



YIPA Youth Intervention Programs Association

**It's No Longer Good Enough:
How To Effectively Advocate for Youth Services**



Evergreen
SOUTH & LONG BEACH




About Me

- Master of Arts in Psychology
- Lead a therapeutic team
- Driven by reform
- Love politics


Paul MEUNIER
LEADERSHIP NOW | City Council
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Advocacy vs. Lobbying



Poll

How much experience with advocacy do you have?


A lot
Some
None



Poll



How adequately are at-risk youth supported?

Fully supported
Under supported
Not supported



Why Advocate



- Less funding resources than in the past
- More kids today are in need of services
 - Family stress
 - Economics
 - Social Media
 - Pressure to succeed
- It's no longer sufficient to be a good Youth Intervention worker, you also need to be a good advocate for Youth Intervention work



Impact Of Status Quo



- Youth/families
- Communities
- Youth-serving programs
- Economy
- Our elected officials

"Those who are crazy enough to think they can change the world usually do."
- Steve Jobs




Sense Of Urgency

- Youth often become lifelong consumers of our public services
- Many youth would be productive and happy adults if given the proper support
- Many people do not understand Youth Intervention or the value it provides
- Youth workers are not good at speaking up about what we do




Question

Why do you think people run for office?




About Elected Officials

- Most have the best intentions in mind
- They come from all walks of life
- They have a wide variety of personalities
- Many have no idea about the work you do
- Elected officials want to hear from you
- Most want to support your cause
- There is a HUGE difference between support and funding!
- Few will champion a cause unless pushed




You Have What It Takes

- You simply need to build relationships
- Respect, an aggressive approach is not good
- Persistence
- The job of Youth Intervention workers is to let elected officials know the value of your work
- Share your programs' successes, impact and needs.
- Don't be intimidated; have confidence
- Tell anecdotal stories about the youth you work with
- Let them know how youth have improved after participating in your program
- Bring it to a personal level... describe how it impacts the elected person




Connect With Them

1. **Send an email or write a letter to your representatives, mayors, county commissioners and council members:** Tell them why YOU think they should support Youth Intervention Programs. You don't have to be the expert with a load of facts and theories - just share your opinions.
2. **Call them:** If you get their voice mail, leave a message and ask them to call you back. If you connect with them, share your opinions about the importance of Youth Intervention.
3. **Attend a town hall meeting:** Find out your elected official's position on Youth Intervention. Have they supported intervention measures in the past? Will they support them in the future?
4. **Visit them or ask them to meet you for coffee next time they are in the district:** Use this time to explain why Youth Intervention is so important to your community.
5. **Follow-up!**
6. **Engage with advocacy groups:** At the very least, take advantage of what is easy.




Tell Your Story

- **You have a lot to say**
- **Make it personal**
- **Connect it locally**
- **Reminder, keep it confidential**



Forming A Question

- Build your talking points into the question
- Frame your questions in a manner that are likely to get the desired response
- How do you stand on helping youth?
- Youth Intervention programs help young people become productive, financially self-sufficient adults. One in six of Minnesota's youth are at risk of becoming adults with chronic social, emotional and behavioral problems. How important is it to you to help our young people?




A Few Talking Points

YOUTH INTERVENTION WORKS: Youth do better in school, improve life skills, develop pro-social attitudes and 90% don't get new delinquency charges.¹

IT SAVES MONEY: Youth Intervention returns \$9.78 for every state taxpayer dollar.²


WE NEED MORE OF IT: Currently an estimated 300,000 youth are in need of Youth Intervention services.³

¹The Minnesota Youth Intervention Program. A Statistical Analysis of Key Findings. November 2012
²University of Minnesota (2007) Social Return on Investment in Youth Intervention Programs
³2010 Minnesota Census data




More Talking Points

- We have a choice for our at-risk youth, either they can become contributors to the common good or consumers of our public services.
- It's difficult to defend the amount of money we spend on Adult Intervention. There is a more human and fiscally responsive approach, Youth Intervention.
- Youth Intervention programs connect young people in positive ways to their community.
- No one wins when our youth fail, no one. And, it's inconsistent with our shared values about our youth.
- It's pretty simple, all youth need help determining what they are good at, direction on how to use their skills in a positive way, and accountability when they make mistakes.
- We all need our young people to become fully developed adults with a vested interest in their communities.
- Supporting Youth Intervention is defensible because the return on investment is so high and the benefits go to all of us.
- It's a better approach to prevent water damage in a home before it leaks, we need to think the same way about our youth. It's time we get it right and the youth that need our help, get our help.
- Youth Intervention works, it saves money and we need more of it.



Opportunities

- **Advocacy to the Next Level**
- **YIP Rally Day**



Go Change The World!

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