

Cape-wide Youth Action Plan Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Cape-wide Youth Action Plan?

The plan is a set of goals, strategies, and action steps, developed by the community, that provides a common vision and a roadmap to support youth and families on Cape Cod, and to measure progress and encourage accountability towards that vision. The plan is not focused on any one issue area, but is designed to be regional and systemic. The plan is designed to facilitate the sharing of information, strengthen the coordination of positive things happening in our community, and to track progress in moving the youth development agenda forward as a community. The overall vision for the Cape-wide Youth Action Plan is to “Create a Healthy Cape Cod for all young people.”

How are you defining “youth”?

The plan is focused on services and programs for young people ages 10-26 and their families. We understand that there are broad needs across the age spectrum, but that we need to provide a focus and a starting point, with the intention to ensure that as a community, we are building a continuum of services for all young people, from birth through adulthood, and their families.

Why and How Was the Plan Created?

In 2009, The Cape Cod Foundation released a report entitled “Understanding Cape Cod”. Following the release of “Understanding Cape Cod,” the Foundation engaged the general public as well as Foundation supporters in a series of community forums in order to gather feedback on the report and its contents. The information obtained from these forums was compiled and presented to The Cape Cod Foundation Board of Directors in January 2010. The Foundation Board, based on the feedback from the forums, adopted three primary focus areas for further civic leadership work, with the priority being ***Youth Development***. A group of community stakeholders began meeting over the course of several months to investigate and discuss the scope of youth development issues on Cape Cod. These discussions resulted in working with more than 50 community members who, over nine months, helped to create the Cape-wide Youth Action Plan.

What is The Cape Cod Foundation’s role?

As the leading organization for the development of the Cape-wide Youth Action Plan, The Cape Cod Foundation guides the vision and strategy, supporting aligned activities, building public will and mobilizing funding to advance the work of the plan. Numerous partnerships and connections have been developed that will support the plan’s implementation.

Who else is involved?

The Cape Cod Foundation has invited more than 25 partner groups to endorse the plan for the public media launch and formal implementation and will welcome any collaborative, organization, or individual to join. The idea is to create a collaborative of the partner groups to encourage cross-sector communication and partnerships, to “break down the silos”. See the list for partners to date.

How has this work been funded and how will it be sustained?

As the lead organization, The Cape Cod Foundation has contributed significant resources, mostly in the form of staff time, to the plan. The Foundation has garnered additional support from other foundations and from other donors within the Foundation to support the work. Steering Committee members have also contributed significant time, as have the more than 50 community members that helped to create the plan. The partnerships we have developed, and will continue to develop, will be essential to sustaining the plan and the implementation. The Foundation will continue to contribute staff time to the process, and will work with donors and other funders to identify resources.

What are the goals of the plan?

The plan's five goals, further broken down into strategies and action steps, are:

1. Inspire young people to define and achieve their personal success through school and community based resources that support their healthy development;
2. Increase the capacity of families and caregivers to support and guide the success of youth through family education and resources.
3. Expand opportunities for regional networking and partnerships among schools and the wider community to support success for youth, families, caregivers, and caring adults;
4. Expand recognition of the positive role that youth play as assets to the community now and for the future progress of the Cape; and
5. Increase the community's economic and financial investment in the success of young people.

What are some of the key themes in the plan?

- Increasing access to resources
- Enhancing mentoring and other programs that provide youth with positive role models
- Increasing intergenerational programs
- Increasing opportunities for youth to become more civically engaged and to expand leadership skills
- Increasing opportunities for adults to become more involved in working with and supporting youth
- Providing safe places and opportunities for young people
- Increasing opportunities for workforce development and the development of other life skills
- Enhancing the network of support systems for youth and their families
- Encouraging expanded partnerships and collaboration among those working with and on behalf of youth and their families

How will the plan be implemented?

Partners will participate in quarterly meetings. The Partner list has been developed to ensure representation from key groups/collaboratives/organizations that are working on/responsible for identified aspects of the plan. The meetings are intended to:

- Bring together groups from various disciplines to learn and share their progress with each other, and to deepen cross-discipline collaborations to further progress
- Provide updates on various aspects of the plan and to track progress
- Provide opportunities for increased partnerships and resource sharing
- Provide information on key areas identified for support and resources, areas where groups need help, financial, volunteer, shared resources, etc.
- Ensure that the plan remains a living, breathing document to which we can continually assess progress

The Cape Cod Foundation will facilitate and coordinate all meetings and will be responsible for updating the plan to reflect activities and benchmarks reached. Data and indicators will be reviewed on an annual basis to see if we are "moving the needle" as a community.

How will we monitor progress?

The Action Plan recommendations section includes 68 specific recommendations. The recommendation section includes the specific action step recommendation, a priority rating with implementation timeline, benchmarks to set progress in implementation, and a recommendation for an implementation lead agency or collaborative to commence work on the specific recommendation. Through the implementation process and an annual review of the relevant indicators for our community, we will track both qualitative and quantitative measurements which will be conveyed back to the community as a community progress report.

What are some of the accomplishments so far?

- During the spring of 2012, the Foundation began an outreach effort to targeted community groups and stakeholders that had a natural connection to the Action Plan, based on the work these stakeholders were already doing, or Plan recommendations that aligned with their missions.
- During 2013, the Foundation and the Action Plan steering committee worked to identify and connect with community partners, and to evaluate ways to begin the implementation of key recommendations. Work was also done to develop connections to Cape Cod's school districts and local governments and to develop a framework for youth's role in implementing the Action Plan.
- During the fall of 2013 and in early 2014, the structure of the implementation effort was finalized and the Cape-wide Youth Action Plan document was refined to prepare for community-wide unveiling in May 2014.
- We have researched local, regional, and national best practices of communities implementing youth plans. Included in this outreach have been conversations about online community platforms that can be used as a central resource for all things "youth" on Cape Cod: to map community resources, share information, community statistics, and resources, highlight community needs, and track program outcomes. This idea of a centralized, accessible resource is one that cuts across various aspects of the plan and comes up repeatedly in community meetings as a strong need for Cape Cod. We have identified a promising tool for Cape Cod, the Urban Institute's Community Platform, and are anxious to implement this in 2014.
- We co-sponsored, with the League of Women Voters of the Cape Cod Area and Cape Cod Community College, a forum on civic engagement of young people.
- We co-sponsored a community meeting with Mass Mentoring Partnership in December to share information about how local efforts to match young people with caring adults can be enhanced. These connections are ongoing, and Mass Mentoring Partnership will be coming again in May to continue the conversation.
- We worked with a marketing class at Cape Cod Community College to develop ideas around communication with youth regarding the plan.

What are the goals for 2014?

Our top goal for 2014 is the public media launch of the plan, which will be held on May 19. Following the public launch, we will begin formal implementation and will also continue pursuing funding resources to move ahead with the online community platform. There is immense community support for this online platform initiative, and the purpose extends far beyond just the youth development arena. There are other priorities that will arise from the plan upon the initiation of the formal implementation process.