



# Performance Partnership Pilots for Disconnected Youth (P3): Sustaining Systems Change Efforts and Coordinated Services for Youth

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Elizabeth Brown

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Project Officer: Deborah Martierrez  
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**Submitted by:**

Mathematica  
P.O. Box 2393  
Princeton, NJ 08543-2393  
Telephone: (609) 799-3535  
Facsimile: (609) 799-0005  
Project Director: Linda Rosenberg  
Reference Number: 50152

## **Disclaimer**

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## Abstract

To help state, local, and tribal communities remove institutional and programmatic barriers across multiple Federal discretionary programs that serve disconnected youth, the U.S. Congress authorized the Performance Partnership Pilots for Disconnected Youth (P3) in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014 (the Act). Disconnected youth, as defined by the Act, include those ages 14 to 24 who are either homeless, in foster care, pregnant, parenting, justice involved, unemployed, or at risk of dropping out of school. The Act allowed for up to 10 pilots in which state, local, or tribal government entities and their partners could pool funds from across the discretionary programs of five Federal agencies to provide innovative evidence-based interventions to youth. Nine pilots were awarded to grantees and their partners under the 2014 Act for a grant period that ended in September 2018 (three received one-year extensions).

The nine pilots were awarded to grantees across the country, including a mayor's office, a police department, social service agencies, a city, county regional workforce agencies, and a tribal entity. All pilots identified a network of partners to more efficiently provide services and improve outcomes for disconnected youth. Pilots partnered with workforce entities, education partners, community-based organizations, justice-related organizations, human services agencies, housing agencies, health providers, and local library systems.

As set out in the notice inviting applications, one purpose of P3 was to be a catalyst for systems change at the state or community level (U.S. Department of Education 2014). Through the use of braiding or blending different program funds and using waivers to smooth requirements across these programs, Federal agencies sought to test whether the pilots could more effectively serve youth and improve outcomes for youth.

In this paper, the P3 study team has placed pilots' efforts to sustain systems change along a continuum. At one end of this continuum, two pilots approached P3 as a platform to facilitate systems change in their communities. Next along the continuum is a pilot that had taken initial steps toward systems change by the end of its P3 grant. Next, two pilots reported that through P3 they had strengthened partnerships and broken down silos but that the systems for serving disconnected youth did not experience much change as a result of P3. Lastly, staff at three pilots reported that no systems change work occurred as part of their participation in P3. These pilots did not view P3 through a systems change lens and instead focused on programming for disconnected youth.

The two pilots that identified systems change as a primary goal of their P3 pilots at the outset were able to sustain their efforts beyond the pilot. The Los Angeles, California, pilot approached P3 as an opportunity to change the system for providing services to disconnected youth. It resulted in the development of a strategic plan that would guide the system for serving disconnected youth in the future. The lead pilot agency in Broward County, Florida, had a long history of working with partners and serving as the backbone organization for change initiatives. The pilot leveraged P3 to build an integrated data system for local youth-serving agencies to reduce manual data collection, improve accuracy, and provide secure access to information.

Sustaining the systems change efforts of P3 pilots required explicit goals and planning, a strong commitment from leadership, and partners' willingness to innovate. The champions of these systems change efforts continued to seek ways to improve the system after the conclusion of their P3 pilots.

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## A. Introduction

To help state, local, and tribal communities remove institutional and programmatic barriers across multiple Federal discretionary programs that serve disconnected youth, the U.S. Congress authorized the Performance Partnership Pilots for Disconnected Youth (P3) in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014 (the Act). Disconnected youth, as defined by the Act, include those ages 14 to 24 who are either homeless, in foster care, pregnant, parenting, justice involved, unemployed, or at risk of dropping out of school (see the box at the end of this paper for more information about P3 and the national evaluation). The Act allowed for up to 10 pilots in which state, local, or tribal government entities and their partners could pool funds from across the discretionary programs of five Federal agencies to provide innovative evidence-based interventions to youth. Applicants could request and receive waivers from the eligibility and reporting requirements of these programs to better serve their youth in exchange for accountability for achieving previously negotiated performance goals (U.S. Government Accountability Office 2017).

This paper is one in a series of implementation study papers of the National Evaluation of P3. We begin the paper with an overview of the nine initially awarded pilots followed by a discussion of the ongoing change efforts and related sustainability efforts as of summer 2019. We then present two case studies of systems change efforts. For this paper, the evaluation team conducted telephone interviews in summer 2019, about a year after most pilots had concluded pilot activities.<sup>1</sup> We interviewed the main point of contact of eight of the nine pilots to discuss the perceived effects of the pilot on the lead pilot organization and its community of partners; youths' experiences; and efforts by the community of partners to sustain P3 beyond the grant, including coordination across partners, the use of flexibilities, and the manner by which youth receive services. The ninth pilot's point of contact from the 2018 site visit was no longer available, and we were unable to identify an individual who could speak to the pilot's continuation efforts. A review of documents—including local evaluation reports, vision documents, pilot activity summaries, and initiative web materials—from the eight grantees that participated in phone interviews added rich information about pilot activities, sustainability efforts, and systems change work. Finally, the team was able to interview partners of Los Angeles City's ongoing initiative that stemmed from its efforts under the P3 grant, which added richness to the case study of that pilot.

## B. Overview of P3 Cohort 1 pilots

As described in earlier papers from the evaluation's implementation study (Rosenberg and Brown 2019; Hanno et al. 2020), the nine Cohort 1 pilots were awarded in communities across the country to grantees that included a mayor's office, a police department, social service agencies, a city, county regional workforce agencies, and a tribal entity. Each pilot, comprised of the grantee and its partners, received up to a maximum of \$700,000 in start-up grant funds to support its efforts, including coordinating partners to serve their disconnected youth and supporting a local evaluation.<sup>2</sup> Federal agencies awarded 25 statutory waivers across eight of the nine pilots. These waivers pertained to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I Youth program, eligibility requirements of other programs, and administrative functions. In addition, pilots identified discretionary programs that would be blended or braided to support their planned services for youth, and most had approval from U.S. Department of

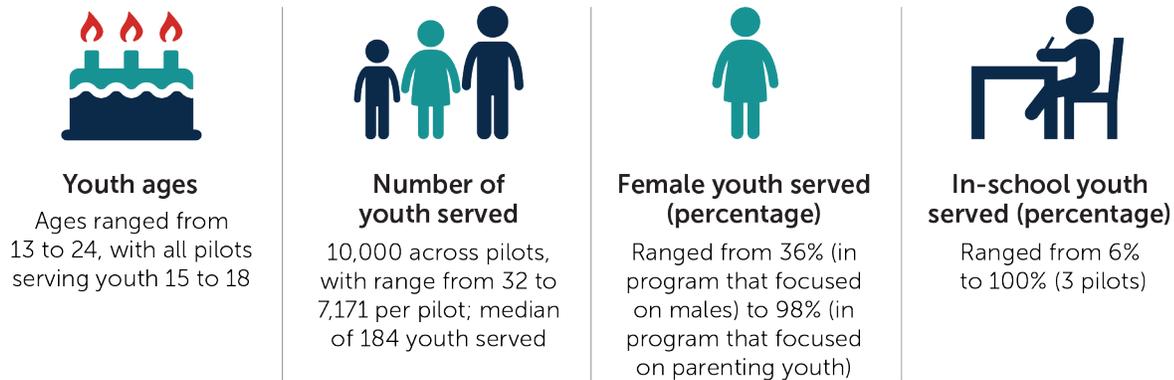
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<sup>1</sup> Six of the eight pilots had concluded all pilot activities one year prior to the telephone interviews. Two pilots received and were using contract extensions to provide another year of services and would be concluding pilot activities three months after the phone interviews.

<sup>2</sup> In September 2016, eight of the nine pilots received supplemental funds, which ranged from \$48,000 to \$175,000.

Labor (DOL) to use WIOA Title I Youth program funds.<sup>3</sup> Over the course of the initial period of pilot performance (fall 2015 through September 2018), pilots relied on their discretionary program and start-up funds to provide services to nearly 10,000 youth (Figure 1).

**Figure 1. Overview of the characteristics of youth served**



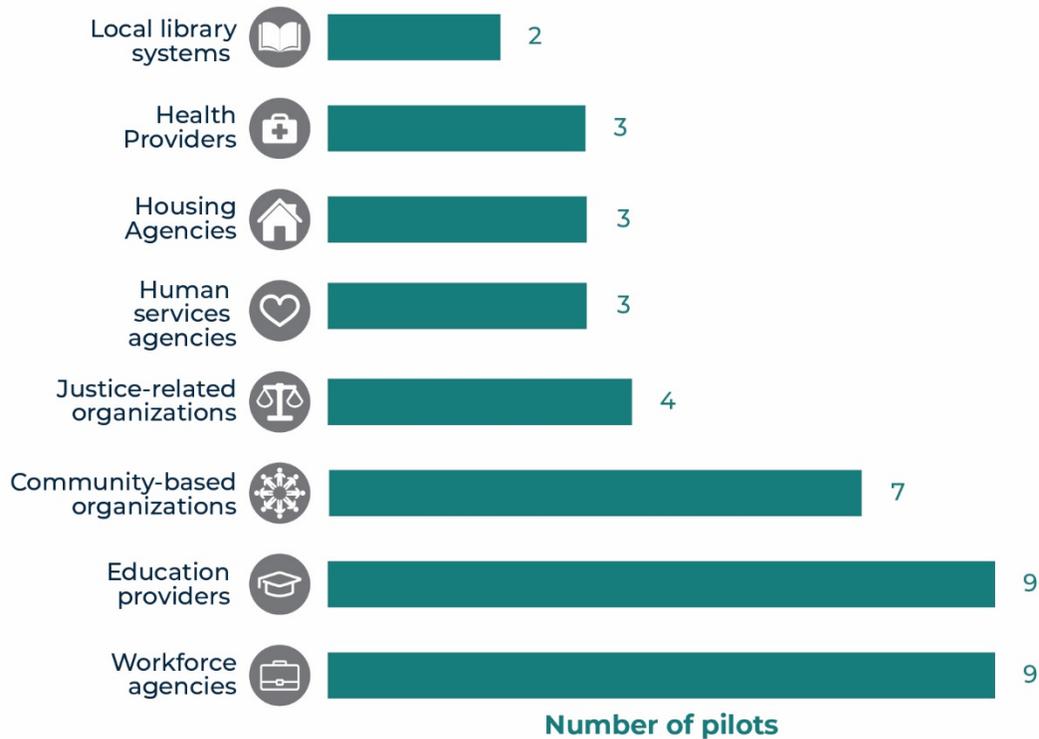
Source: P3 Pilot data as reported by each pilot to the National Evaluation, 2019.

Note: The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014 defined disconnected youth as those ages 14 to 24. Some pilots reported serving youth who were 13.

All Cohort 1 pilots identified a network of partners to more efficiently provide services and improve outcomes for disconnected youth. Pilots partnered with workforce entities, education partners, community-based organizations, justice-related organizations, human services agencies, housing agencies, health providers, and local library systems (Figure 2). Most pilots capitalized on these partnerships to coordinate services for disconnected youth. In seven pilots, partners provided case management services to youth, linking them to existing program and services within their communities. The other two pilots developed specific interventions for their target populations. To engage the broader community serving disconnected youth, pilots hosted partnership meetings, implemented steering committees, and established work groups. Pilots used these meetings to discuss service options for youth, coordinate those services, or create buy-in for existing activities. For example, one pilot established service coordination meetings amongst P3 partners at which specific youth were discussed and a service plan was developed for those youth. Partners reported that the meetings provided an opportunity to discuss what services they offer and to learn from others in the community about their resources.

<sup>3</sup> Both blending and braiding combine funds from two or more separate funding sources to support program services for a particular target population. With blending, funds of each source are not allocated or tracked by the individual source. Thus, the funding streams lose their individual identity and are pooled together to meet the population's needs. With braiding, each funding stream retains its initial programmatic and reporting requirements, although some requirements might be waived (AGA Intergovernmental Partnership 2014).

**Figure 2. Cohort 1 P3 pilots' partnerships**



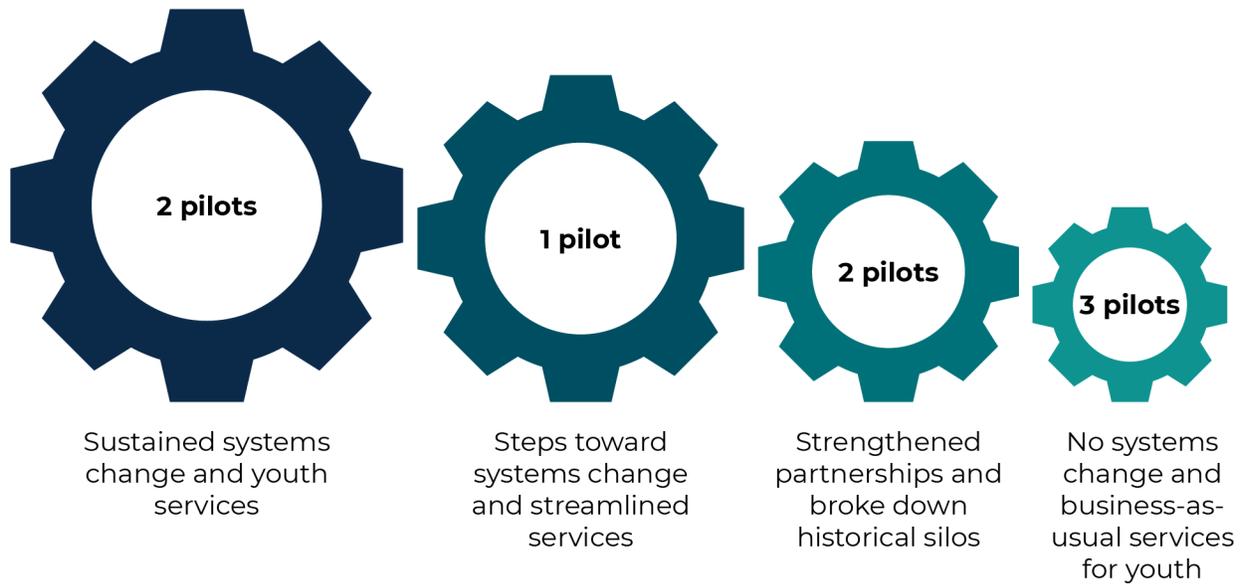
Source: P3 pilot on-site data collection and document review, 2017. N=9 pilots.

### C. Systems change and sustainability efforts of Cohort 1 pilots

As set out in the notice inviting applications (NIA), one purpose of P3 was to be a catalyst for systems change at the state or community level (U.S. Department of Education 2014). Through the use of braiding or blending different program funds and using waivers to smooth requirements across these programs, Federal agencies sought to test whether the pilots could more effectively serve youth and improve outcomes for youth. The NIA defines systems change as establishing cross-sector collaboration at the local level to break down agency silos. For purposes of this paper, we define systems change at the pilot level as changes in how the pilots' partner agencies worked together through their governance structures, communication practices, and data-sharing approaches.

We placed pilots' efforts to sustain systems change along a continuum (Figure 3). At one end of this continuum, two pilots approached P3 as a platform to facilitate systems change in their communities. Staff from these two pilots reported that their systems changes efforts undertaken as part of P3 were being sustained beyond the pilot. Next along the continuum is a pilot that had taken steps toward systems change; these changes were at the beginning stage as the P3 grant was ending. Next, two pilots reported that through P3 they had strengthened partnerships and broken down silos but that the systems for serving disconnected youth did not experience much change as a result of P3. Lastly, staff at three pilots reported that no systems change work occurred as part of their participation in P3. These pilots did not view P3 through a systems change lens and instead focused on programming for disconnected youth.

**Figure 3. Continuum of efforts to sustain systems change and youth services**



Source: P3 pilot sustainability interviews, 2019.

### **Two pilots used P3 as the catalyst for sustained systems change**

Two pilots reported achieving the goal of P3 as forming a catalyst for systems change in their communities and continuing to sustain these efforts. Each of these pilots identified systems change as a primary goal of their P3 pilots at the outset. The Los Angeles, California, pilot approached P3 as an opportunity to change the system for providing services to disconnected youth. It resulted in the development of a strategic plan that would guide the system for serving disconnected youth in the future. In addition, the pilot institutionalized its systems work by creating a hub for disconnected youth research, training, and innovation called the Reconnecting Los Angeles Youth (ReLAY) Institute. The ReLAY Institute is the direct result of P3 efforts to facilitate collaboration amongst the many agencies and organizations that serve youth and to create an information hub. More information about the Los Angeles pilot is provided in Section D of this paper.

The lead pilot agency in Broward County, Florida, the Children’s Services Council of Broward County (CSC), had a long history of working with partners and serving as the backbone organization for change initiatives. Prior to P3, that agency had tried unsuccessfully to create an integrated data system that housed need, service delivery, and demographic data of youth from a variety of youth-serving agencies. The pilot leveraged P3 to gain technical assistance funds and received supplementary P3 funds to build an integrated data system for local youth-serving agencies to reduce manual data collection, improve accuracy, and provide secure access to information. As part of its P3 pilot, the CSC implemented a coaching model in local high schools, which focused on supporting youth so that they can transition successfully to postsecondary education. The lead pilot agency continued the coaching model after the end of the grant period and described plans to expand it beyond the original sites. Under the model, youth received coaching and were connected to partner services through their involvement in P3. Section E provides more detail about the Broward pilot’s effort to create an integrated data system.

### **One pilot took steps toward systems change through P3 efforts**

This pilot's lead agency reported that P3 enabled it to convene youth-serving agencies and hold discussions with local partners about how to coordinate youth services. Staff reported that the lead agency regularly convened staff from direct service providers and formed a thought partnership among participants. As a result of these efforts, staff reported that their partners laid the groundwork for continuing efforts to improve systems and be prepared to work together to address future issues. The lead pilot agency continued its coordinator role after the P3 grant ended. Staff at the lead pilot agency reported that, since P3, the partners are more open to discussing problems and finding solutions as a group. In addition, they can learn and share promising practices from providers across the entire youth serving system.

The lead agency was able to sustain the pilot's approach to referring and enrolling disconnected youth into appropriate services. Prior to P3, the eligibility and enrollment procedures required that out-of-school youth enroll immediately in the WIOA Youth program to receive employment-related services. Using the P3 grant, the pilot partners developed a sequenced model in which these youth participated in a secondary education program prior to starting employment or training services. That secondary education program is the state's reengagement program, which allows state education funds to support reengagement centers and allows for their operation by community-based organizations or community colleges while being defined as a K-12 school. In the secondary education program, youth enroll in a GED program or an alternative high school program. This permitted youth more time to receive support services, such as help getting appropriate identification documents, and to prepare for training. Staff reported that youth were more successful in training programs after they had received supportive services to help them address employment-related barriers.

### **Two pilots reported stronger partnerships through P3**

Two pilots noted that they strengthened partnerships and broke down historical silos within and across agencies; however according to staff, these strengthened partnerships did not translate into a change in their system for serving youth. In the community of one of these pilots, firm boundaries existed historically between the agencies that served youth. Each agency provided its own services and did not coordinate with others on the provision of services to the same youth. For the P3 pilot, the agencies jointly developed services that served the community's disconnected youth. After P3, lead pilot agency staff reported that the partner agencies continued to jointly address challenges and designed programs together. They reported that relationships established through P3 paved the way for the agencies to collaborate on several projects to enrich services for youth and other members of the community. Further, they reported that they built on the services provided under P3 and developed a new program to provide counseling services to youth of all ages (not just youth ages 14 to 21 as required under P3) to help them improve their educational outcomes and connections to the community.

The other pilot noted that connections developed during the pilot between the workforce and education systems were sustained after the pilot ended. Formal ties between the two systems had never been established before the grant. As part of sustainability, one staff member from the partner education agency serves on the workforce board. In addition, many of the P3 pilot staff shifted to different roles within the organizations, which has facilitated continued communication and partnership.

### **Three pilots did not realize any systems change and, after the grant, largely resumed their pre-P3 activities and approach to serving disconnected youth**

Three pilots did not report systems change or sustained service elements. Although all of these pilots' staff understood that the P3 initiative was more broadly about systems change, and two of the pilots discussed systems change as part of their pilot activities in their proposals, the pilot activities primarily focused on providing services to youth during the grant period. The pilots' staff reported several reasons for the lack of systems change, including lack of visibility in the community, changing priorities, and not identifying systems change as a pilot goal from the outset. Without continued funding, the pilots reported they were unable to sustain their youth activities. In addition, staff reported that lack of leadership support hindered sustainability. Staff from these pilots noted that the start-up funds provided with the P3 grant made many of the activities they provided possible, including staffing coordination meetings, supporting case management services to youth, and supporting collaboration with partners.

- Staff at one pilot noted that P3 did not have visibility in the lead pilot agency or the community of youth-serving agencies. Because of this reported lack of buy-in and visibility, pilot staff noted that they did not have the support to continue P3-related activities after the grant ended. Staff noted that the P3 start-up funds supported several of the pilot's key activities, including maintaining the staff that facilitated activities and paying the stipends for participants. Without local champions, the pilot staff reported that they did not receive local funds to continue the youth services provided through P3.
- Staff from another pilot reported that priorities shifted at the grantee organization and there was a lack of support for P3 activities. Although this pilot received an extension, the systems change work and connection between partners that had been established during the initial grant period lost momentum. The service model and leveraged partnerships that occurred during the initial P3 period did not continue into the extension. The pilot staff reported lack of leadership support at an agency level as well as more broadly among youth-serving agencies and elected officials.
- The last pilot met infrequently with partners and chose to serve youth in-house rather than refining the existing system to serve youth. This pilot did not build-in systems change priorities into its service delivery model or partnerships under P3 even though the proposal called for a collective impact model of comprehensive and coordinated multiagency intervention to increase disconnected youths' engagement.

#### **D. Case study 1. Los Angeles P3 and ReLAY Institute: Commitment to changing the system to better serve disconnected youth**

Prior to the award of its P3 grant, the City of Los Angeles (the P3 grantee) had identified the need to restructure how its disconnected youth were being served. According to interviews with the grantee and its partners, Los Angeles's service network for disconnected youth was disparate, with organizations focusing on providing their services to particular population groups with limited collaboration across organizations. Grantee staff reported that these organizations tended to identify a population and develop expertise for serving that group. The youth-serving agencies did not coordinate services or share either best practices or lessons learned about how to serve their populations. Therefore, youth often had to find organizations that fit their circumstance or characteristics on their own, even though many youth had multiple barriers that could be served by more than one organization. City of Los Angeles staff reported that prior to P3 they had wanted to embark on a broader systems change effort were looking for a platform to support this effort. Box 1 provides information about the services that Los Angeles provided to eligible youth.

Systems change was an explicit goal of the Los Angeles P3 pilot. The City of Los Angeles saw P3 as a catalyst for systems change. They aimed to redefine how disconnected youth are served by bringing together the government agencies, education, and youth-serving agencies to create a coordinated and collaborative approach. The City championed this effort and worked with its lead partners, including the County of Los Angeles, the Los Angeles Unified School District, the Los Angeles Community College District, local California State Universities, the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, the Los Angeles Housing Service Agency, and over 50 public, philanthropic, and community-based organizations. Through the pilot, the City worked to gain local partners' commitment to revising how Los Angeles youth were being served and used P3 as a platform to identify structural barriers affecting service delivery.

The City's vision for its P3 pilot was that "all disconnected youth in Los Angeles will secure quality education, training, and employment opportunities" (Los Angeles Performance Partnership Pilot 2017). Thus, the pilot partners developed a new service delivery system for youth centers funded by the WIOA Title I Youth program (WIOA Youth) that provided new assessment resources and connections to partner services in the community. In addition, through the P3 strategic vision, the partners launched a new effort—the ReLAY Institute—to centralize and coordinate research and promising practices for serving disconnected youth.

P3 provided legitimacy for the City to embark on systems change efforts, as partnerships were critical to the success of P3 and future systems change work (see Box 2). The City of Los Angeles championed the effort and acquired commitment from operational leaders of the lead partners who were able to implement change in the policies and procedures at their organizations. Staff at the City of Los Angeles and other partners within Los Angeles then met and developed a plan to address the system's challenges. A series of work groups met monthly during the design and early implementation of the pilot to focus on specific objectives. The following work groups involved 10 to 30 participants and represented a mix of the P3 partners:

**Box 1. Youth services provided under the Los Angeles P3 pilot**

The Los Angeles P3 pilot partners provided youth case management, direct workforce-related services, and referrals to other service providers in the community, including housing and mental health services through its YouthSource Centers. Monthly regional meetings were held for case review and coordination among programs and community-based partner organizations.

The pilot targeted disconnected youth defined as those in foster care, homeless, young parents, involved in the justice system, unemployed, or who had or were at risk of dropping out of school. The pilot partners served over 6,500 youth.

**Box 2. Partnership was reported by pilot staff as critical to the success of Los Angeles P3**

- Pilot staff reported that partner commitment was essential. For P3 to work, staff noted that all the partners must be committed to and support the systems change efforts to overcome administrative challenges.
- Pilot staff reported that champions provided visibility. Champions at the lead pilot agency and key partners gave P3 priority and visibility in the region. This dedicated group of individuals helped to keep P3 in the forefront of agencies' goals and garnered support across the region. Without this support, partners and staff reported, P3 as a systems change pilot would not have been possible.
- Pilot staff noted the importance of understanding who can make decisions. One pilot leader said, "never take a no from someone who cannot say yes." He said the only way to achieve a systems change is to get buy-in and support from the people who have the power to say, "yes, let's make it happen."

- The Partnership Advisory Committee provided for communications across the various governmental entities. This committee largely consisted of representatives of local elected officials overseeing youth development work in the Los Angeles region.
- The Operational Working Group focused on the delivery systems for P3, considering how to create enrollment and referral processes and bring together partners at the provider level.
- The Data, Evaluation, and Research Work Group helped define outcome measures, create data sharing agreements, work with the local management information system on access issues, and facilitate the evaluation.
- The Policy and Waiver Work Group identified a list of over 20 waivers that would facilitate more streamlined services for youth. In addition, this group identified systemic barriers present at different agencies that could change without a waiver to improve services.
- The Steering Work Group was responsible for the overall coordination and communication of work group activities.
- The Strategic Plan Work Group was responsible for developing a strategic plan to provide a road map for the youth-serving systems and services in Los Angeles for 2017 to 2020. The resulting strategic plan set forth four goals for P3 and the youth-serving system (see Box 3). The plan was primarily led by the City of Los Angeles with support from members of the other workgroups and regional partners.

In addition to these six work groups and committees, the City of Los Angeles and its partners developed regional partner collaborative meetings. Held in 12 locations across the Los Angeles region, these meetings brought together youth-serving agencies, workforce entities, community colleges, and community-based organizations. During these monthly meetings, staff from the different groups would provide information about their available services and help to navigate service paths for youth. A facilitator supported by local government funds led these meetings during the P3 pilot extension period.

The pilot partners leveraged P3 to develop a new youth service delivery system, including a consistent assessment process across youth centers. A key part of the new system was the implementation of a revised intake process for all youth entering the region's youth centers. Before P3, if youth were not interested in or eligible for WIOA Youth services, the youth centers could offer only limited services or referrals. Under P3, after orientation at a youth center, youth received a P3-developed education assessment that identified their mental health and other needs. This assessment guided the process of identifying the youth's needs and developing their service plan. If youth were interested in other services, such as mental health services, they were connected to center programs or other community service

**Box 3. Goals set by the Los Angeles P3 pilot Strategic Plan Work Group**

- **Goal 1:** Align and coordinate with public and private agencies in Los Angeles City and County to better serve youth ages 16 to 24 through the development of a platform for collaboration and exchange of best practices.
- **Goal 2:** Increase capacity and sustainability of the regional Los Angeles Workforce Development System, by developing innovative strategies and process improvements that increase and enhance service provision.
- **Goal 3:** Champion policy and systems change to improve outcomes.
- **Goal 4:** Develop programs and policies that empower youth to be self-sufficient and resilient by respecting their needs and desires and by ensuring they have an active voice in making key decisions about their own lives.

providers. Thus, as a result of P3, youth centers strengthened connections with partners and created designated referral paths.

The pilot's perceived benefits of the P3 waiver authority was mixed. On the one hand, the pilot reported that they benefited from the expanded eligibility waiver they received for defining out-of-school youth in WIOA. Specifically, a WIOA Youth waiver approved by DOL allowed the pilot to count foster and homeless youth as out-of-school youth. On the other hand, as the Policy and Waiver Work Group discussed systemic barriers to efficiently serving youth, the pilot staff realized that Federal regulation was less of a barrier than anticipated and local policies and procedures were greater barriers.

**The systems change efforts of P3 coalesced into the creation in 2018 of the ReLAY Institute at the five regional California State Universities.** To further the systems change work of P3, the pilot partners identified the need through their workgroups to create a hub for innovation, research, activities, and information sharing. The presidents of the five California State Universities—California State University Northridge, California State University Los Angeles, California State University Long Beach, Cal Poly Pomona, and California State University Dominguez Hills—that serve the Los Angeles region (known as CSU5) made the commitment that they would create a joint institute that would serve all the universities and workforce areas. Staff from the City of Los Angeles helped to champion the effort and gained support from the CSU5 presidents who had served as integral partners of the P3 pilot. ReLAY partners stated that the presidents recognized that investing in disconnected youth by preparing them for and connecting them to the workforce is critical for the future of the region. The ReLAY Institute became that hub. This effort marked the first time the five universities came together to create such a venture. The ReLAY Institute identified seven strategic objectives and five areas of activities and expertise to guide its work (see Box 4) (CSU5 2018).

**To develop the ReLAY Institute, partners reported needing creative thinking to overcome challenges and administrative hurdles.** Acquiring administrative funding to support the ReLAY Institute posed challenges, as this was a joint venture of five separate universities. As the host campus for ReLAY, California State University Northridge, on behalf of the CSU5, committed to covering much of ReLAY's start-up costs and operations with in-kind contributions and to use some non-state funds as needed to help ReLAY move forward with its important work. The aim is for ReLAY to secure ongoing operating funds through an endowment gift or a number of grants and contracts that can cover operating costs in the next few years. The City and County of Los Angeles also committed funds.

#### **Box 4. ReLAY strategic objectives and areas of expertise**

The vision of ReLAY is to be an “innovative platform to transform service delivery systems to improve outcomes for the region's opportunity youth. Our goal is to catalyze collective action and provide leadership to improve the lives of opportunity youth. We also strive to build the capacity of public and private service providers through increasing their knowledge and analytic capacity, by capturing and sharing data, identifying best practices, disseminating innovation, and fostering networks” (CSU5 2018).

- Seven strategic objectives: (1) cross-sector support; (2) capacity building; (3) partnership building; (4) advancing innovation; (5) fortifying networks; (6) creating solutions; and (7) connectivity.
- Five areas of activities and expertise, called pillars: (1) the research and evaluation network; (2) the consortium for public policy education; (3) the alliance for engaged learning; (4) the academy for professional development; and (5) the innovation hive.

As the first cross-university institute, ReLAY encountered administrative and bureaucratic complications. The creation of an institute supported by five separate universities with their own bureaucracies, policies, and practices required the CSU5 to create new structures and expectations. The group had to find a faculty champion and decide where to house ReLAY. The CSU5 also had to negotiate one set of policies and procedures that would govern the Institute. In summer 2019, ReLAY was staffed by an associate director and a lead faculty member from CSU5.

ReLAY developed a cross-sector executive advisory board to guide its efforts. The CSU5 presidents led a process to secure commitments from key public and philanthropic leaders to join the Institute's Advisory Board. Leaders were selected based on their leadership in supporting work that has resulted in improved outcomes for disconnected youth and their communities. This Board will help frame policy priorities and set the agenda of the Institute. The Advisory Board includes members from the CSU5, City of Los Angeles, County of Los Angeles, local school districts, local community colleges, chambers of commerce, foundations, and community organizations.

**Partners noted that the ReLAY Institute created the capacity for providers to think innovatively and to build a platform that can house all the learning and resources for serving disconnected youth.** In interviews, the ReLAY staff and partners highlighted three main emphases of the Institute's work that encompass their objective strategies and pillars. First, ReLAY serves as a clearinghouse for information about innovation and services for disconnected youth. ReLAY Institute partners reported that because information previously was not housed in a single place, many youth-serving agencies were unaware of other providers' innovations or best practices. Thus, the ReLAY Institute can serve as a mechanism to gather information for and across providers about how to better serve youth in the community and connect service providers and innovative methods across a large geographic area. To serve that function, the Institute aims to build a platform that encourages the dissemination of information and best practices. ReLAY Institute partners reported that they ultimately hope to see ReLAY as the hub for connectivity and innovation, with the products branded by ReLAY and shared across the partners on the website and through other dissemination activities.

Second, partners stated that the intent is for the ReLAY Institute to strengthen the regional network and future workforce by serving youth that would otherwise not be connected to services. Staff reported that the universities' common mission is to equip these youth with the tools they need to take part in the workforce and move along career pathways. They said that the ReLAY Institute will help the universities understand how to identify and better serve youth who otherwise would not have access to postsecondary education. Partners who were interviewed reported that ReLAY could serve as the vehicle for convening universities, city and county agencies, providers, and the philanthropic community to identify issues faced by disconnected youth and find solutions to address those challenges.

As part of this effort to strengthen the city's workforce, the ReLAY Institute gained support from the seven regional workforce boards. The CSU5 negotiated memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with all seven workforce boards to have the ReLAY Institute share information about serving disconnected youth and connecting those youth to the workforce. Before P3, each workforce board in the Los Angeles region disseminated its own information about services for youth. Because this information was not linked to information available through the other workforce boards in the area, a youth or provider who wanted to learn about all services available through a workforce board in the area would have to go each workforce board. The ReLAY Institute now houses that information in a central location and youth or providers can search available resources. The ReLAY Institute website will have search functionality by service

planning area and categories that include health, living, and work, among others. For example, youth or youth-serving providers could search for resources on parenting in their local areas.

Third, a broader goal of the ReLAY Institute is to disseminate information and best practices to improve outcomes for youth across the Los Angeles region and ultimately the country. The ReLAY Institute partners reported that it has huge potential to serve as a model across the country and help other communities that want to undertake systems change to more effectively serve youth. Reports, briefs, and other documents developed by CSU5 researchers and ReLAY partners will be available on the website. For example, researchers at one of the CSU5 conducted a scan of citywide expenditures on disconnected youth and rolled out the product as a ReLAY effort housed on the ReLAY website.

### E. Case study 2. Broward Data Collaborative Integrated Data System: Integrating data to better understand needs and coordinate services for disconnected youth using a racial equity lens

For several years preceding P3, the Broward lead pilot agency, the Children’s Services Council (CSC) of Broward County, had tried to bring together partners from across the state to participate in an integrated data system. Due to challenges working through technical and legal requirements, it was unable to secure agreements with most partners to build the data system.

CSC staff viewed P3 as an opportunity to restart discussions around data sharing; and advance CSC’s intentional effort to facilitate the use of data sharing to address racial equity in Broward’s youth-serving agencies. Box 5 provides information about the services provided to youth under the pilot. As P3 encouraged systems change and improvements, staff reported that an integrated data system fit with these goals and was a priority of education, human services, juvenile justice, and mental health pilot partners. In addition to the P3 grant funds, CSC, and the County had already allocated funds to incorporate a racial equity lens into Broward’s youth serving system. The Broward P3 pilot used its grant funding to build a data

#### **Box 5. Services provided to youth under the Broward P3 pilot**

The Broward P3 pilot partners provided case management services to in-school youth to promote their education goals. Coaches conducted comprehensive assessments of participating youth to help them develop their post-secondary transition plans. The pilot also offered summer youth employment opportunities to youth. The pilot partners served over 400 youth through its efforts.

sharing system, develop the integrated data system’s governance structure, and to incorporate Community Participatory Action Research (CPAR) into the Broward Data Collaborative (BDC) integrated data system that would serve as a repository of youth outcome and service delivery data. CPAR was a CSC led research project for youth involved with justice, child welfare, and behavioral health systems. Conducted collaboratively by youth, front line staff, managers and researchers, CPAR’s goal was to include youth voices in local research and evaluation to improve community outcomes and build their capacity to serve on the BDC governing board.

Broward was developing the integrated data system using a racial equity lens for local youth-serving agencies to reduce manual data collection, improve accuracy, and provide secure access for administrative and case management purposes. In summer 2019, the BDC integrated data system was expected to be functional the following summer and would: (1) facilitate individual case planning and decision-making; (2) improve the collection of information for law, policy, and program development; and (3) enhance performance measurement, program evaluation, and research. CSC anticipated that the integrated data system would empower the BDC youth-serving agencies to have the information they

need to more effectively serve youth. CSC also anticipated that the system would help build connections between providers and advance the creation of meaningful relationships among participants and system professionals (via CPAR). The grantee viewed this systemic change as necessary to advance racially equitable outcomes in Broward's youth serving system.

As envisioned, the integrated data system would allow access to information for agencies that have provided services to youth and for participants and system professionals to work towards mutual solutions for systemic problems. This would enable BDC youth-serving agencies to more systematically track long-term and cross-system outcomes while CPAR related projects will install equity-based solutions to the outcomes present in the various systems. As a result, CSC staff reported that youth would have opportunities to receive better coordinated services, as the system will include service receipt and referral information for all the partners included in the data system.

In addition, the intention was for the system to include demographic information so that partners would not need to ask youth for the same information if it has been collected by another partner using the system. Finally, youth (system participants) would work with system professionals to create more equitable outcomes for the youth served by the system. These youth would participate on the BDC governing board and help make decisions about changes to the system.

**Broward used P3 to refocus on building an integrated data system.** The Broward P3 lead pilot established cross-sector partnerships to design, plan, and build the integrated data system. It brought together partners from the Broward County Public Schools, Broward County, Florida Department of Children and Families, Early Learning Coalition of Broward County, Broward Behavioral Health Coalition, ChildNet, and Department of Juvenile Justice. CSC had been working with these partners for over 10 years to develop MOUs that would permit data sharing and collaboration on an integrated data system. At the start of P3, they had been continuing to work with partners to get these in place. In addition, the lead pilot agency incorporated the youth perspectives via CPAR when developing its integrated data system. This provided youth a voice in designing the database and helping to identify areas for improvement.

P3 provided the resources, structures, and relationships to develop the integrated data system. In 2016, CSC partnered with the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet's Technology Workgroup as part of the P3 effort to create technological and legal platforms to locally integrate data across state databases. As lead agency for the BDC, CSC was maintaining the integrated data system and continuing to explore ways to enhance the system, including its functionality in supporting more coordinated services for youth, and received additional funding to expand the implementation of CPAR.

Capitalizing on its P3 grant, CSC applied for and won a national technical assistance grant to plan the integrated data system. CSC received an Actionable Intelligence for Social Policy technical assistance grant from the University of Pennsylvania in 2017. The technical assistance provided support for designing an integrated data system, developing data sharing practices with partners, and navigating legal requirements.

**CSC has worked through two main challenges encountered during the design, development, and building of the integrated data system.** First, CSC staff noted that legal requirements and restrictions complicated the process. The data included in the integrated data system are private and sensitive. Due to the nature of the data, many partners' legal staff had to negotiate the terms for inclusion of their data. This required significant time and multiple discussions among different levels of staff to get the approvals in place.

Second, in summer 2019, CSC was still determining how to get a universal informed consent from the youth. The pilot staff spent an extensive amount of time negotiating the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act's informed consent requirement with the local education agency for sharing individual level education data. The CSC and the local education agency agreed upon a robust informed consent process, with all but one data education data element included in the integrated data system.

## F. Moving forward

According to interviews, sustaining the systems change efforts of P3 pilots required explicit goals and planning, a strong commitment from leadership, and partners' willingness to innovate. The champions of these systems change efforts continued to seek ways to improve the system after the conclusion of their P3 pilots. Staff reported that the pilots that built in systems change from the outset had the most success at sustaining their efforts. At times, these efforts required pilot staff and partners to identify their own structural barriers and pioneer new ways of thinking about serving disconnected youth. Staff at two pilots reported that systems change was an uncomfortable process, but ultimately would improve how youth received services in their communities.

### **P3 and the national evaluation**

First authorized by the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014, Performance Partnership Pilots for Disconnected Youth (P3) awards pilots, led by state, local, and tribal community grantees, the flexibility to blend and braid funds across Federal discretionary youth programs to test innovative, cost-effective, and evidence-based strategies to improve outcomes of disconnected youth. The multiple Federal agencies designated in the Act worked to implement this authority (U.S. Department of Education 2014). Through the Act, five agencies—the U.S. Departments of Education (ED), Health and Human Services (HHS), and Labor (DOL); the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS); and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)—awarded a first cohort of nine P3 pilots in 2015 with a period of performance through September 30, 2018 (henceforth the Cohort 1 pilots). The period of performance for three pilots was extended by one year, though one pilot chose not to use the extension. As of the writing of this paper, the Federal partners awarded six additional pilots under the 2015 and 2016 Acts (the Cohort 2 and 3 pilots) and had published a notice inviting applications to select up to 10 pilots each for fiscal years 2018 and 2019.

To assess P3, the Federal partners awarded a five-year national evaluation, under the direction of the DOL Chief Evaluation Office, to Mathematica and its subcontractor, Social Policy Research Associates. Through the evaluation's multiple components, the Federal partners sought to document the work of the pilots, examine their implementation of the P3 authorization, and support local evaluations of the pilots' impacts on youth outcomes. The national evaluation included the following components:

1. **Implementation study.** The implementation study is examining the work of the Federal, state, and local partners to assess their role in changing systems and in providing innovative services to youth. The team conducted two rounds of visits in 2017 and 2018 to Cohort 1 pilots authorized in the 2014 Appropriations Act and conducted one round of visits in 2019 to the five pilots awarded under the 2015 and 2016 Appropriations Acts.
2. **Outcomes data collection.** The national evaluation team collected the administrative data from the nine Cohort 1 pilots to define the population of youth who participated in P3, the services they received, and the employment and education outcomes they achieved.
3. **Evaluation technical assistance.** The nine Cohort 1 pilots and four of the subsequent six pilots planned to conduct experimental, quasi-experimental, one-group pre/post, or implementation evaluations as part of their grant applications. Through the national evaluation, team members provided ongoing technical assistance to pilot leaders and their independent local evaluators to help strengthen the designs and reporting of their local evaluations. In 2019, the evaluation team synthesized findings from across the Cohort 1 local evaluation reports (Maxwell and Yanez 2020).

For more information on P3, please see <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/reconnecting-youth/performance-partnership-pilots>

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