

2016

Aurora Youth Options Annual Report



Aurora Youth Options  
aurorayouthoptions.org

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# Aurora Youth Options Annual Report Update

Fiscal Year 2015

## **AURORA YOUTH OPTIONS BACKGROUND**

In 2009, a group of 20 partner agencies in Aurora, Colorado created a community steering committee with the goal of bringing a new program to life: Aurora Youth Options (AYO). The steering committee evolved out of what Aurora City officials saw as an unmet need of local youth who were beginning to exhibit behaviors that are indicators of significant risk factors for future negative outcomes.

Committee members hoped to develop an organization that could provide the guidance, services, support and resources that many of these youth were lacking. Through the generous support of funds from the State Strategic Use Fund (SSUF), AYO was able to take form, and has continued to develop since the program's inception. AYO offers youth referrals to existing community resources, and mental health services as well as one on one, group mentoring, homework help, tutoring and teen and family leadership programming.

## **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

The Aurora Youth Options (AYO) program utilizes the Gatekeeper Case Finding and Response System where community members are used to identify individuals who do not typically come to the attention of traditional service delivery systems. AYO identifies "gatekeepers" in the community who are most likely to come into contact with these youth during the course of their day-to-day lives, including teachers, cafeteria workers, primary care providers, law enforcement and school resource officers.

Nominated youth are given the *Communities that Care (CtC) Youth Survey* by an AYO Youth Specialist to assess his or her risk and protective factors. Youth are then referred to one or more community resources or organizations that have been recognized as working to mitigate risk factors and/or increase protective factors. When needed, Youth Specialists can access AYO funds to assist in payment for community services such as entrance fees for local recreation centers, sports, or art fees. Following the initial referral, the Youth Specialists continue to have regular contact with the youth, family, and community providers to assure that barriers to participation are removed and that each youth is positively engaged and the provided services are meeting the youth's assessed needs.

## EVALUATION

The AYO Program outcomes evaluation is conducted by the Aurora Research Institute (ARI). AYO Youth Specialists administer the CtC to all nominated youth. ARI staff track and maintain CtC data in a secure database. ARI collects CtC and other data, runs regular analyses to identify the risk and protective factors of each youth, responds to specific requests for data summaries, assists AYO staff with presentations and lectures and provides regular grant progress reports to program funders.

## PROCESS MEASURES

PROCESS MEASURE	COLLECTION SCHEDULE
<b>Staffing notes</b> to document that staffings occur as scheduled. Notes document the general themes and topics covered during meetings.	Weekly
<b>Referrals</b> the number of youth nominated/referred to AYO.	On-going
<b>Frequency of gatekeeper trainings</b>	Quarterly
<b>Fundraising and promotional events</b>	Quarterly
<b>Community Partnerships</b> the community providers and organizations with which AYO has developed successful relationships.	On-going
<b>Youth and Family Leadership</b> youth who have been referred to and placed in youth and family leadership programs in the community.	On-going
<b>Homework Help and Tutoring</b> number of HHT sessions held and attendance rate	Quarterly

## Team Staff

Weekly team meetings were held during the fiscal year. Attending staff included: Vicki Scott, Program Director, Natalie Kaiser, AYO Program Coordinator, Rachel Ahem, Mentor Specialist Lead, Mack Abernathy, Mentor Specialist Lead, Riana Mitchell, Youth Specialist, Marc Garstka, Youth Specialist, Brett Reyes, PACT Program Coordinator, Arely Castillo, PACT Assistant, Terry Gale, PACT Facilitator, Tamika Greenwood, PACT Facilitator, Elise Zakroff, Homework, Help, and Tutoring (HHT) Coordinator, Ken Broermann, Mentor Program Coordinator, John Weir, Program Evaluator, Danielle Jackman, Program Evaluator. During each team meetings staff reported on program status and progress, new issues or developments and upcoming team events. Other topics included:

- Employee evaluation of development of community relationships and outreach.
- Planning of team events including Family Dinner Day, AYO Mentoring Campout, and staff trainings and workshops
- Future plans for Denver School of Science and Technology student interns
- Team presentation/knowledge dissemination from the Youth Symposium conference
- New bilingual office support
- Revise AYO/Mentoring schedule for the summer

## Youth Served

AYO strives to connect youth the community services in a variety of ways. First, AYO receives self-referrals (also known as nominations) as well as referrals from a variety of community organizations and individuals who have regular contact with local youth from the City of Aurora. In order to possibly receive services, AYO requires that the youth must: live and/or attend a school within either the Aurora Public School District (APS) and/ Cherry Creek School District (CCSD); and not yet have obtained a high school diploma or GED. Once a youth is referred to AYO s/he will be asked to first complete a nomination form (which obtains basic demographic information) and then a *Communities that Care (CtC)* youth survey. AYO uses the *CtC* to assess youth’s individual risk and protective factors and to identify youth’s interests, strengths and weaknesses. Once the *CtC* assessment is complete and after consultation with the youth and their family, AYO Youth Specialists will refer the youth to existing community resources and/or AYO support programs that best meet the youth’s needs.

Youth are also connected to resources through a school based substance abuse prevention/intervention program called Prevention Awareness through Core Training (PACT). Select middle and high school classes are given the program to youth who have been passively consented to participate. Youth who participate also complete a nomination form. For the first half of this fiscal year, youth also completed a *CtC* survey.

A youth is considered served if s/he: receives a referral package from a Youth Specialist; is given extensive contact with a Youth Specialist and/or AYO staff to participate in the various services; and attends/completes any of the services provided by AYO or referred by AYO. For this fiscal year of 2015, there were 538 youth who were served by AYO. Below is the breakdown of their zip code and school district.

**Table 1: Number of Youth Served by Zip Code – FY2015 - 2016**

Zip Code	80010	80011	80012	80013	80014	80015	80016	80017	80018	Other*	Total
<b>Number of Youth Served</b>	97	36	39	36	19	8	6	25	77	195	538
<b>TOTAL PERCENT</b>	18	6.7	7.2	6.7	3.5	1.5	1.1	4.6	14.3	36	100

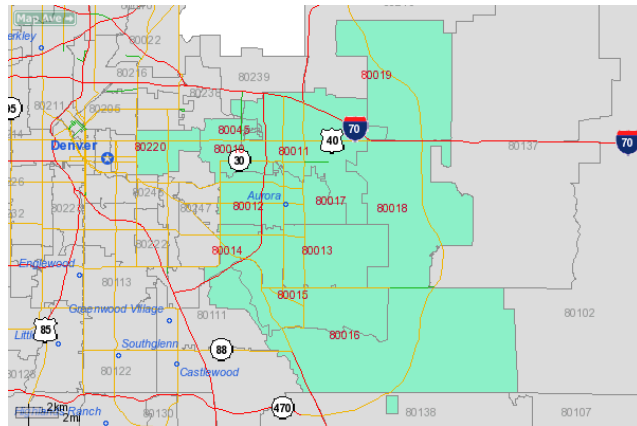
Note. \* In several zip codes there were 6 or fewer youth who participated in AYO. There were also 20 youth with unrecorded zip codes. These zip codes were combined into a larger category called, “Other”.

**Table 2: Number of Youth Served by School District**

School District	FY2015 -2016
<b>Aurora Public School District</b>	431
<b>Cherry Creek School District</b>	65
<b>Other</b>	42
<b>Total</b>	538

**Table 3: School District Zip Codes**

<b>Aurora Public School District and Cherry Creek School District</b>
80010
80011
80012
80013
80014
80015
80016
80017
80017
80018
80019
80110
80111
80112
80113
80121
80122
80222
80224
80231
80246
80247



[http://www.eachtown.com/Colorado/City/Aurora;4599/areacode\\_zip.html](http://www.eachtown.com/Colorado/City/Aurora;4599/areacode_zip.html)

### **Gatekeeper Trainings**

AYO program uses the Gatekeeper Case Finding and Response System developed by Raymond Raschko to target youth in the community who are eligible to participate in and receive AYO services. AYO staff recruits adults in the city of Aurora and Denver Metro area who often come into contact and interact with local youth to be Community Gatekeepers. Gatekeepers are typically school faculty and staff, coaches, scout troop leaders, police officers, school resource officers, social workers, faith-based leaders and parents. AYO staff holds Gatekeeper trainings as needed throughout the year so that new Gatekeepers can learn about the programs, how to identify appropriate youth and how to refer youth to AYO.

Organizations and individuals involved in Gatekeeper trainings this quarter include: the Aurora Key Community Response Committee, the Aurora Police Department, Aurora School Resource Officers, The Aurora Gang Task Force, Arapahoe Douglas – Youth in the Works and Tri-County Health. In addition to these organizations, AYO holds many of their Gatekeeper trainings for Aurora Public School and Cherry Creek School District employees.

### **Community Partnerships**

AYO works very closely with other programs and staff at the Aurora Mental Health Center (AuMHC) including: child intensive services, outpatient services, children and family services, adolescent intensive serves and

Hampden Academy. Many AuMHC employees participate in AYO's Gatekeeper trainings and nominate youth to the AYO program.

In addition to working with AuMHC, AYO has also developed many close partnerships with other organizations in the community. These community partnerships include youth serving non-profit agencies like, the Asian Pacific Development Center, City of Aurora Youth Services, Wings Over the Rockies, America's Promise, Aurora Community Connections, Metro Community Provider Network, the Youth Mentoring Collaboration, the Conflict Center, Big Brothers Big Sisters, the Denver Foundation, Families First, the Arapahoe County Department of Human Services, Kidstek the Trails Recreation Center and the 18<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC).

Another common community referral for AYO youth are local non-profits and faith-based organizations. AYO refers youth to athletic teams and clubs, arts and recreational programs that youth would not otherwise have the opportunity for involvement. These programs include: ATT Altitude, A1 Boxing, Aurora Youth League, Aurora Youth Rugby, Downtown Aurora Visual Arts (DAVA), Morehead Recreation Center, Mile High Football and the Junior Athletes of the Midwest (JAM).

### **Homework Help and tutoring**

Homework Help and Tutoring (HHT) is an optional, free support service that is offered to all youth involved with AYO. HHT is a drop in program meaning youth may stop in at any time during any HHT session. HHT sessions are held twice per week for 2 hours at the AYO building (1298 Peoria Street, Aurora, CO). Community volunteer adult and youth tutors provide assistance with homework and/or tutor them in specific subjects. Youth spent a cumulative 570 hours between the two sites at Homework Help and Tutoring over the past fiscal year.

### ***Communities that Care (CtC) Youth Survey***

The *Communities that Care (CtC) Youth Survey* is a 207 question needs-assessment tool that is meant to help communities design and implement prevention programs. The survey was designed to be administered to youth in grades 6 through 12 and measures a variety of risk and protective factors<sup>1</sup>. Research has shown these factors are effective predictors of drug use, delinquent and/or criminal behavior, teen pregnancy, school dropout, and violence. The *CtC* also measures reports of the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drug use and involvement in other antisocial behaviors like fighting, school suspension and selling drugs.

AYO uses the *CtC Youth Survey* as an assessment tool to determine youth's risk and protective factors. All nominated youth are asked to complete a *CtC Youth Survey* prior to receiving AYO services. This initial survey serves as the youth's baseline data to which all future *CtC* data will be compared to measure the youth's overall change and progress in the program. AYO Youth Specialists use data from the survey in conjunction with other assessment tools to determine youth's risk level, interests, strengths and weaknesses and create an individualized treatment plan.

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<sup>1</sup> Catalano, R., & Hawkins, J.D. (1996). The social development model: a theory of antisocial behavior, in J.D. Hawkins (ed.) *Delinquency and Crime*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

The Aurora Research Institute (ARI) uses the CtC to measure change in youths’ risk and protective factors. Risk and protective factors are measured in four domains – community, family, school and peer-individual. Change scores are calculated by comparing youths’ baseline scores in these domains to follow-up data that is collected 6 months following baseline and/or program discharge. CtC outcomes are reported on a quarterly basis.

### *Youth Demographics Measured at Baseline*

Of the 538 youth that were served, 154 youth enrolled in one of AYO’s support programs called the Mentoring Program. As PACT discontinued collection of the CtC surveys among youth, there is a limited number of youth (48) who completed it and that we have information for. Of the 202 youth who filled out the baseline, only 38 youth completed a follow up.

**Table 4: Number of participants enrolled both this fiscal year and since the inception of the distribution of the CtC Surveys.**

	<b>FY2015 - 2016</b>	<b>Total FY(2009-2016)</b>
<b>Nominated Baseline</b>	538	4,275
<b>Mentoring Baseline</b>	154	N/A
<b>PACT Baseline</b>	48	N/A
<b>Follow-Up</b>	38	1,337

The table above shows that the number of follow-up data collected during the fiscal year is only 19% of the number of Mentoring/PACT baseline surveys collected. The difference in these numbers can be explained by the discrepancy in the length of the programs to which youth are referred. Follow-up surveys are collected approximately 6-months following baseline or upon program completion. Many of the programs that AYO youth are referred to are less than 6 months and can complicate scheduling follow-up data collection. In addition, follow-up data collection is scheduled according to the youth’s availability and program staff found that many youth who have completed their program are unwilling or unable to schedule time to complete their follow-up surveys.

### **Summary of Youth Demographics**

This summary is based on the combined baselines for the Mentoring and PACT program.

- 44% identified as male
- 14% of youth identified as being bi/multiracial
- 96% identified as not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino
- Approximately 73.3% of youth speak English as their primary language at home

**Table 5: Age at Baseline July 2015 to June 2016**

Age	ENROLLMENT	
	N	Percentage (%)
10	5	2.5
11	68	33.7
12	24	11.9
13	18	8.9
14	20	9.9
15	25	12.4
16	11	5.4
17	3	1.5
18	10	5.0
19 and older	18	8.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 6: School grade at Baseline July 2015 to June 2016**

School Grade	BASELINE	
	N	Percentage (%)
6 <sup>th</sup>	74	38.1
7 <sup>th</sup>	25	12.4
8 <sup>th</sup>	15	9.9
9 <sup>th</sup>	16	11.9
10 <sup>th</sup>	4	13.4
11 <sup>th</sup>	27	4.5
12 <sup>th</sup>	9	11.9
Missing participants	24	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>100</b>



**Table 7: Race and Language spoken at home at Baseline July 2015 to June 2016**

<b>Race</b>	<b>BASELINE</b>	
	<b>N</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
White	30	14.9
Black/African American	52	25.8
American Indian/Native American/Eskimos/Aleut	3	1.5
Asian/Pacific Islander	73	36.1
Other	1	.4
Hispanic/Latino	7	3.5
Multiracial	36	17.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Language used at home</b>		
English	148	73.3
Spanish	45	22.2
Other	8	4.5
Missing participants	1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>100</b>

## OUTCOMES MEASURES

### RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS AT BASELINE FOR ALL YOUTH PLACED IN A PROGRAM

**Table 10: Baseline Risk Factor Domain Scores**

<b>FACTOR</b>	<i>n*</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Perceived Risk in Gang Involvement	153	.34	1.18
Community Risk	135	1.77	.67
Family Risk	154	1.46	.51
School Risk	116	2.23	.65
Peer Involvement Risk	133	1.68	.53

Note. \* represents number of youth placed in a program with the exception of the PACT program. The varying n's represents missingness within each subgroup

**Table 11: Baseline Protective Factor Domain Scores**

<b>FACTOR</b>	<i>n*</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Community Protective	154	2.30	.89
Family Protective	138	3.02	.76
School Protective	117	2.92	.93
Peer Protective	131	4.45	.57

Note. \* represents number of youth placed in a program with the exception of the PACT program. The varying n's represents missingness within each subgroup.

**Table 12: Baseline Problem Behavior and Mental Health Domain Scores**

<b>FACTOR</b>	<i>n*</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Problem Behaviors	154	.05	.20
Overall Mental Health	154	1.05	.84

Note. \* represents number of youth placed in a program with the exception of the PACT program. The varying n's represents missingness within each subgroup.

**RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS  
AT BASELINE  
FOR YOUTH PLACED IN PACT PROGRAM**

**Table 13: Baseline Risk Factor Domain Scores for Youth in the PACT program**

<b>FACTOR</b>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Perceived Risk in Gang Involvement	48	.14	.55
Community Risk	48	1.30	.58
Family Risk	48	1.14	.56
School Risk	48	1.84	.58
Peer Involvement Risk	48	1.36	.52

**Table 14: Baseline Protective Factor Domain Scores} for Youth in the PACT Program**

<b>FACTOR</b>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Community Protective	48	2.35	.92
Family Protective	48	2.68	1.43
School Protective	48	2.58	.75
Peer Protective	48	4.48	.89

**Table 15: Baseline Problem Behavior and Mental Health Scores for Youth in the PACT Program**

<b>FACTOR</b>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Problem Behaviors	48	.05	.22
Overall Mental Health	48	1.63	.80

**CHANGES IN  
RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS**

**Table 16: Change in Risk Factor Domain Scores**

	n	SCORES			
		Baseline	Follow-Up	Change	Effect*
Perceived Risk for Gang Involvement	38	.41	.21	.20	.20
Community Risk	38	1.59	1.73	.14	.24
Family Risk	38	1.39	1.43	.04	.09
School Risk	38	2.08	2.05	.03	.04
Peer Involvement Risk	38	1.56	1.50	.06	.12

Note. \* represents Cohen's effect (d)- .2 = small effect, .5 = medium effect, .8 = large effect

**Table 17: Change in Protective Factor Domain Scores**

	n	SCORES			
		Baseline	Follow-Up	Change	Effect*
Community Protective	38	2.41	2.47	.07	.07
Family Protective	38	3.00	2.83	.17	.18
School Protective	38	2.67	2.71	.04	.06
Peer Involvement Protective	38	4.46	4.35	.11	.16

Note. \* represents Cohen's effect (d)- .2 = small effect, .5 = medium effect, .8 = large effect

**Table 17: Change in Problem Behavior and Overall Mental Health**

	n	SCORES			
		Baseline	Follow-Up	Change	Effect*
Problem Behavior	38	.03	-	-	-
Overall Mental Health	38	1.71	1.58	.13	.18

Note. \* represents Cohen's effect (d)- .2 = small effect, .5 = medium effect, .8 = large effect

**Summary of Risk Factor, Protective Factor and Outcomes Measures**

- There were no statistically significant changes between baseline and follow up, which means that we cannot state that the changes were not due to chance.
- The effect sizes for the perceived risk for gang involvement and community risk were small.
- Independent of sample size, effect sizes emphasize how large of a difference there is between the two means.
- The small effect possibly sheds light on areas that could be more of a focus in future delivery of services.
- Other ways to increase effect size is:
  - To maintain program integrity (the degree to which the program adheres to the delivery of their program).
  - Establish a more appropriate time for the follow up
  - Conduct several follow up measures
  - Incentivize youth to encourage follow up surveys (e.g., raffle).