



Creative Youth Development National Blueprint Executive Summary

Vision

All young people will have equitable access to opportunities to develop their creative potential, to live richer, fuller lives and develop the critical learning and life skills they need to become active contributors to their communities.

Young people thrive when they have opportunities to maximize their creative potential. Research shows that creative youth development supports young people in developing the personal, social, and intellectual skills that are critical to success in life, school and work. However, there are simply not enough CYD programs to meet the needs of youth in our communities and existing CYD programs need more support and investment.

Creative youth development is a recent term for a longstanding theory of practice that integrates creative skill-building, inquiry, and expression with positive youth development principles, fueling young people’s imaginations and building critical learning and life skills.

A growing movement is working to ensure that all young people have opportunities to benefit from creative youth development participation. The Creative Youth Development National Blueprint (2018) was developed by the CYD National Partnership—in concert with a cross-sector, 10-member national advisory committee and three national working groups—to drive collective action. The purpose of this agenda is to increase access to CYD for American youth and holistically support positive change in the lives of young people.

By 2023:

- **Creative Youth Development (CYD) will be a broadly known, well-researched, deeply respected and richly funded field of practice** that reaches communities throughout the United States to provide life-changing opportunities to youth through the arts, humanities, and sciences.
- **Educators, funders, and community leaders will collaborate across sectors to implement Creative Youth Development programs** in a variety of contexts in schools and communities.
- **Youth will have increased access to CYD programs.**
- **A broad array of funders will be familiar with Creative Youth Development as a strategy for supporting the development of young people**, extending beyond arts-specific funders to include those focused on education, health and well-being, juvenile justice, and workforce development. More funders will be investing in CYD.
- **Creative Youth Development practitioners will have a shared understanding of the defining characteristics and principles of CYD practice as well as shared language, models, research, and tools** to help build a case for programs.
- **A robust community of practitioners across the globe will be connected** and work to continually refine and improve the practice of Creative Youth Development to best serve young people and their communities.



Three Strategic Priorities

This Blueprint builds on the 2014 Collective Action for Youth Agenda by prioritizing three strategic areas—**Visibility and Impact**, **Funding**, and **Field-Building**—and identifying specific actions for cross-sector advancement of the field. With support from the National Endowment for the Arts, the CYD National Partnership gathered input from more than 650 stakeholders through numerous community conversations throughout the country in 2016 and 2017. The Partnership also commissioned research by the Forum for Youth Investment that mapped opportunities for alignment between CYD and allied youth sectors. Three cross-sector Action Teams were then formed to analyze and distill the research and stakeholder inputs and make final recommendations for the Blueprint.

Implementation of key strategies is underway in concert with national action teams and the field. Participants include youth, practitioners, researchers, funders, policy makers, and other stakeholders in creative youth development and allied sectors (e.g., mental health, juvenile justice, workforce development, youth development, education, and community development).

VISIBILITY & IMPACT: Documenting and Communicating Outcomes and Impact

Goals:

- Support the CYD field with language and tools to support consistency, clarity, quality, and ease in communicating about CYD and its impact. Determine how to best frame the case for CYD to garner support and attention from policymakers, funders, and allied youth sectors.
- Document and boldly communicate national data on CYD program impact and youth outcomes to support individual youth and programs, influence policy, and garner support.

Key Actions:

- Create a suite of communications tools, informed by and easily accessible, to the field that convey the key characteristics of CYD and its impact.
- Launch a national storytelling campaign to boldly communicate CYD as a powerful solution for positive outcomes for youth.
- Develop and promote a shared conceptual framework for documenting and communicating the impact of creative youth development programs.
- Collect and aggregate field-wide data on impact and outcomes through a shared evaluation tool.
- Develop a CYD national research agenda.

FUNDING: Building Pathways to Funding

Goals:

- Create a market for CYD practice.
- Make pathways to funding more equitable for all CYD programs/organizations.
- Increase & diversify funding.

Key Actions:

- Map the CYD funding landscape & activate a comprehensive funder engagement strategy.
- Develop CYD communications tools and case examples for funder engagement.
- Elevate the role of intermediary organizations and networks.



FIELD BUILDING: Professional Development, Networking & Technical Assistance

Goals:

- Expand and deepen opportunities for the CYD field to connect and learn.
- Cultivate and strengthen local, regional, and national cross-sector relationships with allied youth sectors.

Key Actions:

- Utilize conferences and meetings hosted by National Partners as platforms to convene the CYD field nationally and internationally.
- Support, catalyze, and connect local, state, and regional peer learning networks through the Emerging Young Artists' Leadership Exchange, online learning among stakeholder groups, and documentation of effective models.
- Foster year-round online learning, information resources, and continuous communications.
- Cultivate and strengthen local, regional, and national cross-sector relationships with allied youth sectors.

This plan represents a shared vision for amplifying promising strategies highlighted in recent research and practice, increasing investment in CYD nationally, and catalyzing action that will bring new resources and support to CYD practice throughout the country. Woven throughout the Blueprint are the **core values of the CYD Movement: racial equity and social justice, youth voice, and collective action.**

Just as the field of CYD is dynamic, this Blueprint is dynamic and will continue to be revised to reflect shifting landscape, context, needs, opportunities, and resources. To start, we have outlined strategic actions for the next 1-3 years. The Blueprint will evolve as implementation unfolds and will be updated online to reflect progress toward goals. The Blueprint will be published to the CYD national website, www.creativeyouthdevelopment.org in March 2018.