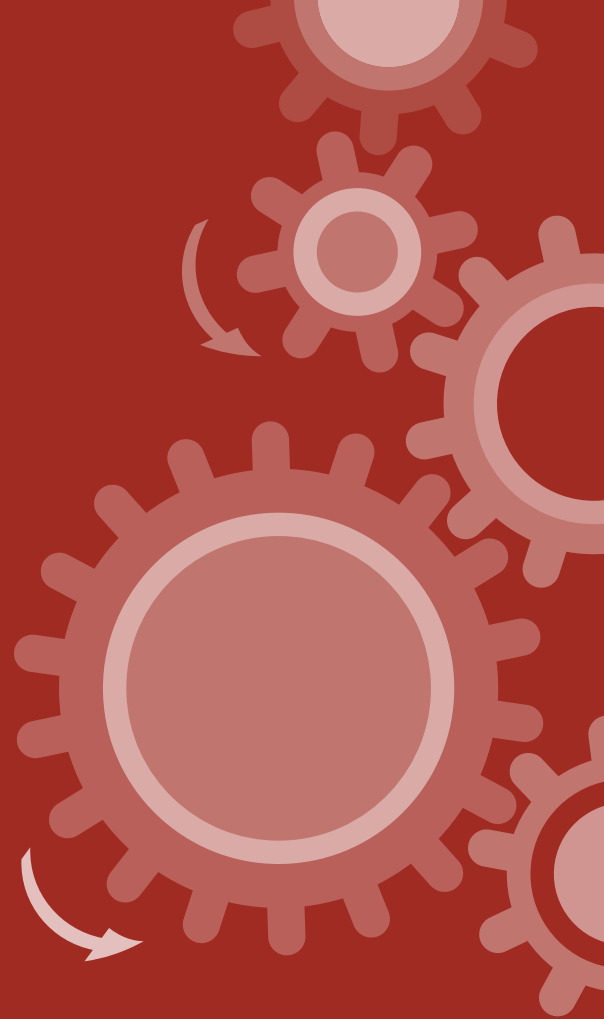


Step 1

Building Community Partnerships



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Building Community Partnerships

Communities that have implemented CIT for Youth have emphasized the critical role community partnerships play in the success of CIT for Youth. This manual begins with building community partnerships because they truly form the foundation of a successful CIT for Youth program for every community.

What Are Community Partnerships?

Community partnerships are relationships between organizations that are working in good faith toward a shared interest or common goal to produce positive change. Community partnerships are ongoing, collaborative relationships. True community partnerships take time to build since they rely on trust, understanding and respect. In a successful partnership, partners will give to and benefit from the partnership.



Why Are Community Partnerships Important?

“CIT for Youth is more than just training officers on children’s mental health issues. It is building partnerships that will work with our trained law enforcement officers to find solutions and resolutions. We were afraid that if we trained our officers without proper supports in place by the partners, they would feel the CIT for Youth program was just more police training without addressing the real concerns.”

- Det. Ron Bruno, CIT Utah program director, Salt Lake City Police Department

Address the Underlying Problem

Community partnerships are critical to address the fact that too many youth with mental health needs do not access services and supports they need to succeed at home and in school and to stay out of the juvenile justice system. With effective community partnerships, this problem can be alleviated and each partner can responsibly support youth with mental health needs and their families—an outcome that benefits everyone involved.

CIT for Youth provides an important opportunity for families, youth, school personnel, law enforcement officers, mental health providers and other community leaders to come together to ensure the safety and well-being of all youth, including those with mental health needs. Secure community partnerships promise to improve the outcomes of youth with mental health needs, produce cost savings and support the organizations and individuals struggling to meet the needs of these youth.

Pool Funding and Resources

Many CIT for Youth programs rely on volunteer staff time and in-kind donations to provide training materials, facilities for meetings and trainings, honoraria for law enforcement officers who participate in trainings and training instructors. These needs can also be met through pooled funding.

Grants

Strong community partnerships are also valuable in getting funding from private and government grants. Grant-makers look for collaborative efforts that focus on creating systems change. In addition, community partners are often eligible for different funding streams. For example, law enforcement agencies may be able to apply for a community policing grant while mental health providers are eligible to apply for grants to improve crisis stabilization services. Partnerships give your CIT for Youth program greater flexibility to pursue a variety of strategies for securing resources. For more information about applying for grants, visit NAMI's CIT Advocacy Toolkit at www.nami.org/cittoolkit.

Encourage Accountability

Community partners involved with CIT for Youth will have a responsibility to others in the partnership and to youth impacted by the program. Community partners will have to answer to each other if something goes wrong. This accountability increases the likelihood that community partners will stay involved and uphold their end of the bargain so the program succeeds. Building a strong, working relationship between each community partner is the key to productively resolving challenges that may arise in the future for your CIT for Youth program.

Ensure Long-term Sustainability

A CIT for Youth program built on community partnerships is more likely to endure with the active participation of multiple organizations than a program sustained by a single organization. Effective community partnerships are built when each partner feels ownership over CIT for Youth and has a vested interest in the success of the program. Basically, each community partner should have a stake in whether CIT for Youth succeeds. This investment in the program will help ensure its long-term sustainability.

Who Is Involved in Community Partnerships?

There are four core community partners who should be involved with CIT for Youth. Anyone can initiate the call for CIT for Youth, but these partners are needed to see it through. When identifying key partners, be sure to find people who represent the demographics of your community to ensure that your CIT for Youth program embeds diverse perspectives from the start.

Important Note

You may already have some of these core community partners in place because of an existing CIT program. However, you will still want to invite *new additions* to your partnership for CIT for Youth.

- 1. Law Enforcement Officers** help coordinate CIT for Youth efforts in the law enforcement community and share the experiences of officers to inform program development. Law enforcement officers are usually the first to see the positive outcomes of CIT for Youth so they often become the program's greatest promoters.

New additions: School-based officers, including school resource officers who are either employed by law enforcement agencies or schools. School district police units (popular in Florida and Texas), which are created and employed by school districts, should also be included. You should also consider including judges and other court personnel since they often have direct contact with youth involved with the juvenile justice system.

- 2. Families and Youth** bring the family and youth lived experience and voice to decision making and developing the training. They can share compelling personal stories to make the case for CIT for Youth. As an added benefit, family organizations often work with a wide range of partners, participate in various coalitions and have advocacy experience—all of which can be huge assets to implementing and sustaining CIT for Youth.

New additions: Parents, caregivers and youth involved with NAMI and other mental health advocacy organizations.

- 3. School Personnel.** Schools are in a unique position to identify youth with mental health needs early. School personnel can work with CIT for Youth officers to link students with mental health needs to the follow-up services and supports they need.

New additions: School board members, superintendents, principals, school counselors, teachers, school-based mental health providers, other school staff and parent/teacher groups from traditional and nontraditional schools, including alternative schools.

- 4. Community Mental Health Providers** share information about the mental health services and supports that exist in your community. This is valuable in assessing where youth should be diverted when they are identified with mental health needs or become involved with law enforcement.

New additions: Child and adolescent mental health care providers, including psychiatrists, psychologists, therapists, school-based providers, substance abuse and addiction counselors and neuropsychologists.

These core partners are the critical players to ensuring youth with mental health needs who become entangled with law enforcement are successfully diverted to home and community-based services and supports and away from the juvenile justice system.

Once these essential community partners are connected and “sold” on the need for CIT for Youth, you can work together to identify and reach out to additional community partners when their involvement is needed.

How Do We Build Community Partnerships?

“With all the partners—families, schools, law enforcement and mental health—it is important to take a step back and respect the different cultures. Recognize that it is not what you are used to and it is not the timetable you are used to. Have respect for that. It is a push and pull thing. You are driving systems change, but driving it respectfully.”

– Sherri Wittwer, executive director, NAMI Utah

Community partnerships take time, trust and respect to build. It is a marathon, not a sprint. The table, Effectively Building Community Partnerships, starting on the next page, describes a comprehensive process for how to build community partnerships and strategies to consider during this process. It also connects you with tools to assist you along the way. The case study, Working with Law Enforcement in Connecticut, starting on page 18, provides a real-world example of how one community leader built relationships with law enforcement officers to implement CIT for Youth.

Important Note

You may already have some community partners together as a result of an existing CIT program. A CIT program provides the perfect structure and starting point for building relationships for CIT for Youth. You may also already have a strong network of partners in place because of existing coalitions, task forces and other collaborative activities. Consider leveraging what already exists as you move forward in building partnerships.

Effectively Building Community Partnerships

Actions	Strategies	Helpful Tools	✓ When Action is Taken
<p>Find Your Partners. Begin by brainstorming representatives from each of the four core community partners—law enforcement officers, families and youth, school personnel and mental health providers—to contact. Consider having a few different representatives from each community partner.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider existing CIT programs, coalitions, task forces and collaborative activities and family organizations as sources of information for who you should bring to the table for CIT for Youth. Brainstorm the best representative you need from each community partner. This could be the person with the most power or influence or someone with a personal connection to mental illness who can get you through the door with a community partner. Review the U.S. Census Bureau data from your community and work to engage community leaders representing your community's various cultures. It is important to include them to bring credibility to the process. 	<p>Worksheet: Finding Your Core Community Partners on page 27</p> <p>Resources at www.nami.org/citforyouth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multicultural Engagement and Inclusion Tips <i>Multicultural Engagement and Inclusion Planning Guide</i> U.S. Census Bureau State and County QuickFacts 	
<p>Get in the Door. Once you have identified potential community partners, think strategically about how to make the first contact with each of them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have someone who has a strong relationship with the organization or is in the same profession make the initial contact for you—this can add credibility. Send an introductory email or make a call requesting a meeting to discuss how you can be of use to a potential partner. Identify who you are and what you do when you first meet with potential partners. Avoid talking about CIT for Youth right away. Instead focus on getting to know them. Listen to the potential partner's perspective. Keep records of your attempts to contact each potential partner and the rates of success for specific communication modes, days, times, etc. Persistence and different attempts at contact are important but avoid being overbearing. 	<p>Template: First Contact Email on page 37</p>	

Effectively Building Community Partnerships (continued)

Actions	Strategies	Helpful Tools	✓ When Action is Taken
<p>Build the Relationship. Often, relationships are built through a “give and take” process. Before you make your “ask,” focus on building trust and respect—which are the cornerstone for any strong, working relationship. Being responsive to requests will help in building great relationships with partners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer to be a resource to potential partners when you meet with them. Spell out how you can be of use to each other. • Respond to any needs and requests community partners have before you ask them to join CIT for Youth. • Take time to educate and provide resources to community partners about mental health issues and how addressing these issues benefits everyone. • Promote positive experiences with community partners who do the “right thing” when it comes to addressing the needs of youth with mental health needs. This may include sending letters of recognition to the media about outstanding service by community partners. 	<p>NAMI’s Child and Adolescent Action Center at www.nami.org/caac.</p>	
<p>Step into Their Shoes. Take time to understand the challenges community partners face in addressing the needs of youth with mental health needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spend time with community partners to understand their perspectives, values and culture. Listen to what they have to say. • Ask to participate in a “ride-along” with police officers, shadow school professionals for a day or have a Q&A session with mental health providers. • Talk with an approachable individual (one who has an interest in children’s mental health or a family connection to mental illness) within the organization to learn about your potential partner’s common challenges and concerns. 	<p>Worksheet: Meeting the Needs of Community Partners on page 28</p> <p>Case Study: Working with Law Enforcement in Connecticut on page 18</p>	

Effectively Building Community Partnerships (continued)

Actions	Strategies	Helpful Tools	✓ When Action is Taken
<p>Ask Them to Join You. Once you have connected with community partners and done your homework, ask them each to join your CIT for Youth effort.</p> <p>“You always have to speak to them in terms of their interests and help them recognize they are already dealing with these kids. Let them know you are bringing tools and resources to them. Help them feel like they are not alone in addressing these issues. There is a community solution to the difficult challenges they face.”</p> <p>- Sherri Wittwer, executive director, NAMI Utah</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce CIT for Youth as an effective approach to the challenges community partners have shared. • Acknowledge the struggles community partners face every day as well as their successes. Speak from a place of understanding and respect. If you speak to their needs and concerns, they are more likely to respond. • Share with community partners the benefits of participating in CIT for Youth and the value of their participation, especially to youth with mental health needs. • Anticipate the concerns community partners may have and plan how you will proactively address them when you bring up CIT for Youth. • Avoid using this time to vent frustrations with community partners—this will likely put them on the defense. • Leave behind a promotional brochure for community partners to review and digest. 	<p>Worksheet: Meeting the Needs of Community Partners on page 28</p> <p>Template: Talking about CIT for Youth on page 38</p> <p>Template: Fact Sheet on Youth with Mental Health Needs in the Juvenile Justice System on page 40</p> <p>Resources at www.nami.org/citforyouth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CIT for Youth Promotional Brochure 	

Tips for Overcoming Resistance

“Sometimes people throw up barriers and you think...this should not be a barrier. This is something that will help you.”

- Det. Ron Bruno, CIT Utah program director, Salt Lake City Police Department

Although there may be a great need for CIT for Youth, some community partners may not be ready to change the way they do business—even if it is for the better. There can be resistance from potential community partners to what seems like a win-win for everyone. Communities that have successfully implemented CIT for Youth have shared the following strategies for overcoming resistance.

- 1. Enlist a CIT for Youth Champion.** To combat naysayers and get community partners on board, it is helpful to identify a champion who will rally behind the program and convince potential community partners that it is a valuable cause. Champions can be found anywhere. Judges, police officers, advocacy leaders, policymakers and high-visibility community figures can all make great CIT for Youth champions and are worth approaching. Champions should be credible, respected and charismatic community leaders who are passionate about the need for CIT for Youth. Their commitment and drive will be needed to help overcome barriers.

“We need big players to initiate partnerships.”

- Sherri Wittwer, executive director, NAMI Utah

- 2. Try, Try and Try Again.** Don't give up on community partners that reject the idea the first time. Research shows that after hearing a request three times, people are likely to say yes. Keep inviting them to the table and keep the lines of communication open so they come to understand the benefits of participating in CIT for Youth. Sometimes it takes skeptics time to understand where you are coming from and how CIT for Youth can change things for the better. Make sure they know you genuinely value and want their participation by spending quality, face-to-face time with them and getting to know their concerns.

“You have to put in face time. It may mean drinking lots of coffee. Invite them over and over again. It takes time for people to do something new. Keep saying how CIT for Youth would be better if they were in the partnership. Remind them you are here.”

- John Williams, director of youth services, Oak Park and River Forest Townships

- 3. Play the Waiting Game.** No matter how well you sell it, your community may simply not be ready for change. Sometimes new leadership can bring new opportunities for CIT for Youth. Unfortunately, communities often are not motivated to change until a

tragedy occurs that highlights the need for immediate change. Community members become outraged when law enforcement officers unnecessarily injure or kill an individual who is acting out because of untreated mental health issues. In fact, the first CIT program was established in Memphis in 1988 after the tragic shooting by a police officer of a man with mental health needs. As difficult as this is for communities, a tragedy can serve as a catalyst for CIT for Youth. However, it is always preferable to adopt CIT for Youth before a tragedy happens.

“Sometimes you have to put your timetable aside and go with the speed of the community. This is the challenge with building community partnerships but in the end it is very much worth it.”

- Sherri Wittwer, executive director, NAMI Utah

Case Study: Working with Law Enforcement in Connecticut

By Louise Pyers, statewide CIT program coordinator, executive director of the CT Alliance to Benefit Law Enforcement (CABLE) and criminal justice project director at NAMI Connecticut

One way to begin the process of understanding law enforcement culture is to attend a Citizen's Police Academy if one is offered in your community. That's where I started after founding CABLE. I asked a lot of questions about police work. I also did a huge amount of listening to officers' thoughts and concerns about their jobs. I even learned how to shoot a gun! Before entering a serious dialogue about people living with mental illness, I wanted to understand officers' culture, jobs and how they were trained. This proved to be incredibly valuable since it helped me to talk with them in an informed way.



I learned very quickly to suspend judgment regarding police interactions with individuals living with mental illness and to listen to their perspective. It took a while to cultivate trusting relationships with some very special law enforcement officers, but it was worth the time and effort. I asked them what kind of training they had and asked for their advice on how I might proceed with bringing some additional information to officers regarding mental illness. All this was done before I even had a plan as to how I would bring the educational component to light. I was so fortunate that Capt. Ken Edwards, New London Police Department, who had already implemented CIT in his department, came forward. Having a law enforcement “champion” and partner who was willing to lead the CIT trainings like Capt. Edwards was essential to CIT's success in Connecticut.

I continued my process by doing a lot of research on the internet and contacting people who have done studies on interactions between police and individuals living with mental illness. My research was around the phenomenon of “suicide by cop.” It put me in touch with some great people in law enforcement who could further educate me about police culture. Sgt. Barry Perrou, Psy.D (ret.) of the LA County Sheriff's Department was one of these people. Constable Rick Parent of the Delta, British Columbia Police Department sent me five pounds worth of his doctoral thesis on suicide by cop, which was also extremely helpful. Perhaps the most pivotal person was Capt. Edwards, who initially contacted me about my research since it was published in the FBI National Academy's magazine. He was looking for more information on suicide by cop too. That is when he told me about this great program he had brought from Memphis to New London: CIT.

If you wish to bring police to the table with families, mental health providers and other community leaders ask your local police department to provide some education about police

work. This is not the time to air concerns or grievances about how individuals may have been mistreated during an encounter with police. This will create a barrier that will make it harder for you to get your main message across when asking them to collaborate with you.

Some police agencies may be able to provide an interactive training, such as “Shoot, Don’t Shoot.” I have done this training. It was very revealing to me how difficult a police officer’s job is. Also, if your local police department permits this, you can ask to go on a “ride-along” with one of their officers. This is also a valuable way to learn more about their culture.

It takes a while for police officers to trust others. They are used to being criticized and Monday morning quarterbacked at every turn. They are wary of well-meaning people who come with a special gift of “education” to give them. They are very concerned about public safety and their safety—as they should be—and they have a hard time taking information from well-meaning folks who may not understand these safety issues. Even though we can say, “this training will help your officers be safer,” they will still be cautious. They will begin to trust you as long as you are genuinely interested in them and how they perceive the world. It’s a lot different than the way we see it!

For more information on Connecticut’s CIT efforts, contact Louise at lcp@cablweb.org or criminaljustice@namict.org.

Forming a Steering Committee

Once you have your core community partners on board, it is time to formalize your partnership by creating a CIT for Youth steering committee. You may be able to expand an existing CIT steering committee to include CIT for Youth or you may want to create a whole new one. It depends on what makes the most sense for your community.

What Is a Steering Committee?

A CIT for Youth steering committee is a planning group that sets the priorities, provides guidance on key issues and makes the important decisions for the implementation of CIT for Youth. The committee reviews, monitors and launches the program.



Why Is a Steering Committee Important?

The steering committee serves as the driving force and decision maker behind CIT for Youth implementation. The CIT for Youth steering committee has several important responsibilities, listed below.

Conducting Asset Mapping

- Reaching out to a broader stakeholder group for their resources, expertise and knowledge.
- Creating a map of the services and supports available to youth with mental health needs.
- Identifying resource gaps, strengths and opportunities for collaboration and coordination.

Planning and Coordinating

- Appointing a CIT for Youth coordinator or working with an existing CIT coordinator. The coordinator will be responsible for coordinating police trainings. This person can be a representative from any of the community partners and is overseen by the steering committee.
- Providing in-kind donations (e.g., training materials, facilities, honoraria, training instructors and staff time) and applying for grant funding, if necessary.
- Discussing current policies and procedures related to youth in a mental health crisis. If necessary, working with community partners to create or amend policies to eliminate barriers to CIT for Youth implementation.
- Strategizing on overcoming any barriers to CIT for Youth.
- Coordinating with advocacy groups to advocate for a broader, more effective array of children's mental health services and supports, if necessary.
- Determining how to measure the effectiveness of CIT for Youth in order to improve and sustain the program.

Training

- Assessing CIT for Youth training curriculum options and supporting the coordinator in planning CIT for Youth training events.
- Providing instructors for the training.
- Creating a mechanism for feedback and evaluation of the CIT for Youth training. Analyzing feedback and making changes, as necessary

These responsibilities are explained in greater detail throughout this manual. Your steering committee should meet regularly to address and fulfill these responsibilities.

Who Is Involved in the Steering Committee?

Representatives from your core community partners should form the basis of your CIT for Youth steering committee. You will work together to carry out the responsibilities outlined above. In the course of your work, you may decide you need to include additional partners who can bring a unique perspective, skill set or an array of resources and connections to the table that can contribute to the success of CIT for Youth.

How Do We Form a Steering Committee?

Invite each of the core community partners to a get-to-know you meeting where everyone can meet each other, you can discuss the role of the steering committee and, together, develop working agreements for the steering committee.

Before the Meeting:

- Develop and email an agenda to community partners.
- Share the responsibilities of the steering committee listed previously.
- Create a sign-in sheet to get the contact information of the representatives participating on the steering committee.
- Review the templates, Working Agreement and Model Committee Form, on page 43 and 46. Adapt the templates to meet your needs and make copies available for each community partner.

During the Meeting

- Ensure each community partner signs in.
- Introduce yourself. Reiterate the benefits CIT for Youth can bring to the community and the valuable role each community partner plays in its implementation.
- Allow everyone to introduce themselves and share what they hope CIT for Youth will accomplish.

- Discuss the responsibilities of the steering committee. Take time to address any concerns and questions about the role of the steering committee.
- Have community partners review the Working Agreement. Complete this worksheet together to develop guidelines for the steering committee. Although it may seem like everyone is on the same page, often this is not actually the case. It is important to get all agreements in writing to make them as clear and concise as possible and to have something to turn to if an agreement is ignored.
- Have community partners review, complete and sign the Model Commitment Form.
- Discuss next steps and delegate any tasks.
- Schedule regular steering committee meetings.

Some of these tasks may be completed over several meetings.

Important Note

Make sure that at every meeting, every community partner has a chance to talk and voice any concerns. This will help ensure that all needs are addressed and promote a sense of ownership over the program. Once the program is implemented, the steering committee should still meet to address how the program is working or not working in the community.



Step 1 Key Messages

- Community partnerships—relationships between organizations that are working in good faith toward a shared interest or common goal to produce positive change—are critical to addressing the underlying issue that CIT for Youth aims to solve, which is that too many youth with mental health needs are encountering law enforcement officers that are not trained to respond effectively to a mental health crisis and as a result, youth in crisis often do not get to the services and supports they need. Without community partnerships, CIT for Youth will become “just a training” that is incapable of changing how communities address the needs of youth.
- There are four core community partners who are essential to CIT for Youth and who may be new additions to an existing CIT partnership: School-based police officers, including school resource officers (SROs), families and youth, school personnel and child and adolescent mental health providers. You will want to ensure your community partners reflect the diverse cultures of your community. These core community partners will serve as the foundation for your steering committee, which is responsible for driving the implementation of CIT for Youth. Other organizations may be included in the steering committee to lend their knowledge, expertise and resources as needed.
- Building community partnerships often requires persistence and patience. It is a “give and take” process. Remember to do your homework so you can speak to the needs of your community partners.

Supporting Documents

Worksheets

Finding Your Core Community Partners

Identify existing partners and resources and brainstorm representatives for the core community partners.

Meeting the Needs of Community Partners

Inform yourself about community partners and plan how you will discuss CIT for Youth with each of them.

Templates

First Contact Email

Make the first contact with community partners.

Talking about CIT for Youth

Plan how you will invite community partners to join your CIT for Youth partnership.

Fact Sheet on Youth with Mental Health Needs in the Juvenile Justice System

Use this fact sheet to make the case to your potential partners about the need for CIT for Youth. If possible, adapt it with facts from your state or community.

Working Agreement

Complete with your CIT for Youth steering committee to set guidelines and responsibilities.

Model Commitment Form

Commit community partners to the steering committee responsibilities.

Additional Resources

(Available online at www.nami.org/citforyouth)

- *CIT Advocacy Toolkit*
- NAMI Child and Adolescent Action Center
- Multicultural Engagement and Inclusion Tips
- *Multicultural Engagement and Inclusion Guide*
- U.S. Census Bureau State and County QuickFacts

Worksheet: Finding Your Core Community Partners

Directions: Use this worksheet to identify partners and resources and to brainstorm the best representatives to reach out to from each potential community partner. Usually, the best representative is a person with a personal connection to mental illness or someone who has power and influence within the organization or agency.

Existing CIT Partners^{**}

Existing Coalitions, Task Forces and Collaborative Efforts

Law Enforcement Officers and Court Personnel

School-based officers, including school resource officers, school district police units, community law enforcement agencies, judges and other court personnel.

School Personnel

School board members, superintendents, principals, school counselors, school-based mental health providers, other school staff and parent/teacher groups from traditional and nontraditional schools, including alternative schools.

Family and Youth

Parents, caregivers and youth involved with state and local mental health advocacy organizations, including NAMI.

Mental Health Providers

Child and adolescent mental health care providers, including psychiatrists, psychologists, therapists, neuropsychologists and substance abuse and addiction counselors.

^{**}Communities with existing CIT programs should build on existing partnerships. In some cases, a CIT for Youth program will include the same organizations or agencies, but will focus on different individuals within the organization.

Worksheet: Meeting the Needs of Community Partners

Directions: Use these talking points to plan how you will discuss CIT for Youth with each community partner—law enforcement officers, families and youth, school personnel and mental health providers.

Meeting the Needs of Law Enforcement Officers

Challenges	CIT for Youth Benefits	Potential Objections	Responses to Objections
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers feel they are often used as the “big stick” in schools and communities when responding to youth with mental health needs. They get stuck with the role of “enforcer” rather than “supporter.” Officers have to ensure their own safety and well-being of the whole community. They need to respond assertively to mental health crises that could lead to injuries or community tragedies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaches police officers skills to effectively prevent or de-escalate a crisis situation, effectively communicate with youth and work in the school environment. Reduces the need for the use of force in a crisis and reduces the trauma experienced by police officers who injure youth. Improves the safety of police officers and others. Uses a community policing approach that includes a proactive approach to preventing community tragedies. 	<p>We have no time or funding to train our officers in CIT for Youth...</p> <p>CIT for Youth is too touchy-feely for what we need to do to keep our officers safe...</p>	<p>CIT for Youth is cost-effective and saves law enforcement officers time by providing a proactive approach to reducing and preventing crises. It also reduces the number of youth who are “frequent flyers”⁺⁺ by ensuring they receive the mental health services and supports they need.</p> <p>CIT reduces officer injuries. After the introduction of CIT in Memphis, officer injuries sustained during responses to “mental disturbance” calls dropped 80 percent.</p>

⁺⁺The term “frequent flyer” is often used to describe youth who have not been linked to the mental health services and supports they need, resulting in repeated confrontations that lead to unnecessary, costly involvement of these youth in the juvenile justice system and more difficult-to-treat mental illness.

Meeting the Needs of Law Enforcement Officers (continued)

Challenges	CIT for Youth Benefits	Potential Objections	Responses to Objections
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers see that youth are not receiving the mental health services and supports they need, leading them down the wrong path well into their adult lives but feel there is nothing they can do about it. Officers feel they are forced to arrest and detain a student after school personnel escalate a crisis situation, leading the student to eventually violate the law. They repeatedly come into contact with “frequent flyers.” School-based officers want to do more to safely support and help these youth, since they see them every day, but often lack the infrastructure and community partners to refer youth to effective mental health services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involves mental health providers, schools and families to increase the chances that youth are referred to mental health services and supports. Helps reduce or eliminate future encounters with law enforcement. 	<p>We need to be in charge and take control of situations, not try and help people who are committing a crime...</p> <p>We already have a process for addressing these issues...</p>	<p>Getting individuals the help they need is the best way to control unstable situations since it reduces repeated interactions that result from a lack of mental health services.</p> <p>CIT for Youth provides a proactive, collaborative process for schools and communities to follow so officers are not left alone to address these issues.</p>

Meeting the Needs of Families and Youth

Challenges	CIT for Youth Benefits	Potential Objections	Responses to Objections
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families are often forced to involve police when their child is experiencing a mental health crisis because other alternatives do not exist. Police are available and obligated to respond 24/7 while mental health services and supports are usually only available during standard work hours. Many parents find it difficult to obtain mental health services and supports for their child. Locating mental health providers, long waits for appointments and high out-of-pocket costs are frequent barriers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Links youth with mental health services in school and/or the community, reducing the need for treatment in more costly and restrictive settings. Often, services and supports are built around CIT for Youth so more options exist for families (e.g., triage centers, mobile crisis units, etc.). Increases the likelihood that youth will stay out of the juvenile justice system and remain in school and in the community. Ensures the safety of everyone involved in a mental health crisis, including the child. 	<p>I don't want my child labeled with a mental illness...</p> <p>Mental illness is not real...</p>	<p>Mental health treatment isn't about labeling the child, rather it is about addressing the behaviors or symptoms that are impacting a child's health and well-being. A diagnosis can help you access the services and supports your child needs to succeed at home, in school and in the community. Conversely, children living with unidentified or untreated mental illness often get labeled, "crazy," "lazy," "bad" or "dumb."</p> <p>Scientific advances are allowing us to see brain differences between children with mental illness and those without. More is becoming known as research progresses. Mental illness should be addressed just like any other health condition.</p>

Meeting the Needs of Families and Youth (continued)

Challenges	CIT for Youth Benefits	Potential Objections	Responses to Objections
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents become frustrated with the inability to access effective services to help their child. They feel their child will need to commit a crime to access these services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gets youth the help they need so they do not experience the negative outcomes associated with untreated mental illness. 	<p>My child is fine and does not need help...</p>	<p>As a parent, you are the primary expert about your child. However, other people in your child's life may be able to observe problems that are not yet apparent at home. For example, with children in the classroom for the majority of their day, school personnel may be the first to notice changes in a student's class attendance, interaction with peers or staff and academic achievement. Unidentified or untreated mental health issues can lead to devastating consequences for youth, including major challenges at school, acting out at home, a loss of friends, loss of critical developmental years, increased risk for substance abuse, involvement with the juvenile justice system and suicide.</p>

Meeting the Needs of Families and Youth (continued)

Challenges	CIT for Youth Benefits	Potential Objections	Responses to Objections
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents must ensure the safety of their child and family members during a mental health crisis. Some parents may not recognize their child's mental health needs or believe that their child will grow out of the concerns. 		<p>My child's mental health is no one's business...</p> <p>I do not want the police involved with my child...</p>	<p>Your child's health is a personal matter. Working with trusted and effectively trained professionals will help get your child's life on track. CIT for Youth helps everyone to understand how to link a student with mental health services and supports.</p> <p>CIT for Youth reduces repeated interactions with law enforcement officers and helps officers to understand effective and humane ways to respond to a mental health crisis. It also helps divert youth to home and community-based services and away from the juvenile justice system.</p>

Meeting the Needs of School Personnel

Challenges	CIT for Youth Benefits	Potential Objections	Responses to Objections
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School personnel often lack appropriate resources and training to address mental health crises or disruptive behaviors. This may lead to school personnel inadvertently escalating a situation. They feel the only recourse they have is to call the police. Although they can often recognize students with mental health issues, schools struggle with the appropriate action to take with limited time, funding and expertise available. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a proactive approach to preventing crises in schools. Increases school safety and creates a more positive school climate. Reduces the trauma experienced by school personnel and students who witness or participate in a mental health crisis that results in a traumatic, physical altercation. Increases the likelihood that students with mental health needs will remain in school and improve their academic and functional performance. Ensures consistency in a school's approach to responding to mental health crises. 	<p>We don't have the time to address the mental health needs of students...</p> <p>If we identify students with mental health needs, we need to provide services and supports we don't have...</p>	<p>CIT for Youth will save time by providing a proactive approach to preventing and reducing disruptive behaviors and mental health crises in schools—often a challenge for school personnel. It also provides an efficient process for schools and communities to address crises.</p> <p>CIT for Youth increases community collaboration, which enhances the tools and resources available to schools to address the needs of youth with mental health needs. CIT for Youth supports schools in addressing the needs of these students since it engages multiple community partners.</p>

Meeting the Needs of School Personnel (continued)

Challenges	CIT for Youth Benefits	Potential Objections	Responses to Objections
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School personnel may be overwhelmed with students who act out in the classroom, which often leads to high staff turnover. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addresses the school to prison pipeline by ensuring students living with mental illness are linked to effective services and supports. 	<p>It is not our job to worry about mental health...</p>	<p>Children with unmet mental health needs fail more classes, earn lower grade point averages, miss more days of school and are retained at grade level more often than other students with disabilities. Approximately 50 percent of students with a mental disorder age 14 and older drop out of high school—the highest dropout rate of any disability group. Mental health is essential to a student’s ability to learn and stay in school. The academic performance and behavioral functioning of students significantly improves when their mental health needs are effectively addressed.</p>

Meeting the Needs of School Personnel (continued)

Challenges	CIT for Youth Benefits	Potential Objections	Responses to Objections
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools must ensure the safety and well-being of all students while meeting high academic standards. With these responsibilities mounting, they may believe that they cannot adequately address the needs of students living with mental illness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases community collaboration, which enhances the tools and resources available to schools to address the needs of youth with mental health needs. 	<p>CIT for Youth does not concern us...</p>	<p>Many schools have proven to be a pipeline into the juvenile justice system with school personnel contacting law enforcement when students engage in disruptive behaviors, including cases involving mental health crises. Schools are in a unique position to ensure students living with mental illness are identified early and effectively linked with services.</p>

Meeting the Needs of Community Mental Health Providers

Challenges	CIT for Youth Benefits	Potential Objections	Responses to Objections
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providers often do not have enough resources or staff to meet the needs of all youth with mental health needs. This is especially true in rural and frontier communities. There are complex funding barriers that prevent or limit providers from getting reimbursed for their services, ultimately impacting how they can serve youth. In some communities, community mental health centers respond to youth from multiple jurisdictions—creating an unmanageable workload for providers and long waiting lists for families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies youth with mental health needs so providers can intervene early and effectively to potentially prevent the development of a more difficult-to-treat, chronic condition. Trains officers to better identify youth who may have mental health needs so that the limited resources of community mental health centers are available to youth who need them. Coordinates care among providers and creates a more effective referral system so communities can work together to better distribute the workload. Helps communities better understand the policies and procedures that impact families' access to mental health care. 	<p>We have a workforce shortage. There are not enough providers to meet the needs of these youth...</p> <p>Community mental health centers are already overcrowded with youth who need mental health services and supports...</p>	<p>CIT for Youth can help you identify how to do more with limited community resources. CIT for Youth can also help make the case for increased mental health providers and services.</p> <p>Early identification and intervention of youth with mental health needs promises to reduce the need for more costly and intensive services. CIT for Youth also helps to identify home and community-based services that can complement community mental health centers and improve outcomes.</p>

Template: First Contact Email

Directions: Use this email as a template for making the first contact with a community partner.

Superintendent Miller

From: John Hawk [jhawk@cit.org]
Sent: Monday, July 5, 2011 2:30 p.m.
To: superintendentmiller@email.com
Subject: CIT for Youth

Dear Superintendent Miller,

My name is John Hawk. Jane Foster, who works in the Central School District recommended that I reach out to you. She shared that you are interested in doing more to support the academic and functional achievement of students in your school.

I am the statewide crisis intervention teams (CIT) coordinator. CIT is dedicated to improving the lives of individuals with mental health needs and their families and works with law enforcement, mental health providers, families and individuals to improve the outcome of law enforcement interactions with these individuals. Our goal is to help individuals with mental health needs get the support and treatment they need. We firmly believe that schools also have a key role to play in this process.

I would like to meet with you to discuss the resources, programs and tools that we have available and other potential partners who are interested in addressing the needs of students. I know how important student achievement and school climate are to your district. It is in this spirit that I reach out to request a meeting to discuss the opportunity to collaborate.

I know you are very busy, and I appreciate your consideration.

I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you.

Sincerely,

John Hawk
CIT Coordinator
1 (800) 555-5555
jhawk@cit.org

Template: Talking about CIT for Youth

Directions: Use this sample script as a starting point on how you may wish to invite community partners to join your CIT for Youth partnership, once you have formed a relationship with them. It is helpful to have talking points in place before you approach a community partner about CIT for Youth.

Principal John Smith: Hello, Ms. Garcia. Welcome back to Central High.

NAMI State Leader Juanita Garcia: Hello. Thank you so much for meeting with me today.

Principal Smith: My pleasure. By the way, thanks so much for the resources you shared with my teachers. Several told me this week that they have really learned a lot about how to communicate with parents about mental health concerns.

Ms. Garcia: You're welcome. I'm glad the information was helpful.

Principal Smith: So, what can I do for you today?

Ms. Garcia: I came to talk about a program that would be very beneficial to Central High. I have been working with the Central Police Department and they are interested in expanding their Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) program to help school resource officers better respond to students in a mental health crisis in school.

Principal Smith: What's CIT?

Ms. Garcia: CIT is a partnership between NAMI Central, Central Police Department and Central Community Mental Health Center. We work together to ensure that individuals in a mental health crisis get referred to treatment instead of going to jail. We want to expand CIT to address the specific mental health needs of youth. We would like to bring Central High into our partnership because we are confident this will help students who act out or are in mental health crises in school get they help they need. It will also be extremely beneficial to school personnel who are already struggling to address these issues.

Principal Smith: Well, we already have our hands full. We really do not have time or money to work on something like this.

Ms. Garcia: This program promises to save you time and money in the long run. In talking with your school staff, I got a pretty clear sense that some teachers may not know what to do with students who are acting out or experiencing a crisis as a result

of a mental illness. They shared that they feel ill-equipped to address these situations sometimes causing the problem to escalate and to involve police officers. This is common in many schools in our state. I think you would agree, this is not a good use of classroom time and resources. I think CIT for Youth could be really helpful in addressing these issues and in supporting staff.

Principal Smith: I do want to support my teachers but I think police should focus on keeping the school safe. That is a priority of mine.

Ms. Garcia: CIT for Youth trains officers on how to effectively defuse a crisis situation before it escalates. This helps to create a more safe and calm school environment.

Principal Smith: That's fine. They could do their training then. I don't think we need to be involved though.

Ms. Garcia: CIT for Youth relies on community partnerships to be successful, including schools like Central High. We can train law enforcement officers to resolve a crisis, but we need your help in making sure that students get referred to the right services and supports, whether in school or in the community. Early identification and intervention is key because students with mental illness fail more classes, earn lower grade point averages, miss more days of school and are retained at grade level more often than students with other disabilities. However, when they are linked with effective services, their academic and functional achievement improves.

Principal Smith: You make some good points, but I think I need some more information.

Ms. Garcia: I completely understand. I think there would be real value in having you meet the other community partners involved with developing CIT for Youth. I'd be happy to arrange a meeting at the school if that works best for you.

Principal Smith: I suppose I could do that, but I am not committing myself to anything.

Ms. Garcia: In the meantime, I will leave you with this packet of information about CIT for Youth. You are a key community partner for this program, it cannot succeed without you.

Principal Smith: Thank you, Ms. Garcia. As always, it is a pleasure to see you.

Ms. Garcia: Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to meet with me. I will be in touch later this week to schedule a follow-up meeting.

Template: Fact Sheet on Youth with Mental Health Needs in the Juvenile Justice System

Directions: Use this fact sheet to make the case to your potential partners about the need for CIT for Youth. If possible, adapt it with facts from your state or community.

Youth with Mental Health Needs in the Juvenile Justice System

Serious mental illness impacts large numbers of our nation's youth. Recent research indicates that 13 percent of youth aged 8-15 live with mental illness severe enough to cause significant impairment in their day-to-day lives.¹ This figure jumps to 21 percent in youth aged 13-18.² Mental illness begins early in life and interferes with development and functioning. It can affect youth of any gender, race/ethnicity, religion or socio-economic status. Half of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14 and three quarters by age 24.³



Despite the availability of effective treatment, there are average delays of 8 to 10 years between the onset of symptoms and intervention—critical developmental years in the life of a child.⁴ In the United States, only about 20 percent of youth living with mental illness receive treatment.⁵ Only 13 percent of children living with mental illness from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds receive mental health services and supports due to barriers in access to quality care.⁶

Instead of receiving help, far too many youth with mental health needs are landing in the juvenile justice system.

Research shows that 70 percent of youth in the juvenile justice system have one or more psychiatric disorders, with 20 percent of these youth having a serious mental illness that significantly interferes with their day-to-day functioning.⁷ These youth may be experiencing suicidal ideation or psychosis while being locked up. Numerous national and state studies have also shown that minority youth are disproportionately involved with the juvenile justice system.

Many of these youth are incarcerated for minor, non-violent offenses, while others have not been charged with a crime at all. These youth are entering the juvenile justice system solely to access mental health services and supports or because of disruptive or inappropriate behaviors that are often symptoms of an unidentified, untreated or ineffectively treated mental illness.

At the same time, the U.S. Department of Justice has found that juvenile facilities fail to adequately address mental illness. Unidentified and untreated mental illness can lead to devastating consequences, including:

- Approximately 50 percent of students aged 14 and older living with mental illness drop out of high school—the highest dropout rate of any disability group.⁸ Seventy-three percent of those who drop out are arrested within five years.⁹
- Children living with mental illness fail more classes, earn lower grade point averages, miss more days of school and are retained at grade level more often than students living with other disabilities.¹⁰
- Children may miss as many as 22 days during a school year and experience reduced potential for education, employment and income.¹¹
- Suspension and expulsion rates for these youth are three times higher than their peers.¹² Among all students, African Americans are more likely to be suspended or expelled than their Caucasian peers.¹³
- Children living with mental illness are three times more likely to be arrested before leaving school than other students.¹⁴
- Youth living with mental illness are twice as likely to be living in a correctional facility, halfway house, drug treatment center or on the street after leaving school compared to students with other disabilities.¹⁵
- Suicide is the third leading cause of death for youth aged 15-24; more youth and young adults die from suicide than from all natural causes *combined*.¹⁶ Latina teens and American Indian/Alaska Native youth in particular have high rates of suicide attempts and completed suicides. Ninety percent of those who die by suicide have a mental illness.¹⁷

There are many complex, multi-system problems that have led to the criminalization of youth with mental health needs. Far too many youth are becoming unnecessarily entangled with the juvenile justice system because they are not receiving effective mental health treatment.

CIT for Youth Saves Lives

Fortunately, the way communities do business does not need to be this way. With effective community partnerships and coordination, communities can responsibly support youth living with mental health needs and their families—an outcome that benefits everyone involved.

CIT for Youth is a dynamic collaboration of families, school personnel, law enforcement officers, mental health providers and other community organizations committed to ensuring youth with mental health needs are referred to mental health services and supports rather than thrust into the juvenile justice system. CIT for Youth also provides training to law enforcement officers on preventing a mental health crisis and de-escalating a crisis when it occurs.

CIT for Youth provides a natural place for everyone to come together to ensure the safety and well-being of all youth, including those with mental health needs. It promises to improve the lives of youth living with mental health needs and produce cost savings and support for communities struggling to meet the needs of these youth.

- ¹Merikangas, K.R., He, J., Brody, D., Fisher, P.W., Bourdon, K., & Koretz, D.S. (2010). Prevalence and treatment of mental disorders among U.S. children in the 2001–2004 NHANES. *Pediatrics*, 125, 75-81.
- ²Merikangas K.R., He J., Burstein M., Swanson S.A., Avenevoli S., Cui L., Benjet C., Georgiades K., & Swendsen J. (2010). Lifetime prevalence of mental disorders in U.S. adolescents: Results from the national comorbidity study. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 49(10), 980-989.
- ³Kessler, R., Berglund, P., Demler, O., Jin, R., Merikangas, & Walters, E., Lifetime prevalence and age-of-onset distributions of DSM-IV disorders in the National Co-morbidity Survey Replication (NCS-R). *General Psychiatry*, 62, June 2005, 593-602.
- ⁴Wang, P., Berglund, P., *et al.* Failure and delay in initial treatment contact after first onset of mental disorders in the National Co-morbidity Survey Replication (NCS-R). *General Psychiatry*, 62, June 2005, 603-613.
- ⁵U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (1999). *Mental health: A report of the surgeon general*. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Mental Health Services, National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Mental Health.
- ⁶Ringel, J. S.; Sturm, R. 2001. National Estimates of Mental Health Utilization and Expenditures for Children in 1998. *Journal of Behavioral Health Services & Research*, 28(3): 319-333.
- ⁷Skowrya K. & Coccozza, J. (2007). *Blueprint for change: A comprehensive model for the identification and treatment of youth with mental health needs in contact with the juvenile justice system*. Accessed at www.ncmhjj.com.
- ⁸U.S. Department of Education (2006). Twenty-third annual report to Congress on the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Act. Washington, D.C.
- ⁹Rush, S. *Improving Education for Students with Emotional Disturbance*. Knowbility. Retrieved Feb. 3, 2009, from www.knowbility.org.
- ¹⁰Wagner, M., Blackorby, J., & Hebbeler, K. (1993). Beyond the report card: The multiple dimensions of secondary school performance of students with disabilities. Menlo Park, Calif.: SRI International.
- ¹¹Blackorby, J.; Cameto, R. 2004. Changes in School Engagement and Academic Performance of Students with Disabilities. In Wave 1 Wave 2 Overview (SEELS). Menlo Park, Calif.: SRI International.
- ¹²*Ibid.*
- ¹³*Ibid.*
- ¹⁴Wagner, M. (1995). Outcomes for youths with serious emotional disturbance in secondary school and early adulthood. *The Future of Children: Critical Issues for Children and Youth*, 5(4), 90-112.
- ¹⁵*Ibid.*
- ¹⁶Centers for Disease Control, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (2006). Accessed at www.cdc.gov.
- ¹⁷U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (1999). *Mental health: A report of the surgeon general*. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Mental Health Services, National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Mental Health.

Template: Working Agreement

Directions: Fill in the table below with your steering committee to form the basis of a working agreement for the CIT for Youth steering committee.

Name of Committee
Overarching Goal What is the primary overarching goal of the committee?
Value of the Committee What unique value does the committee bring to the stated goal?
Key Priorities What are the committee's key priorities for achieving the stated goal?
Guiding Principles What principles or values related to the goal will guide committee priorities and activities? (e.g., we focus on priorities that meet the shared interests of our members or we seek new solutions to challenging issues).
Members What other individuals/groups would be valuable to include as additional members?

Processes
What type of decision-making process will be used for important decisions regarding CIT for Youth? (e.g., will decisions require all members to participate, those present at a meeting, a simple majority, etc.?).
Who will draft agendas? Who will draft minutes?
How will communications within the group be handled? How will communications with the public, elected officials and other stakeholders be handled?
How and how often will the group assess progress toward its priorities?
Roles and Functions
What responsibilities will be expected of each steering committee member?
Authority
Which members will be authorized to speak on behalf of the group?

Operations	
Meeting dates and times:	
Meeting Location:	
Copies:	
Conference Calls:	
Facilitative materials (flip charts, markers, sticky dots, etc.):	
Formal printed materials from group:	
Other Agreements	

Template: Model Commitment Form

Directions: Use this form to commit community partners to the steering committee responsibilities.

Name of Steering Committee: [From Working Agreement]

Overarching Goal: [From Working Agreement]

Key Priorities: [From Working Agreement]

1.

2.

3.

Guiding Principles: [From Working Agreement]

Responsibilities: [From Working Agreement]

Organizational Statement of Commitment:

Our organization is committed to be an active member of the CIT for Youth steering committee. As a member, we attest that the goal, key priorities, responsibilities and guiding principles of the steering committee are in alignment with our organizational goals and policies. We agree to abide by agreed-upon decision-making processes and to support steering committee decisions. We agree to notify the steering committee, in writing, in the event our organization experiences a conflict of interest or is no longer able to support steering committee goals and priorities.

As evidence of our commitment to the steering committee, our organization agrees to do the following:

- Appoint** a designated representative and a backup person to attend steering committee meetings and conference calls.

Name of Representative:

Name of Backup Representative:

Authorize our representative to make decisions on issues or actions as follows:

- After obtaining formal organizational approval
- Without formal organizational approval (has decision-making authority)

Authorize our representative to make decisions regarding financial contributions as follows:

- After obtaining formal organizational approval
- Without formal organizational approval (has decision-making authority)

- Actively assist** with steering committee activities.
- Supply** the steering committee with our organizational name and/or logo.
- Disseminate** steering committee materials to our members or other stakeholders

Our organization further agrees to commit the following resources to the steering committee:

- Financial contribution** of \$ _____ per year/month/one-time
- In-kind donation (s)** of:
- Volunteers** for steering committee responsibilities of:

Signature and Title

Date

Organization

