

## **Chester Core Standards for *Older* Youth Programming Self Assessment Tool**

The Chester Core Standards for *Older* Youth Programming began as a collaborative effort between the Chester Youth Collaborative, and the city of Chester. These organizations, along with assistance from United Way Southeastern Pennsylvania Center for Youth Development, key stakeholders and community members developed a document that will be used as a self assessment tool for new and existing youth programs. Though, these standards were developed for organizations serving older youth (12 -18), these standards are available as a basic guideline for all youth programs in the city of Chester.

It is estimated that 2800 youth between the ages of 12 and 18 are receiving youth services through various programs within the Chester Youth Collaborative (CYC). The Chester Youth Collaborative, established as the Youth Development Resource in the city of Chester, provides resources and assistance to enhance program quality for Youth Serving Organizations serving Chester youth. The CYC, along with key stakeholders and community members, recognize the need to not only track improvement within existing programs, but to provide a guideline for new youth programs that want to serve youth in the city of Chester.

The Chester Core Standards for Older Youth Programming have been divided into three categories, Foundation, Strategies and Engagement:

- The *Foundation* category highlights key operational functions that all youth programs must have in order to safely run programming, which includes staff to student ratio, intake procedures for students, etc.
- The *Strategies* category speaks to the way in which programming is planned, which includes documentation of lesson plans and age appropriate materials and activities.
- The *Engagement* category discusses best practices on how to recruit, engage and retain youth in programming.

The Core Standards are based on a three point system, as outlined below:

<b>Level 1</b>	Minimum standards that should be in place at the start of program.
<b>Level 2</b>	Standards critical to providing effective youth programs. Level 2 standards should be fully implemented by the end of the program's first year of operation.
<b>Level 3</b>	Continuous Improvement, meaning that programs are not required to attain these goals, but should always be working towards the standards. It is suggested that programs are working at these on a continuous

## Rating the Chester Core Standards

The Chester Core Standards has been designed to allow Youth Serving Organizations an opportunity to self-asses their programs so that they are empowered to seek resources and Technical Assistance to improve program quality. Findings from ratings are to be objective and are used to gauge what a Youth Serving Organization needs to improve program quality.

The rating system for the Chester Core Standards is based on a 4 point scale. In the **Ratings** column, please choose a rating for each Standard by circling the number that is appropriate. If the **Ratings** section is shaded, that Standard does not need to be rated with a number. Instead, these Standards should be rated with Yes or No, please circle the appropriate option.

The Rating System is as follows:

0	<b>No</b> evidence the standard is met
1	<b>Little</b> evidence the standard is met (Standard will be considered as not met due to not having sufficient evidence, but can be met if improvements are made)
2	<b>Moderate</b> evidence is met
3	<b>Consistent</b> evidence the standard is met

A rating of either 0 or 1 will result in that Standard not being met.

A rating of a 2 indicates that the Standard is being met, *but needs improvement*.

A rating of a 3 indicates that the Standard is being effectively and consistently met.

## Foundation

*(Please rate the items listed below using the scale (Y) Yes; (N) NO.)*

	Rating	Yes	No
<b>LEVEL 1</b>			
1. Organization has a mission and vision statement.		Y	N
<b>LEVEL 2</b>			
2. Organization has written Policies and Procedures		Y	N
a) Organization has Staff Handbook including:		Y	N
-Mission and Vision Statement		Y	N
-Mandated Reporting law		Y	N
-Staff Rights and Responsibilities		Y	N
-Documentation on appropriate discipline and conflict management techniques		Y	N
b) Organization has Volunteer Handbook including:		Y	N
-Mission and Vision Statement		Y	N
-Code of Conduct, as written by organization		Y	N
-Language on appropriate boundaries		Y	N
c) Organization has Parent Handbook including:		Y	N
-Mission and Vision Statement		Y	N
-Arrival and departure times and procedures		Y	N
-What to Bring to Program		Y	N
-What to Expect for Program		Y	N
-Emergency protocol for absent parent		Y	N
-Emergency contact form		Y	N
d) Organization has Participant Handbook including:		Y	N
-Mission and Vision Statement		Y	N
-Code of ethics w/ consequences		Y	N

-Program contact information		Y	N
-Program Structure		Y	N
<b>LEVEL 3</b>			
3. Organization meets minimum licensing standards:		Y	N
a) Program has a locked file box that contains confidential information on students/families		Y	N
b) All staff/volunteers have criminal and child abuse clearances which include FBI clearances (when necessary).		Y	N
c) Staff have current immunizations		Y	N
d) Staff/Volunteer handbooks includes:		Y	N
i. Copies of incident Report and Emergency			
ii. Preparedness forms to be copied when needed		Y	N
iii. System to file reports will be included in			
iv. staff/volunteer handbook as well		Y	N
e) Proper student to staff ratio is maintained.		Y	N
i. For grades 1st-3rd the ratio is 1:12		Y	N
ii. For grades 4th-12th the ratio is 1:15		Y	N
f) Youth's arrivals and departures are documented.		Y	N
g) Staff note when students arrive and depart.		Y	N
h) All youth have written documentation of approved adults or (youth over the age of 13) who sign them out.		Y	N
i) Youth who walk home from program have written permission from parents/guardians to walk home		Y	N
j) Youth (ages 13 and over) sign themselves in and out		Y	N
k) At least one person on site is certified in first aid/CPR is present at all times.		Y	N

l) When transporting youth, normal staff to youth ratio is maintained		Y	N
m) Consent forms for transporting youth, taking pictures or videos, and dispersing medicine are on file for youth		Y	N
n) Regulations for food preparation and handling are followed, including:		Y	N
i. Food is properly stored and refrigerated when necessary		Y	N
ii. A sufficient amount of food is provided for youth		Y	N
iii. Food may not be withheld from a youth as a form of discipline		Y	N

## Engagement

*(Please rate the items listed below using the numbered scale.)*

Engagement	Rating	
<b>LEVEL 1</b>		
1. Organization promotes a respectful environment	0 1 2 3	
a) Program promotes open dialogue between youth, adults, and/or group leaders.	0 1 2 3	
b) Staff create an environment where both staff and youth are engaged in the learning process	0 1 2 3	
c) Program fosters experiential learning (i.e. internships, service learning projects, community service projects, etc.)	0 1 2 3	
<b>LEVEL 2</b>		
2. Organization actively practices positive youth development:	0 1 2 3	
a) Each staff person has attended at least one workshop/course focusing on "Program Quality"	0 1 2 3	

b) Staff create a welcoming environment and engage youth in program activities.	0 1 2 3	
c) Staff promote a respectful, culturally diverse and culturally aware environment.	0 1 2 3	
d) Program provides opportunities for youth to be active change agents within the program.	0 1 2 3	
<b>LEVEL 3</b>		
3. Organization is committed to civic and community engagement.	0 1 2 3	
a) Program offers and encourages opportunities for business and community leaders to connect with and contribute to youth.	0 1 2 3	
b) Program provides information regarding other community resources to meet the needs of youth and families.	0 1 2 3	
c) Youth feel connected to their community, community members, and community stakeholders.	0 1 2 3	
<b>Strategies</b>		
<i>(Please rate the items listed below using the numbered scale.)</i>		
<b>LEVEL 1</b>		
1. Activities align with standard best practices.	0 1 2 3	
a) Program's daily activities align with overall philosophy of program.	0 1 2 3	
b) Staff engage youth in the planning of program activities.	0 1 2 3	
<b>LEVEL 2</b>		
2. Effective activity planning process	0 1 2 3	
a) Staff document activity planning process.	0 1 2 3	
b) There is a plan in place to monitor and assess activities to ensure effective and quality programming.	0 1 2 3	

c) Program has sufficient materials/equipment to serve youth participants.	0 1 2 3	
d) Materials/Equipment are in good condition and age appropriate for youth participants.	0 1 2 3	
Congratulations! You have completed the Chester Core Standards Self Assessment. Please calculate your score and indicate your overall rating below.		
<b>Overall Rating: Foundation</b>		
Level 1: Organization has met all Level 1 Standards		Y N
Level 2: Organization has met all Level 2 Standards		Y N
Level 3: Organization has met all Level 3 Standards		Y N
Comments:		
<b>Overall Rating: Engagement</b>		
Level 1: Organization has met all Level 1 Standards		Y N
Level 2: Organization has met all Level 2 Standards		Y N
Level 3: Organization has met all Level 3 Standards		Y N
Comments:		
<b>Overall Rating: Strategies</b>		
Level 1: Organization has met all Level 1 Standards		Y N
Level 2: Organization has met all Level 2 Standards		Y N
Level 3: Organization has met all Level 3 Standards		Y N
Comments:		

<b>Organization:</b>	<b>Executive Director:</b>
<b>Person Completing Assessment:</b>	
<b>Date of Self-Assessment:</b>	

