

RECLAIMING FUTURES **WORKBOOK SERIES**

Readiness Assessment

ABRIDGED ASSESSMENT

A national program founded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

 **RECLAIMING FUTURES**
Communities helping teens overcome drugs, alcohol & crime

**RECLAIMING FUTURES
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INSTRUCTIONS

The following list of questions has been developed specifically for communities considering how to begin to organize a Reclaiming Futures effort. Local leaders should utilize these questions during formal or informal dialogues and take actions based on the results of these conversations and a self-assessment of their readiness to proceed. Finding the answers to these questions could be considered the first essential step in completing a comprehensive Reclaiming Futures implementations planning process. For more information, visit: **[www. reclaimingfutures.org](http://www.reclaimingfutures.org)**

the Reclaiming Futures model

COORDINATED INDIVIDUALIZED RESPONSE

COMMUNITY DIRECTED ENGAGEMENT

Youth referred to the juvenile justice system for law violations

Youth eligible for treatment or supervision in the community

If no substance abuse is indicated, resume traditional juvenile justice process



* Success may be defined in various ways, including the absence of new arrests or new court referrals, no new drug use, reduced drug use, no subsequent referrals for drug or alcohol treatment, or some combination of these measures.

Of all youth who complete the required services and demonstrate ongoing engagement in individualized transition supports, how many are successful for at least one year?

Readiness Assessment (Abridged)

OVERVIEW AND BROAD VISION

1. What is our vision for a system of care and opportunity for the young people in our community?
2. What other system reforms have we succeeded at, and what have we learned from them? What attracts us to the Reclaiming Futures effort—how is it like us or like things we have done in the past? What strength does this highlight in our community?
3. How would our services benefit, both by qualitative improvements and by cost savings as a result of the Reclaiming Futures model?

LEADERSHIP FOR CHANGE

1. Do we have a committed core group of leaders who are already on board with the idea of pursuing a Reclaiming Futures approach? This might include local judges, probation leaders, community leaders, families and youth leaders, treatment leaders, school leaders, and others. (Note: This does not imply that *everyone* who will ultimately be important to the success of the effort is currently in dialogue, but the presence of a core group is important to conceptualizing an agency's readiness to proceed.)
2. Are we ready and able to position a change leader who will serve as a coordinator for this effort?
3. Have we agreed as leaders that we are ready to commit to a multiyear process that will involve rigorous system- and agency-wide dialogue, robust coalition development, and the ability to create cross-system relationships?

PLANNING FOR COLLABORATION

1. What kinds of planning processes have we used in multiyear program development or reform efforts previously? Are we satisfied with them?
2. Given that many different groups will be learning about various aspects of change and improvement in an initiative like this one, how can our training and technology transfer resources be engaged and prepared?
3. What tools (for example, interorganizational agreements, memoranda of understanding) have we used previously? Are they sufficient for future partnerships or the expansion of current partnerships?

COMMUNITY-DIRECTED ENGAGEMENT

1. What kinds of community involvement programs do members of the collaborative currently have in place? How is success defined? Are members of the collaborative satisfied with their success?
2. Do community members understand that their role in helping to *reclaim* young people is essential for success? How do they demonstrate this understanding?
3. Do local agencies (juvenile justice, treatment, and others) welcome community involvement and active participation in both individual cases and in larger program activities such as reforms or development? (Note: This may include a fundraising role). If so, how can we build upon this? If not, how can we encourage this change?

DATA AND EVALUATION

1. What are we most satisfied with in our ability to manage information in our current system? How did we accomplish this?
2. Does the way we currently track young people throughout our system give us an accurate picture of their process and, ultimately, of their outcomes (including when they become engaged in meaningful community activities)? Who sees this progress? Who receives regular briefings about it? Are we willing to expand the pool of people who participate and are regularly briefed about this?
3. Have data management specialists been included in the development of our leadership team as early as possible? Do they welcome the types of data system reforms, shifts, and modifications that Reclaiming Futures might introduce into our system?

SCREENING AND ASSESSMENT

1. Are we satisfied with the descriptive information we currently have regarding the behavioral health needs of young people in the justice system?
2. Do we share an understanding and philosophy (across programs and parts of the system) about the importance and need for standardized, evidence-based screening? For comprehensive assessment? Are we familiar with our available options?
3. Who is most likely to support the idea of improving the quality of screening and assessment? Are they fully engaged in the planning process?

SERVICE COORDINATION

1. In conducting comprehensive case coordination among our juvenile offender population, what are we doing well?
2. Are the multiple partners and sectors typically involved in a youth's case adequately familiar with individual treatment plans, and do they have meaningful input and feedback loops regarding those plans?
3. Are we satisfied that documentation we utilize accurately captures the potential breadth of a youth's activities? Are we satisfied that this information is accurately included in each youth's data profile?

INVITATION, ENGAGEMENT, AND TRANSITION

1. When was the last time that members of the leadership team did a walk-through exercise to observe how young people and their families experience the juvenile justice and treatment systems? What did the experience teach your team?
2. Are we conscious of information that can illuminate whether any groups are faring better or worse in initiation, engagement, and transition from services? What are the implications of carefully addressing any success gaps?
3. Are we satisfied with our understanding of the importance of balancing a need for treatment activities with positive youth development activities? Do we believe each component is valued in the initiation, engagement, and transition process by all involved? If not valued everywhere, where is it valued?

BROADENING COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

1. What has been our most successful effort to communicate with decision-makers and the general public about the work that is done in our systems on behalf of young people, their families, and the community?
2. Are we satisfied with the degree to which our past communications efforts have invited community participation?
3. What messages are most important to communicate regarding the need for improved responses, care, and opportunity for young people in trouble with alcohol, drugs, and the law?

SUSTAINING AND EXPANDING THE EFFORT

1. What have been our biggest successes in sustaining the changes we've made? What have we learned about sustaining change?
2. Are we satisfied with the degree to which all core team members share a common vision, goals, and skill set for beginning new endeavors with a need to think about sustainability from the onset?
3. Do we have ideas about the department-level, agency-level, county-level, state-level, or federal-level issues that might affect our efforts to incorporate the Reclaiming Futures model for maximum sustainability?



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Reclaiming Futures is a new approach to helping teenagers caught in the cycle of drugs, alcohol and crime. A national program founded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Reclaiming Futures is housed in the Regional Research Institute School of Social Work at Portland State University.

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Portland State University serves as a center of opportunity for over 28,000 undergraduate and graduate students. Located in Portland, Oregon, one of the nation's most livable cities, the University's innovative approach to education combines academic rigor in the classroom with field-based experiences through internships and classroom projects with community partners. The University's 49-acre downtown campus exhibits Portland State's commitment to sustainability with five LEED certified buildings, while many of the 213 bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees incorporate sustainability into the curriculum. PSU's motto, "Let Knowledge Serve the City," inspires the teaching and research of an accomplished faculty whose work and students span the globe.

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