

Youth Voice Agency Level Assessment (Y-VAL)

Y-VOC Includes Themes 1-4

Eight Critical Themes

- 1. Overall vision and commitment (8 items):** The agency has developed formal structures and policies for voice/participation
 - Clear roles for participation
 - Transparent assessment of efforts to promote participation
- 2. Collaborative approach (5 items):** Young people are treated as valued partners in decision processes
 - Involved from the beginning, including decisions about what
 - Respect and mutual learning, willingness to compromise, responsiveness
 - Youth-friendly meetings
 - Information/transparency about what will happen/has happened as a result of decisions
- 3. Empowered representatives (5 items):** Young people are supported in a way that will maximize their potential to have an impact on decisions
 - Multiple young people participating consistently over time
 - Supported preparation, meeting happens as planned
 - “Pipeline,” opportunity to develop leadership skills
- 4. Commitment to facilitation and support of Y/YA participation (3 items):** The agency invests resources to support participation
 - Dedicated staff time/FTE
 - Addressing barriers: child care, transportation/ distance, consent
 - “Point person” whose job includes managing logistics of participation
 - Incentives provided for participation (may be monetary or non-monetary)
- 5. Workforce development (4 items):** The agency ensures that all staff are able to interact collaboratively with young people
 - Young people participate actively in hiring
 - Staff are trained about agency policies and commitment to participation
 - Job performance evaluation includes attention to staff competencies related to participation
 - Agency is developing peer roles
- 6. Participation in developing programming/program policies (5 items):** Young people have an impact on how the program works with the population
 - “Substantial and systematic” involvement in
 - Decisions about program models/services
 - Efforts to improve services, retention, accessibility
 - Efforts to make the organization more youth friendly/responsive—communications, privacy, décor, etc.
- 7. Participation in evaluation (4 items):** Young people are engaged in efforts to determine how well the agency is doing its work
 - Systematic efforts to gather feedback on services
 - Young people help decide on how efforts will be assessed
 - Young people are informed about findings from evaluation/CQI
 - Agency acts on data and reports on this to young people
- 8. Leading initiatives and projects (3 items):** The agency supports young people to take the lead on projects they design
 - Provides tangible support to initiatives initiated by young people