Connect. Improve. Inspire.

Colorado 9to25
Charter

Colorado 9to25 (CO9to25) is a collective, action-oriented network of youth and adults working together to achieve positive outcomes for *all* youth in Colorado. It takes collaborative action to ensure all young people ages 9-25 are *safe*, *healthy*, *educated*, *connected* and *contributing*.

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Background

Ensuring lifelong success for young people means that people and agencies need to work with all those who care for and about young people (collaboration)[1]. Policies, programs and services must be strengthened *with* and *for* all young people in Colorado, especially those who are experiencing tremendous challenges such as homelessness, involvement with the child welfare system and juvenile justice system, teen parenting, and discrimination against any facet of their identity (race, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, citizenship status, etc.).

A thorough and complete approach to improve youth and young adult health and well being is the best way to continue the work being done in early childhood and to increase collaboration within and among agencies. This approach is the way to provide Colorado with tools to effectively and efficiently address the needs of youth. This approach will positively influence the long-term health of communities. The concept of developing a comprehensive youth system is proposed by the Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs and is informed and inspired by the work of the Early Childhood Colorado Partnership (ECCP)

From 2009 to 2013, the Early Childhood Colorado Partnership brought many partners, private and public, together to reach the shared vision of supporting Colorado's young children and new parents.[2] ECCP's work required an approach that brought the parts of a system together in order to produce more creative, flexible, and responsive manners to address challenges.

In October 2011, a team called the Leadership Team started and guided the statewide effort to introduce Colorado 9to25 (CO9to25). At first, this team was made up of former members of the Advisory Council for Adolescent Health at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, and members from the Colorado Youth Development Team. These partners developed the strategic direction and framework for CO9to25.

In 2013, the Colorado General Assembly passed a law calling for a Statewide Youth Development Plan (HB13-1239) that focuses on the work of state departments. CO9to25 is Colorado's youth system-building effort ready to meet the requirements of this legislation and to continue the work of Early Childhood Colorado, the early childhood system for Colorado children ages 0-8.

By uniting our interests and resources, we can set in motion much-needed changes in public and private planning and decision making to improve the health and well being of youth across our state. As we continue to expand our reach, we invite the participation of anyone interested in partnering with us to ensure all people ages 9 to 25 are safe, healthy, educated, connected, and contributing.

[1] Success for Life: A Call for Collaborative Action on Behalf of Massachusetts Youth

[2] Colorado Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Grant: Accomplishment Summary 2009-2013

Guiding Values and Principles of Colorado 9to25

Colorado 9to25 (CO9to25) is a cooperative, action-oriented network of youth and adults working together to achieve positive outcomes for *all* youth in Colorado. It takes collaborative action to ensure all young people ages 9-25 are *safe*, *healthy*, *educated*, *connected* and *contributing*. Most importantly, youth and young adults shall play pivotal roles in all levels of network activities.

Positive Youth Development (PYD)

PYD is an approach that focuses on building skills and opportunities, as well as supportive and authentic relationships with youth. It is an evidence-based, public health approach that enhances prevention, intervention and treatment models. It also focuses on engaging/partnering with youth and promoting equity and social justice. PYD means taking a "whole person" approach in working with young people, including the youth, their families, communities, policies, and systems. This approach means committing to focus on strengths of youth as well as acknowledging the risks youth face. CO9to25 uses a PYD approach by building and enhancing youth-adult partnerships throughout Colorado to ensure that all youth are *safe*, *physically and mentally healthy*, *receive a quality education*, are *connected* to caring adults, schools and their communities; and are *contributing* to their community

Collective Impact and Collaboration

In order to create lasting solutions to social problems on a large-scale, organizations (including those in government, civil society, and the business sector) need to coordinate their efforts and work together around a clearly defined goal[3]. Working together to reach that defined goal is the basis of collaboration (the Latin root of the word collaboration means "to labor together") and the approach of Colorado 9to 25 is to collaborate with all of the organizations, government, business sector, youth, families, and communities to make it possible for youth to reach their full potential. Collective Impact as an approach further defines this collaborative work.

Collective Impact is the idea that big-picture social change happens when different people and groups in society work together to reach a common goal. None of us can do it alone. Ensuring that young people are safe, healthy, educated, connected and contributing requires coordination across all sectors. In a time of economic insecurity when we are constantly asked to do more with less, we must join forces to achieve greater results. To that end, CO9to25 is committed to using a Collective Impact approach, combining five ideas that have been proven to lead to powerful results[4]:

1. A common agenda - all participants have a shared vision for change, one that includes a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed upon actions
2. Shared measurement of data systems – partners and people affected by our work have an agreement on the ways success will be measured and reported
3. Mutually reinforcing activities – every person focuses on what they do best in a way that is supported and coordinated with the work of the other people who are involved.
4. Continuous communication – taking time to develop trust, ensure fairness in the decision making process and being inclusive of all stakeholders
5. Backbone support organization – a separate organization who can plan, manage, and support the collaborative through ongoing facilitation, technology and communications

[3] http://www.fsg.org/OurApproach/WhatIsCollectiveImpact.aspx
[4] http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/collective_impact

support, data collection and reporting, and handling the myriad logistical and administrative details needed for success.

Examples of the Impact of Colorado 9to25

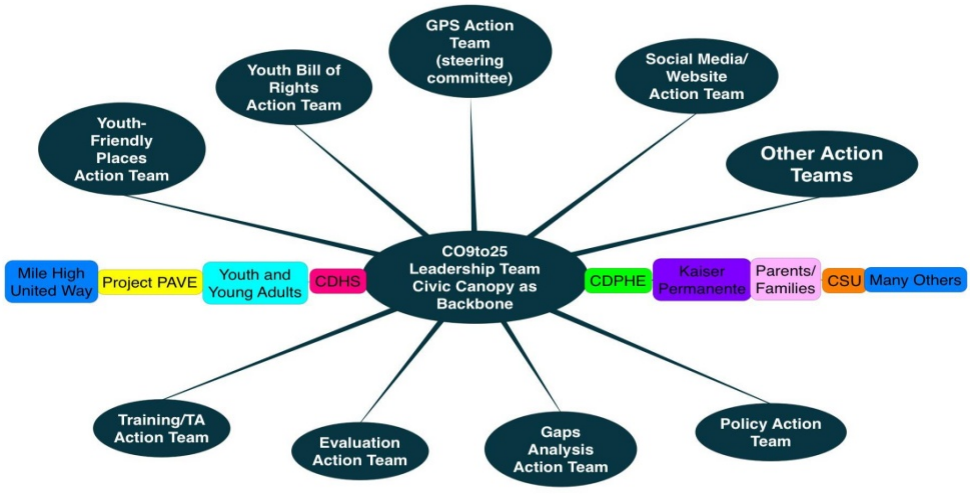
1. Colorado Department of Human Services is now hiring youth to work on transformation grants as consultants.
2. CO9to25 has spokesperson training for youth to increase their skills in advocating for issues they care about to legislators.
3. Youth created the publicity materials for a healthy living program in Commerce City for Children's Hospital and the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center.
4. Hundreds of people in at least 30 rural and urban communities across CO have been trained by Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment on Positive Youth Development.
5. Youth advisors work as partners with the Youth Systems Developer and the Youth Health at CDPHE to train on PYD and to organize events.

Structure

The **Leadership Team**, which includes GPS team members and represents diverse people and interests, guides the direction of CO9to25.

The **GPS Team** guides innovation and makes recommendations and final decisions for CO9to25.

Actions Teams for each focus area (safety, health, education, connection, and contribution) are made up of at least one youth and one GPS team member from the Leadership Team as well as network partners. Action Teams carry out the decisions made by the Leadership Team. Partners called Network members support and promote the overall goal and accomplishments of CO9to25.



CO9to25 Action Teams are responsible for implementing portions of the CO9to25 Action Plan. They are groups of 8-10 people co-led by an adult and youth and managed by The Civic Canopy.

Levels of Membership for CO9to25

Network member – Participates in CO9to25 meetings, forums and/or events and is part of our contact list.

Action Team member – A Network member who participates on an Action Team to carry out strategies and actions put forth by the Leadership Team. Action Teams focus areas include but are not limited to: Safety, health, education, connection, and contribution. Action Team members are accountable for ensuring that their work also reflects the values, goals and strategies of CO9to25.

Leadership Team member – Participates in leadership meetings and makes final decisions regarding the direction of the work. They are expected to "walk the talk," to make sure their work reflects CO9to25's values, goals and strategies. The foundation of all of this work is positive youth development. Using a strengths-based approach, engaging and partnering with youth, and being sensitive to all cultures and backgrounds will drive all of the Leadership Team's work. It is important to note that the Leadership Team members work to further the larger goals of CO9to25 and not those of their organization or group.

GPS Team member – Participates in meetings and drives much of the agenda by keeping the work going in-between Leadership Team meetings.

Network Member Expectations

Meeting and Event Participation

- Participate in at least two Community of Practice/Networking meetings or webinars per year
- Optional participation as member of an Action Team

Commitment

- Increase knowledge of positive youth development
- Increase knowledge and integration of a positive youth development approach into their work
- Share and contribute resources and opportunities via the CO9to25 website, meetings, webinars and/or Facebook page
- Follow CO9to25 on social media sites like Facebook and Twitter
- Provide feedback to CO9to25 on how to improve the intent, focus, activities and meaning of meetings

Application and Selection Process

- No formal application process. If interested in becoming a CO9to25 Network Member, please sign up on the CO9to25 website: www.co9to25.org

Action Team Expectations

Commitment

- All expectations listed for Network membership apply to Action Team members

- In addition all Action Team members must:
    - Be familiar with the CO9to25 values, principles, and goals
    - Each Action Team will create an action plan to support the completion of tasks determined by the Leadership Team, which will be submitted to the GPS team
    - The team will meet as needed to complete task by the due dates
- Each Action Team must have two chairs (one adult and one youth). At least one of the chairs must be a Leadership Team member

Leadership Team Expectations

Logistics

- The Leadership Team will be made up of 36 members total, including 18 youth and/or young adults
- The group will meet quarterly to give advice on decisions related to the direction of CO9to25 and implementation of the action plan.
- The meetings will be 10-12:00 on
    - February 28, 2015
    - April 11, 2015
    - July 11, 2015
    - October 10, 2015
- Childcare will be provided.
- Off-site call-in and/or video conferencing is available.
- The Civic Canopy will ensure that the meetings are well planned and well facilitated, with notes taken each time and sent out within the week.

Meeting and Event Participation

- Participate in a minimum of three out of four quarterly Leadership Team meetings
- Participate in the CO9to25 events, meetings and, webinars throughout the year
- Attend yearly 1-day leadership retreat
- Minimum of two years on the Leadership Team with the potential for an extension.
- Optional: Participate in a mentor/mentee relationship with other Leadership Team members or participate as a liaison to other Leadership Team
- Optional: Act as co-chair for an action team
- Overall time commitment: 1 day yearly retreat, 4-hour meetings 3 times a year, 2 hours of work outside meeting time for a total of hours a year (3-4 hours a month)

Commitment

- Coordinate, collaborate, and partner with youth
- Work with non-profit, government, business, and community sectors
- Work together toward shared outcomes
- Build skills, opportunities and meaningful relationships with young people and those who serve them
- Help to identify gaps, where to focus resources and what policies to develop or change
- Advocate for policies and practices that improve the health and well-being of youth

Application and Selection Process

- Complete an application for membership

- Include a letter of support from your organization, school, or agency, so that we know it is aware of and supports the work of CO9to25
- Submit application to the GPS Team by the December 16, 2013.
- Applicants will be accepted based upon:
    - Level of influence related to the 5 goal areas (safety, health, education, connection, and contribution). Level of influence does not always mean "high powered" connections—it is also the ability to partner with and engage the community to educate, raise awareness, etc.
    - Unique experiences, knowledge and skill.
    - Attention will be given to ensure Leadership Team members reflect the broader Colorado population (diversity in geography, gender, ethnicity, ability, etc.)

Decisions

- Team will strive for consensus on all decisions. If a unanimous decision cannot be reached then decisions will be made by majority vote
- One more than half of the total number of members on the team must present in order to take a vote
- Participation and voting can also be by video or phone

Conflict Resolution

- All conflicts will be handled in an immediate and direct fashion.
- All team members will agree to be open and willing to communicate about conflict when it arises
- Members with disagreements and conflicts that cannot be resolved will consult with the GPS Team in order to work together to ethically and fairly determine a shared solution.

GPS Team Expectations

Commitment

- All expectations listed for both Network and Leadership Team membership apply to GPS Team members
- In addition, GPS Team members must:
    - Communicate with all Action Teams
    - Incorporate participation on this team into job description or work goals
    - Meet monthly at a minimum. Additionally, the team will meet as needed to complete task by the due dates determined by the CO9to25 work plan
    - Attend all Leadership Team meetings