

## The Youth Data Archive

*John W. Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities*

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### **What is the YDA?**

The Youth Data Archive is an initiative that links data on individual youth across organizations and works with community partners to identify and investigate shared questions that individual agencies cannot answer alone. The YDA supports partners to understand the resulting analyses and make data-driven policy and programmatic decisions to improve youth outcomes. For more information about the YDA and examples of our work, please visit: [http://gardnercenter.stanford.edu/current\\_initiatives/youth\\_archive.html](http://gardnercenter.stanford.edu/current_initiatives/youth_archive.html).

#### **What can the YDA tell us that we wouldn't be able to learn on our own?**

The YDA provides partner agencies with the ability to assess programs by looking at youth across contexts and time. The YDA brings together data on youth outcomes from multiple agencies, creating a rich data set to which each individual agency does not have access. Using this wealth of data, the YDA helps agencies to understand how their services affect outcomes for youth in other settings. In addition, the YDA contains longitudinal data that allow agencies to look at trajectories over time for the same group of youth instead of simply comparing cross-sectional snapshots for different youth.

#### **What are some examples of questions that the YDA could answer?**

- How does English Learner participation in after school programs affect their English language acquisition?
- Is there a link between physical fitness and academic achievement among elementary, middle and high school youth?
- How many youth in alternative education settings successfully transition back into comprehensive high schools?
- Are there academic and behavioral differences among foster youth placed with family members compared to those placed in other settings?

#### **Who contributes to the YDA?**

We encourage the participation of any agency or program that collects data on youth aged 0-24 years. Examples of YDA community partners include public or government agencies such as school districts, health departments, county offices of education, human services agencies and departments of parks and recreation; and non-profit community-based organizations such as after school programs and youth leadership and entrepreneur programs.

#### **What communities are currently working with the YDA?**

The YDA's deepest partnership has been in San Mateo County, CA where we are working with ten public and community-based agencies. The YDA is also in development in San Francisco, Santa Clara, Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. Youth Data Archive staff members are also in discussion with potential partners about working at the regional, statewide and national levels.

### **Who decides how the data are used and what analyses are done with the YDA?**

Each agency that contributes data helps identify the research questions, interpret results, and review analyses before publication. No analyses are done without explicit approval of an agency representative, and agencies may remove their data from the YDA at any time. Agencies also help decide how results will be shared and in what format. With permission, we may share findings with other partners, publish and post briefs online, or disseminate to the broader research and policy community in other ways.

### **How does the YDA protect confidentiality and manage consent procedures?**

The YDA protects confidentiality in multiple ways. All data are housed in a secure data center that meets the highest industry standards for data security. The YDA is designed to examine policy and service issues for youth-serving organizations and cannot be used to look up or coordinate services for individuals. Also, reports produced by the YDA never include data reported in a manner that permits identification of any individual. This approach allows agencies to share data under research exemptions specified in the California Education Code, FERPA, and HIPAA regulations as well as privacy laws without seeking individual consent. The full security protocol is available upon request.

### **What happens with the analyses after they are completed?**

The YDA is committed to using completed analyses to inform both the practices and policies of local partners and the broader field of youth development. To ensure that research findings are translated into actionable steps, the YDA continually works with partners to make the link to existing initiatives and to pursue follow up analyses as findings from completed analyses spur further inquiries. YDA researchers also work closely with partners to help them understand research findings and methodology so that they can present the findings to their stakeholders and use them as the basis for decision-making. Toward the goal of informing the broader field, the YDA, only with the permission of all partners, publishes research in a variety of formats targeted toward practitioners, policy makers, and academics.

### **What is the cost to my organization?**

YDA analyses are conducted either using a fee-for-service model that is negotiated between the John Gardner Center and community partners or by way of a grant to the JGC or to partners. Partners may use a variety of strategies to secure funding such as dividing portions of the funding among individual partners; jointly or individually applying for grants that include YDA analyses; or applying for grants in partnership with the JGC. The JGC also directly receives grants for research involving the YDA which may be applied to analyses in a similar focus area requested by partners.

### **If I am interested, how can I get involved?**

For more information about participating, please contact Kara Dukakis, YDA Associate Director, at (650) 721.2971 or [kdukakis@stanford.edu](mailto:kdukakis@stanford.edu).