



Youth & Family Centers
in our Public Schools

Sustaining a Public-Private Partnership

The San Francisco Beacon Initiative is a public-private partnership that promotes youth and family centers in San Francisco's public schools. At the initiative level, partnerships among a broad array of stakeholders, including city agencies, the school district, corporate partners, private foundations and community organizations, provide governance through a steering committee and help leverage resources to promote Centers' long-term sustainability. For the Beacon Centers, partnerships among community organizations, schools, Beacon staff and residents strengthen ties to the community and provide a platform for the delivery of quality programming and services.

A Shared Vision

In the early stages of the Initiative, the planning council realized that in order to achieve the vision of community centers in schools that improve the lives of youth and their families, there would need to be agreement among the various stakeholders as to what the Initiative would accomplish and who would be responsible for making that happen. The Community Network for Youth Development (CNYD) — then the Initiative's intermediary organization — enlisted the Institute for Research and Reform in Education (IRRE) to facilitate the development of guiding principles that would reflect stakeholders' assumptions about the goals for the Initiative and outline the steps needed to sustain the Centers and achieve positive outcomes. A critical part of this process was to outline the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders. The Initiative's planning council acknowledged that support from city and school leadership, private funders, schools, communities and families were all necessary in order for the Centers to thrive, making public-private partnerships a critical component of the Beacon Initiative's structure.

Citywide Partnerships

Oversight of the San Francisco Beacon Initiative is provided by a steering committee composed of representatives from the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD), the San Francisco Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF), the San Francisco Juvenile Probation Department, corporate partners and the Evelyn & Walter Haas, Jr. Fund (representing a collaborative of funders), Beacon Center directors, lead agency directors and the Initiative's executive director. The steering committee sets policy, oversees strategic planning, monitors site performance and develops strategies for the long-term financial stability of the Beacon Centers. This partnership between public and private funders has enabled the Initiative to bring in new resources, adapt to changing fiscal conditions, and advocate for changes that lead to increased sustainability and efficiency at the Beacon Centers.

A Diversified Funding Base

The Beacon Initiative's funding streams illustrate the value of stable core funding in attracting leveraged resources:

- Core funding for the Beacon Centers comes from DCYF, primarily through tax set-aside revenue collected under the voter re-enacted Children's Amendment. The funding is a three-year grant to the Beacon Centers.



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*A strong focus on
accountability
has helped to
sustain the
commitment
of both public
and private
stakeholders.*

A place to be a kid.

A place to support families.

A place to build community.

- SFUSD provides substantial in-kind support for each Beacon Center through the use of school facilities, as provided for in a Memorandum of Understanding that specifies the expectations and responsibilities of the Beacon Center and a host school. Additionally, after-school funding streams such as 21st Century Community Learning Centers provide support for education and enrichment programs at the Beacons.
- The Mayor's Office on Criminal Justice, in collaboration with the Juvenile Probation Department, provides funds for a case management program at each Beacon Center to bring prevention services to at-risk youth.
- Private foundations, led by the Haas, Jr. Fund, provide funds to sustain the work of the Beacon Initiative in such key areas as evaluation and strategic planning, as well as targeted grants to encourage innovation at Beacon Centers.

At the Initiative level, a strong focus on accountability has helped to sustain the commitment of both the public and private sector stakeholders during a period of retrenchment in both the private and public sectors. The implementation of the Beacon Quality Standards in 2003, as well as an ongoing evaluation process to measure each Center's progress in meeting the standards, has helped to reinforce broad citywide support. To quote Mayor Gavin Newsom: "I look to the Beacons to set a standard of excellence and quality for youth development programs citywide."

Partnerships in the Schools and Communities

The Initiative's founders envisioned Beacon Centers as hubs of activity for the community, located in the schools. Nonprofit, community-based organizations serve as lead agencies for each Beacon Center, providing administrative and fiscal management and oversight of Center directors and staff. Host schools and local partnering agencies provide facilities and services that supplement each Center's core offerings. These partnerships enable them to reflect the needs and interests of the host schools and surrounding community and to offer a broad range of services and activities.

Community Ties

Beacon Centers' lead agencies and partner organizations have established ties to their surrounding communities and can therefore facilitate a direct connection with youth, families and community. This involvement spans such roles as assessing community needs and making plans that draw on the strengths and address the challenges of each neighborhood. Youth, families, community members, school staff, partner organizations and lead agency staff come together within community councils to discuss the needs of the neighborhood and plan activities and program offerings. This inclusive process allows the Centers to be responsive to communities' needs and promotes community ownership of the Beacon Centers.

A Platform for Collaborative Service Delivery

Lead agencies' ties to the local community allow them to leverage support from local agencies. Each Beacon Center works in collaboration with a number of partnering agencies that provide activities in the core program areas, in addition to services such as health care and transportation. Agencies partnered with Beacon Centers range from community service and volunteer organizations such as Americorps and Experience Corps to faith-based organizations and foster care agencies. The diversity of these partnering agencies allows Beacon Centers to provide a wide array of activities and services outside of what the schools and lead agency are able to offer. Host schools provide Beacon Centers with the space and facilities to run their programs. Additionally, collaboration and communication between Beacon and school staff allows for a continuity of service and care for students participating in Beacon Centers.