

YOUTH GUIDANCE

GUIDING KIDS TO BRIGHT FUTURES

Mission

Youth Guidance creates and implements school-based programs that enable children to overcome obstacles, focus on their education and, ultimately, to succeed in school and life.

Vision

Youth Guidance sees a bright and successful future for every elementary and high school student. Because we believe that success in school is not only possible but should be achieved and celebrated, we are present in the schools to facilitate an environment that truly engages students in the learning process, and through careful guidance, enables them to realize their full potential and graduate with a meaningful plan for successfully managing life.

Youth Guidance Today

Youth Guidance serves approximately 13,000 youth each year. We operate in some of Chicago's most under-resourced communities, and provide school-based programs in partnership with over 118 Chicago schools. More than 90% of the students we serve are low-income and are 58% African American, 31% Hispanic/Latino, and 9% Caucasian/other races and ethnicities.

Support of our mission — with an annual budget of \$26 million — is derived from government and private sources. Youth Guidance is governed, in FY21, by a volunteer board of 36 directors and eight life members and is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. The agency is accredited by the Council on Accreditation (COA).

Programs and Services

Each Youth Guidance program is strategically developed to address a community need falling within one of three specific program areas: Counseling & Prevention, Community & Afterschool, and Youth Workforce Development.

Counseling & Prevention

Becoming A Man (BAM) ®

Youth Guidance's BAM program is a school-based group counseling program that teaches young men in grades 7-12 to learn, internalize and practice social cognitive skills, make responsible decisions for their future and become positive members of their school and community. BAM's curriculum addresses six core values: integrity, accountability, self-determination, positive anger expression, visionary goal-setting and respect for womanhood. BAM serves more than 8,000 students in over 118 sites in 45 communities across Chicagoland, Boston and Somerville, MA; Los Angeles County, CA, Kansas City, MO, King County, WA, and London, UK.

Working On Womanhood (WOW)SM

Youth Guidance's WOW program is a school-based, trauma informed counseling program that uses cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) to improve the social-emotional competencies of young women in grades 7-12. WOW's curriculum focuses on five core values: self-awareness, emotional intelligence, healthy relationships, visionary goal-setting, and leadership. Through weekly sessions throughout the year, WOW participants engage in activities and discussions designed to improve self-image, self-worth and social skills. Each young woman benefits from interactions with her counselor and peers. WOW serves more than 2,600 female students across 41 schools.

School-Based Counseling

Youth Guidance's School-Based Counseling program provides students with individual, group and/or family counseling to address issues such as adjusting to a new school environment; improving behavior and interpersonal relationships; coping with trauma, grief or loss; handling environmental stress (family, school, neighborhood); and regulating emotion. Approximately 280 students are receiving school-based counseling in FY19 in 9 Chicago schools.

STRIVE (Strategies To Rejuvenate Interest and Value in Education)

STRIVE is a partnership between Youth Guidance, Chicago Public Schools and the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services that successfully helps youth in care of the state, who have endured trauma or neglect transition into adulthood and lead productive lives. STRIVE is currently serving nearly 200 students.

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Community & Afterschool

Currently, Youth Guidance's Community & Afterschool programs touch more than 2,422 students in 16 Chicago public and charter schools.

Full-Service Community Schools

Youth Guidance's Full-Service Community Schools program addresses barriers to student learning by providing academic and social supports within and outside of traditional school hours.

Extended Day & Enrichment

Aligned with the school day, Youth Guidance's Extended Day & Enrichment programs incorporate community initiatives and resources and include a parent engagement component, access to necessary counseling, and have an intense focus on self-sustainability. Each enrichment menu is tailored to meet the specific needs of the school, student and parent community.

Parent & Family Engagement

Parent & Family Engagement works to equip parent leaders with specific skills that enhance their ability to support their children's academic success, while also improving school outcomes. Parents develop the capacity to support positive adult-student relationships and the creation of a safe, child-centered school climate. Ultimately, Parent & Family Engagement services expand a school's capacity to support long-term, positive home-school connections, and be an improved resource to the community. Services are aligned with the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships, and are based on more than 23 years of Youth Guidance's parent engagement work in Chicago Public Schools.



Youth Workforce Development

Youth Guidance's workforce development programs seek to empower youth to become socially and economically self-sufficient.

Project Prepare®

This career development program prepares inner-city youth for high school graduation, post-secondary education and a future of self-sufficiency. The curriculum includes career awareness and job readiness training; job placement; retention and follow-up services; financial literacy education; and counseling/case management. Project Prepare helps students develop soft and hard life skills focused on college career readiness.

Project Prepare-Blue

In 2015, Youth Guidance launched a new workforce development program that builds upon its proven in-school programming to serve out-of-school and unemployed youth. Individual and group-based career exploration, job readiness training, and coaching take place during training sessions. Staff facilitate placement into employment, advanced training, and/or college and offer ongoing support to promote job retention, career advancement, and self-sufficiency.