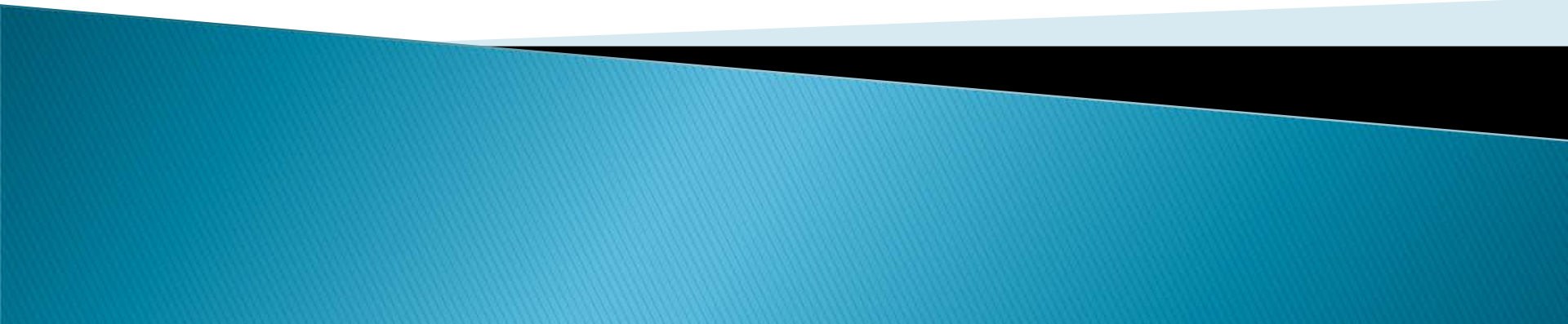


# Engaging Youth in Organizations and Systems: Small Steps to Successful Implementation



# Meet Your Presenters



Lacy Kendrick Burk, BA,  
Founder/Executive Director,  
Youth Engagement  
Solutions LLC, Consultant



Matthew Hudson,  
Consultant, Director of  
Operations, Juris  
Doctorate Candidate  
2012



Clay Finck, MEd.,  
Program  
Supervisor, National  
Resource Center for  
Youth Development



Thomas Chapmond,  
Consultant, former  
Commissioner of Texas  
Department of Family  
and Protective Services



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#youthengagement



“National Resource Center  
for Youth Development”

“Youth Engagement  
Solutions LLC”

# Overview

- ▶ Positive Youth Development / Principles of Youth Engagement
  - Individual/practice
  - Youth perspective
  - Systems/Administration
  - Organizational
- ▶ How you can increase youth involvement in your system or organization

# From a Youth's Perspective

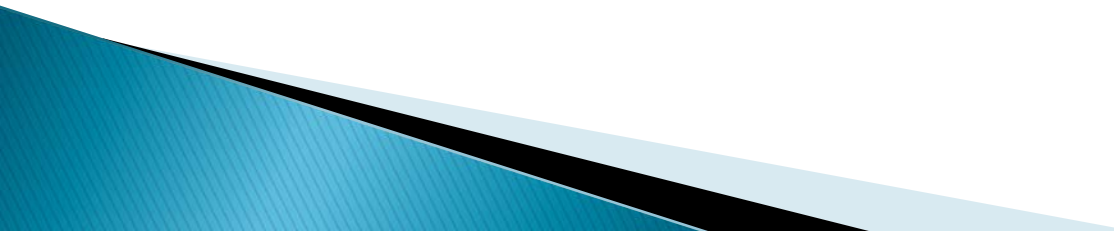
Matthew Z. Hudson

# Youth Board Work

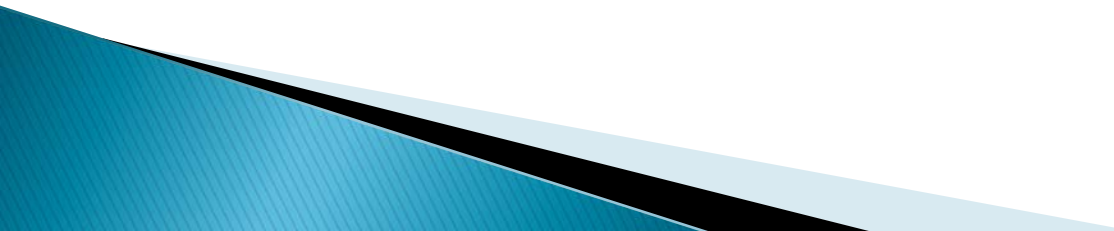
- ▶ My experience with the Kansas Youth Advisory Council
- ▶ The National Resource Center for Youth Development
- ▶ Youth Engagement Solutions LLC



# Youth Involvement

- ▶ Engaging youth
  - ▶ Utilizing their opinions at various levels
    - CFSR success
    - Maine – Sibling visits
    - Kansas – Tuition waiver
- 

# Lessons Learned

- ▶ Be better prepared to take advantage of what youth can do to improve our child welfare systems
  - ▶ “Nothing about us without us”
  - ▶ Supporting youth so they can assist (Stipends, hotels, transportation, etc)
- 



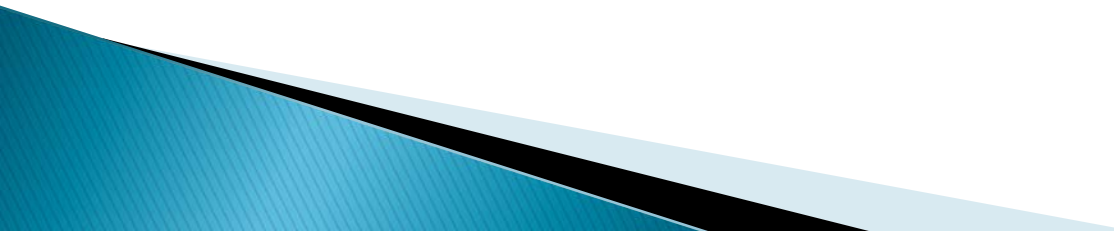
# System Level Perspective

Thomas Chapmond

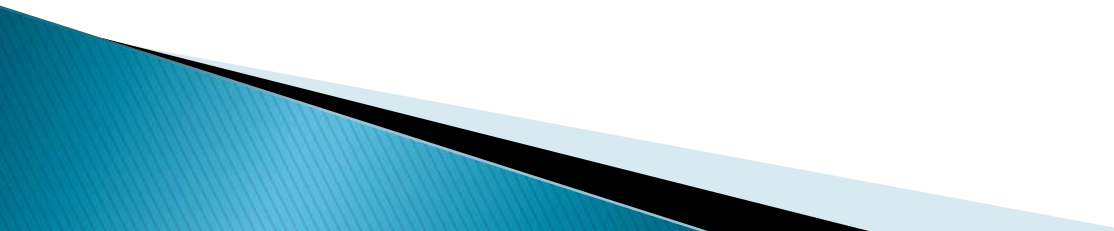
# Background

- ▶ As the first Independent Living Coordinator for Texas, I was keenly aware how valuable it was to listen to youth and involve them in policy development.

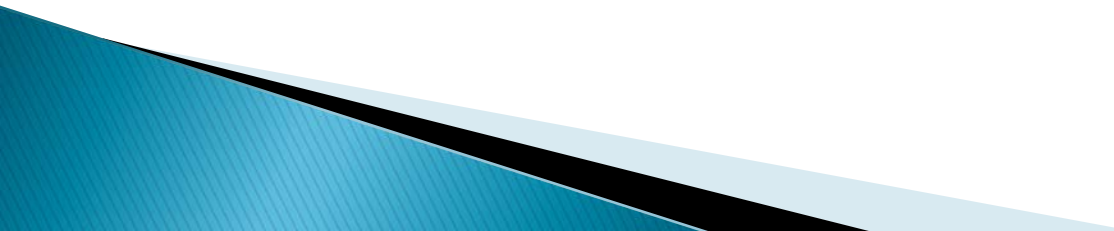
# Statewide Youth Advisory Committee

- ▶ One youth representative from each of 10 administrative regions
  - ▶ Met four times a year to develop policy recommendations
  - ▶ Presented recommendations to the agency board each year
- 

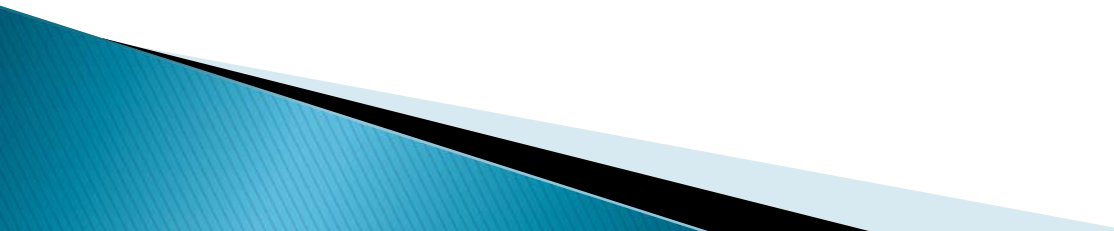
# Lessons Learned

- ▶ Smartest thing we ever did
  - ▶ Recommendations never seemed self-serving, very mature input
  - ▶ A number of recommendations made it into policy
  - ▶ Recommendations from youth seemed to have more credibility
- 

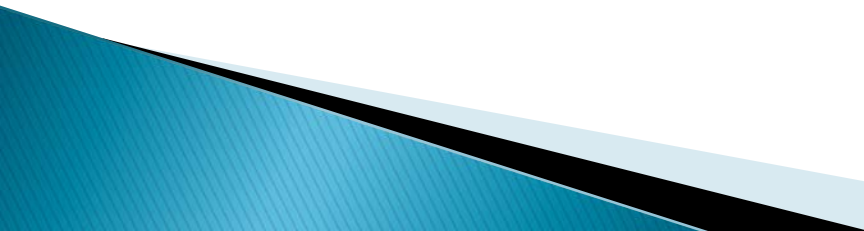
# Hired Youth Specialist in State Office

- ▶ In the early stages of the program, we hired a young woman who had just transitioned from foster care. This Youth Specialist position was established to: help with staff training, train other youth to participate in staff training, provide policy review from a youth perspective, speak at conferences, provide consultation to foster parents and residential care providers, etc.
- 

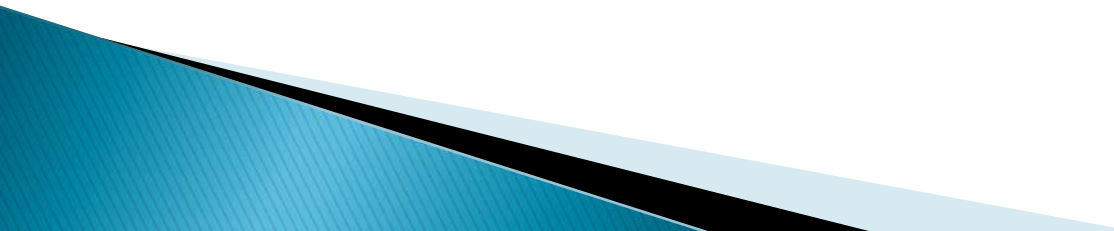
# Lessons Learned

- ▶ Staff became much more aware of issues from the youth perspective
  - ▶ Staff became much more aware of the impact of their behavior
  - ▶ Young people had an advocate in state office and they became more confident in advocating for themselves
  - ▶ The Youth Specialist became the “face” of youth in care. Before that, it seemed that everyone just talked about youth in care, but few policy makers ever interacted with a youth face to face
  - ▶ We were proud of ourselves for “walking the walk”.
- 

# Lessons Learned (cont.)

- ▶ We did not define the job well enough, it was too vague.
  - ▶ We injected a young person fresh out of care into a professional state office environment and we expected her just to fit in
  - ▶ The position was more “self-directed” than it should of been – that was unfair to her.
  - ▶ We should have time limited the position
  - ▶ We should have done a much better job of defining specific tasks
  - ▶ We should have realized that the Youth Specialist would need more supervision and support than the typical professional adult who had been working in the field for years
- 

# Recommendations

- ▶ Look for Any Opportunity to Interact with Youth When you visit local offices, arrange to have a group of youth available for you to visit with
  - ▶ Have a list of specific questions you want input on, then open the discussion for their recommendations and questions
  - ▶ Implement a practice for yourself that you take a youth to lunch regularly
  - ▶ Be a role model
- 



# Organizational Level Perspective

Clay Finck



# NRCYD

## National Resource Center for Youth Development

A service of the Children's Bureau • A member of the T/TA Network

- ▶ A Service of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Children's Bureau
- ▶ Member of the Children's Bureau's Network of T/TA providers
- ▶ Located in Tulsa, Oklahoma
- ▶ 5 year competitive award



# NRCYD

## National Resource Center for Youth Development

A service of the Children's Bureau • A member of the T/TA Network



Catherine Heath,  
Federal Project  
Officer, ACF



Peter R. Correia, III,  
MSW, NRCYS Director



Dorothy I. Ansell,  
MSW, NRCYD  
Program Director



Clay Finck,  
MSEd, Program  
Supervisor



DeNiece Johnson, BS,  
Program Coordinator



Lynne Wright, MHR,  
Trainer/Consultant

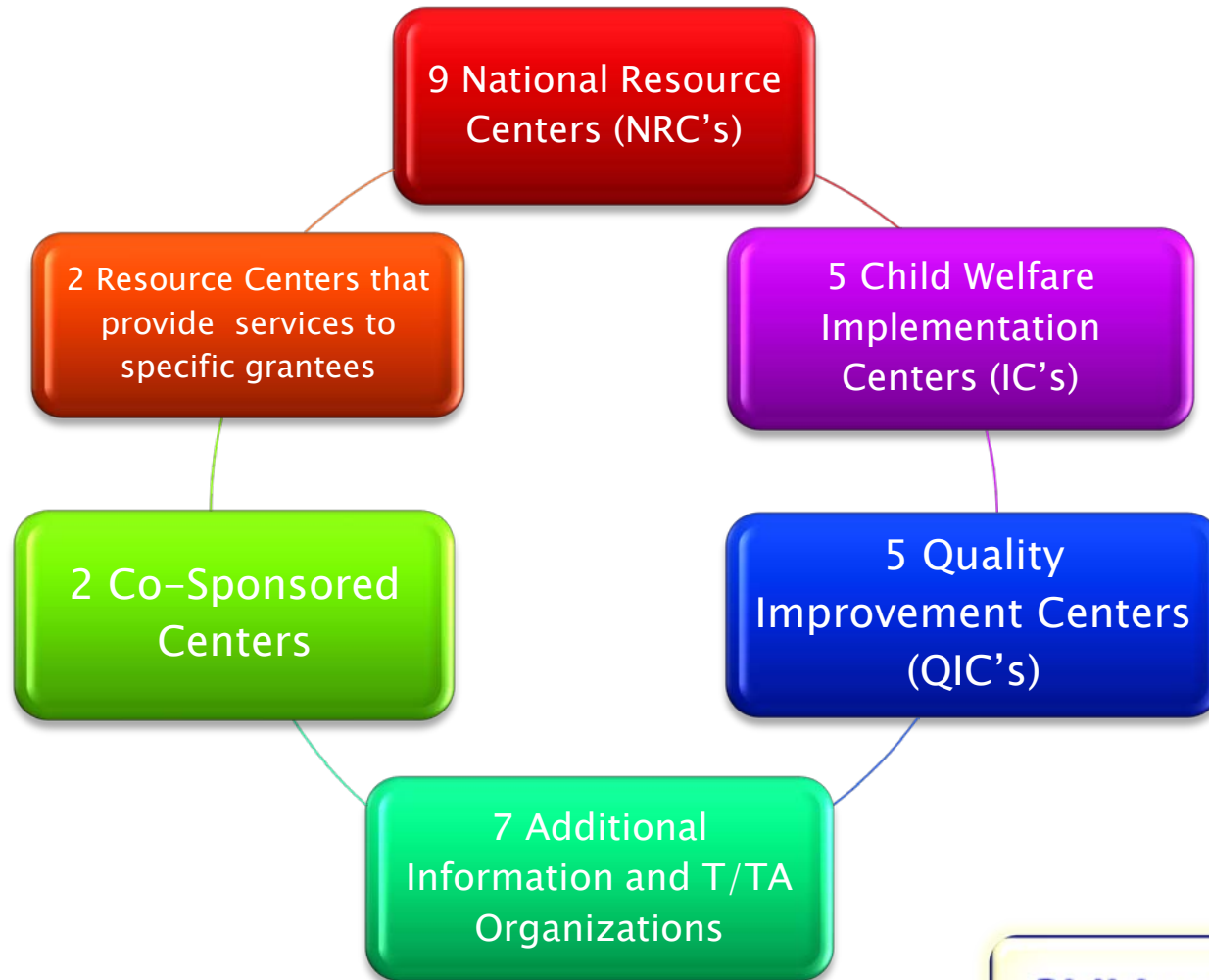


Lupe Tovar, BA,  
Trainer/Consultant



Kathy Sutter, MS,  
Program Supervisor

# Children's Bureau T/TA Network



# NRCYD Assists to Implement:



Chafee  
Program  
1999

Education  
and Training  
Voucher  
Program  
2001

Fostering  
Connections  
2008

National  
Youth in  
Transition  
Database  
2010



# NRCYD

**T/TA based  
on Four Core  
Principles:**

Permanent Connections,

Collaboration,

Cultural Competence, and

Youth Development.

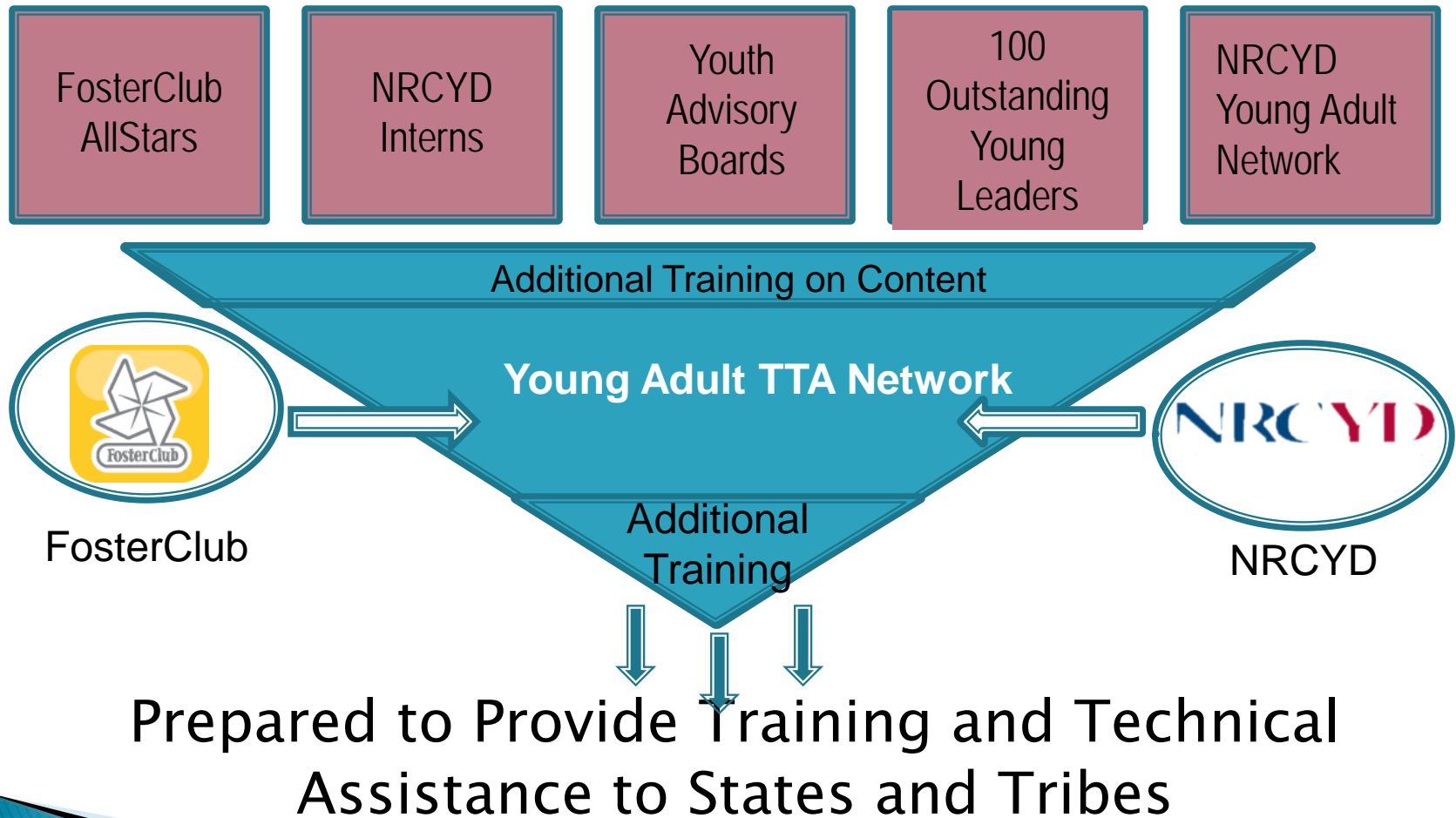
**National Resource Center  
for Youth Development**



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# Young Adult Training and Technical Assistance Network

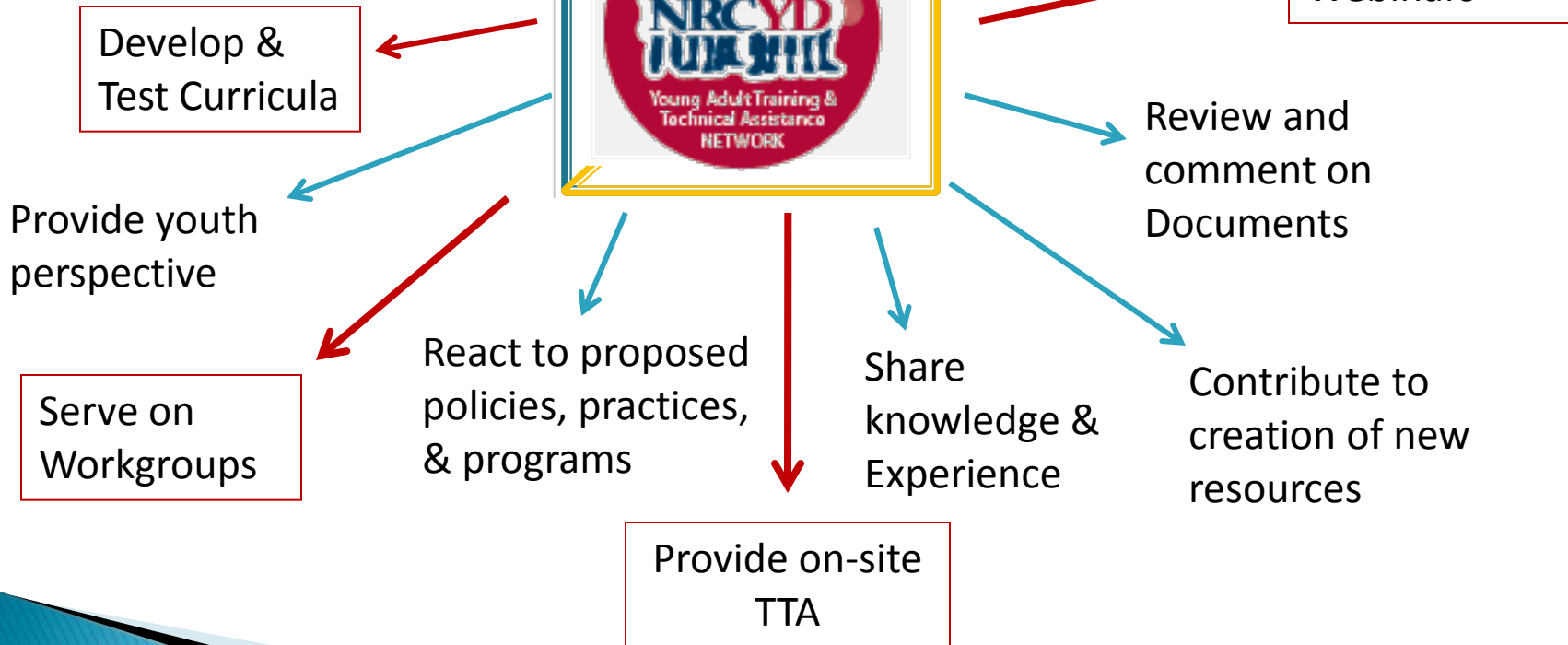
# Young Adult TTA Network





# 100-200 Young Adults (ages 16-25) with Current and Former Foster Care Experience

- Facilitated and managed by FC
  - Trained by FC and NRCYD
  - Funded by NRCYD
  - Available to the entire TTA Network
- Off-site flexible work
- On-site work, more structured time commitment & more training required

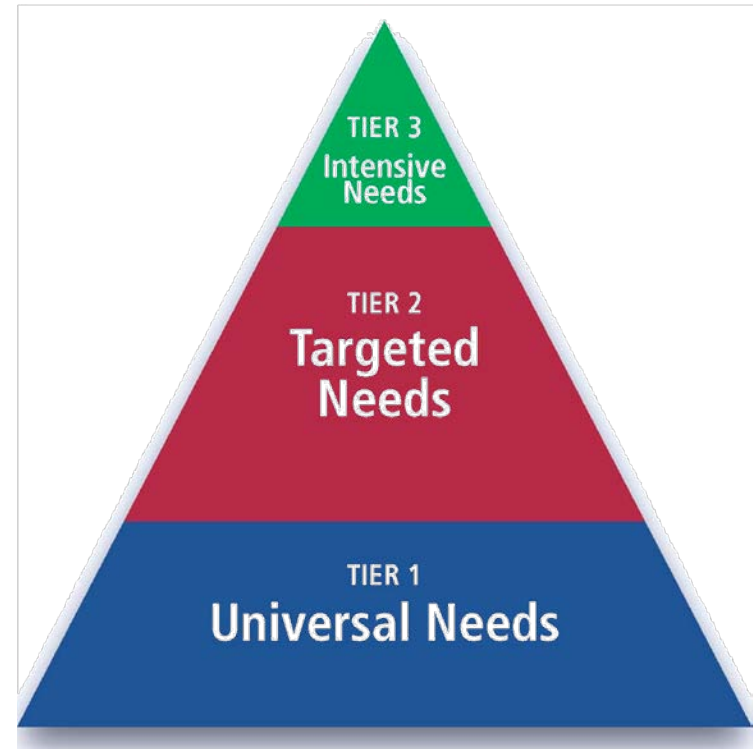


# NRCYD'S Three-Tiered Service Delivery System

Training and Technical Assistance based on your needs

Opportunities to dialogue with your peers on topics of concern to you

Information that can help you provide quality services for your youth



# Program Development

- ▶ Facilitated the older youth provisions of Fostering Connections
- ▶ Reviewed Chafee and ETV policies, programs and services,
- ▶ Recommend ways to maximize resources and improve outcomes for youth
- ▶ Facilitate stakeholder discussions and planning



# Youth/ Adult Partnership Development

- ▶ Emphasize the importance of permanency for older youth
- ▶ Create and implement positive youth development strategies
- ▶ Develop and strength youth leadership groups
- ▶ Coach youth/adult partners working on projects
- ▶ Improve life skills assessment and instruction
- ▶ Strengthen the transition planning process
- ▶ Support LGBTQ youth



# Building Capacity so that...

States, Tribes and Territories can provide high quality services to their youth.

If youth are involved, we can help.





# Incorporating Youth into NRCYD

- Consultants
- Interns
- YATTA NET
- Employees

# Lessons Learned/ Recommendations for Organizations

# Engaging Youth: Small Steps to Implementation

Lacy Kendrick Burk





# Keep in mind...

- ▶ Make sure to prep youth, both emotionally and professionally
- ▶ Provide them with info for what they are going to be there for, what the purpose of the group/meeting is, and what their role is in the process
- ▶ Provide travel stipends for transportation and food up front in a way the youth can have accessibility to funds (i.e. cash vs. check, or take them to the bank prior to the event)
- ▶ Debrief with the youth after the event, and keep an open line of communication as youth may have “aha” moments later.
  - As a youth – Lacy
  - As an adult – Clay and Thomas

# And how...

- ▶ Identify areas that are working well (incorporating youth opinions)
  - Assessment, Evaluation, Continuous Quality Improvement processes
- ▶ Identify areas where youth could be more participative
- ▶ Connect with other places/resources where systems or organizations have successfully utilized youth expertise

# Small Steps to Implementation

- ▶ Changing your workplace culture
  - Larger policies and guidelines
  - *Kaizen* – “Continuous improvement”
- ▶ What has worked for sustainable change in states
  - Thomas – Youth at planning meetings
    - In policy, but didn’t happen in practice – realistic, needed to involve others in policy change, educate youth on their right, prepare youth to attend and have support
  - Clay – NEYC
    - Stabilized, hold standing meetings with Commissioners, Involve young people in training staff
- ▶ CQI and evaluation of youth participation

# Questions?

# Contact Info



- ▶ [www.YESolutions.org](http://www.YESolutions.org)
- ▶ [info@yesolutions.org](mailto:info@yesolutions.org)

## NRCYD

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- ▶ [www.nrcyd.ou.edu](http://www.nrcyd.ou.edu)
- ▶ [Nrcyd@ou.edu](mailto:Nrcyd@ou.edu)