

A GUIDE FOR YOUTH ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS



Oakland County

Strengthening Families
Through Community Involvement

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INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

This information has been prepared for Officers and Standing Committee Chairpersons of local Youth Assistance Programs of Oakland County and designed to provide guidelines for carrying out the Programs' responsibilities:

The material is divided into four parts:

1. Purpose of and general statements related to the Oakland County Youth Assistance Program.
2. Organizational relationships.
3. Committee structure, duties and responsibilities.
4. The Oakland County Youth Assistance Coordinating Council, Inc.

It is hoped that his material will assist in program development, orientation of officers and all members, revising bylaws and operating a local Youth Assistance Program.

Part I

MISSION, PURPOSE AND GENERAL STATEMENTS

MISSION

To strengthen youth and families and to reduce the incidence of delinquency, abuse and neglect through community involvement.

PURPOSE

The purposes of Oakland County Youth Assistance Programs are:

1. Mobilization of community interest, skills and forces on behalf of children and families.
2. Involvement of local citizens in developing/improving services designed to control, treat, eliminate and prevent delinquency, abuse and neglect.
3. Identification of social, psychological and environmental factors producing antisocial behavior.
4. Creation of programs to assist individuals in developing skills which will decrease the likelihood of delinquent, abuse and neglect behavior occurring.

GENERAL STATEMENTS

The authority for the programs rests with each local Board of Directors. Members are selected by the Board of Directors, approved by the local municipalities and school districts and confirmed by the Circuit Court-Family Division Judges.

Programs involve citizens in their communities who are interested, concerned and willing to give voluntarily of their time and skills in the development and implementation of community plans and programs through which youths' highest potential may be developed.

All programs are voluntary in nature on the part of clients served and citizens who are involved. Self-determination is respected. The confidentiality of privileged material is highly guarded within the counseling phase.

PART II

ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

SPONSORING BODIES

Each Youth Assistance Program is sponsored by the municipalities/Board of Education contained within that particular school district and the Probate Court/Circuit Court-Family Division of Oakland County. The local sponsors (school district/municipality) are responsible for the operational and programmatic expenses of running the local Program.

YOUTH ASSISTANCE STAFF

The Oakland County Youth Assistance Program is a Unit of the Oakland County Circuit Court-Family Division. Staff are employed and paid by the Circuit Court-Family Division and include a chief, supervisors, Youth Assistance caseworkers and clerical support staff. The staff is responsible to the chief, who has overall Unit responsibility for administration, supervision, coordination, research and program planning. Supervisors have immediate responsibility over the Youth Assistance caseworkers. The staff is ultimately responsible to the Circuit Court-Family Division Judges.

Central Staff

The personnel include: chief, four field supervisors and two Youth Assistance caseworkers who serve as coordinators in the Volunteers Program, a sub-unit of Youth Assistance, consisting of Mentors Plus: Prevention and Intervention. There are three clerical staff who are involved in office management, case logging and general secretarial support services.

The Volunteer Programs staff role is to assist the Mentors Plus committees throughout local Youth Assistance Programs. Specific duties include: (1) assisting local committees in setting up the program; (2) assisting with recruitment procedures, screening processes, involvement in supervising training programs. The Volunteer Programs staff also recruit, screen, train, match and supervise one-to-one volunteers as they are matched with adjudicated youth.

Field Staff

The field services are provided by the Youth Assistance caseworkers assigned to the local communities. Each worker performs the dual role of providing casework (secondary prevention) and community organization (primary prevention) services.

The community becomes the focus of attention in primary prevention. Working with local citizens, who comprise the Board of Directors, the staff encourage defining community needs through research and then establishing local community programs.

The combination of citizens, professionals, schools and government provide the unique avenues for social change through the Youth Assistance Program.

In the casework phase, through the casework process, the Youth Assistance caseworker, in conjunction with the youth and family, analyzes the presenting problem, defines causal factors, develops a diagnosis and formulates a treatment plan. The focus is upon the family as a unit, and the referred youth and parents are involved in the casework process. Services are usually short-term and are coordinated with services of other agencies within Oakland County, when applicable.

Administrative Services

The chief has responsibility for the staff and overall operation of the Youth Assistance Program. The chief is accountable to the Circuit Court-Family Division, and works in conjunction with the municipalities and local school districts who sponsor the programs. Some specific components of this accountability are: (1) program planning and evaluation; (2) assignment of staff to local programs; (3) ensuring staff development; (4) developing educational programs and publicity to increase community awareness of Youth Assistance.

Supervisory

The field supervisors have the major responsibility of providing direct supervision to the Youth Assistance caseworkers. They assist staff in the following areas: (1) caseload management by consulting with the workers on case assessment and treatment plans; (2) working in partnership with the workers in helping the local programs carry out their goals and objectives, including direct consultation with committees; (3) keeping the chief informed of the worker's professional practice and job performance; (4) ensuring the use of administrative procedures in the completion of assigned tasks.

VOLUNTEER BOARDS OF DIRECTORS

The staff has a direct responsibility to assist the Chairperson of the Board of Directors and other committees in program planning and the accomplishment of goals set by the committees. Staff also assist in reviewing all committee work as to the movement toward their objectives.

Chairpersons of all Standing, Project or Ad Hoc Committees of the Youth Assistance Program are appointed by and directly responsible to the Chairperson of the Board of Directors. The appointments are concurrent with the tenure of the appointing chairperson.

THE TASKS PERFORMED BY THESE COMMITTEES ARE CRITICAL TO THE TOTAL OPERATION AND PERFORMANCE OF A YOUTH ASSISTANCE PROGRAM. FOR THE PROGRAM TO OPERATE SMOOTHLY, IT IS MOST IMPORTANT FOR LINES OF COMMUNICATION TO BE CLEAR BETWEEN ALL COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS, THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND YOUTH ASSISTANCE CASEWORKERS ASSIGNED TO THE PROGRAM.

COMMITTEE VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers involved in a Youth Assistance Program serve the needs of the Program on five levels: as officers; members of the Board of Directors; committee chairpersons; members of a Standing Project-Ad Hoc Committee, or as a task volunteer. A member may serve on some or all of these levels simultaneously.

Members are expected to attend the monthly Board of Directors meetings, program or project committee meetings to which they may be assigned, as well as occasional individual duties when asked. All members will be assigned a specific position within the organization, with the assistance of the officers and existing membership; e.g., chairpersonship of camp committee, participation as Mentors Plus volunteer. With the exception of ex-officio representatives, who form a communication link with the sponsors, additional participants must be productive to ensure the survival of the Program and its impact on the community.

COMMUNITY AGENCIES AND RESOURCES

It is most important for Youth Assistance Programs and staff to be knowledgeable of community resources as well as the availability of resources on the county, state and federal levels.

An effective, cooperative/coordinated relationship should exist between Youth Assistance Programs and other agencies within the community.

Churches, synagogues, service clubs and other groups in the community play an important role in Youth Assistance Programs, and their involvement is vital.

PART III

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE, DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

(This material could be voted on as an addendum to the Bylaws)

SOME FACTORS COMMON TO ALL COMMITTEES

A COMMITTEE:

Is an administrative tool by which specific tasks are performed.

Is formed when, and only when, a task to be performed can be done and appropriate people are available to do the job.

Has basically a democratic function—to bring about sharing of ideas so that an effective course of action can be developed.

The goals, tasks and responsibilities of each committee should be defined clearly before it is formed. They must be realistic and ones that can be accomplished. The development of tasks analysis (in narrative or graphic form), with time frames, is encouraged as a strategy to these ends.

The authority and source of the committee's authority should be understood and clearly defined to whom the committee reports its findings.

1. Standing Committees: are part of the bylaws and voted on for their approval.
2. Project/Ad Hoc Committees: may be appointed at any time for a specific job and when that job is completed, are dismissed.
3. Program Committees: They are Standing Committees, and their role is to design, plan and implement programs that relate specifically to the reduction/elimination of delinquency/abuse/neglect situations.
4. Operational Committees: They are committees responsible for the internal maintenance of the Youth Assistance Programs.

It is necessary for all committees to hold meetings and make adequate plans for meetings. Records of all meetings should be kept, and reports of progress should be made regularly to the Board of Directors.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

This is the core committee of the local Youth Assistance Program and has direct responsibility for its operation. It is a committee with administrative, coordination, implementation and policymaking functions. Its purpose is to coordinate services and resources through the involvement of local citizens for the prevention of delinquency, abuse and neglect. Its membership is composed of a cross-section of local citizens in various capacities of community leadership, business and professions.

The Board, with the help of the Youth Assistance caseworker, reviews and assesses the activities of the Program on a yearly basis.

BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE (Executive, Steering, Advisory)

This committee provides a medium for the elected officers to become involved in programming and administration of the Youth Assistance Program.

Purpose

To provide an advisory service to the Chairperson of the Board of Directors and carry out the business of the Program between Board of Directors meetings.

Objectives and Duties

To help the Chairperson in areas of:

1. Assessing committee meetings.
2. Preparing agendas.
3. Selecting committee chairpersons.
4. Discussing program plans and goal setting.
5. Evaluating any other administrative and program matters.
6. Taking on selected internal functions as the need arises, i.e., membership, finance.
7. Acting, in conjunction with the Youth Assistance caseworker, as a catalyst to stimulate committee growth, new directions, etc.

Structure

Composed only of the elected officers (which can include Immediate Past Board of Director Chairperson) and the Youth Assistance caseworker.

BYLAWS COMMITTEE

Purpose

To develop and maintain the bylaws which serve to guide the operation of the program.

Objectives and Duties

1. To be responsible for ongoing review of the program's bylaws and for recommending changes or revisions which will enable the organization to function more effectively.
2. To assess programs and activities of the Board of Directors and its committees in light of current bylaws in an effort to determine areas needing bylaws revisions/changes.

Structure

Consists of 3-4 persons who have a working knowledge of the overall Youth Assistance Program structure, Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, sponsor relationships and Internal Revenue Service rules (when relevant).

CAMPING AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

Purpose

Assess the local community's provision for wholesome leisure-time activities and provide camping/recreational opportunities to young people who have financial and other needs.

Objectives and Duties

1. Become knowledgeable of recreational resources.
2. Coordinate existing recreational services into a cooperative planned unit of service.
3. Help citizens become aware of their community recreational needs.
4. Provide a recruiting service for summer camps and recreational programs.
5. Plan and/or operate recreational activities for families/youth, i.e., summer and recreational programs, teen centers, field trips, etc.

Structure

This committee should have 5-10 persons who have had some experience in the recreational and camping fields. They should have time to coordinate, recruit, fundraise and transport for the camping or recreational experience.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Purpose

Provide for the Program's budgeted financial needs and material items or other resources which may be used in client meeting service needs.

Objectives and Duties

1. Develop the annual budget approved by the Board of Directors.
2. Provide where possible, clothing, furniture, food (special holiday baskets), transportation, medical care, etc. for clients carried by the Youth Assistance caseworker or involved in other sponsored program activities.
3. Study and review the dual financial arrangements with the local sponsors where further clarity is needed.
4. Present annual budget to local sponsors for their approval.
5. Plan and implement fundraising projects.
6. Work closely with the officers/Youth Assistance caseworkers in such areas as budget preparation, presentation.

Structure

Membership should be limited to three persons, including the program's treasurer, who have had experience in bookkeeping, budget planning, fundraising and knowledge of organizations providing for the material needs of citizens.

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Purpose

Study and work toward developing and securing adequate laws designed to improve social conditions in our society affecting children and the prevention of delinquency, abuse and neglect.

Objectives and Duties

1. Be familiar with national/state legislative policies and current methods of effectively utilizing them.
2. Study/analyze legislative proposals, particularly when Michigan Legislative bodies are in session.
3. Know the local legislative people/their positions on legislation related to children. Education must precede, accompany and follow legislation if any law is to succeed.
4. Educate legislative representatives to the needs of children and families.
5. Develop coordinated/cooperative relationships with community forces, particularly where proposed legislation is not clear and seemingly not in the best interest of children.
6. Become knowledgeable of local ordinances and work with municipalities/school districts in developing ordinances and other local laws related to children.
7. Develop, out of program experiences, legislative briefs which may be suggested to existing legislators for consideration.
8. Interpret to the community and county all matters of legislation that are related to children.
9. Make youth aware of the legal process and laws affecting them and their families.

Structure

Size of this committee should be up to three people who have general knowledge and background of legislative procedure and strategy in motivating groups into action.

NOTE: If the Program has a 501(c)(3) tax status, the committee needs to review the laws concerning lobbying.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Purpose

Keep the roster of the Board of Directors filled according to the bylaws.

Objectives and Duties

1. Develop a plan for the recruitment of members.
2. Recommend prospective members to the Board of Directors for approval.
3. Submit the names of persons, accepted by the Board of Directors, to the local municipalities and school board for approval.
4. Provide an orientation to the Youth Assistance Program.
5. Arrange for the recognition of appointed members by the Board of Directors.
6. Review procedures for members delinquent in attendance or other behavior.
7. Develop a membership rotation procedure. This should provide a definite period of time for the person to serve. The length of the term is defined in the Program's bylaws.
8. Update, produce and distribute to members and sponsors a roster of the current membership.

Structure

Size of this committee should be three persons who have a general knowledge of people in leadership positions in the community and possess a good understanding of Youth Assistance Program concepts. It is advantageous if members are actively involved in other various groups and organizations within the community.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Purpose

Prepare, each year, a slate of officers for the Board of Directors election.

Objectives and Duties

1. Be knowledgeable of the membership and their leadership potential.
2. See that an election is held each year in accordance with the bylaw's requirements.
3. Work closely with the Membership Committee Chairperson and Board of Directors in securing information in regard to a possible slate of officers.
4. Contact all persons appearing on the slate for their consent to be listed before presenting the slate to the Board of Directors for election.
5. Prepare ballots and slates for election in accordance with the Program's bylaws.
6. Cooperate by performing other duties relating to elections that might be requested by the Board of Directors.

Structure

Three persons. Where possible, members of the Nominating Committee should not nominate themselves. The Immediate Past Board of Director Chairperson may be considered to chair this committee.

FAMILY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Purpose

Facilitate ongoing school and community-based parent and family education programs which will enable parents to acquire knowledge, skills and techniques that will assist them with their children.

Objectives and Duties

1. Develop programs which will enrich/strengthen child management and parenting skills.
2. Develop, promote and distribute material related to child management.
3. Work within the framework of the school/community on problems such as:
 - A. Drop-outs/absenteeism/truancy
 - B. Slow learners
 - C. Disciplinary matters
 - D. Ordinances
 - E. Curfews
 - F. Trends or factors affecting children
 - G. Substance abuse
4. Broaden community awareness of effective ways of combating social problems which detract from family growth.
5. Ongoing research pertaining to youth/family management needs.

Structure

Members should have experience in schools, welfare agencies, PTA/PTO, parenting, administration, educational approaches and program design.

PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Purpose

Develop/implement public relations strategies and campaigns within the community to market the Youth Assistance Program and increase its visibility.

Objectives and Duties

1. Know/utilize the local and area news media (newspaper, radio, television, etc.) in publicizing the Program.
2. Develop the Program's Annual Report and other material designed to convey the work of the Program to the public.
3. Publish, or assist in publishing, all materials related to the various committees of the Program.
4. Arrange for the processing of all requests to the Board of Directors of an educational or public relations nature.
5. Plan annual meeting.

Structure

Members should have skills in public relations, news media, public speaking, journalism and a working knowledge of their Youth Assistance Program.

RESEARCH AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Purpose

Study, secure factual data, develop community/project profiles in order to formulate program plans for the prevention of delinquency and neglect.

Objectives and Duties

1. Provide a complete picture/profile of the area served regarding various sociological characteristics.
 - A. Economic
 - B. Population
 - C. Social Welfare
 - D. Education
 - E. Religion
 - F. Housing
 - G. Human Relations
 - H. Deviant Behavior
 - I. Recreation
2. Keep the community/program aware of trends which influence antisocial behavior, such as:
 - A. School dropouts.
 - B. Data on areas in the community where delinquent behavior most frequently occurs and where the offenders live.
 - C. Statistical data on apprehension and description of offenses committed.
 - D. Information concerning national/county-wide youth projects, community resources and gaps in welfare agencies/services.
3. Formulate programs to meet community needs which are consistent with Youth Assistance goals.
4. Act as an advocate for program development by community organizations that will benefit the community and its children/families.

Structure

Usually does not exceed seven in number, and members should have experience in sociology, statistics, research, writing, planning.

MENTORS PLUS COMMITTEE

Purpose

Provide identified children, within the community, with a meaningful experience from a caring adult. The intent is to build a trusting relationship which will enrich and benefit a child's life.

Objectives and Duties

1. Recruit, screen and match adults from the community for work as Mentors Plus volunteers.
2. Monitor progress of the matches, through regularly scheduled monthly contacts with the volunteers and contacts with the parent(s)/child.
3. Provide continuing awareness of volunteerism to matched volunteers, local Youth Assistance Programs/community.
4. Work in cooperation with the Youth Assistance caseworker/County Youth Assistance Volunteer Programs staff.
5. Implement group or regional activities for Mentors Plus matches.

Structure

Members need to be knowledgeable of volunteer recruitment techniques and aware of resource persons to assist in training volunteers. A committee of five to seven is suggested.

YOUTH INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

Purpose

Help identify the contributions/problems of youth as they relate to the prevention of juvenile delinquency, abuse and neglect; communicate youth viewpoints on these subjects to the Board of Directors/community; plan, develop and implement projects/activities geared toward the positive well-being of young people.

Objectives and Duties

1. Involve youth in direct problem-solving; social action programs designed to serve their peers/community; educational and learning experiences/leadership training/career exploration and awareness of community social problems for the purpose of self-growth/improvement.
2. Implement the tasks of the Youth Involvement Committee within the philosophy of the Board of Directors.
3. Provide, where possible, youth personnel for other committees of the Board of Directors.

Structure

1. The chairperson should be a youth member of the Board of Directors with full rights/privileges and be in high school.
2. There can be established one Youth Involvement Committee for both junior and senior high school students.
3. A member of the Board of Directors should be assigned to serve as the adult advisor of the Youth Involvement Committee, without the power to vote.

YOUTH RECOGNITION COMMITTEE

Purpose

This committee has the primary responsibility of planning and implementing the Annual Youth Recognition Event. Individuals within the local community are encouraged to nominate young people who, through some effort, volunteer work, heroic deed, employment, etc., contribute to the well being of the community. Recognition events are structured to honor the selected youths and their parents. The event usually includes a meal and certificates of recognition. Local dignitaries are in attendance and participate in the program.

Objectives and Duties

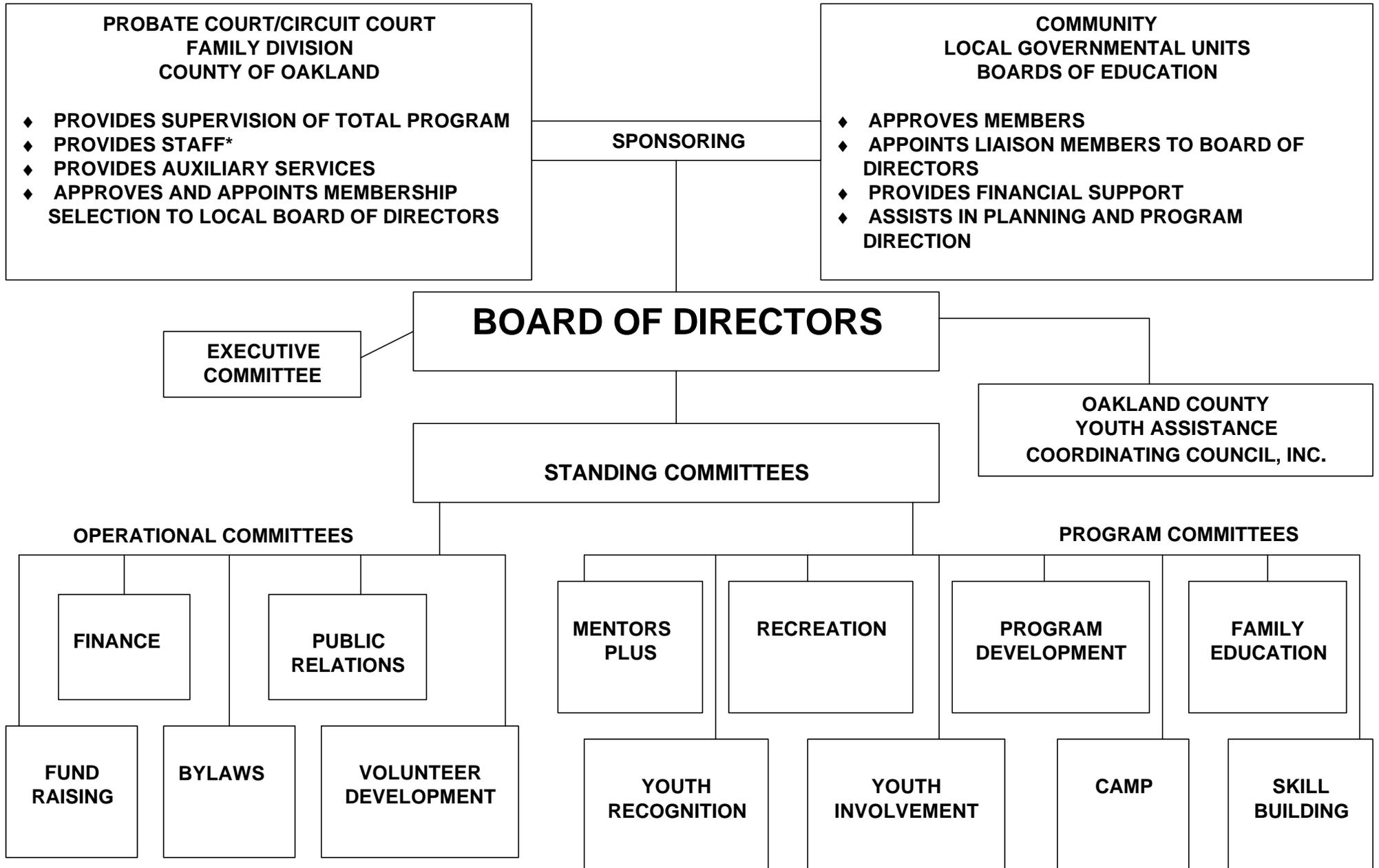
1. Identify criteria for youth to be recognized.
2. Solicit nominations from schools, religious institutions, hospitals, nursing homes and the community-at-large.
3. Screen and select youth to be recognized.
4. Develop program.
5. Identify site.
6. Invite program participants.
7. Host event.

Many of the duties can be conducted or shared with other committees of the Board, involving finance, public relations and youth involvement.

Structure

Membership should have at least three members.

YOUTH ASSISTANCE PROGRAM STRUCTURE & SERVICES



*WITH PRINCIPAL FUNDING APPROPRIATED THROUGH OAKLAND COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS