

SAMHSA Youth in Transition Project
Rutland Regional Plan

Regional Vision: The Rutland Regional YIT Project will enable youth in transition to have a solid path, and the skills, resources and community connections necessary to follow that path, to an independent, healthful and productive adulthood. The YIT Project will provide a coordinated network of programs and services that provide a single point of entry with synchronized and efficient follow-up and ongoing support for youth identified as in transition.

Services Already in Place: Rutland County has an array of resources and services that can be accessed as a part of this Project. Members of over thirty (30) agencies met to discuss the project and the services that they represent to identify areas that are either under-serving this population or lacking altogether. The resources and services identified as available in the Rutland region are organized by type of service below:

- Healthcare
 - Rutland Mental Health Services
 - Rutland Free Clinic (Healthshare)
 - Rutland Regional Medical Center
 - Vermont Department of Health
 - Dr. Dynasaur
 - Medicaid
 - Vermont Health Access Plan (VHAP)
 - Women, Infants and Children (WIC)
 - Spring Lake Ranch (mental health and substance abuse treatment)
 - Substance Abuse
 - Turning Point Club of Rutland
 - Evergreen Substance Abuse Services
 - Family Planning
 - Planned Parenthood of Northern New England, Rutland Health Center
 - CareNet Pregnancy Center
- Education and Training
 - Community High School of Vermont (Department of Corrections)
 - Vermont Adult Learning
 - Smokey House (youth work program)
 - Boys & Girls Club of Rutland County
 - Rutland County Supervisory Unions
 - Brandon Commons School
 - Sheldon Academy (Vermont Achievement Center)
 - STEPS program, College of St. Joseph
 - Community College of Vermont
 - Vermont State Colleges
- Employment
 - JOBS (Jump on Board for Success) program
 - Vermont Department of Labor
 - VABIR (Vermont Association of Business, Industry and Recreation)
 - YES Program (Youth Employment Service)

- Vocational Rehabilitation Vermont
- Rutland Region Workforce Investment Board
- Housing
 - Rutland Housing Authority
 - VCRHYP Rutland (Vermont Coalition of Runaway & Homeless Youth Programs)
 - The Open Door Mission (homeless shelter)
 - BROC (Bennington-Rutland Opportunity Council)
- Connectedness with Responsible Adults
 - Boys & Girls Club of Rutland County
 - Easter Seals Parenting Education Program
 - JOBS
 - Rutland County Parent-Child Center
 - Salvation Army
- Below is a list of organizations that offer individualized service planning and coordinated services across the categories listed above.
 - Rutland Mental Health Services
 - JOBS (Jump On Board for Success)
 - Easter Seals Parenting Education Program
 - Eckerd Youth Child and Family Support Services
 - Peer Navigation (resource for families who living with disabilities)
 - Community Justice Center Drug Court
 - BROC (assists low-income Vermonters with basic needs)
 - Department of Children and Families: Reach Up

Statement of Unmet Needs: A facilitated conference of professionals and youth (considered to have recently been “in transition”) met to determine the most pressing “unmet needs” for youth in transition in the Rutland region, especially those out of school and/or with substance abuse and mental health challenges. In addition, data was compiled and analyzed and surveys were completed by teens in both the Boys & Girls Club and the Eckerd Youth Alternatives (EYA) Youth Development Committee. Three main gaps were identified as priorities.

- Lack of outreach in places where youth in transition gather (“street” outreach).
- Lack of case management across systems and services and a concomitant deficiency in consistent, caring relationships across systems and services.
- Lack of an independent center, e.g., a “Life Skills Center,” where the youth can access case management, appropriate services (i.e., housing, education, healthcare, employment), skills learning opportunities, and committed consistent relationships with responsible peers and adults. Need was expressed for such a facility to be youth-centered, comfortable and “neutral” (not stigmatized), as well as easily accessible.

Project Progress Years One through Five: To support the overall outcome of Youth in Transition having a base of supportive, interconnected resources, the Youth in Transition Project has a clear outline of progress from Years One through Five. The Project will use Year One as an opportunity to build credibility, resources and collaborative relationships. The emphasis will be on engaging youth in a positive, attractive environment that creates a comfort level so that the Project will become a gathering place that provides safety, healthy choices and coordinated services. In the following years, once the youth have become attached to the Life Skills Center,

the emphasis will be on increasing their outreach to programs and services, increasing the programs and services available, leveraging and actively seeking financial stability, and on continuing to act as a proactive “net” for the youth in the Rutland area who may otherwise fall through the cracks.

Desired Outcomes and Possible Indicators – Year One: In Year One of the Project the major outcomes will be to engage Youth in Transition, attract them to the Life Skills Center and establish caring relationships between the youth and an adult. With the support and cooperation of all of the mental health service providers in the community, a special effort will be made to identify and attract the Youth in Transition with serious emotional disturbances and ensure their referral to and continuing care with the most appropriate services. Year One will establish baselines in terms of the number of youth connected to the Life Skills Center, referred to and involved in the services available through the center, and participating in Center activities on a regular basis.

- Year One Outcome One – Improve outreach to youth in transition.
 - Indicators:
 - The number of youth identified as “youth in transition”
 - The number of identified youth accessing the Life Skills Center
 - Progress Measures:
 - Documentation of youth identified by outreach workers as “youth in transition”
 - Logs of visits by identified youth

- Year One Outcome Two – Increased access to coordinated care and caring relationships
 - Indicators:
 - The number of youth participating in Life Skills Center programming
 - The number of youth reporting connections to caring adults and peers
 - The number of youth with serious emotional disturbance connected or reconnected to mental health services
 - Progress Measures:
 - Registrations and “check-in” lists for Life Skills Center programs, agencies and services.
 - Self-report by identified youth and Life Skills Center staff and volunteers

- Year One Outcome Three – Youth in transition will identify and access community resources
 - Indicators:
 - The number of visits by identified youth to housing/shelter agencies
 - The number of visits by identified youth to health agencies and services
 - The number of visits to substance abuse agencies and services
 - The number of referrals made by street outreach professionals
 - Progress measures
 - Documentation of number of YIT referrals to other services tracked by outreach team professionals
 - Access to health care will be documented by Rutland Free Clinic in VCCU (Vermont Coalition of Clinics for Uninsured) database

- Year One Outcome Four – Youth in transition will have case management services administered by caring adults
 - Indicators:
 - Youth in transition can identify available services and programs and how to access them
 - Youth in transition meet regularly with caring adult(s) to review progress in accessing programs and services
 - Life Skills Center will keep central, confidential records and file for each youth in transition
 - Progress Measures:
 - Formal and informal surveys of youth “on the street” and in the Life Skills Center
 - Meeting logs
 - Number of files and completeness of information in them.
- Year One Outcome Five – Collaboration with the “Youth Development Committee” (YDC), in cooperation with Eckerd Youth Alternatives (EYA), for guidance in effective project implementation
 - Indicators:
 - Collaboration with a youth-led committee to assist the Life Skills Center and the Street Outreach team in engaging and retaining Youth in Transition participants
 - Plans for effective project growth and increased impact and evolve over the life of the Project
 - Changes to Life Skills Center programming and outreach methods in response to the EYA-YDC involvement in and input into the Project
 - Progress Measures:
 - Schedule of quarterly meetings with the Eckerd Youth Alternatives Youth Development Committee (EYA-YDC)
 - Recommendations for improving outreach, increasing participation and retaining youth in transition in the Life Skills Center programming
 - Responses of youth in transition to the Life Skills Center and Street Outreach Team as evidenced by the results of informal surveys, self-report surveys and information given on intake forms
 - Information in reports generated by the Project on the involvement of the EYA-YDC in Project planning and its impact on Project effectiveness

Desired Outcomes and Possible Indicators – Years Two Through Five One: In Years Two through Five the Project will focus on increasing the number of Youth in Transition enrolled in the Project, increasing their engagement in planning outcomes, accessing programs and services, and monitoring the ongoing commitment to the goals and objectives the participating youth have established. The progress measures outlined below are relative to the baselines established in Year One, so that percentages in Year One are “0” and increases in Years Two through Five are measured against the absolute numbers from the first project period. The Project will use the tracking system employed by JOBS as a template (see Appendix A) for assessing Youth in Transition progress.

- Years Two through Five Outcome One – The Youth in Transition Project, in collaboration with the Youth Development Committee, will plan and implement programs and services to additional youths each year.
 - Indicators:
 - Outreach workers will link with additional youth (new cases) each year
 - The Life Skills Center will serve additional youth each year
 - Additional youth will participate in programs and services available through the Life Skills Center
 - Additional agencies will provide programs and services through the Life Skills Center
 - Progress Measures:
 - Documentation of contact with youth new to the Youth in Transition project
 - Number of case files maintained by the Life Skills Center
 - Log of referrals to partner agencies
 - Documentation of agencies and services with agreements to partner with the Life Skills Center

- Years Two through Five Outcome Two – Youth participating in the Life Skills Center will increase their access to health care services, including mental health care, substance abuse prevention and treatment services, and treatment for co-occurring mental health and substance abuse problems.
 - Indicators:
 - Partner Rutland Free Clinic reports a 15% increase in the number of youth in transition accessing their services, compared to the first year of the project, by the end of Year Two.
 - By the end of Year Two of the Project, 10% of the youth in transition who have been contacted by the outreach team will be linked to a regular physician. An additional 10% will make such a link each year of the Project.
 - Partner Rutland Mental Health reports a 15% increase in the number of youth in transition receiving regular mental health treatment by the end of Year Two, with an 10% increase in Years Three through Five.
 - Partner Evergreen Substance Abuse Services reports a 15% increase in the number of youth in transition receiving ongoing substance abuse treatment by the end of Year Two, with a 10% increase in Years Three through Five
 - By the end of Year Two, 20% of program participants eligible for health care coverage programs have signed up for or been accepted into a program. An additional 10% of eligible youths will enroll in each of Years Three through Five.
 - Progress Measures:
 - Referral logs, file reviews, self-report and Partner Agency reports.

- Years Two through Five Outcome Three – Youth in transition will access secondary and post-secondary education and training, and those already enrolled in such education and training will complete or continue their programs.
 - Indicators:

- Partners Community High School (DCF) and Vermont Adult Learning report an increase in participants accessing services through the Life Skills Center. In years two through five, there is a 10% increase in the number of youth in transition enrolling in these programs.
 - Of the youth in transition determined to benefit most from alternative education placements, 5% will enroll in Vermont Adult Learning, Community High School, and Smokey House in Year two, with 10% increases in Years Three through Five.
 - Of the youth in transition identified as eligible and appropriate to enroll in Partners Community College of Vermont and College of St. Joseph (STEPS) 10% will access these programs, with 10% increases in Years Three through Five.
 - There will be a 10% increase over Year One in the number of youth in transition earning a GED, a high school diploma, or other certificate or documentation of enrollment or completion, with an additional 5% earning a GED, high school diploma or completion document in each of Years Three through Five.
 - Progress Measures:
 - Documentation of enrollment
 - Self-report
 - Progress reports, portfolios and other evidence of completed work
 - Graduation and program completion certificates
- Years Two through Five Outcome Four – Youth in transition participating in the Life Skills Center will learn employment skills, explore careers and obtain and maintain gainful employment.
 - Indicators
 - In Year Two, there will be a 20% increase over Year One in the number of eligible youth participating in the Life Skills Center referred to the Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL) and Vocational Rehabilitation Vermont (Voc Rehab) for jobs skills training and job placement. Partners VDOL and Voc Rehab report an increases of 10% each year in Years Three through Five in the number of eligible youth in transition accessing VDOL and Voc Rehab services through the Life Skills Center.
 - The percentage of eligible youth in transition who sign up for or are accepted in the VDOL and Voc Rehab programs for which they are eligible increases by 10% each year in years Two through Five.
 - In each year of Years Two through Five there will be a 10% increase in the number of youth in transition referred to the JOBS program, BROCC employment training, or the Rutland Region Workforce Investment Board
 - Progress Measures
 - Referral logs for employment services and reports from VDOL and Voc Rehab
 - Referral logs for other all other employment and training programs and reports from the agencies that offer them.

- Self-report from youth in transition participants, other evidence (including pay stubs) that participants are employed or actively seeking employment
 - Reports from employers that youth have maintained employment for at least 90 days.
- Years Two through Five Outcome Five – Youth in transition will access assistance for emergency shelter and gain more permanent, stable housing
 - Indicators
 - In each year of Years Two through Five there will be a 10% increase in the number of youth in transition who access shelter and housing assistance, and a 10% increase in the number of youth in stable housing situations.
 - Housing collaboration partner VCRHYP Rutland (Vermont Coalition of Runaway & Homeless Youth Programs) will report a 10% increase in youth accessing their services
 - Progress Measures
 - Referral logs for shelter and housing services
 - Self-report
 - Documentation of stable housing (e.g., rental agreements)
 - Referrals logs for VCRHYP Rutland

PRIORITY SERVICES/STRATEGIES

This project will create a proactive outreach program that will utilize multiple strategies to identify, engage and connect with the target population. The project will create a Street Outreach Team (consisting of two professionals and one trained youth outreach worker- See appendix B for job description) that will focus on the areas, organizations and outlets where the target population naturally gathers, in order to engage and relate to the targeted youth. Once a relationship is formed, the targeted youth will be invited to the Life Skills Center, a youth-centered activity center with food, multiple activities, services and opportunities to form positive peer relationships. The involvement of a peer-aged outreach worker is critical in attracting and engaging youth in transition by providing a “bridge” from the street to the Center, in providing a positive and relevant role-model, and in the creation of a “success story” where a youth in transition is employed and on their own path to becoming a productive member of society. In addition, each targeted youth will be encouraged to form relationships with the caring adults that are a part of the project as well as other trained peer mentors.

The Life Skills Center is staffed by the Street Outreach Team who will bring the youth into the Center and work with them to develop short and long term goals and objectives to support them in securing a path to a stable and productive adulthood, and map out and document strategies to achieve them. A special emphasis will be placed on those youth with serious emotional disturbance, and on out of school youth. The Street Outreach Team members will work in collaboration with Rutland Mental Health and the other mental health providers in the community to identify youth with serious emotional disturbance and provide ongoing case management and follow-up to assist the youth in committing to and following a treatment plan. To achieve this, the Center will work closely with the area service providers and community

resources that are partners with the project through Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs - see Appendix C for a complete list of Project Partners and copies of the MOUs). Ongoing collaboration and consistent communication with community partners through the LIT will facilitate referrals to educational and job training resources for out of school youth, referrals to Medicaid and other health insurance programs for eligible youth, housing and shelter programs for youth without stable housing, and employment services for youth able to seek and sustain employment.

The Life Skills Center staff will work with the Partners and with all of the agencies, programs and services in the community to identify appropriate training and educational opportunities for the staff and volunteers of the Center. Each individual working with the Youth in Transition Project will have a professional improvement plan that identifies knowledge and experience strengths that can be shared, and areas for improvement. This template will be developed by the street outreach team in collaboration with partner agencies. The Executive Director will ensure that all appropriate and relevant learning opportunities are made available to staff and volunteers, and review the professional improvement plans on an annual basis to make sure that the staff and volunteers of the Center are optimally skilled and up to date. The Life Skills Center will operate out of the Boys & Girls Club of Rutland County and the Rutland Free Health Clinic, with oversight by the Boys & Girls Club of Rutland County Executive Director, Larry Bayle.

The Boys & Girls Club, in collaboration with the EYA-Youth Development Committee, the Rutland Regional Partnership for Families (RRPFS) and the Local Interagency Team (LIT) will utilize and build upon the relationships the member agencies and organizations have with the greater Rutland community to build capacity for the program and further engage and leverage community resources. In addition, as “neutral” (non-stigmatized), culturally competent community organizations, the Boys & Girls Club and Rutland Free Clinic, in collaboration with the EYA-YDC and the RRPFS and the LIT team, will be able to regularly invite in the family and other important relationships of these youth to provide further support in remaining committed to their plan and achieving their goals and objectives.

The Project will work with the Project Partners to:

- Monitor the access of the targeted youth to the Partners’ programs and services and document each youth’s progress in utilizing the Partners’ programs and services to maximize commitment and benefit
- Identify strategies to engage the families and important relationships of the targeted youth to ensure that the youth and their supportive relationships are comfortable and able to contribute to the youth’s plan
- Develop mutually feasible data collection systems to capture all relevant data and comply with the requirements of the NOMS data collection
- Coordinate with the Partners’ existing communication vehicles to educate the public on the programs and services of the Center, the Outreach Team and the Partner organizations, with emphasis on working with the judicial community including the Drug Court and Diversion program, to inform the community about the Project. The Project along with their Partners will utilize existing relationships with the regional media to ensure that positive articles about the Club, the Clinic and the Partners’ programs and services are publicized.

- Identify educational and training opportunities relevant to staff and volunteers of the Life Skills Center, Outreach Team and of the Partners' organizations and document access to and completion of the educational and training opportunities.

The Youth in Transition Project will establish and, over the five year period, expand relationships with the partner organizations. Rutland Mental Health will work with the YIT Project to provide mental and behavioral health services to participants in the project, and work with Rutland Mental Health to ensure that the Project maximizes available funding (i.e., through Medicaid and other funding sources) to sustain these services. Evergreen and Turning Point will work with the YIT Project to engage youth with substance abuse issues in treatment and support services. The YIT Project will work with the Rutland Free Clinic to facilitate youth in receiving regular health care and track their usage. The YIT Project will coordinate with the JOBS program to provide supportive employment and case management services. Other relationships will involve the Community High School in providing lunches to attract and sustain YIT involvement. The YIT Project will also provide cooking classes (Cooking for Life), part of the Vermont Achievement Center, to educate YIT on cooking, nutrition, budgeting and shopping to encourage independence and healthy lifestyle choices.

FUNDING AND MANAGEMENT

The Boys & Girls Club of Rutland County, a 501(c) 3 organization, will be the fiduciary agent for the SAMHSA grant. Larry Bayle, the Executive Director of the Boys & Girls Club of Rutland County, will establish a SAMHSA account in Quickbooks to manage Project finances, including payroll and account administration. The Executive Director will oversee the coordination of services and referrals along with the utilization of the partner resources.

The YIT Project will be guided as it grows by the Youth Development Committee, comprised of YIT and other youth community members (Eckerd), the Rutland Regional Partnership for Family Services as an advisory group, and the LIT as the steering committee. Regularly scheduled meetings and reports will evaluate progress on the stated indicators as assessed by the progress measures, as well as summarize overall Project achievements. Meetings will include discussions of barriers to achieving Project goals and objective and strategizing ways to overcome these barriers.

The outreach workers will be supervised by the Executive Director of the Boys and Girls Club of Rutland County. The two adult outreach workers will be responsible for data collection for all aspects of the grant on a monthly basis, as well as case management, daily outreach responsibilities, and the daily running of the Life Skills Center. Supervision by Larry Bayle will include monitoring the professional improvement plan of the outreach workers and any volunteers working regularly with the Project.

The team of outreach workers and the Executive Director will give an activity report at the monthly RRPFS meetings, which includes representation from the community, family and youth participating in the Life Skills Center, and ask for feedback from the group.

The Executive Director will maintain regular communications on a monthly basis with the Local Interagency Team and provide quarterly reports to the LIT which serves as the Project steering committee.

The Youth in Transition Project, in cooperation with the Partners, the RRPFS and the LIT, will maximize and leverage all available funding resources to supplement and sustain the Project. The Executive Director and Street Outreach Team will work with the health and mental health organizations to access and coordinate Medicaid resources for those youth eligible for these resources, and to promote health insurance enrollment for eligible youth. The Executive Director and Street Outreach Team will maintain contact with all of the education, job training and workforce partners to maximize and leverage available and appropriate funding for education and training, which may include Next Generation funds, financial aid, work study programs, scholarships, etc. Regular collaboration with the members of the RRPFS and the LIT will facilitate access to resources and services beyond the scope of the project, including housing services, job training and medical services, Drug Treatment Court services and other resources to minimize the amount of YIT funds that will be needed to provide mental health and substance abuse treatment services, and to ensure the sustainability of the Rutland Region YIT Project.

Please see appendixes D (budget) and E (budget narrative).