

Alcohol Drug Policy Commission (ADPC) + Clackamas County Youth Action Board (YAB) Project



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Introduction- Who is YAB?

The Clackamas County Youth Action Board (YAB) consists of individuals 14-25. The primary objective of YAB is to elevate the community. YAB is dedicated to supporting organizations in empowering young people and supporting youth voice and choice.

Our group has lived experience with substance use disorder and houselessness. Some YAB members are currently in high school.



Partnership with Alcohol and Drug PolicyCommision-



- In 2024 the Youth Action Board had the opportunity to review the proposed ADPC strategic action plan. YAB advised on policy changes to make services more accessible and well-understood across the board from directors to recipients.



Project Purpose and Scope of work

In July of 2024 the Alcohol & Drug Policy Commission invited YAB to share their insights on the ADPC goals in:

- Implementing youth voice and work into advocating for policy decisions that are relevant and helpful to our community.
- Creating guidance and defining care/needs for youth with substance use disorder
- Designing programs that support clinicians and peers to better serve youth and their families.

Our Approach: Gather key stakeholder input regarding the issues above to inform our recommendations and accurately represent the community.

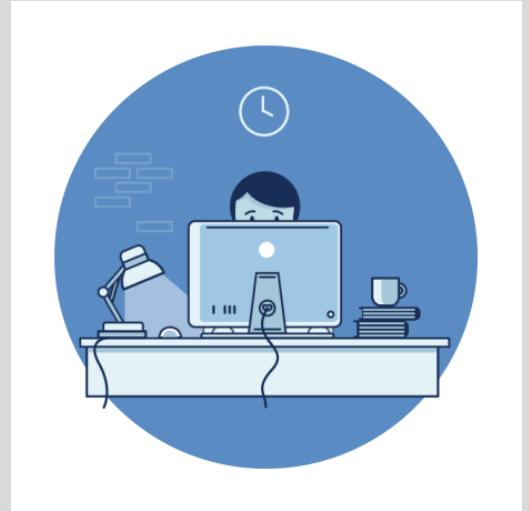


YAB: Areas of Focus & Definition

- Access to methadone clinics and medication assisted treatment services for youth (14-17) and young adults (18- 25) in recovery & seeking services.
- Youth and family advocates for youth ages (13-18).
- Prevention messaging that target youth ages 13-18 and young adults 19-25.

Methods Section

- FRAMEWORK: Community Readiness Model
- 9 interviews with 7 different organizations
- Sectors Represented:
 - *Prevention, Local Government, Law Enforcement, Peer Support, Violence Prevention, Treatment, Recovery, Rural Youth.*
- **Implications:** *While efforts exist to support youth in accessing treatment and navigating substance use issues, significant barriers remain — particularly related to awareness, access, stigma, and systemic alignment. **While there are pockets of strength—especially within schools and social media outreach—there is still more that needs to be done to address these issues***
- **Solutions to explore:** *Strengthening community partnerships, enhancing leadership engagement, and making services more youth-accessible and visible are central to improving outcomes.*





Barriers to Youth Access & Awareness (Access to Treatment)

Challenges Identified:

- **Limited Youth-Specific Services:** Few sober housing options, long waitlists, MAT services mainly for 18+.
- **Logistical Barriers:** Lack of transportation and inadequate outreach.
- **Low Public Awareness:** Families and communities unaware of existing services; suggestions for a "crip sheet" directory Or centralized resources.
- **Information Silos:** Disconnected messaging, particularly in rural and conservative communities.
- **Teachers as Trusted Sources:** Youth more likely to trust educators than parents or external agencies.



Messaging, Miscommunication, Media Gaps

Problems with Messaging:

- **Disjointed Communication:** Inconsistent awareness across platforms and demographics.
- **Inadequate Outreach:** Reliance on Facebook groups and school presentations is insufficient.
- **Mismatch with Youth Needs:** Prevention messaging often feels too juvenile or irrelevant.
- **Inequitable Access:** Info primarily reaches wealthier or more connected groups or those that are seeking it.



Community, Family & Leadership Dynamics

Community & Family Context:

- **Variable Concern:** Stakeholders rate concern levels 5–8 but lack momentum for action.
- **Limited Family Engagement:** Denial, stigma, and resistance in conservative areas.

Leadership Perception:

- **Mixed Engagement:** Some leaders are champions, others passive or uninformed.
- **Policy Hesitancy:** Engagement often reactive, not proactive.
- **Need for Education:** Leaders more likely to support if educated on youth impact and ROI.



Youth Voice, Peer Advocacy & Trusted Networks

Strengths in the Field:

- **Peer Advocates:** Confidential, trust-based relationships valued more than formal programs.
- **School Engagement:** Teachers, counselors, and wellness clubs serve as trusted entry points.
- **Long-Term Relationships:** Programs with consistent advocacy over time see more success.
- **Safe Spaces:** Need to create physical and relational environments where youth feel heard.

Quotes:

- “We trust teachers more than parents.”
- “Workers in the field doing the work is a major strength.”



Structural Barriers & Gaps

Obstacles to Success:

- **Funding & Staffing Shortages:** Prevent program expansion and sustainability.
- **Fragmented Systems:** Lack of coordination and central referral systems.
- **Stigma & Fear:** Youth fear reporting substance use due to punishment; CPS fears among parents.
- **Policy and Practice Gaps:** Insufficient cross-agency collaboration (e.g., YAFA with CPS).

Suggestions:

- Invest in daycare support, flexible treatment schedules, and systems for early intervention (ages 13–25).



Recommendations

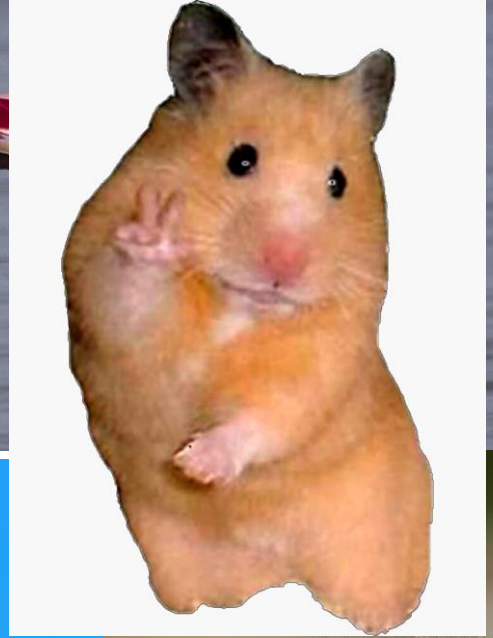


- Awareness & Communication: Launch campaigns, use apps and directories.
- Leadership & Capacity: Train leaders, fund youth advocacy.
- Community Engagement: Co-design programs with families and youth.
- School-Based Hubs: Prevention services in schools.
- Policy Adjustments: End mandatory methadone meetings, promote trauma-informed services.

Conclusion

- Efforts exist but are fragmented.
- Youth need relevant and visible supports.
- Community, leadership, and family involvement are uneven.
- Stronger alignment across systems is essential.
- A coordinated, youth-centered strategy is key for long-term success.





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