P/PV *Case Study*

Public/Private Ventures

How Community-Based Organizations Can Learn about the Needs and Strengths of Disconnected Young People:

Hudson Guild of New York City's Youth Survey Effort

Ben Daniels, Wendy McClanahan and Danijela Korom Djakovic

P/PV *Case Study*

Public/Private Ventures

How Community-Based Organizations Can Learn about the Needs and Strengths of Disconnected Young People:

Hudson Guild of New York City's Youth Survey Effort

Ben Daniels, Wendy McClanahan and
Danijela Korom Djakovic

October 2008

Overview

Many organizations aim to serve disconnected young people, but struggle to attract and retain them. Hudson Guild of New York City, a settlement house that provides a broad range of services to hundreds of adults, teens and children in two housing developments in Chelsea, was no exception. While Hudson Guild offered several programs and activities for young people living in the surrounding community, staff members came to realize that the youth who participated in these programs represented only a portion of the young people who could benefit from what Hudson Guild had to offer—there remained an important and significant group of young people they were not reaching. As a result of this realization, in 2007 Hudson Guild leadership set out to improve its services for disconnected young people.

Hudson Guild first turned to the disconnected youth literature but found little help from the writings of experts. While it found information about the importance of youth involvement in education, work and other relevant programs, there was little in the way of clearly articulated, proven strategies or models for how to successfully *develop and implement* programming that will attract the highest risk young people and keep them engaged. So in the autumn of 2007, Hudson Guild embarked on a study to assess the needs of youth between the ages of 16 and 24 who were residing in the community and were "disconnected"—i.e., those youth who were not in school or not working—or at risk of becoming disconnected. The goal of the effort was twofold: to locate and engage disconnected young people in the community who were not being served and to gather information that would help Hudson Guild create programs that would best meet their needs.

Hudson Guild provides a broad range of services, including childcare and early education programs, after-school programs, recreation and educational support, tenant advocacy, mental health services, nutritional services and recreational services, to residents of two housing developments in Chelsea, a neighborhood on the west side of Manhattan in New York City.

Other organizations face this same dilemma. This brief, commissioned by JobsFirst NYC, describes the process Hudson Guild employed to learn more about the young people in the community it serves, as the steps taken by Hudson Guild may help inform organizations interested in undertaking a similar venture. JobsFirst NYC funded Public/Private Ventures (P/PV) to provide Hudson Guild with research support on the project: P/PV helped oversee the survey design, provide technical assistance and document the process. In the first section, we provide a snapshot of how the project was developed and implemented. Section two uses Hudson Guild's experience to explore some of the key decisions a community-based organization must make when carrying out this type of project. The appendix includes the survey that Hudson Guild used and a companion decision-making tool that can be utilized by other organizations interested in undertaking a similar survey effort.

Development and Implementation of the Hudson Guild Survey Effort

Step One:
Gathering information from stakeholders and experts.

Hudson Guild wanted to ground its effort in established best practices in programming for disconnected youth, while maintaining relevance by engaging community members. It began the process with a series of meetings between staff and youth from the community. These meetings afforded Hudson Guild the opportunity to explain to the community what they did and why, to get feedback from target young people regarding their goals and the types of resources they felt they needed to achieve those goals, and to lay the groundwork for further connection with these youth.

Hudson Guild realized that many other individuals and organizations would have critical advice about how best to develop and conduct a survey that would gather the right information. To this end, Hudson Guild also held meetings with various experts in public policy and research, as well as members of public agencies, funders and other nonprofit organizations. These meetings provided Hudson Guild with valuable feedback on its plans from individuals who have done or are doing similar work as well as information about the target population provided by the agencies that serve it.

Step Two: *Survey design.*

Hudson Guild collaborated with P/PV to develop the data collection instrument and plan the implementation of its project. P/PV started with an extensive literature and survey review and from there developed a generic survey that would elicit information experts believed would be useful to know about disconnected young people. Then, P/PV worked with Hudson Guild to customize the survey by revising and adding questions to gather information that would measure additional constructs Hudson Guild believed were critical to informing its program development efforts. Since P/PV was involved in the project from the start, we were able to participate in the early meetings with stakeholders and experts, which provided information and perspectives critical to the revision of the survey instrument. P/PV also obtained feedback on the survey from Hudson Guild leadership and partners. After several rounds of revisions, the survey was presented to a group of young people, who reviewed it and provided feedback on both its content and individual questions. From this feedback, the survey was revised and finalized. The final survey is included in the appendix.

Step Three:
Recruiting and administration.

Hudson Guild made the decision early on to engage youth as leaders in the survey administration process (see below for a broader discussion of utilizing youth in this role). In January 2008, 45 young people, ages 16 to 24, from both the housing developments Hudson Guild serves were sent out to the field for three weeks to recruit participants from their existing social networks along with other residents of the housing projects whom they did not know. Because it was unlikely that these youth would be able to reach all target young people in the community, after three weeks Hudson Guild sent out mailers to residences that included young people in an attempt to reach everyone. Ultimately, Hudson Guild decided it would get the highest response rate if the survey was available to youth in two forms: traditional paper and pencil, which could be completed and submitted to Hudson Guild staff, and electronically, which could be completed online at a computer lab staffed by Hudson Guild in each housing development.

For more detailed information about the process Hudson Guild used and the findings of the survey, please see its forthcoming report *Unfinished Business: Reconnecting At-Risk and Disconnected Youth Living in Chelsea's Public Housing*.[1]

Key Implementation Decisions

Although the process as described above seems relatively straightforward, along its path Hudson Guild made several key decisions that had implications for the project's budget, the utility of its findings and the strength of the conclusions that could be drawn about disconnected young people.

Discussion Point One:
Using community youth to recruit respondents.

Hudson Guild's meetings and focus groups with youth identified natural leaders in the community, so it decided to invite 45 of these young people, who were the same age as the target population, to become field recruiters for the study. This group was charged with soliciting 16 to 24 year-olds living in the two housing developments to complete the survey. Out of the estimated 750 to 800 youth living in the two housing developments, 508 (about 65 percent) completed the survey. Hudson Guild estimates that without local young people leading the survey effort and recruiting respondents, the response rate would have been much lower.

Furthermore, respondents and recruiters were paid for their participation in the study. Respondents received $25 for completing the survey while recruiters received $10 for each person they referred to the study and an additional bonus of $50 after they had recruited 15 people. In all, Hudson Guild distributed roughly $26,300 to the community through this survey. By actively engaging the community throughout the project and making a sizable monetary investment in the youth it seeks to help, Hudson Guild was able to achieve an impressive survey response rate[2] and build considerable interest in the project and Hudson Guild itself.

Hudson Guild's use of youth recruiters raises important issues. While successful, Hudson Guild noted that the majority of its recruiters and respondents were between 16 and 18 years of age. Recruiters were reluctant to go

outside of their social networks and approach older youth. Future studies would do well to note the potential for recruitment bias, and if a social networking is to be employed as a recruiting strategy, the distribution of recruiters should more closely match the demographics of the recruiting population. Additionally, the staff from Hudson Guild noted another source of potential bias in its survey, namely that disconnected youth were more likely to be recruited and to take the survey. Because disconnected youth were neither working nor in school, they were more often home or in the community and had free time to complete the survey. While this worked in Hudson Guild's favor, if organizations are interested in understanding a larger population—for instance, youth who are underemployed and not unemployed—they could use techniques such as phone surveying, extended recruitment and surveying hours, survey mailings or larger survey completion incentives.

Discussion Point Two:
Surveying the entire population.

This project was ambitious in that it attempted to survey the entire target population rather than a subset of young people from the target population. Hudson Guild found itself in the somewhat unique situation of having its target population geographically limited to two nearby housing developments; this combined with the fact that Hudson Guild was interested in using the survey not just to collect information but as an outreach tool were key factors in their decision to attempt to reach all young people in the housing developments. Other community-based organizations may have more geographically diverse catchment areas or may not want to combine diverse goals, such as information gathering and outreach, and in these cases, surveying just a sample from the target population can make a great deal of sense. Indeed, given strong participant tracking and survey management processes, surveying a sample, particularly a random sample, is likely to achieve results similar, if not identical, to those that would be achieved

if the entire population were surveyed. However, sampling can be deceiving—what it can potentially save in participant recruitment and survey incentive costs can be eaten up by identifying a sample and making sure that as many sample members as possible complete the survey.

Discussion Point Three:
Method of administration.

Hudson Guild administered the survey via two formats—a paper-based form and an online survey that could be accessed at computer labs Hudson Guild maintains in each housing development. Most respondents took the paper survey, though Hudson Guild encouraged participants to use the computer labs. Use of computer-administered surveys reduces the amount of time spent entering data later on and can save resources in the long term. Furthermore, in the project report, Hudson Guild notes that many surveys had contradictory answers, such as a respondent answering that he or she[3] was not currently working yet also reporting income from a part-time job. This issue can be resolved through computer-assisted administration, which can present questions to the respondent based on his previous answers. For instance, only a person who says he has a job would be asked about his current income from that position. Adding fields to the survey—for dates surrounding events such as employment or incarceration, for instance—could also provide clarity around contradictory answers and possibly permit stronger conclusions to be drawn from the data. The drawback of computer-assisted surveying is that a potential respondent must have access to a computer to complete the survey. This can be especially problematic for low-income populations. The solution is to provide access to computers for respondents without access, as Hudson Guild did; however, this means that potential respondents must actually go somewhere to complete the survey, which presents an additional barrier.

An alternative method is to have the survey administered by an interviewer. Any contradictory events reported or nonresponses could be picked up and clarified by the interviewer as the survey is being administered. This option is the most costly, but would also likely return the most accurate and interpretable data.

Discussion Point Four:
Respondent tracking.

Hudson Guild opted to make its surveys anonymous. In fact, it went to lengths to ensure that no names appeared on any survey. Furthermore, it employed an informal tracking system—identifying respondents on sight and disqualifying paper surveys where the handwriting appeared similar. In the end, this system was not tight enough to ensure that respondents completed only one survey—a necessity to produce generalizable information. Other organizations may want to consider implementing a more rigorous and elaborate respondent tracking system. For instance, partial anonymity[4] can be maintained through the use of a numerical or other arbitrary code-tracking system that could link unique identifying information, such as name and/or date of birth, with a numerical code printed on the survey. Once surveying is complete, the list of identifying information can be destroyed. Additionally, other strategies short of a coding system can help to bolster tracking, including maintaining a log of respondents' names and verifying them by checking identification or recording names for money-order incentives. Tracking is also critically important when using a sampling strategy.

Discussion Point Five: *Cost*.

Employing a survey strategy to learn more about disconnected youth is a resource-intensive undertaking. Hudson Guild received a substantial amount of private foundation funding to complete this project. As noted above, it distributed more than $26,000 solely to members of the community who participated in the project. The costs of designing a comprehensive survey, creating databases for the computer labs, entering the data into the computer for the paper surveys and analyzing the data are not low. Hudson Guild believes that nonprofit organizations need to "set the bar higher" when budgeting and planning projects; however, the fact remains that such funding may not always be available for surveying and program development projects. In those cases, several of the options discussed earlier could reduce costs. Sampling a population, instead of attempting to survey everyone, may reduce costs without sacrificing statistical validity. Organizations could also offer lower incentives, use only computer-assisted surveying or use a preexisting survey instrument, such as the one developed by P/PV and Hudson Guild, as a starting point.

Conclusion

The Hudson Guild survey project suggests a number of strategies for future community research projects. Its neighborhood approach is based on the assumption that while organizations would do well to know the literature around disconnected youth, this knowledge should be reinforced with an understanding of the characteristics of the local community, including the youth themselves. Whether or not this project results in a successful program remains to be seen (POWER-UP, the program developed for disconnected youth based on the results of the survey, will be implemented in January 2009). What is known is that Hudson Guild's approach has provided a wealth of information about disconnected youth in Chelsea, and by involving young people in the survey's creation and administration and infusing money into the community, Hudson Guild has generated a considerable amount of excitement about its programming. Finally, with this effort, Hudson Guild successfully reached young people it had not been in contact with before.

Much more needs to be known about strong programs for disconnected youth. We know that education, skills training and employment, along with many other services, are essential for this population, but much less is known about the strengths and interests of disconnected young people. Strong programs seek to utilize youth strengths and interests in order to attract them, hone their existing skills and keep them engaged. Given the diversity in this population, programs seeking to better serve disconnected young people should consider Hudson Guild's approach. Furthermore, programs should place equal focus on evaluating and monitoring their programs once they are developed. Youth are key to the success of our nation; reclaiming the disconnected among them will improve their economic outlook, the quality of life in our communities and the economic viability of our towns and cities.

Endnotes

1   www.hudsonguild.com

2   Although some researchers may argue that a 65-percent response rate is not "impressive," we believe that it is high given the fact that a nonresearch organization was implementing the study and that the population it was trying to reach is particularly hard to engage.

3   The remainder of this document will use "he" or "their" to refer to the entire population, even though in reality it consists of males and females.

4   This system would result in partial, not complete, anonymity. If a person found a survey and picked it up, he would not know who responded. However, researchers, or anyone else with access to the list of identification numbers and unique personal identifiers, would be able to link a survey with a particular individual.

Appendix A
Hudson Guild Disconnected Youth Survey

Youth Survey

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this survey. We are doing this survey to learn more about youth in our neighborhood and to have information that will help us create programs for youth.

The survey asks your opinions about a number of things in life, such as your family, friends, daily activities, education, work and legal background. It will take about 30 minutes to fill out the survey. **Your answers to these questions will be anonymous. We will not ask you to write your name or any other information that may identify you.**

This survey is completely voluntary. You may skip any questions you don't want to answer.

This is not a test. There are no right or wrong answers.

Be sure to read the instructions before you mark any answers.

1. **How old are you?** _____ years

2. **Do you live in either Fulton Houses or Elliott-Chelsea Houses?**
   ☐ 1 Yes, Fulton
   ☐ 2 Yes, Elliott-Chelsea
   ☐ 3 No

If you are 16 to 24 years old AND live in either Fulton or Elliott-Chelsea Houses, please fill out the rest of the survey. If you are NOT 16 to 24 years old and DON'T live in either Fulton or Elliott-Chelsea Houses, please return the survey to our staff.

These questions are about your activities.

3. **Tell us about things you do in a typical day. From the list below, check <u>UP TO FIVE</u> activities that take up most of your time on an average weekday.**
   ☐ 1 Working for pay at a full- or part-time job, or at a paid apprenticeship/internship
   ☐ 2 Working without pay, volunteering or interning
   ☐ 3 Looking for a job
   ☐ 4 Attending classes at high school, trade/vocational school, or college
   ☐ 5 Attending classes at a work readiness or GED preparation program
   ☐ 6 Doing homework
   ☐ 7 Doing organized activities in the school or community (such as sports, art, music, religious school or religious youth groups)

☐ 8 Hanging out with friends
☐ 9 Doing housework (such as cleaning, cooking, laundry)
☐ 10 Doing hobbies (such as reading, sports, art or music)
☐ 11 Caring for a child/children
☐ 12 Watching television or videos, or playing video games
☐ 13 Other, please specify _____
☐ 14 Other, please specify _____

4. **Do you participate in any of these activities? (Check "yes" or "no" for each activity. If you check off "yes", answer the other two questions)**

A) Work readiness program ☐ 1 Yes ☐ 2 No	If yes, where do you go for this activity? _____ →	How many times a week do you go there for this activity? _____
B) GED preparation ☐ 1 Yes ☐ 2 No	If yes, where do you go for this activity? _____ →	How many times a week do you go there for this activity? _____
C) College preparation ☐ 1 Yes ☐ 2 No	If yes, where do you go for this activity? _____ →	How many times a week do you go there for this activity? _____
D) ESL classes ☐ 1 Yes ☐ 2 No	If yes, where do you go for this activity? _____ →	How many times a week do you go there for this activity? _____
E) Tutoring ☐ 1 Yes ☐ 2 No	If yes, where do you go for this activity? _____ →	How many times a week do you go there for this activity? _____
F) Computer classes ☐ 1 Yes ☐ 2 No	If yes, where do you go for this activity? _____ →	How many times a week do you go there for this activity? _____
G) Arts classes ☐ 1 Yes ☐ 2 No	If yes, where do you go for this activity? _____ →	How many times a week do you go there for this activity? _____
H) Counseling services ☐ 1 Yes ☐ 2 No	If yes, where do you go for this activity? _____ →	How many times a week do you go there for this activity? _____
I) Sports/recreational activity ☐ 1 Yes ☐ 2 No	If yes, where do you go for this activity? _____ →	How many times a week do you go there for this activity? _____
J) Other, please specify _____ ☐ 1 Yes ☐ 2 No	If yes, where do you go for this activity? _____ →	How many times a week do you go there for this activity? _____
K) Other, please specify _____ ☐ 1 Yes ☐ 2 No	If yes, where do you go for this activity? _____ →	How many times a week do you go there for this activity? _____

☐ 13 I don't participate in any activities.

This question is about your opinions on success in life.

5. **People define success in lots of ways. Please show how important each item is in your personal definition of success in life. (Check only one for each item)**

	Not at all important	Somewhat important	Very important	Not sure
A) Feeling personally satisfied with what you are doing	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9
B) Having close family relationships	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9
C) Having a close group of friends	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9
D) Having an active religious or spiritual life	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9
E) Making a contribution to society	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9
F) Making a lot of money at your job	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9
G) Being famous or respected in your field	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9
H) Being attractive and popular	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9

These questions are about your family and home.

6. **How many people live in your household including yourself?** _____

7. **Who do you live with most of the time? (Check all that apply)**

☐ 1 Live alone	☐ 11 My child/children
☐ 2 My boyfriend or girlfriend	☐ 12 Brother(s) or stepbrother(s)
☐ 3 Mother	☐ 13 Sister(s) or stepsister(s)
☐ 4 Stepmother	☐ 14 Grandmother
☐ 5 Female legal guardian	☐ 15 Grandfather
☐ 6 Father	☐ 16 Aunt
☐ 7 Stepfather	☐ 17 Uncle
☐ 8 Male legal guardian	☐ 18 Cousin(s)
☐ 9 Parent's boyfriend or girlfriend	☐ 19 Someone else's child/children
☐ 10 My husband or wife	☐ 20 I live with a foster family
	☐ 21 Other, please specify _____

8. **How many adults (over 21) who live with you work at a job for pay?** _____

9. **What language is USUALLY spoken in your home? (Check only one)**
   - ☐ 1 English
   - ☐ 2 Spanish
   - ☐ 3 Other, please specify _____

10. **Do you have a legal guardian? (Check only one)**
   - ☐ 1 Yes, I have a legal guardian → ☐ A) **How is this person related to you (for example, aunt or grandmother)?** _____
   - ☐ 2 No, I don't have a legal guardian

These questions are about people who are supportive of you.

11. **Please look at the following list and decide how much each person (or group of persons) is supportive of you at this time in your life. A supportive person is one who is helpful, who will listen to you, or who will back you up when you are in trouble. (Check only one for each person or group of persons)**

	Not at all helpful	Somewhat helpful	Very helpful	There is no such person
A) Mother	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9
B) Stepmother	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9
C) Foster mother	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9
D) Father	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9
E) Stepfather	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9
F) Foster father	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9
G) Boyfriend or girlfriend	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9
H) Husband or wife	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9
I) Sister	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9
J) Brother	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9
K) Grandmother	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9
L) Grandfather	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9
M) Other relatives	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9
N) Friends	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9
O) Teacher	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9
P) Social worker	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9
Q) Other, please specify _____	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	
R) Other, please specify _____	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	
S) Other, please specify _____	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	

12. **How much do you agree or disagree with each sentence? (Check only one for each sentence)**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
A) I feel loved.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
B) I know people upon whom I can always rely.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4

> *These questions are about your plans and hopes for the future.*

13. What do you want to accomplish <u>WITHIN A YEAR</u> from now? (Check all that apply)

<u>WITHIN A YEAR</u> **from now, I want to…**
- ☐ 1   Stay in high school, trade/vocational school, or college
- ☐ 2   Finish high school, trade/vocational school, or college
- ☐ 3   Work or keep my job
- ☐ 4   Get a GED
- ☐ 5   Get a trade/vocational certificate
- ☐ 6   Get an associate's degree
- ☐ 7   Get a bachelor's degree
- ☐ 8   Get military training
- ☐ 9   Have a child/children
- ☐ 10   Get married
- ☐ 11   Don't know
- ☐ 12   Don't care
- ☐ 13   Other, please specify _____
- ☐ 14   Other, please specify _____
- ☐ 15   Other, please specify _____

14. What are the <u>THREE BIGGEST BARRIERS</u> you face to accomplishing the things you checked off in the last question? (Check up to three)
- ☐ 1   Don't face any barriers
- ☐ 2   Don't believe I can achieve what I checked off
- ☐ 3   Family responsibilities
- ☐ 4   Child-care responsibilities
- ☐ 5   Lack of money
- ☐ 6   Lack of information
- ☐ 7   Lack of support from my family
- ☐ 8   Lack of support from my friends
- ☐ 9   Lack of motivation to achieve what I checked off
- ☐ 10   Lack of job training
- ☐ 11   Lack of work experience
- ☐ 12   Low grades
- ☐ 13   Language
- ☐ 14   Discrimination (such as racial, ethnic or gender)
- ☐ 15   Don't have any goals
- ☐ 16   Don't care
- ☐ 17   Not sure
- ☐ 18   Other, please specify _____

15. Do you know what kind of job or career you would like to pursue in the future?

☐ 1 Yes → **What type of job or career?** _____

☐ 2 No

☐ 3 Not sure

16. How much help do you need with these skills or areas? (Check only one for each item)

	None	Some	A lot	Don't know
A) Basic preparation for work, work ethic, work readiness skills	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9
B) Knowing more about my career interests	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9
C) Learning about work opportunities (for example, different occupations, industries, employers)	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9
D) Looking for work (for example, résumé, interviews)	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9
E) Help with homework, tutoring	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9
F) Getting a GED	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9
G) College applications	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9
H) Life skills (for example, managing household finances)	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9
I) Basic educational skills (for example, reading, writing or math)	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9
J) Parenting skills	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9
K) Childcare	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9
L) Housing	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9
M) Mental health counseling	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9
N) Drug or alcohol counseling	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9
O) Family or individual counseling	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9
P) Personal safety	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9
Q) Getting out of a gang	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9
R) Legal services	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9
S) Other, please specify _____	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	

☐ 4 I don't need help in any skills or areas.

These questions are about your education.

17. **Are you enrolled in school <u>NOW</u>? (Check only one)**
    ☐ 1 Yes
    ☐ 2 No

18. **Are you attending school <u>NOW</u>? (Check only one)**
    ☐ 1 Yes, high school → A) What grade? _____
    ☐ 2 Yes, trade/vocational school → B) What year? _____
    ☐ 3 Yes, college → C) What year? _____
    ☐ 4 No, I graduated
    ☐ 5 No, I quit or dropped out
    ☐ 6 No, I am suspended
    ☐ 7 Other, please specify _____

19. **What is the <u>LAST GRADE or YEAR</u> of school you <u>FINISHED</u>? (Check only one)**
    ☐ 1 Grades 1-8   ☐ 5 Grade 12
    ☐ 2 Grade 9   ☐ 6 1-2 years of trade/vocational school
    ☐ 3 Grade 10   ☐ 7 1-2 years of college
    ☐ 4 Grade 11   ☐ 8 3 or more years of college

20. **Do you have any of these diplomas or degrees? (Check all that apply)**
    ☐ 1 GED
    ☐ 2 High school diploma
    ☐ 3 Trade/vocational certification
    ☐ 4 Associate's degree
    ☐ 5 Bachelor's degree
    ☐ 6 Other, please specify _____
    ☐ 7 I don't have any diplomas or degrees

21. **How many more credits do you need to complete to graduate or get your diploma/certificate? _____ credits**
    ☐ 1 I received a diploma/certificate, completed course work
    ☐ 2 Don't know or don't remember

22. **Putting them all together, what were your average grades like <u>ON YOUR LAST REPORT CARD</u>? (Check only one)**
    ☐ 1 100-91
    ☐ 2 90-81
    ☐ 3 80-71
    ☐ 4 70-65
    ☐ 5 Below 65
    ☐ 6 Don't know or don't remember

23. **Putting them all together, what were your average grades like THE LAST YEAR YOU ATTENDED SCHOOL? (Check only one)**

☐ 1 100-91

☐ 2 90-81

☐ 3 80-71

☐ 4 70-65

☐ 5 Below 65

☐ 6 Don't know or don't remember

24. **IN THE LAST YEAR YOU WERE IN SCHOOL, (approximately) how many times did you miss school? (Check only one)**

☐ 1 None

☐ 2 Less than once a month

☐ 3 Once a month

☐ 4 Two or three times a month

☐ 5 Four times a month

☐ 6 More than five times a month

25. **When was the last time you attended school? _____/_____**

                                                                                        MONTH   YEAR

☐ 1 Don't know or don't remember

26. IF YOU ARE NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL NOW, tell us why. Check UP TO THREE items that you feel are the MAIN REASONS why you are not in school.

☐ 1   Received diploma, completed course work

☐ 2   Expelled or suspended

☐ 3   Just moved here

☐ 4   Too old for school

☐ 5   Don't have time

☐ 6   Don't like school

☐ 7   Don't get along with other students

☐ 8   Child-care responsibilities

☐ 9   I have to work

☐ 10 Got pregnant

☐ 11 Got offered a job

☐ 12 Can't afford to go

☐ 13 Have a health problem

☐ 14 Just got out of a detention center, jail or prison

☐ 15 My friends had dropped out of school

☐ 16 My school was unsafe

☐ 17 Nobody cared if I went to school

☐ 18 Don't get anything out of school

☐ 19 Other, please specify _____

These questions are about your work experiences.

27. **Have you ever had a PART-TIME job, working less than 30 hours a week? (Check only one)**
    ☐ 1 Yes, one job
    ☐ 2 Yes, two or three jobs
    ☐ 3 Yes, four or more jobs
    ☐ 4 No, I never worked part time

28. **Have you ever had a FULL-TIME job, working 30 or more hours a week? (Check only one)**
    ☐ 1 Yes, one job
    ☐ 2 Yes, two or three jobs
    ☐ 3 Yes, four or more jobs
    ☐ 4 No, I never worked full time

29. **Do you <u>NOW</u> work at a job for pay? (Check only one)**
    ☐ 1 Yes, part time (less than 30 hours per week)
    ☐ 2 Yes, full time (30 or more hours per week)
    ☐ 3 Yes, occasional jobs (such as babysitting)
    ☐ 4 No, I do not work now → **SKIP to 31**
    ☐ 5 No, I never worked → **SKIP to 31**

30. **What kind of work do you do at this/these job(s)? (For example: auto mechanic, cook, construction worker)** _____

31. **How much do you agree or disagree with each sentence? (Check only one for each sentence)**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
A) I am not quite ready to handle a part-time job.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
B) I have enough skills to do a job well.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
C) I know I can succeed at work.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
D) I would take almost any kind of job to get money.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
E) I admire people who get by without working.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
F) The only good job is one that pays a lot of money.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
G) Working hard at a job will pay off in the end.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
H) Most jobs are dull and boring.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4

32. Are you male or female? (Check only one)

☐ 1 Male
☐ 2 Female

33. What is your race or ethnicity? (Check all that apply)

☐ 1 Black, not Latino ☐ 2 White, not Latino
☐ 3 Latino
☐ 4 Asian
☐ 5 American Indian or Alaskan Native
☐ 6 Other, please specify _____

34. Were you born in the United States? (Check only one)

☐ 1 Yes
☐ 2 No → In which country were you born? _____

35. How long have you lived in the United States? (Check only one)

☐ 1 I have always lived in the United States
☐ 2 4 years or less
☐ 3 More than 4 years

36. Were both of your parents born in the United States? (Check only one)

☐ 1 Yes
☐ 2 No
☐ 3 Not sure

37. What is your current relationship status? (Check only one)

☐ 1 Single
☐ 2 Living as married
☐ 3 Married
☐ 4 Divorced
☐ 5 Separated
☐ 6 Widowed

38. Do you have any children? (Check only one)

☐ 1 Yes, one child
☐ 2 Yes, two children
☐ 3 Yes, three or more children
☐ 4 No → **SKIP TO 43**

39. Do any of your children live with you?

☐ 1 Yes
☐ 2 No

40. Are you the person who takes care of your child/children most of the time?

☐ 1 Yes
☐ 2 No

41. Are any of your children currently in foster care?

☐ 1 Yes

☐ 2 No

42. How old were you when your first child was born? _____years

43. On a daily basis, do you take care of any children, for example your own brother or sister, your boyfriend's or girlfriend's children? (Check only one)

☐ 1 Yes

☐ 2 No

44. On a daily basis, do you take care of a person age 18 or older who has a physical or mental health problem that keeps him or her from doing regular activities like walking or getting dressed? (Check only one)

☐ 1 Yes

☐ 2 No

These questions are about your legal background and other areas of your life.

We are asking you this information because we want to learn about different areas of youth's lives. Having a more complete picture of the youth in our neighborhood will help us create the right programs for them.

Your answers to all questions will be anonymous. This survey is completely voluntary. You may skip any questions you don't want to answer.

45. Have you ever been arrested?

☐ 1 Yes → A) **How many times?** _____ B) **For what? (Check all that apply)**

☐ 2 No ↓

☐ 3 I prefer not to answer

☐ 1 Property crime (such as burglary, theft or auto theft)

☐ 2 Drug crime (such as drug possession, trafficking, manufacturing)

☐ 3 Violent crime (such as robbery, assault, rape, murder)

☐ 4 Misdemeanor (such as trespassing, disorderly conduct)

☐ 5 Other, please specify

_____

46. Have you ever been convicted?

☐ 1 Yes → A) **How many times?** _____   B) **For what? (Check all that apply)**

☐ 2 No   ↓

☐ 3 I prefer not to answer

☐ 1 Property crime (such as burglary, theft or auto theft)

☐ 2 Drug crime (such as drug possession, trafficking, manufacturing)

☐ 3 Violent crime (such as robbery, assault, rape, murder)

☐ 4 Misdemeanor (such as trespassing, disorderly conduct)

☐ 5 Other, please specify

_____

47. Have you ever been in prison or a youth correctional institution?

☐ 1 Yes → A) **When was the last time you were there?**

From _____/_____ to _____/_____

MONTH   YEAR   MONTH   YEAR

☐ 2 No

☐ 3 I prefer not to answer

48. Are you currently on probation or parole?

☐ 1 Yes → A) **For what? (Check all that apply)**   ☐ 1 Property crime (such as burglary, theft or auto theft)

☐ 2 No

☐ 3 I prefer not to answer

☐ 2 Drug crime (such as drug possession, trafficking, manufacturing)

☐ 3 Violent crime (such as robbery, assault, rape, murder)

☐ 4 Misdemeanor (such as trespassing, disorderly conduct)

☐ 5 Other, please specify

_____

49. During the past 12 months, did you engage in activities such as…

	(Check only one for each item)	
A) Destroying or damaging property that did not belong to you?	☐ 1 Yes	☐ 2 No
B) Shoplifting?	☐ 1 Yes	☐ 2 No
C) Stealing motor vehicles or parts from motor vehicles?	☐ 1 Yes	☐ 2 No
D) Selling stolen property?	☐ 1 Yes	☐ 2 No
E) Breaking into homes or other buildings?	☐ 1 Yes	☐ 2 No
F) Dealing, holding or manufacturing drugs?	☐ 1 Yes	☐ 2 No
G) Using drugs?	☐ 1 Yes	☐ 2 No
H) Mugging or robbing?	☐ 1 Yes	☐ 2 No
I) Any other illegal activity? If yes, please specify _____	☐ 1 Yes	☐ 2 No

☐ 3 I prefer not to answer

50. Are there gangs in your neighborhood?
- ☐ 1 Yes
- ☐ 2 No
- ☐ 3 I prefer not to answer

51. Do you have friends who are gang members?
- ☐ 1 Yes
- ☐ 2 No
- ☐ 3 I prefer not to answer

52. Are you in a gang?
- ☐ 1 Yes
- ☐ 2 No
- ☐ 3 I prefer not to answer

53. IF YOU ARE IN A GANG, how supportive are your fellow gang members at this time in your life? (People who are supportive are helpful, will listen to you, or will back you up when you are in trouble.) (Check only one)
- ☐ 1 Not at all helpful
- ☐ 2 Somewhat helpful
- ☐ 3 Very helpful
- ☐ 4 I am not in a gang
- ☐ 5 I prefer not to answer

54. How much money did you make last month before taxes were taken out? (Check only one)
- ☐ 1 Not working part time or full time
- ☐ 2 Less than $100 a month
- ☐ 3 Between $100 and $499 a month
- ☐ 4 Between $500 and $999 a month
- ☐ 5 Between $1000 and $1499 a month
- ☐ 6 Between $1500 and $1999 a month
- ☐ 7 Between $2000 and $2499 a month
- ☐ 8 Over $2500 a month
- ☐ 9 I prefer not to answer

55. If you did any "off the books" jobs last month where you were paid in cash, how much money did you make last month?
- ☐ 1 Didn't do any "off the books" jobs
- ☐ 2 Less than $100 a month
- ☐ 3 Between $100 and $499 a month
- ☐ 4 Between $500 and $999 a month
- ☐ 5 Between $1000 and $1499 a month
- ☐ 6 Between $1500 and $1999 a month
- ☐ 7 Between $2000 and $2499 a month
- ☐ 8 Over $2500 a month
- ☐ 9 I prefer not to answer

56. How much of your income last month came from some kind of illegal or criminal activity?
- ☐ 1 None
- ☐ 2 Less than half
- ☐ 3 About half
- ☐ 4 More than half
- ☐ 5 All
- ☐ 6 I prefer not to answer

THANK YOU FOR HELPING US WITH THE SURVEY!

Appendix B
Selected Pros and Cons of Survey Administration Decisions

How many people should you survey?

Option 1: Survey everyone in the target population

Pros	Cons
• If you are able to survey every person in your group of interest, the information you collect will definitely represent this group because you have surveyed *everyone.* • No need to identify a sample population, which can be tricky, because everyone is being surveyed. • Your organization will come into contact with the greatest number of youth.	• Surveying an entire population can be resource-intensive if the population is very large. • If your target population is spread across a large area, it may not be feasible from a logistical standpoint to survey every member of the population. • It is unrealistic to expect that you will be able to survey every person in your group of interest—and if you are unsuccessful you <u>may</u> have bias (e.g., the most risky of the population of interest were not surveyed so your results would not represent their opinions/behaviors).

Option 2: Survey a random sample of your target population

Pros	Cons
• Surveying a random sample from the entire population can save money and reduce the time spent administering the survey while providing actionable data that can be just as valid as that achieved by surveying an entire population.	• Identifying a representative random sample can be difficult. You need to have enough information about the target population to generate the sample (e.g., housing units where disconnected youth live). • If you are unable to get a large enough sample, the results may not be generalizable to the entire target population. • To be <u>sure</u> that your data is representative of the entire population, you need to survey everyone in your sample—which may be unrealistic (see above). • If you offer incentives for survey completion (see the next page), participants who are interested in completing the survey but were not included in the sample (and therefore not surveyed) could have negative impressions of the effort (and, perhaps, your organization).

Option 3: Survey a sample of those whom you can reach

Pros	Cons
• This is the cheapest option, as you are not surveying everyone and not concerned about maintaining representativeness. • The data will accurately describe the sample you surveyed.	• The data may not be representative of the entire population of interest. If you want to know about all disconnected youth and survey only those who come to the computer lab to complete the survey, you will have data that are representative only of youth who are willing to come to your computer lab and fill out a survey (e.g., perhaps not the most risky or those who are employed).

Should you pay respondents for their participation?

Option 1: No

Pros	Cons
• Less expensive than paying respondents.	• Respondents may be less inclined to participate if they are not compensated for their time. • If the survey takes longer than a few minutes to administer, respondents may feel as though they are being taken advantage of and they may not complete the survey or they may rush through it, not answering accurately.

Option 2: Yes

Pros	Cons
• Offering compensation for participation can increase potential respondents' interest in the survey, lead to greater success in recruiting, and, therefore, lead to a higher participation rate. • Paying respondents may build goodwill within the population of interest.	• Depending on the size of the surveyed population, paying respondents can become costly. • Paying respondents can increase the likelihood of respondents attempting to be surveyed more than once. If a strong tracking system is not in place, data will be biased.

What method should you use to administer the survey?[1]

Option 1: Self administered (paper and pencil—traditional paper survey)

Pros	Cons
• Survey administration costs are lower because no resources need to be aligned toward administering the survey beyond bringing the respondents and survey together. • Can be done anywhere at the leisure of the respondent, although this is not the best method for getting high response rates.	• The potential for contradictory or unclear answers becomes significantly greater. • If a respondent misinterprets a question and answers based on that misunderstanding, the results will not be accurate. • Costs of entering data are higher than the other two options.

Option 2: Computer-assisted administration, completion by respondent

Pros	Cons
• Computer-assisted survey programs are relatively inexpensive and easy to use. • Computer programs allow the avoidance of most contradictory or unclear answers if survey is constructed well. • If the survey is administered in a central location with staff available, staff can answer questions if the respondent has questions about the survey. • Can be done at the leisure of the respondents, although they will need access to a computer that connects to the Internet, and this is not the best method for getting high response rates.	• Respondents need to have access to a computer or be willing to travel to a location where there is access. • Some respondents may not complete the survey because they do not know how to use a computer or the Internet.

Option 3: Administration by an interviewer (paper and pencil or computer administered)

Pros	Cons
• Contradictory answers can be challenged and clarified by the interviewer, and if computer administered, contradictions can be further minimized. • Should the respondent have any questions about the survey, the interviewer can answer them and ensure accurate types of responses.	• Having interviewers on hand to administer surveys will increase the costs of project. • Depending on the number of interviewers on hand, the number of willing respondents may outnumber interviewers who are able to administer the survey. This could lead to a bottleneck of surveys or a smaller number of respondents able to be surveyed. • Respondents may feel uncomfortable revealing answers to sensitive questions to interviewers.

How will survey respondents be tracked?

Option 1: Informally/anonymous

Pros	Cons
• If respondents are screened informally and meet participation criteria, with no personal information recorded, they can complete the survey completely anonymously. • Being able to provide complete anonymity may persuade otherwise reluctant possible respondents to complete surveys.	• Without a formal tracking system in place, it will be difficult to ensure respondents are surveyed only once. • Even if you became aware of repeat responders, there would be no way to identify their surveys in order to disqualify them. • Repeat responders could bias the results of the survey and invalidate a random sample.

Option 2: Formally/partially anonymous

Pros	Cons
• Having a tracking system in place where surveys have an attached code that can be referenced to a master list with codes and respondent names or other identifying data ensures that respondents are not surveyed twice and may help strengthen the administration of a random sampling design. • Should a respondent somehow be surveyed twice, their surveys could be easily discovered and treated according to the demands of the project.	• This approach is not strictly anonymous. While the surveys themselves would not necessarily contain any identifying data aside from an arbitrary code, you and your organization would be able to learn which respondents completed each survey.

Endnotes

1   We do not discuss phone interviewing as an option
    in this document because our sense is that it may
    be unfeasible for CBOs, and given reductions in lan-
    dlines and increases in cell phone use, the utility of
    phone interviewing is decreasing.

P/PV