



TAG in Action: Colorado 9to25

As part of its national call to action, **Adolescent Health, Think, Act, GrowSM (TAG)**, the Office of Adolescent Health, in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service has identified a number of successful strategies for improving adolescent health throughout the country.



The Goal

Colorado 9to25 is a collective, action-oriented group of Colorado youth and adults working in partnership to align efforts and achieve positive outcomes for all youth, ages 9-25, so they can reach their full potential.

The Game Plan

Since 2010, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment has used federal Maternal and Child Health (MCH) block grant funding to build a youth system now known as Colorado 9to25 (CO9to25). In 2013, state legislation in Colorado directed the Colorado Department of Human Services to create a statewide youth development plan. Having partnered on CO9to25 since its inception, staff identified alignment between the legislative requirements and CO9to25's existing work.

With CO9to25 serving as the foundation of the legislated plan, community and state youth initiatives were reviewed across the state. CO9to25 then identified gaps and barriers to services, including: missing connections to adults, behavioral health needs, homelessness, disparities and stigma experienced by various populations, and a need for cross-systems coordination and collaboration. A nonprofit organization, The Civic Canopy, worked to maintain and enhance the CO9to25 infrastructure to align youth-serving programs, practices and policies across Colorado to address these gaps and promote positive youth development.

The Winning Plays

CO9to25 representatives modeled a positive youth development approach as they designed a plan for the entire state. Two key practices for engaging young people stood out: building upon the inherent interests and strengths of youth participants through preparation and debriefing to enhance their capacity to sit at the table, and facilitating meaningful engagement of youth in decision-making roles including changing meeting norms to make them more inclusive of young people's needs. As one young woman said about the process, "It's when there is give and take, and respect for diverse opinions that we change the world. The Colorado Statewide Youth Development Plan gives us, the youth, a chance to be heard."

Learn More

Colorado 9to25
<http://co9to25.org/>

