The Youth Development Resource Center has created the following strategic plan to guide its efforts over the next two years, and beyond.

The plan ensures the YDRC effectively supports youth development providers in increasing program quality, and ultimately improve youth outcomes across the city of Detroit. It is based on a six-month inquiry process conducted by the Forum for Youth Investment and also included a variety of inputs related to the education and youth development landscape in Detroit.
LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

For more than 10 years, through a variety of initiatives and iterations, there have been efforts in Detroit to ensure that youth are safe, healthy, educated, and prepared for adulthood. Those efforts have included building the organizational capacity of youth development organizations, increasing program quality, and improving youth access to programs. Since 2013, the Youth Development Resource Center (YDRC) has been central to those efforts. Today, more than 400 youth development providers ranging in size are operating across the city, and with that, there’s an elevated recognition of the role youth development programs play in supporting positive youth outcomes. This is an opportunity to establish a vision for the role that the YDRC can play in lifting up quality across the youth development sector.

Key stakeholders, including funders and youth-serving organizations, agree that the YDRC is a vital resource filling a critical void in the City of Detroit. During strategic planning interviews, there was universal recognition of the YDRC’s value in providing quality capacity-building services that ensure positive youth development learning environments for youth of all ages. Funders and providers alike appreciate the YDRC’s integrated approach to capacity-building that ensures programs are using data to inform improvement.

The YDRC, now in its fifth year of operations, is well-positioned to take its work to the next level by shifting from supporting specific neighborhoods across the city to supporting access to quality youth development programs in and around Detroit. This plan formalizes a roadmap for the YDRC’s vision with key strategic priorities to focus its work, and lays out its approach to supporting organizations in improving youth outcomes.
Who We Are

The Youth Development Resource Center supports a network of Detroit area youth development providers to strengthen their individual and collective impact on youth through shared measurement, continuous quality improvement, professional development, and advocacy.

OUR VISION

All Detroit area youth are connected to high-quality youth development opportunities that grow their capacities to thrive in school and life.

OUR MISSION

To improve the quality of Detroit area youth-serving organizations to maximize their impact on youth and to advocate for accessible high-quality youth development opportunities.

OUR OBJECTIVE

To increase the quality and impact of youth development programming across the Detroit area. We accomplish this through programming described in detail starting on page 5.
OUR 2018-2020 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1. IDENTIFY a provider-driven youth outcomes framework that includes “how much, how well, what difference?” and build a shared measurement system with the potential to scale.

2. INCREASE the number of providers that engage with YDRC through a more robust web presence, through network activities, and through Acting with Data.

3. CHAMPION the importance of accessible, high quality youth development opportunities for the children and youth in the Detroit area.

4. FOCUS on YDRC operations to ensure sustainability and scale.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

▸ FOR YOUTH
  Youth are connected to high-quality learning and development opportunities that expand their skills and capacities for success in school and life.

▸ FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS
  Organizations are connected to a network focused on improving quality and expanding access to professional learning opportunities across the youth development sector in Detroit.

▸ FOR THE DETROIT AREA
  Afterschool and summer learning programs are recognized as critical to youth’s development and learning, and those opportunities are equitably available for all youth.
OUR VALUES

VALUES THAT GUIDE HOW WE WORK WITH YOUTH AND FAMILIES

EQUITY AND ACCESS
All Detroit area youth should have access to high-quality youth development programs.

WHOLE CHILD
Holistically supporting young people in their social and emotional development will transfer into all areas of youth’s lives, including academic success and thriving futures.

YOUTH AND PARENT VOICE
The needs of youth and parents must be central to every conversation about expanding access to and the quality of youth development and learning opportunities.

VALUES THAT GUIDE HOW WE WORK WITH PROGRAMS AND YOUTH WORKERS

STRENGTHS FOCUS
Positive and lasting change occurs when we take a strengths-based, low-stakes approach that meets people and organizations where they are on their individual learning and developmental path.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT
A continuous improvement approach, promoting the use of evidence-based tools and practices, is necessary to improve adult capacity and create positive learning environments for youth.

VALUES THAT GUIDE HOW WE WORK WITH THE COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY
There is power in networking, partnership, and authentic community-building.

COLLABORATION
Creating a culture shift that allows Detroit area youth-serving stakeholders to build trust, collaboration, and the collective will to expand opportunities for Detroit area youth.

DATA-DRIVEN
Data and research are a teacher, a guide, and a decision-maker while our community seeks to expand learning and developmental opportunities for all young people.

PEER MENTORING
Training and mentoring talent in the youth development field will help sustain and expand youth development opportunities for the next generation.
To meet its strategic priorities in the next two years, the YDRC’s will focus its work using these four approaches:

**MEASURE**

Strengthen the ability of youth development organizations to use standardized data and best practices that allow quality and impact to increase.

**IMPROVE**

Offer and connect youth development professionals to learning that strengthens their skills to implement high-quality youth programming that is safe, supportive, engaging, and skill-building.

**CONNECT**

Convene networking and peer learning opportunities for professionals to build relationships and partnerships, connect to local resources and national best practices, and share lessons learned.

**ADVOCATE**

Champion quality and equity so that more children across the Detroit area can access high-quality youth development opportunities.
The YDRC’s work to help youth development providers, funders, and capacity-builders measure quality and assess the impact of youth development opportunities is its signature function.

Since its founding, the YDRC has supported Detroit area youth-serving organizations to track and use data and to engage in continuous quality improvement. The YDRC provides workshops and access to common MEASUREMENT tools — such as a soon-to-launch enrollment and attendance tracker, the Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA), and a youth social-emotional skills and outcomes survey. These tools help providers assess how many youth they are serving, how much service they are providing, how well the service is delivered, and what difference they are making in terms of the youth skills and outcomes. Providers then use that data to reflect on practice, make plans for improvement, and participate in targeted professional development and coaching aimed at practice improvement.

**THE YDRC WILL:**

- Scaffold the Acting with Data Learning Community for school-year afterschool programs and strengthen coaching for beginners to ensure fidelity. Continue with the Summer Learning Program Quality Improvement Learning Community.

YDRC’s quality improvement approach will consist of three levels, and will be shared with providers in the following way:

**FIRST: COMMIT TO QUALITY YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE**

As a first step, youth-serving organizations and managers can understand and adopt the Quality Standards for Youth Development Programs and use them as a guide for self-assessment and program improvement plans. Afterschool and summer programs that aim to be licensed should also understand the Michigan Out-of-School Time Standards of Quality approved by the Michigan State Board of Education. To learn more, visit: [http://www.miafterschool.org/standards-of-quality/](http://www.miafterschool.org/standards-of-quality/).

Additionally, youth development professionals who are committed to professionalism in the out-of-school time field should attend trainings and consider obtaining the Michigan Afterschool Association’s Michigan School-Age Youth Development
(MiSAYD) Certificate or Credential. To learn more, visit https://misayd.gennet.us/.

YDRC provides trainings to youth development professionals, but also encourages youth development professionals to seek out trainings aligned to the National Afterschool Association Core Knowledge and Competencies.

**NEXT: MEASURE AND DEMONSTRATE QUALITY AND IMPACT:**

After the introduction to common quality standards and professional development pathways, YDRC partners with youth development programs for data-informed continuous quality improvement through their Acting with Data Learning Community and Summer Learning Program Quality Learning Community.

**FINALLY: DEEPEN YOUTH AND ADULT SKILLS:**

YDRC invites providers that have mastered the measurement and program improvement planning process to deepen social emotional learning (SEL) practices for youth and adults, or improve other areas of youth development practice.

- Pilot a data system for attendance tracking with a small set of ready providers in 2018–2019.
- Refine a shared measurement framework, working with the SEL (Social Emotional Learning) Advanced Cohort of Acting with Data to narrow to three to six priority common SEL measures.
- Foster alignment between The Skillman Foundation and the United Way for Southeastern Michigan initiatives on summer capacity-building for Summer 2019 so they are not two disconnected efforts.

**OUTCOMES:**

- Increase in the number of the providers in Detroit completing a quality improvement cycle during the school year or summer, as measured by submitting a Program Improvement Plan.
- Successful pilot of a data management system, with data from that system being used to inform citywide system building and dedicated fund development conversations.
- The SEL Advanced Cohort develops a set of shared outcomes to vet with the larger provider community, with the aim of having providers agree to a common set of metrics that could eventually be tracked citywide to support advocacy for youth development programs and resources.
The YDRC supports quality improvement efforts with youth development programs in a variety of ways, including training support and learning summits for youth development professionals. These efforts are designed to promote quality standards and aligned best practices, and to help programs and professionals IMPROVE program quality. The summits are open to any out-of-school time provider in and around Detroit and aim to strengthen the culture of quality among youth development, afterschool, and summer learning programs.

THE YDRC WILL:

- Continue to offer **Summits for Youth Development Professionals**, but deepen ties with the **Michigan Afterschool Association** and encourage individual youth workers to pursue further professional development opportunities, such as Michigan Afterschool Association’s Michigan School-Age Youth Development (MiSAYD) Certificate or Credential. Incentivize participation by offering $50 to the first 25 providers who sign-up with YDRC and receive a certificate. Youth development professionals and managers can advocate for increased pay for staff who complete certification, raising the bar on professionalism and fair pay in the out-of-school time sector.

- Expand the contractor pool for **Youth Work Methods** and build internal training capacity in some key organizations such as Detroit Parks & Recreation Department and the YMCA by sponsoring staff to become certified Youth Work Methods trainers and coaching them to be competent trainers.

- Differentiate training offerings for front-line staff and training for program managers, and align offerings to MiSAYD core competencies.

- Continue contracted professional development.
**OUTCOMES:**

- Increase the number of youth development programs whose staff are attending professional development opportunities.

- Increase the number of individual youth workers attending professional development opportunities.

- Increase the number of youth workers receiving either a credential or a certificate.
A. **NURTURE** a network of youth development providers and aligned youth-serving partners that connects participants to each other, to local resources, and to national youth development best practices.

The YDRC works to build awareness of local and national resources relevant and available to network participants, aimed at NURTURING a connected network and continuous program improvement. The YDRC shares this information with youth development providers through a variety of channels, including in-person trainings (bimonthly network meetings and triannual summits), via a monthly e-newsletter, and through social media. The YDRC has also worked with providers to create common tools, such as the Quality Standards for Youth Development Professionals and resource toolkits and guide.

**TO NURTURE A NETWORK, THE YDRC WILL:**

- Continue to expand the network to reach more youth development providers and aligned youth-serving partners (e.g. schools, libraries, health and human service providers, child welfare and juvenile justice, workforce training, etc.), encouraging them to embrace the program quality standards.

- Redesign the Quality Standards for Youth Development Programs into a workbook that can serve as a tool for program quality improvement.

- Continue to establish a brand and a strong web presence so that more providers engage in the YDRC network and access its resources, making the resources toolkits and guides more accessible.

- Continue to build the network with a more intentional focus on making connections among participants and improving providers’ advocacy capacity.
Become a hub for youth development resources in the Detroit area. Activities may include:

- Posting an up-to-date training calendar of all youth development training events in the Detroit area;
- Listing the YDRC trainings in the Michigan School-Age Youth Development Registry; and/or
- Curating a list of recommended trainings/trainers to promote access to program quality resources and opportunities provided by other Detroit area capacity-builders.

Continue to participate in Every Hour Counts and other national out-of-school time system-building convenings to learn about other city out-of-school time systems and developments in the field to bring back to Detroit.

**OUTCOMES (NURTURE):**

- The YDRC network continues to grow.
- YDRC newsletter subscriptions increase.
- The YDRC website is an online portal for youth development workers to access information about professional development and best practices in the field.
- The YDRC develops a local and national reputation as an exemplar hub of information and resources for youth development providers and their partners.

**B. REFINISH practice through professional learning communities and sharing lessons learned**

With YDRC’s knowledge of the local and national out-of-school time landscape, the organization plays an important role as a connector for youth development providers, funders, and capacity-builders seeking to support the growth of youth-serving organizations in the Detroit area. The YDRC often serves as a thought-partner and consultant to funders and capacity-builders, particularly in regard to REFINING content-specific professional learning communities related to out-of-school time programs, such as college success, sports, youth leadership, and creative arts.
TO **REFINE PRACTICE, THE YDRC WILL:**

- Selectively commit to leading on professional learning communities (PLCs), so as not to dilute the core Acting with Data work.
- Continue to hone the approach to supporting PLCs to ensure they align with the YDRC’s approach to a data-informed quality improvement process that includes evidence-based tools and practices.
- Be a resource for funders, capacity-builders, and providers who want help thinking through an approach to professional development through PLCs.

**OUTCOMES (REFINE):**

- The YDRC is viewed as a thought partner in designing, and sometimes facilitating, quality professional learning communities.
In 2017, the YDRC teamed up with the Youth Development Alliance (before it was folded into the YDRC) to write a position statement to raise awareness of and demand for access to quality expanded learning opportunities for the children and youth of Detroit. However, until the strategic planning process, the YDRC did not have advocacy as a named strategy component. During the planning process, the YDRC learned that many stakeholders feel that there is a need for an entity in Detroit to play an advocacy role, and therefore, the YDRC has plans for an emerging advocacy strategy.

**THE YDRC WILL:**

- Develop an advocacy strategy so that youth development providers have the skills and resources to mobilize themselves, families, and youth to advocate for improved and equitable access to quality youth development opportunities.

- Coordinate with local and state-level leaders working to re-establish the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) funds for Detroit.

- Continue to support the development of a citywide out-of-school time system, working to identify key stakeholders and help facilitate an arc of learning that will enable decision-makers to understand how and why a systems approach can promote increased access to quality expanded learning opportunities.

- Inform the work on creating a dedicated funding stream, including helping to provide the data necessary to make the case that investing in quality youth development opportunities benefits youth and their families.

**OUTCOMES:**

- YDRC is recognized as a champion for quality youth development opportunities.

- The YDRC’s data work helps to inform both the out-of-school time system-building discussions and the dedicated funding advocacy campaign.