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# YOUTH DEVELOPMENT COLLABORATIVE PILOT

## ***OVERVIEW***

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## ***WHAT IS THE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT COLLABORATIVE (YDC) PILOT?***

The YDC Pilot is a two-year pilot program of the Morino Institute in partnership with four community-based groups (Core Partners) serving inner city youth and their families in the District of Columbia. The Pilot seeks to understand how the Internet—its related technologies and the resources it makes available—can be integrated into the work of these organizations to increase their capacity to offer quality services and improve their overall operations.

The goal of the Pilot is to leverage and strengthen the work of the Core Partner groups by providing the expertise to develop the organizational capacity—people, systems and know-how—to integrate the Internet into their learning and youth-related programs. All too often computers, software and Internet services are donated to organizations without the training and support necessary to integrate these tools into their programs.

The YDC Pilot differs because its focus is on how to use the Internet and related technologies as a tool to achieve organizational change and growth. Another difference is the way the Morino Institute is supporting the Pilot. In addition to providing financial support, the Institute is collaborating with the Core Partners much as a venture capitalist would in funding a new business. The Institute is providing direct, hands-on expertise to help the Core Partners develop the capacity to create, grow and sustain their programs for the duration of the Pilot and beyond. The Institute is also employing assessment methods that will lead to continuous improvement of the Pilot.

From the Pilot, the Institute has developed an approach and base of knowledge that can be adapted by other youth serving organizations in the District and nationwide. The Pilot is part of a larger effort to address the continued digital divide and offer all children the opportunity to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence to participate in the New Economy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## ***WHO ARE THE PARTNERS?***

The Institute is collaborating with four organizations that are well-established in their communities. The four organizations are Calvary Bilingual Multicultural Learning Center, Community Preservation and Development Corporation/Edgewood Terrace, Friendship House and Perry School Community Services Center. Each of these partners has strong and dynamic leadership. Each has built a successful, self-sustaining organization that has provided effective services for young people in the inner city, and serves as a strong advocate for the needs of its community.

## ***HOW DOES THE PILOT WORK?***

The YDC Pilot has established four Networked Learning Centers, one at each of the Core Partner organizations. The Centers provide Internet-enabled out-of-school learning environments for children ages 6 through 13. The Centers offer a minimum of 15 networked computers, a high speed Internet connection, and a wide range of state of the art software and multimedia equipment.

Each Center is staffed by a full-time director, supported by other staff and volunteers. Through the YDC Pilot, the staff has been trained in the use of the Internet for project based learning, child development, use of multimedia equipment and classroom management. This training will continue through year two of the Pilot, with greater emphasis on the use of the Web as a tool for learning and communication.

The Centers are creating and using project based, experiential learning programs to help young people develop the critical thinking and social skills so essential to going on to college, getting a job and providing for their families. The goal is to help children become active learners and

strengthen their self-esteem and confidence to reach beyond their neighborhood through the Internet.

The Pilot is developing an online forum to tap the collective intelligence of those involved in the effort and to create an online learning community. The online forums serve three functions:

- 1) Facilitate communication, coordination and program management;
- 2) Bring together Core Partner management and staff with other youth development practitioners and specialists from related areas, in and outside the Greater Washington region, to exchange ideas and provide a mechanism for learning; and
- 3) Create a base of knowledge for the Morino Institute and its partners to readily capture processes, experiences, techniques and achievements throughout the Pilot.

### ***WHAT IS THE MORINO INSTITUTE'S ROLE?***

The Morino Institute is investing more than \$2.5 million to fund the Pilot. Approximately 20% of this investment is in direct matching grants to the Core Partners, with the bulk of this investment allocated to building Core Partner organizational capacity and documenting the Pilot's development.

The Institute has dedicated a team of six full-time professionals, led by Tracy Gray, Vice President Youth Services, to assist the Core Partners develop the capacity to sustain programs beyond the Pilot. Supplementing this team are associates and advisors with expertise in youth development, Internet-enabled learning, program management, education, organizational development and management, and information technology.

Additionally, the Institute has created linkages to the Pilot and the Core Partners with the broader business community for improved resource support and capacity building.

### ***WHAT ARE THE ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES?***

Through the YDC Pilot, the Institute will:

- Demonstrate how the Internet can be used to increase the capacity of community-based groups to reach out to youth and families;
- Assist management and staff to develop the capability to use the Internet throughout their organization to provide quality learning opportunities, to adopt more effective business practices, and to sustain their efforts;
- Develop a Web based Professional Staff Learning Program that consists of inquiry based learning projects for out-of-school programs coupled with a staff development component to train youth workers to implement these programs; and
- Capture and disseminate the lessons learned to ensure that other organizations around the country can use these new tools to provide quality programs for children, their families, and their communities.

### ***WHAT IS THE MORINO INSTITUTE?***

The Morino Institute, <http://www.morino.org>, is a nonprofit organization founded by software entrepreneur Mario Morino in 1994 to help people and communities find ways to use the Internet to achieve positive economic and social change. The Institute focuses its efforts in two areas: entrepreneurship, <http://netpreneur.org>, and youth development.