discrimination ● Provide supportive mentors for youth to have a safe place to deal with issues ● Request expertise/technical assistance (TA) on the intersection and how to deal with it ● Make sure that the adults involved reflect the experiences and identities of the youth served

This is not an exhaustive list of barriers or strategies, but it illustrates the range of strategies that could be addressed by TTA products. Suggested TTA products follow.

5.2 Training and TA Products

The following suggestions are for TA and training products to assist OAH grantees in adopting or enhancing strategies to more fully engage youth who have historically been less connected to programs and services to improve their health and well-being:

1. Develop a brief that defines “equitable youth engagement” from an OAH perspective, summarizes the principles of traditional youth engagement, and outlines how to adapt these for equitable youth engagement based on strategies that have proven effective and are evidence-informed (e.g., some of the information from the CBPR and youth advisory board projects in this review, their findings, and how to implement strategies identified as best practices to engage vulnerable youth) to facilitate grantees’ youth engagement strategies for these youth.

2. Deliver a group-level TA webinar with accompanying materials (activity guides and sample projects) on the use of Photovoice to engage hard-to-engage youth, including the steps in the process, cultural adaptations, and adaptations to accommodate the developmental needs of various ages and abilities.
3. Develop a practical OAH toolkit to assist grantees with developing their own youth listening sessions, including ways to gather insights from youth (e.g., Photovoice, interviews, social media surveys, focus groups, workshops). The advantages and disadvantages of each approach could also be included. OAH recently conducted TA calls with grantees on youth engagement. MayaTech will compile the lessons learned/insights from these sessions into a web-based resource on the TPP/PAF Resource Center page as an additional resource to assist grantees with listening sessions as youth engagement strategies. The toolkit could also provide guidance on how to incorporate the insights from these sessions into services/programs.
4. Deliver a group-level TA webinar and activity guide on the use of social media strategies to provide opportunities for hard-to-engage youth to connect to resources of OAH grantees and other community supports (e.g., developing an online presence with resources for youth and grantees and their partners to use in implementing strategies for various groups on the basis of age/developmental status, race/ethnicity, opportunity status, etc., such as how to set up an online presence, sources for information on culturally specific materials, or community partners)
5. Develop a group-level TA product/event on cultural competency in recruitment, retention, and effective engagement of socially disadvantaged and marginalized youth (e.g., suggest ways to apply the Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Standards for Health and Healthcare Services or CBPR principles to effectively engage these youth); educate grantees on forms of trauma to which youth might have been exposed that are not typically experienced by other youth (e.g., community violence, historical trauma, microaggressions of racism or homophobia) that might instill cultural mistrust in invitations to participate

6.0 Next Steps

OAH will review this report for development of TA products and approve up to two for MayaTech to develop.

Appendix A. Detailed Search Methodology

Key Parameters

The following inclusion criteria were used to guide multiple search strategies:

- Country of origin: United States, Canada, other international
- Target population: youth ages 10-24
- Sex and gender: All
- Race/ethnicity: All
- Publication dates: 1998-2018

We excluded products that were not written or otherwise produced in English and products that did not specifically focus on how to engage, empower, involve, or foster participation of young people in efforts that could improve their healthy development and social, psychological, or emotional well-being.

Key Terms

In addition to searching on synonyms for “adolescents,” “adolescence,” and “youth,” and “young people,” we conducted searches on single words or phrases or in combinations on keywords, such as the terms in the following table. Primary terms were searched first and combined with secondary terms to narrow search results. For example, “opportunity youth” as a primary term resulted in more than 59,000 articles; however, when combined with “youth engagement approaches” the results narrowed to less than 1,000 articles. Because the numbers were expected to be substantially large for many of the single terms or phrases, several secondary terms were initially proposed and supplemented with additional keywords that emerged from initial searches.

Primary and Secondary Search Terms (*=secondary terms)	
• at-risk youth engagement	• retaining youth in programs*
• attracting and sustaining youth participation*	• school-based engagement strategies
• community-based participatory research (CBPR)*	• social justice youth development*
• community youth development	• strategies to engage youth
• disconnected youth engagement	• young adults
• diversity*	• young people
• effective youth development	• youth action research
• empowerment education	• youth activism *
• engaging foster youth	• youth-adult partnership*
• engaging homeless and runaway youth	• youth-centered*
• engaging low-income youth	• youth civic engagement
• engaging minority youth	• youth-driven*
• engaging tribal youth	• youth-informed*
• engaging youth in juvenile justice	• youth engagement approaches
• engaging youth in research	• youth engagement models
• incarcerated youth ³⁶	• youth engagement strategies
• inclusive youth engagement	• youth leadership development

³⁶ Note “incarcerated youth” which yields 59,000 results will be combined with other terms to narrow results.

Primary and Secondary Search Terms (*=secondary terms)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • marginalized youth engagement • opportunity youth • photo voice* • positive youth development • recruiting youth for programs* • recruitment and retention in youth programs* | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • youth participation • youth participatory research • youth service learning |
|--|---|

Procedures

We expanded this list during the search by reviewing the keywords section of abstracts, articles, and other materials. Searchers kept track of the number of results (articles, book chapters, technical reports, etc.) for various combinations of key words/phrases and made notes of the more useful or meaningful combinations found. Searchers also provided an analysis of the sources in which results were found to generate a list of the journals, websites, etc., that were meaningful in yielding relevant results. An Excel database was generated into which this information was compiled for distribution to OAH.

Research staff systematically searched and reviewed literature for each question following the procedures described next.

Search Procedure: Using the key parameters and inclusion criteria described earlier, research staff conducted a cursory review of article/material titles and abstracts. Researchers conducted the review using the search terms along with the parameters (e.g., publication date, language, country of origin). Staff employed Boolean search techniques to identify abstracts most relevant to the research questions. Boolean search techniques allowed searchers to limit or combine terms in an online search to retrieve relevant results.

The Boolean commands (OR, AND, NOT) were used to define interrelationship among the terms. For example, "OR" was used to find the specified search terms together or separately, and the researchers were able to generate a large quantity of articles (e.g., using youth OR adolescents). Using the "OR" command retrieved all articles with "youth" or "adolescents" in the abstract or title of the article. The "AND" command required that all terms were present (e.g., incarcerated youth AND engagement). The "NOT" command excluded terms from the results to reduce the number of relevant articles (e.g. youth NOT school age). Additionally, searchers located exact terms by placing text in quotation marks (i.e., "youth engagement" or "disconnected youth"), and the search displayed results with those terms specifically. Using these techniques allowed the research staff to filter results to abstracts most relevant to the purpose of the literature review. For example, searching in PubMed with the term "minority youth engagement" yielded 244 results. The search was then broadened to include additional terms to describe the concept. For example, using "adolescent" or "youth" to describe the population of interest, yielded additional results not included if using one term or the other. Entering the search terms "minority" AND "youth" OR "adolescent" AND "engagement" yielded 6,283 results. When entering "minority" AND "youth" NOT "adolescent," the search yielded only 33 articles. The research team documented the yield of each search in addition to duplicate articles.

Once articles/materials were identified, researchers categorized the abstracts as “Relevant,” “Irrelevant,” or “Undecided.” For all relevant articles, researchers also tagged the article as relevant to one or more of the research questions with “RQ1,” “RQ2,” etc., to indicate for which question(s) the article was relevant. An additional review parameter was to indicate whether the strategy discussed in the article/material was identified (in the article or elsewhere) as a best, promising, evidence-informed, or evidence-based practice. Senior-level research staff quality assured the reviewing researchers’ results by using the same parameters and guiding questions to categorize abstracts for a few selected abstracts. The reviewing researchers and senior-level staff discussed any discrepancies and reached consensus. If a mutual decision could not be reached, additional parties who had not reviewed the article were consulted. Following the cursory review of article/material titles and abstracts, abstracts identified as “Relevant” or “Undecided” were selected for full-text review. The categorization, review, and quality assurance processes described previously occurred again to identify articles to include in the final review.

Appendix B. Summary of Search Results by Type of Material

Parameter	Type of Search Material		
	Asya Frameworks	Ina Programs and Evaluations	Lauren Peer-reviewed Journals
Number of citations identified on initial search	10	37	8,295
Eventual number identified (abstract or resource) based on revised searches	13	33	37
Number screened based on revised searches (review of abstract, full article or resource)	13	37	23
Number of those screened that were perceived as "relevant"/"maybe relevant" to one or more of the Qs	12	31	10
Number relevant to each question (can overlap so total can be more than total number eventually reviewed) – based on original questions			
Number relevant to Q1	0	12	0
Number relevant to Q2	12	35	5
Number relevant to Q3	12	17	6
Number relevant to Q4 (added after initial search)	--	4	4

Appendix C. Applying a Diversity Lens to Youth Engagement

Other Categories of Inequitably Engaged Youth and Suggested Strategies to Improve Engagement (adapted from Fletcher’s Freechild Project)

Youth Categories and Type of Inequitable Engagement	Suggested Strategies for Successful Youth Voice
<p>Disengaged Youth. Young people who appear disengaged from youth programs or classes often want very much for their voices to be heard.</p>	<p>Focus on direct experiences in young peoples’ lives. Let youth identify the problems and the solutions in which they would like to be involved and on which they want to act.</p>
<p>Young Women. There are few opportunities for young women to make their unique experiences, voices, and actions heard throughout our society.</p>	<p>Deliberately engage young women in changing the community’s/school’s/etc. gender norms and social inequities that put women and girls at risk for poor outcomes.</p>
<p>Migrant Youth. Students who move to different areas of the country or continent throughout the school year face particular challenges—lack of identity with new youth community, getting used to new community norms about youth, not expected by others to be engaged for a long time.</p>	<p>Don’t feel pressure to “catch up” migrant youths on all activities/programs, but capitalize on their exposure to “other worlds” by integrating their experiences into culturally adapted activities and policies. Provide support for youths’ ideas.</p>
<p>Younger Adolescent Students (elementary to middle school age). Youth engagement is often seen as the domain of older teenagers and young adults; younger adolescents are sometimes seen as incapable of informing, making, challenging, or reflecting on what is routinely done to them, without their input.</p>	<p>However, the phrase “youth voice” applies to the energy of children by encapsulating the potential of their roles as active, meaningful, and significant contributors in their lives. Everyday elementary-age students contribute youth voice in service-learning activities. Elementary students begin to associate their families within their larger communities and can strengthen their own voices by mapping their influence and authority in their community.</p> <p>However, perhaps more than any other age group, positive experiences with youth voice are essential to middle school students. Youth development relies on identity and belonging during these years, and youth voice is central to strengthening those traits. Positive experiences with youth voice can help young people feel empowered and purposeful and create a pathway for action throughout their teens. For others, youth voice can make difficult experiences less challenging and make difficult adults less alienating. In middle school young people can strengthen their sense of community-belonging through youth councils and advisory committees that guide decision making and improve services.</p>
<p>High School Age Students. In high school there are a lot of opportunities to connect young people to change.</p>	<p>That can mean opening the doors of service learning, media-making, political action, and other methods. In some communities that means making</p>

Youth Categories and Type of Inequitable Engagement	Suggested Strategies for Successful Youth Voice
	<p>new doors where none exist. Youth Voice makes sense for high school age students as a learning tool, a community connection, and a lifelong influence. High school students can conduct broad examinations of social, educational, political, legal or cultural bias against young people, and develop specific and concrete projects that respond to their observations.</p>
<p>Youth Voice is for Alternative School Students. Students in alternative schools across the state may be at these schools because it is their last stop before dropping out or being expelled. In some cases, youth are “pushed out” of their previous school due to a lack of intent or capacity to adequately support them (e.g., pregnant and parenting students). They may also see their schools as a last chance to graduate on-time. They generally have a high need for ownership over their learning and belonging to a community.</p>	<p>By engaging young people in alternative schools, adults can foster and support feelings of ownership, belonging, purpose, and empowerment among students who desperately need – and want – those experiences. Students can create classes, evaluate their own performance, teach peers, and train teachers, as well as make decisions about every facet of learning.</p>
<p>Youth Voice is for Youth from Diverse Socioeconomic Backgrounds.</p>	<p>Similarly, young people in low-income areas may feel routinely distrustful and angry toward adults, as their interactions are regularly marked by negativity. Young people from affluent areas may feel overly influential and controlling of the situations in which they are engaged. Each of these differences is important to acknowledge.</p>
<p>Youth Voice is for Out-of-School Youth. Whether young people homeschool, “unschool,” or dropout of school, youth voice can provide an effective way to continue learning, engaging and interacting with the communities they live in and help them feel more connected to the communities and systems that are meant to support them.</p>	<p>By creating projects, leading programs, or evaluating their own life experiences, youth voice can become an expectation—not an exception—in daily life and learning.</p>
<p>Youth Voice is for Incarcerated Youth. The situations that incarcerated youth face are clearly different from young people in the community—but their need to be heard, acknowledged, and empowered is just as vital.</p>	<p>Youth Voice in juvenile justice programs can be realized through reflective writing that simply shares the stories of youth. By encouraging incarcerated youth to critically examine their experiences, adults can empower youth and better understand the youth’s experiences and past trauma, as well as their strengths, which will help inform their positive development.</p>

Youth Categories and Type of Inequitable Engagement	Suggested Strategies for Successful Youth Voice
<p>Youth Voice is for Young English Language Learners. In many communities where English is not the primary language, youth voice can be a blurry phenomenon. Sometimes young people are the main English translators for their parents. This happens because parents do not have the time to learn English or afford classes, or because schools or youth programs do not have the financial ability to hire a professional interpreter. The inevitable misunderstandings sometimes lead to a distrust of children and youth. Sometimes, the reverse happens: youth workers and teachers can sometimes mistake youth voice for the parents’ voice.</p>	<p>Applying newly learned English language skills to their daily lives through youth voice programs can help make English more purposeful, enjoyable, and meaningful.</p>
<p>Youth Voice is for Homeless Youth. Physical, mental, or emotional abuse, parental alcoholism, poverty, multigenerational homelessness, and a myriad of other factors drive children and youth onto the streets.</p>	<p>Programs designed to meet the needs of these young people can actually do the greatest justice by acknowledging youth and affirming their value and identities. Meaningful decision making, skill-sharing, life planning, and reflection on their lives can help homeless youth reengage as community members. This sense of belonging has as many positive effects as there are factors that make youth homeless in the first place, if not more. LGBTQ+ youth are disproportionately represented among homeless and runaway youth especially because of discrimination and trauma encountered at home and/or in their communities due to their sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression (SOGIE).</p>
<p>Youth Voice is for Foster Youth. Growing up in unstable situations, sometimes being forcibly removed from family, being thrust into the lives of strangers...these aren’t ideal situations for engaging young people.</p>	<p>However, when young people participate in the decision making that affects them most, they consistently report feeling empowered, purposeful, stronger, and finally in more control. Research shows these experiences build resilience and belonging. Foster youth can be engaged in designing life plans, informing system operations, and consulting their learning and living situations, as well as many other ways.</p>
<p>Youth Voice is for Diverse Learners. Another form of diversity comes in the different ways that people learn. Everyone has a different style of learning that allows them to learn best. In 1983, researcher Howard Gardner identified seven types of distinct learning styles he called</p>	<p>The best youth voice programs reach each type, and have young people identify where they are themselves. Linguistic Youth – Youth voice programs can focus on words, sounds, and meanings and spend a lot of time reading and writing.</p>

Youth Categories and Type of Inequitable Engagement	Suggested Strategies for Successful Youth Voice
<p>“Multiple Intelligences” to show that different people learn in different ways.</p>	<p>Musical Youth Voice – Learners focus on music, rhythm, and pitch. They concentrate more when music is played, sing to themselves a lot or make up songs to remember details. Youth voice programs involve these learners in making music, analyzing music, and teaching other people music.</p> <p>Logical-Mathematical Youth Voice – Learners focus on patterns, numbers, and logical relationships. They are good at math problems, puzzles, and mental challenges. Youth voice programs can use computers, graphic design, and logic activities.</p> <p>Spatial Youth Voice – Learners focus on shapes, locations, and distances. They are good designers and builders. Youth voice programs can focus on community planning, building design, and creating charts and maps.</p> <p>Bodily-Kinesthetic Youth Voice – Learners focus on physical skills and movement. They are good actors, athletes, and craftspeople who do not like to sit still. Youth voice programs teach these young people through constant activity.</p> <p>Interpersonal Youth Voice – Learners focus on understanding and dealing with other people. They are very social, often trying to understand peoples’ motives and feelings. Youth voice programs can focus on communication, and give young people opportunities to organize their communities</p> <p>Intrapersonal Youth Voice – Learners focus on understanding themselves. They are self-sufficient, confident and opinionated, and do things on their own. Youth voice programs can empower young people by giving them more control of their surroundings and through self-driven.</p>
<p>LGBTQ+ youth/gender nonconforming youth*</p>	<p>LGBTQ+ youth are disproportionately represented among homeless and runaway youth especially because of discrimination and trauma encountered at home and/or in their communities due to their SOGIE.</p>
<p>Youth with disabilities (physical, cognitive)*</p>	<p>Note: The diverse learners category is separate from this. Special accommodations will be needed to authentically engage these youths—e.g. selecting facilities compliant with the American with Disabilities Act, providing special technology or assistive devices, or identifying mentors or role</p>

Youth Categories and Type of Inequitable Engagement	Suggested Strategies for Successful Youth Voice
	models with disabilities or others who are sensitive to the needs of this subpopulation of youth.
Expectant/parenting youth*	Expectant adolescents and youth who are parents (young fathers and young mothers) might need support dealing with the stigma that often comes from others' (including their peers') negative judgments about them because of their family life or lifestyle. These youths might also experience challenges with finding care for their young child while they participate in activities. Expectant mothers need support in accessing health care during pregnancy or expectant fathers might need support to assist their expectant partners. Thus, expectant and parenting youths' voices are important in planning programs and evaluations to ensure positive experiences for all youth.
Young Men	Fatherhood for adolescents and young adult men may pose challenges not typically considered in developing programs for youth—e.g., they also might have needs for childcare (like young mothers); additional supports for job-seeking and employment to be responsible fathers; and exploration of their feelings with respect to how fatherhood limits their opportunities for participation.

**Categories with an asterisk (*) are additions to Fletcher's categories.*

Appendix D. Compensation Strategies to Promote Youth Engagement in Community Research and Programming

ARTICLES/STUDIES	COMPENSATION STRATEGY	NOTES
"Engaging Youth in Participatory Research and Evaluation," Jane L. Powers and Jennifer S. Tiffany	Youth received cash incentives both for completing the survey (\$15) and for each new participant they recruited (\$10)	Rural HIV prevention study (participant-driven recruitment)
"Who Benefits from Community-Based Participatory Research? A Case Study of the Positive Youth Project," Sarah Flicker, PhD	\$20 weekly honorarium	N/A
"Photovoice Engages Rural Youth in Childhood Obesity Prevention," Nancy E. Findholt, Yvonne L. Michael, and Melinda M. Davis	\$100 honorarium at completion of project	N/A
"Keeping it Real": An Evaluation Audit of Five Years of Youth-led Program Evaluation," Jeffrey J. Bulanda, Katie Szarzynski, Daria Silar, and Katherine Tyson McCrea	\$400 stipend at end of research project	The After-School Youth Leadership Development Program: Stand Up! Help Out!
"Hispanic youth participation in community-based participatory research to reduce teen pregnancy disparities,"	\$500 educational stipend per year	CBPR consultant, Nancy Findholt, PhD, RN, (personal communication, December 2, 2010)

Appendix D. Compensation Strategies to Promote Youth Engagement
in Community Research and Programming

ARTICLES/STUDIES	COMPENSATION STRATEGY	NOTES
Joanne Noone, Maggie Sullivan, Nancy Castillo McKinnis, Tiffany L. Allen, Carolina Regalado, and Teresa Esqueda		
"Survey Design from the Ground Up: Collaboratively Creating the Toronto Teen Survey," Sarah Flicker, Adrian Guta, June Larkin, Susan Flynn, Alycia Fridkin, Robb Travers, Jason D. Pole, and Crystal Layne	\$20 honoraria at the end of each session; reimbursement for transit and childcare (when necessary); dinner always provided	N/A
"Say Y.E.S. to Youth: Youth Engagement Strategies," Julie A. Scheve, Daniel F. Perkins, Claudia C. Mincemoyer, Janet A. Welsh	At the regional level, two paid youth positions exist (no amount given)	The Seven Circles Coalition
"JCSH Youth Engagement Literature Review"	Incentives: opportunities to travel, meet other youth, stay in hotels, participate in social activities	Treseder & Crowley, 2001
"Recruiting and retaining youth and young adults: challenges and opportunities in survey research for tobacco control,"	Baseline contingent incentive of \$10 for completion of a survey (66% received) Hard-to-reach (AA, H/L) additional contingent incentive	evaluation of the truth campaign

Appendix D. Compensation Strategies to Promote Youth Engagement in Community Research and Programming

ARTICLES/STUDIES	COMPENSATION STRATEGY	NOTES
Jennifer Cantrell, Elizabeth C Hair, Alexandria Smith, Morgane Bennett, Jessica Miller Rath, Randall K Thomas, Mansour Fahimi, J Michael Dennis, and Donna Vallone	of \$10 for completion of survey (31% received) No household Internet additional contingent incentive of \$20 for completion of survey (2% received)	

PROGRAMS	COMPENSATION STRATEGY	NOTES
Wisconsin PATCH Youth Advocacy Fellowship	Fellows are paid \$10/hour for actively participating in these meetings and other PATCH-approved activities throughout the year. The PATCH Advocacy Fellowship is an 8-month commitment	https://www.wipatch.org/patchyouthadvocacyfellowship
National Institute’s TORCH Peer Leader	Paid opportunity (no amount given)	https://www.nirhealth.org/torch/
Truth – Community Leaders	Paid stipend (no amount given)	https://www.thetruth.com/community-leaders-application