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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Denver Public Library (DPL) is regularly seeking new ways to better serve the community. Currently, DPL is focused on implementing its Service Delivery Initiative: DPL’s strategic plan for moving Library services forward and making Library services increasingly relevant to the community. One of its primary focuses is emphasis and development of its Out of School Learning Initiative, including an expansion of services aimed at teens. In order to most appropriately align this teen services expansion with the concurrent Service Delivery Initiative and with existing teen services at DPL, a committee of DPL staff developed and implemented a project from March 2013 to March 2014 to identify and describe what assets currently exist for teens in Denver. The committee used this information to develop a series of recommendations designed to improve Library service to Denver teens and inform Denver organizations serving teens about how to work more collaboratively.

The Teen Assets Mapping Committee is made up of five members: Michelle Jeske (Project Lead), Cori Jackamore, Nikki Van Thiel, Kellie Cannon and Kristin Roper (Principal Writer). Michelle Jeske attended the Institute of Museum and Library Services-funded Public Library Association Leadership Academy in March 2013, entitled “Navigating Change and Building Community.” Attendees were required to develop a “real-world project,” as described by the Academy, which would be implemented at the attendees’ libraries. Michelle developed a project to identify and describe assets for teens in Denver, utilizing the Asset-Based Community Development model developed by John Kretzmann and John McKnight in 1993. This Leadership Academy project was the impetus for the Teen Asset Mapping Committee and its subsequent work.

DPL is not the first library to conduct an asset mapping project, but it is among the first. Part of this project included one-on-one interviews with community organizations; during these interviews, respondents indicated that the Library is perceived as a non-judgmental, trustworthy institution. From this, we extrapolated

1 Growing Up with Out-Of School Learning Technologies
Provide targeted and engaging out-of-school learning opportunities focused on science, technology, engineering, art and math (STEAM) for children and teens in the Families with Children supergroup and the Metropolitans market segment. Build on the success of Summer of Reading, After School is Cool and the ideaLAB.

2 The academy included a three and a half day education and networking event along with an online component. The focus was on building real world projects that would be implemented in attendee libraries and developing the skills to implement the projects.
that the Library is well-positioned to serve a central role in identifying, describing, and even connecting community assets.

Furthermore, though some organizations were not familiar with the concept of asset mapping, many said they felt honored to be included in the project and are looking forward to receiving the final report, an additional indication of organizations’ positive perceptions of the Library. Others expressed that they were pleased and relieved that the committee is moving forward with this important work. Indeed, we believe this project is clearly needed as it does not appear to overlap similar previous or current work.

The project included surveying DPL staff regarding teen services and speaking directly with DPL Teen Advisory Board (TAB) members, as well as conducting the interviews with community organizations providing services to and for teens. Through this work, we identified two major themes that will significantly inform the DPL teen services expansion: 1. There is a significant knowledge or communication gap regarding what services are available to teens that DPL might help fill with targeted communication efforts. 2. DPL’s existing Positive Youth Development framework has positioned the Library on the track to effectively expand library services to and for teens.
METHODOLOGY

Asset-Based Community Development

At the beginning of this project, the committee became aware of and appreciated a community development model called Asset-Based Community Development which was created by John Kretzmann and John McKnight of the School of Education and Social Policy at Northwestern University. In short, the belief is that community building is improved by focusing on the assets, skills and capacities of residents and organizations rather than focusing on needs, problems and deficiencies. Community development efforts are more effective when they are based on an understanding of the community’s assets. Community builders can then connect the assets to multiply their power and effectiveness.

One of the first steps when using the Asset-Based Community Development model is inventorying the gifts, skills and capacities of individuals, voluntary associations, institutions, physical assets, local economy assets and stories in the community. The committee used this technique to inventory what it considered community assets serving teens in Denver. This initial asset map is included in Appendix A.

Original Scope

The scope of the project grew considerably between the first committee meeting and the final report. Originally, we described our project goal in three parts: identify the assets, describe the assets, harness the assets. At that time, the primary focus of this project was on the first and second parts of the goal, or in short, inventorying the assets.

The project then grew from one that identifies and describes the assets serving teens in Denver, to a project that harnessed major themes and issues among the assets serving teens in Denver, analyzing how those themes and issues relate to DPL and using that analysis to inform library service delivery as it relates to teens--information important to the Library as well as to the community assets serving teens.

The committee used Basecamp and Google Docs to complete the project. Basecamp enabled us to track progress, communicate and post documents including interview responses and articles or reports that informed the project. We used Google Docs to track interview progress and to write the final report, including generating charts for the final report.
Selection of Interviewees

The committee identified a list of community assets serving teens in Denver. Through our own knowledge, experience and internet use, we identified a fairly comprehensive list of assets for teens in Denver. The list can be found in Appendix B.

This list includes more organizations than we believed we could reasonably interview. We then narrowed the list in a two-step process: the committee members first ensured a wide variety of organization types was included, and then removed lesser known organizations that appeared to duplicate efforts of these organizations. We recognized that this process was somewhat arbitrary, but believed it was the best approach to creating a manageable list of organizations to interview, and to identify the main or primary assets for teens in Denver. The committee ensured that the list was well-rounded by including organizations focused on general positive youth development as well as organizations focused on addressing deficiencies.

Interviews

The committee believed it was important to conduct an interview with each organization on the final list. In-person interviews would allow DPL staff to meet key players in the community face-to-face, which proved to be of great importance to the overall process.

In order to conduct the large number of interviews, additional DPL staff were recruited to help. The committee then drafted and distributed a standard set of interview questions for participating DPL staff, to ensure that the same information was gathered from each organization. This list of questions is found in Appendix C. We also drafted a cover letter to be sent to each organization on the list, thus also ensuring that the same information was being given to each location.

While the goal was to conduct in-person interviews at each location, this was not always possible due to the tight schedules of staff at the organizations. Therefore, interview types were prioritized in order of: in-person interviews, phone interviews, and answering the interview questions via email. Of the 45 organizations on the final list, 27 were interviewed in-person, 9 via phone, and 4 via email.

In addition to scheduling conflicts related to interviews, some organizations on the final list were difficult to contact. Numerous interviewers navigated unreturned phone messages and emails before being able to get in touch with organizations. While the committee tried to adhere to a general rule of three attempts to contact organizations, committee members and other interviewers almost always provided
more than three opportunities to organizations before removing them from the final list. In the end, some organizations were replaced with similar organizations that had previously been taken off the list. Additionally, five organizations on the final list were unable to schedule interviews even after the committee extended the deadline to complete interviews twice, resulting in 40 interviews total. This final list is found in Appendix D.

Throughout the interview process, we met to evaluate progress. We also utilized a Google spreadsheet shared between the committee and DPL interviewers, which tracked if and when organizations had been contacted, the result of that contact, the interview date and time, the interviewee’s name and what follow-up was needed.

**Staff Survey**

While inventorying the community assets serving teens in Denver, the committee believed it was important to register the degree to which DPL was a teen asset. We developed a survey that was sent electronically to all DPL staff, intending to capture information from front-line staff. We also allowed for differences of opinion even within the same branch or department by including staff as potential respondents. Participation in the survey was optional.

Of the 435 front-line staff at DPL, 144 participated in the survey. The response rate was notably uneven, due to the committee’s intention to gather information from all front-line staff. While at least one staff member per branch or department responded to the survey, in some cases nearly half of the staff at a given location responded to the survey. Therefore, some locations’ services for teens were overrepresented in the final results, while other locations’ services were underrepresented.

The survey questions were designed to capture such general information as whether staff believed their locations were welcoming to teens, as well as specific information regarding teen spaces and teen program offerings. The survey also allowed for open-ended comments related to teen services at the respondent’s location. For a complete list of survey questions see Appendix E.

The committee evaluated and discussed the survey results after the time to respond had ended. One member of the committee coded two of the most relevant questions for the purposes of this report: what types of teen services are currently provided by DPL, and what barriers DPL staff perceive as limitations to providing teen services. In addition to informing this report, responses were immediately summarized by a second committee member and posted on the DPL internal website, Staffweb. This can be found in Appendix F.
Teen Advisory Board Focus Groups

The committee wanted to round out our conversations by including conversations directly with teens currently served by DPL. Conversations with the teens would provide an opportunity to gather information that would inform recommendations for this report, as well as measure teens’ perception of the current effectiveness of the Library as an asset.

Teens serving on the five current DPL Teen Advisory Boards were identified to participate in these focus groups. Due to the late addition of this idea to the overall process, the committee opted not to identify more teens to participate in these focus groups. TAB staff leaders spoke with the teens at their respective library locations, and asked a standard set of questions created by the committee.

The questions were aimed at identifying what the teens believe they have in the Library as a community asset, what they want from the Library, and specifically how they gather and use information about what is offered by the Library. The entire list of teen focus group questions can be found in Appendix G.

While the number of teens included in focus groups was somewhat small, the focus group meetings were effective in bringing out honest answers from the teens, perhaps more than if the focus groups had been made up of randomly identified teens. The participating teens--as Teen Advisory Board members--have established trusting relationships with Library staff and therefore were forthright with their answers. The results of these focus groups informed the Findings and Recommendations section of this report. A complete list of the results can be found in Appendix H.

Coding the Asset Interviews

The committee coded questions 1 through 9 of the interviews conducted with organizations, to enhance the readability of the information for the final report. The remaining questions 10 through 12 were not coded since the answers provided were open-ended; coding was applied to only the questions in which themes among answers were more useful in a report than the specific text of the answers. We created a controlled vocabulary of codes after all interviews were completed, referred to in this report as a post-coordinated controlled vocabulary.

We began the coding process by individually reading through all of the interviews and identifying themes within the answers. As themes were identified, committee members recorded vocabulary to describe them. These notes became the initial coding of the interview questions 1 through 9.
The committee reviewed the initial coding for each question. This lengthy process included comparing differences and nuances of the language used to depict each interview answer, and determining which exact word or phrase best represented the answers given by the interviewees—often a case of semantics. We developed a set of broad categories that described answers for each question. Within these broad categories, we also developed a set of sub-categories that depicted specifics within the interview questions. The intention was to reflect prevailing themes within the interview answers, without losing the granularity within the answers.

We then divided the questions for a second round of coding. When coding during this round, the committee members re-read the interview answers for the assigned questions. The committee members had discretion to add or change the vocabulary of the codes, and met again to address any changes to the previously agreed upon codes.

During this third coding meeting, it became clear that committee members had utilized different methods when coding. Two committee members had selected either broad or sub-categories as codes, and coded for all categories that fit the interview answer. This meant that some interview answers were coded with only a broad category; some coded with only a sub-category, and some coded with both broad and sub-categories. Another committee member had assigned a broad category to each question, and then assigned sub-categories if the sub-categories applied. The remaining two committee members had coded with a combination of these two methods, based on what method they believed best fit their questions’ answers. For the purposes of consistency, we agreed it was necessary to all use the same approach when coding.

We determined that the most accurate method of coding was to assign a broad category to each interview answer, and then assign sub-categories if any fit. This method seemed most in-line with the original intention behind coding answers: to identify major themes without losing granularity. The committee members then coded their assigned interview questions a final time.

**Lessons Learned About the Process**

The key lesson the committee learned about the process, was that the process itself was important. We learned a great deal simply by taking the time to be methodical in its approach.

To begin, it was difficult to reach many of the organizations on the list. As was mentioned above, a number of phone calls and emails to organizations went unanswered. In other instances, some organizations did not appear to believe it
was important to be included in this project. We found that having the director leading the project sign an email with her title often resulted in responses from organizations which had not previously been responsive. We also found that it was vital to keep the original list of organizations so we could replace unresponsive organizations as necessary.

To understand the assets for teens and the issues that relate to teens, interviews were critical, whether in-person, via phone or via email. While it may appear that the interview questions could have been answered with a thorough web search, interviews greatly enhanced the breadth and the depth of the answers. For example, on a number of occasions, interviewees highlighted areas of their organizations’ work that differed greatly from what the committee understood about those organizations’ work. As another example, the Findings section of this report is not limited to information related to questions asked; rather, additional information was gleaned through having conversations with the organizations that enhanced and broadened the committee’s Findings.

Leaving the Library and going to the organization was also important. Committee members were able to make face-to-face contact with teen asset providers, often being the first DPL staff member to ever do so. Committee members conducting interviews also had the opportunity to observe organizations first-hand. Both the opportunity to represent DPL in person and to observe the organization first-hand significantly informed committee members’ understanding of what the Library might offer to support these organizations, an understanding that committee members believe would not have been as clear or prevalent without physically visiting the organizations.

Committee members also became aware, through the interviews, that talking about what DPL does for teens is strongly desired, if not needed, by these organizations. We had prepared a packet to bring to the interviews, which included DPL services for teens as well as general information related to Library locations and hours. Despite the packet, interviewees still wanted to discuss specifics related to DPL services for teens.

In terms of addressing the information collected during the interviews, we learned that coding itself is challenging. Not all committee members were familiar with the concept or process of coding. The primary difficulty we experienced occurred at the beginning of the coding process, when it was difficult for us to understand the concept of using coding to generate a controlled vocabulary into which all interview answers would fit. The committee members agreed that the answers should be coded in order to provide a readable and digestible report, and this agreement encouraged us to work together to ensure that everyone had a working knowledge of coding and its importance. We learned that a prior working knowledge of coding
would have positively impacted the coding process, specifically by reducing confused conversations that prolonged the coding process.

During the coding process, we needed to identify themes without imposing our own understanding on the interview answers. At times, committee members believed they had a better word or phrase to describe interview answers. However, if that word or phrase was not actually in at least one interview answer, the committee did not use it as a code. Coding by definition requires a controlled vocabulary, but creating a controlled vocabulary was not so important that this committee risked losing what interviewees said. This is an expected challenge with pre- versus post-coordination, in terms of coding, but one that was difficult to navigate nonetheless. The key for the committee was to maintain consistency by avoiding adding any pre-coordinated codes to the interview responses.

The committee members also decided that to maintain the integrity of coding, we must focus strictly on what the interviewee stated only in the answer being coded. This applied to the controlled vocabulary as well as cases where one interview answer may have provided information for another interview answer. We were careful to code interview answers based only on the information provided in the specific answer being coded, even though at times it was frustrating not to consider the interview in its entirety.

We recognized later in the process that the three major discussions related to coding were critical not only to maintain consistency and integrity with coding, but also because the discussions sparked thought about the themes that were emerging through the coding process. During these discussions, committee members examined and speculated on what were later called “major themes.” These discussions significantly informed the Recommendations section of this report, and specifically informed the Recommendations to Library in Appendix I.

The overall process took considerably longer than the committee had originally anticipated. The interviewing and coding were both time consuming. Furthermore, since the scope of the project grew as we learned more about organizations and saw needs the Library might meet, the final product of this work also took longer to generate.
FINDINGS

Constituents Served

Logically, the primary constituents served by the organizations selected are youth, grades 6-12. For the purposes of this report, the committee defined middle-school aged youth as grades 6-8, and high-school aged youth as grades 9-12. Both middle-school and high-school aged youth are referred to as “teens,” in this report.

We also found a notable number of organizations serving emerging adults, defined for the purposes of this report as ages 18-25. The committee also found a surprising number of organizations serving elementary aged youth as well as middle- and high-school aged youth. Usually, the elementary aged youth would then age into the organization’s programs for middle- and high-school aged youth.

In addition to identifying the age ranges served by these organizations, specific demographics were also identified, if applicable. The charts below depict the primary constituents and describe the demographics served, within each age range. Overall, of the organizations selected, we learned that there are a number providing services for teens in crisis (ie, homeless, in the juvenile justice system, or low-income), but not as many services for teens not in crisis situations.
Key Issues Facing Teens

Organizations were asked to identify key issues affecting teens; the issues might or might not have been related to the services offered by the organization responding to the question.

Many teens served by the interviewed organizations are facing school issues ranging from poor grades and attendance to drop-out. In addition, teens often demonstrate a lack of preparedness for career, college and life. A number of organizations articulated in various ways that overall, the traditional school structure does not meet the needs of many students.

Another issue identified was lack of access to essential resources including information, health care, transportation, food, shelter and jobs. Many teens do not have an adequate support structure either at home or school that would provide many of these resources as well as paths to success. There are not enough appropriate after school programs to fill these gaps.
Other issues relate to teens’ past. Teens requiring services from many of the interviewed organizations have experienced developmental trauma in their lives. They have either witnessed or experienced violence including domestic, relationship, child, and/or sexual abuse or gang-related violence.

The chart below depicts the kinds of issues being faced by teens as identified by interviewed organizations.

![Key Issues Facing Teens According to Organizations](chart.png)

**Emerging Issues Facing Organizations**

Emerging issues are circumstances happening now or expected to happen in the future that may be roadblocks to providing services. Most organizations are concerned about the effects of poverty on the teens they serve, but many indicated that reaching teens can often be the largest hurdle to providing services. For example, organizations consistently indicated that the best methods to reach teens--via the internet--seem to be elusive as teens frequently jump from platform to platform.
The chart above describes the parameters of “situational disadvantages” in more detail. Situational disadvantages are issues related to poverty and/or homelessness that adversely affect a teen’s ability to get services and be safe. For example, if a teen does not have access to transportation, they are unable to attend programs and can end up isolated. While most organizations would list ‘poverty’ as a roadblock to services, there were quite a few that explained what aspects of poverty were most likely barriers to serving teens.

Organizations serving teens who are somewhere on the homeless spectrum also spoke about the difficulty in referring teens and emerging adults to shelters. Denver’s new camping ban\(^3\) means that teens who are sleeping outside tend to hide better and go to more out of the way areas than before. Additionally, one organization indicated that there is a policy in place--through Denver’s Road Home program--that disallows creation of additional shelter spaces for teens and emerging adults, which is a problem since there is a trend toward increased homelessness in this group.

**Program Development, Marketing, Assessment and Future Goals**

The interviews were primarily designed to determine what constituents organizations serve, what issues organizations address and what issues organizations anticipate. However, additional information was important to the asset mapping process, such as what resources organizations use to determine how to serve their constituents, what marketing methods organizations utilize to reach their constituents, how organizations define the success of their endeavors and the near-future goals of the organizations. This section discusses that information.

The chart below depicts how organizations acquire information about how to serve their constituents. The committee learned that most organizations receive information from other agencies or organizations whether it be in the form of government data or from collaborations with partners. The youth impact or voice through informal discussions and observations is also heavily relied upon to find how to best serve teens. Academic or professional research, outreach to parents and other invested adults, as well as evaluating the participants through surveys and testing round out the ways organizations told us they get information.

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\(^3\) Passed in May 2012, the camping ban forbids unauthorized camping on public or private property within the City and County of Denver.
The following charts depict what methods organizations employ to reach teens. As mentioned previously, organizations believe that using the internet to reach teens is an ineffective method. They believe that the most successful marketing method is direct contact with teens, or word-of-mouth. Organizations also rely heavily on schools to reach teens, in the form of in-school sessions or referrals from teachers.
The two primary methods of reaching teens are: outreach to schools and outreach directly to teens. The two charts below describe specific methods in more detail.

**SPECIFIC METHODS OF OUTREACH TO TEENS**

- **41.2%** Word of Mouth
- **11.8%** Teens Aged into Program
- **11.8%** Teens in Juvenile Justice System
- **11.8%** Teens Apply to Program
- **8.8%** Social Media
- **8.8%** Website
- **8.8%** Providing Anonymous Way for Teens to Contact

**SPECIFIC METHODS OF OUTREACH TO SCHOOLS**

- **43.5%** Referrals/Lists from Schools
- **30.4%** Workshops/Classes for Students
- **21.7%** Students Enroll through School
- **11.8%** Workshops for Teachers
Almost all of the organizations interviewed collect some kind of data to measure the success of their programs. Additionally, there is a general mix of qualitative data (changes in outlook and resiliency) and quantitative data (number of participants or first time visits).

Specific markers used by organizations seemed to align with the ideology of each program, but broadly there are many similarities between organizations. Most organizations are keenly interested in feedback from teens, either solicited or observed. Tracking success in school is another indicator for success even for organizations that do not have a primary mission of academic achievement.
Youth Program Quality Intervention (YPQI) is a three-part study from The David Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality which includes YPQA, the Youth Program Quality Assessment.

Organizations were also asked to describe their priorities for the near future. These
priorities may or may not relate to the results of the organizations’ program evaluations.

Roughly one quarter of the organizations the committee interviewed said that growing the organization is their key priority for the next 3 to 5 years. Organizations also described collaborating with other organizations, getting the community more involved, and building relationships as other priorities. A number of organizations described singular priorities related directly to their organization’s mission; these are described below as “Other Specific Priorities.”

Gaps in Services to Teens

Organizations were asked to identify gaps in services to teens. These gaps might relate to their particular organization’s mission and goals, or might include general gaps unrelated to the organization’s mission and goals.

As indicated below, leaders of interviewed organizations identify a number of gaps
in service to teens. A significant number described a need for additional opportunities for teens, especially appropriate out of school time activities as well as internships, leadership and service learning activities. Others believe that collectively, existing organizations do not meet all of the educational needs of teens.

In addition, it is difficult for organizations to achieve their desired outcomes because many teens they are serving are not getting their basic needs met (ie. food and shelter). They identified another serious gap in communication, both among service providers but also to target audiences.

| Lack of relevant out-of-school time activities | 9 |
| Lack of internships, leadership or service learning opportunities | 8 |
| Inability to meet educational needs | 8 |
| Inability to meet basic needs | 8 |
| Poor communication about services | 8 |
| Lack of teen jobs | 5 |
| Lack of cohesion among agencies serving youth | 5 |
| Lack of early diagnosis/prevention/intervention | 3 |
| Lack of access to services in the neighborhood | 3 |
| Lack of access to technology and/or technology training | 3 |
| Lack of understanding of teen needs | 2 |
| Lack of transitional care programs | 2 |
| Lack of programs/resources for emerging adults | 2 |
| Little education on teen topics | 2 |
| Lack of safe spaces | 2 |

4 Out of School Time (OST): a top priority for the Office of Children’s Affairs is to streamline how City agencies, Denver Public Schools, and community organizations work together to better serve children and youth through out-of-school time programs that keep kids safe, help working families, strengthen student engagement and support student success.
| Lack of funding | 2 |
| Funding restrictions | 2 |
| Lack of teen voice opportunities | 2 |
| Lack of conversations on important teen topics | 2 |
| Poor longevity of programs | 1 |
| Lack of services for those who don’t qualify for free/reduced lunch | 1 |
| Program quality variations | 1 |
| Lack of programs for those not in crisis | 1 |
| Differing definitions of teens | 1 |
| Challenges in navigating government bureaucracy | 1 |
| Lack of services for those in the juvenile justice system | 1 |
| Need for staff development | 1 |
| Lack of services in other languages | 1 |
| Lack of programs with family support | 1 |
| Lack of positive same sex or race role models | 1 |
| Limited access to contraception and/or STD testing | 1 |

**Ways DPL Might Support Organizations**

The organizations the committee interviewed have many ideas of ways in which DPL might support them and their efforts. Access to and assistance with Library resources; promotion of their programs; providing programs, workshops or lectures; meeting space; and promotion of Library programs to their clients were the top answers.

The Recommendations section of this report explores the fact that many ideas suggested by organizations are services DPL currently provides. This indicates a substantial knowledge gap related to Library services that the committee has identified; the committee suggests ways to address this gap in the
Additional Relevant Findings

The Findings discussion thus far has been limited to the information organizations provided in direct response to the interview questions. However, organizations often provided information which did not directly relate to the questions asked, or expounded on the questions asked. The information was quite relevant to the purposes of this project. This additional information is summarized and discussed below.

As noted earlier, a number of organizations also serve a population increasingly referred to as emerging adults, defined for our purposes as the 18-25 age group. Several organizations pointed to the need for additional services and programs aimed at this population since many people in that age group struggle to transition into adulthood.

Interviewees stated in different ways that it is challenging to be effective and efficient when there is no clear leader providing city-wide coordination regarding improving services to teens in Denver. There are many organizations doing terrific work but the collective impact could be greater if there were a more coordinated effort including data collection, analysis and sharing, communication, and overall
vision and planning.

Through the committee members’ discussions with organizations, it became clear that there is sometimes dissonance between the organizations providing services and teens seeking services. Specifically, one organization noted the lack of strong male role models of the same race as the youth who are being served. There is a general belief that the people who traditionally work in nonprofits or similar organizations (often white, female, middle-class individuals) are sometimes seen as suspect, or that they are not as aware of the needs and culture of the community as they could be.

At the same time, most organizations also noted that teens, being mercurial creatures, make it difficult to create culturally relevant programming and reliable ways of reaching them. This compounds the already difficult problem of effectively relating to teens seeking services.

One organization noted that it is changing its approach to serving teens. Instead of looking at only the negative behavior, this organization is looking at the causes of that behavior. By looking at the whole person, the organization is finding that it is easier to relate to the teen and to meet their needs. In the same way, a number of other organizations pointed to the need to address issues in the entire family as well as the community to help individual teens in a significant way.

On a related note, many organizations stressed the need to teach teens and emerging adults resiliency skills. Resiliency is described as a combination of life skills, ambition, the ability to weather adversity and follow through on plans. Organizations noted that resiliency can also be described as the ability to see the step-by-step path to a goal: having an ambition and steps to get there. According to many of the organizations the committee interviewed, resiliency is not a trait that is often developed at home or in school.

**Staff Survey Findings**

As the committee concluded the organizational interviews, we sent a survey to DPL staff asking questions related to their experience about serving teens at DPL, and what more staff would like to see the Library offer as expanded teen services. This survey was intended to serve as a litmus test, to measure how DPL staff members view teen services at the time of this project.

Though the Methodology section discussed the voluntary survey participation, it is useful to emphasize the implications of the uneven response rate again here. While at least one staff member from every branch and department responded, in some cases many staff members responded, and in other cases only one responded.
Furthermore, committee members hypothesized that it is likely staff members already interested in working with teens participated, while staff members not interested in working with teens did not participate. Because of this, the survey data is considerably skewed, though not inaccurate: the survey results are useful in presenting a snapshot of how staff perceive teen services at DPL.

Nearly all (98%) of the respondents indicated they are comfortable working with teens, one specific indication that staff already interested in working with teens participated in the survey. Experience and being able to relate to teens were the top reasons for this comfort, but many indicated that they have teenagers at home which helps them as well.

While nearly all respondents indicated they are comfortable working with teens, fewer perceive their branch or department as teen-friendly (73%), a further indication that staff members interested in working with teens responded to the survey while staff not as interested in working with teens did not respond. Many of the respondents who indicated their locations are teen-friendly further indicated that this is based on staff at these locations and the programs provided. Those who do not perceive their branch/department as teen-friendly say that this is because they do not have many teens using their locations, or that the lack of funding for teen programs is a barrier to the location being teen-friendly resulting in fewer opportunities for teen programming.

Other questions on the survey addressed specific areas of teen service, including teen collections, dedicated teen spaces, and the DPL teen website, eVolver. Most respondents (64%) believe that the teen collection in their location is adequate to meet the needs of the teens using their location. And 62% of respondents have a dedicated teen space in their branch or department, whether it be a formal or flexible space. Fifty percent of the respondents say they do not use the DPL teen website eVolver, nor do they show it to teen customers.

The survey also asked staff what they are doing to serve teens in their branches. The respondents to this open-ended question described a varied set of teen services, including: homework help; providing leadership opportunities to teens in the form of jobs, volunteer positions, and Teen Advisory Boards; offering Summer of Reading programs; providing teen spaces and access to technology; offering research assistance and reader’s advisory; and hosting book clubs, games nights, and After Hours events.

The chart below depicts the type of teen services provided by DPL branches, and the number of respondents indicating that service is provided at their location. Again, because participation in the survey was optional, the results in this chart should not be taken as a completely accurate picture of teen services across the
system. For example, five locations in the system offer paid jobs for teens; however, only one respondent indicated this on the survey. The chart below emphasizes what teen services are widely offered and what teen services are perceived as important enough that staff included them in this open-ended survey response.
The survey also asked staff to describe challenges to providing teen services at DPL. The top three challenges respondents described were: limited or no designated teen space at their location, teens’ behavior presenting challenges to staff or other Library customers, and teens not coming to the Library. The chart
below depicts the challenges to providing teen services as described by survey respondents.

Teen Advisory Board Focus Group Findings

The committee also interviewed the members of the five current DPL Teen Advisory Boards (TABs), referred to in this report as Teen Advisory Board focus groups. The goals of these focus groups included finding out how teens get information about what is going on in their neighborhood, where teens feel safe, and what teen services they would like to see in their communities and their libraries.
In some cases, the questions asked of the focus groups correlated directly to those asked of the organizations interviewed. For example, organizations interviewed were asked how they find teens to participate in their programs. Teens in the focus groups were asked how they find out what is going on in their neighborhoods. Organizations described working with schools and outreach directly to teens, specifically via word-of-mouth, as their top marketing methods. Teens in the focus groups indicated that they rely on coming to the Library to find out about programs, or using the internet to find out what is going on in their neighborhood. These responses are somewhat incongruent, a situation explored further in the Recommendations section of this report.

In other cases, the questions asked of the focus groups correlated to questions asked on the staff survey. For example, when staff were asked to describe challenges to providing teen services, some described the fact that “the Library is not a safe place” as a challenge. At the same time, the teen focus groups were asked to identify safe spaces in their neighborhoods, and the two top answers were the library and the teens’ homes.

While these are examples of incongruent responses, examples of congruent responses exist as well. Staff were asked what teen services they would like to see provided at their locations, or across the system. Answers that rose to the surface were nearly identical to those given by teens when asked what they believed was missing from their Library: more technology or technology programming, increased access to computers and dedicated teen space. Another example exists when comparing the staff survey question of why staff perceive their location as teen-friendly and why teens felt compelled to come to and/or get involved at the Library: friendly and welcoming staff.

Both organizations and DPL staff indicated that it was difficult to keep up with teens’ current interests, as teens’ interests seem ever- and quickly-changing. The majority of focus group answers tended to reflect this conundrum. Answers varied from location to location and from teen to teen. For example, what teens stated they want from their Library and their community ranged from food trucks to music festivals to shopping malls to social events just for teens. They all wanted something different.
RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings from organization interviews, the staff survey, and DPL TABs, the Teen Asset Mapping Committee developed recommendations to shape the DPL teen services expansion, and recommendations to the Denver community to improve services to and for teens.

These recommendations are made with the concept of wraparound services in mind. Wraparound services is a phrase that refers to services that address all needs of each individual: including basic needs like food and shelter, and more complex needs relating to emotional development and resiliency. We recognize that not all organizations are able to provide wraparound services, but we believe all organizations are able to collaborate to ensure that all needs are met. Indeed, the Library is also limited in the number of services it can specifically provide. Furthermore, the Library is committed to privacy and confidentiality, a commitment that precludes Library staff from initiating personal inquiries with teen customers. Still, even with these limitations, we believe the Library can connect teens to organizations that are able to provide services that the Library cannot; in this way, coordination between organizations achieves a greater impact than organizations working alone.

Therefore, the committee recommends increased coordination among organizations serving teens to ensure regular communication between organizations, reduce duplicated efforts and provide effective referrals to ensure all teens’ needs are met. The committee further recommends that DPL structure its expansion of teen services with wraparound services in mind, thus offering programming and services that achieve a greater, longer-lasting impact. Such programs and services would specifically include relevant programs and internships that reach emerging adults as well as teens, and would require a year-round, separate and dedicated teen services budget.

Recommendations for DPL

The committee recommends that DPL revisit its practice of limiting teen program attendance to youth in grades 6-12. This asset mapping project brought to light the fact that a community of emerging adults (ages 18-25) exists in Denver and is currently not being served, but does need services similar to those needed by teens. Anecdotally, DPL staff have observed that many graduated teens show interest in joining the programs that are currently available for only high school aged students. Therefore, the committee recommends taking one of two alternate approaches to age limitations to DPL teen programming: either exploring the possibility of allowing emerging adults to participate in teen programs or providing the same type of programs for emerging adults.
For the purposes of this report, we are advocating that DPL address providing some services for emerging adults. DPL is currently exploring a number of demographics and related service expansions through its Service Delivery Initiative, and is therefore in the position to acknowledge the emerging adult phenomenon worldwide, the lack of services for this age group, and the ways DPL might provide some of the needed services. Through our work on this project, we believe that emerging adult services sometimes align with adult services, and at other times with teen services. Therefore, it is useful to explore emerging adult services from both adult services and teen services perspectives.

This initial recommendation related to the DPL teen services expansion, however, fails to address the lack of funding for many DPL teen programs. This recommendation also fails to address a lack of coordination among existing DPL teen services that must be addressed before teen services are expanded.

While some DPL teen programs are currently funded, such as the ideaLAB⁵ and Summer of Reading⁶, other programs operate on donated funds, leftover supplies, or no funding. DPL respondents to the staff survey indicated that lack of funding was a barrier to providing services for teens, and this idea is echoed by TAB members’ requests for additional programs that would require funding. Therefore, the committee strongly recommends year-round, separate, and dedicated funding for programming for teens.

Furthermore, the committee acknowledges the additional barriers to providing teen services that staff survey respondents described, which include teen behavior challenges and difficulty communicating with teens. The committee believes that a dedicated teen services budget could be used not only for programming, but also to provide training to address staff concerns.

Once a teen services budget is established, the committee believes the budget might then grow to support more than programming and training opportunities. Specifically, through the interviews with organizations, the committee recognized an overall need for teens to realize opportunities and paths to success—including volunteer positions, internships, technology training, and GED classes. The committee also recognized that while many organizations--nearly half of all interviewed--believe there is a need for out of school time activities for teens, especially internships, few organizations interviewed (6%) plan to offer such opportunities in the near future.

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⁵ The ideaLAB is DPL’s teen makerspace at the Central Library. To see some of the teens’ projects, check this site: http://teens.denverlibrary.org/idealab
⁶ Summer of Reading is a system-wide program where toddlers, children, and teens read for prizes. Specialized programming is provided for each age group.
The committee believes that DPL is able to provide structured internships for teens and emerging adults. These internships would be a step beyond the existing teen volunteer program, would be directly relevant to the teen’s interests, would include job skills acquisition opportunities, and would have a quantifiable impact on the library. Internships are a clearly defined opportunity needed for Denver teens and one that the Library is well-equipped to provide.

With this internship program in place, DPL would then be able to examine the possibility of re-instituting its past practice of hiring teens for paid staff positions. Anecdotally, both teen staff members and Library supervisors have articulated the success of this effort; teens in paid Library staff positions serve as role models for younger children in the community, one of many reasons this practice was viewed as a success in the past. These staff positions would enable teens working as shelvers and clerks to gain job experience, and enable DPL to promote career opportunities at the Library or in similar organizations. Specifically, teen staff members would be exposed to Library jobs as a viable and exciting career path.

Alongside the endeavors to create more relevant teen programming and opportunities, the committee recommends DPL reassess its marketing strategies for reaching teens and organizations serving teens. Interview responses indicated that word-of-mouth and other direct communication methods—such as going to schools or sending letters to teachers and organizations—are the preferred ways to reach teens. Furthermore, a number of interviewees cited frustration trying to reach teens via the internet, as teens’ preferred platforms for communication change frequently. Organizations rarely used untargeted outreach such as printed fliers. DPL, however, relies heavily on printed materials and internet marketing to reach teens, though anecdotally relationship building has proven to be the most effective way to bring teens to the Library. The Teen Advisory Board focus groups also indicate that relationship building is the most effective way to reach teens. This information taken as a whole is quite informative and should spur further discussion as to how to market to teens most effectively. This marketing discussion is multi-faceted and complex; for the purposes of this report, the committee recommends that DPL investigate the most effective ways to reach teens and then develop strategies accordingly. Targeted marketing is already an important part of the Service Delivery Initiative and marketing to teens should specifically be included in the overall conversation.

Dedicated funding and targeted marketing are key recommendations from this committee, but equal attention must be given to developing a coordinated approach to DPL teen services. This recommendation aligns with the Service Delivery Initiative because DPL must not only expand and fund teen services, but must also articulate why such programs and services are provided for teens and
determine how DPL will measure the success of these expanded efforts.

Evaluation and assessment will be critical to ensuring the effectiveness of expanded teen services, thus our emphasis on addressing these components of the process at its inception. Generally, the committee found that organizations struggle to adequately measure the success of their services to and for teens; this is not a challenge limited to DPL. Organizations might measure success with such vague markers as a societal change in perception on an issue, or with quantitative markers such as program registration or attendance. While both are useful, neither addresses such fundamental goals of providing teen services as building relationships that develop resiliency, or enabling teens to realize paths to success.

We appreciate information such as program registration or attendance that DPL currently records, but we also see added significance to these numbers. Such quantitative data represents not only a number of bodies in a room, but also a number of opportunities to build relationships. We recommend that DPL adopt or develop measures of success that go beyond raw numbers to record actual outcomes related to the teen services expansion. DPL might explore existing methods of measuring success, such as the Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA). Or, DPL might develop internal measures of success to correlate with specific benchmarks. These measures may take the form of pre- and post-questionnaires for Teen Advisory Board members and teen volunteers, or might be more informal and personal such as letters teens are asked to write describing their experience in a program after they age out of the program. Other measures may be more concrete, such as identifying the number of teens who regularly use Library services such as homework help or reader’s advisory, or capturing the retention rate of teen programs.

In short, we believe there are evaluation and assessment methods that can be used to determine qualitative as well as quantitative success. We believe that the Service Delivery Initiative presents an opportune moment for DPL to not only expand teen services but also to measure the effectiveness of this teen services expansion. Such continued practices of evaluation and assessment will ensure that DPL teen services are, and will continue to be, relevant to Denver teens.

Libraries are changing; the committee’s recommendations for DPL acknowledge that libraries are no longer the quiet repositories of information that they once were, and that libraries do not want to be perceived as outdated. Overall, the committee believes DPL must do a better job of promoting the library as a community center, which is what DPL is: a noisy, messy, glorious center of discovery, diversity and collaboration. In this way, the committee urges DPL to strongly consider the recommendations described above for its teen services expansion as the overall Service Delivery Initiative unfolds. The committee has
outlined additional specific recommendations in Appendix I.

Outside of the recommendations related specifically to the teen services expansion, the committee also recommends that DPL consider using the asset-based community development model in other contexts. Through its use of this model, the committee gained knowledge and insight about the Denver community beyond the scope of the teen population. The committee met community leaders and was able to educate them about the modern library and specifically what DPL offers teens and the community. By using the asset mapping framework in other contexts, DPL can continue having conversations with community leaders, building relationships and helping to increase awareness of what Library services are available for the community of Denver. Community engagement is how the Library can determine what services it should provide, and what impact those services have; continuing to use this model will in turn enable DPL to remain relevant to its community.

**Recommendations for the Community of Denver**

The primary discovery the committee made regarding services to and for teens in the Denver community is that a significant knowledge and communication gap exists between organizations serving Denver teens, and between organizations and teens who need services. Because DPL services for teens are included in this knowledge gap, and because this committee has already begun the process of bringing these organizations together by generating this report, the committee believes that DPL is well-positioned to take a leading role in connecting community assets for teens in Denver.

Specifically, the committee recommends that DPL begin by hosting a town hall meeting at DPL for community leaders to openly discuss teen services in Denver, and learn about the services DPL provides as well as what services other organizations provide. To borrow a phrase from the creators of the asset-based community development model, this meeting might be billed as a “Connectors Table.”

This meeting would only begin to address the knowledge gap; the process of closing the gap is larger and ongoing. The committee believes that the City and County of Denver is the appropriate organization to lead the process of closing the knowledge gap and facilitating regular conversations between organizations serving teens. At the same time, the committee recognizes this is a daunting task that can only achieve measurable success with all relevant community organizations involved. Still, the committee believes that coordinating communication between these organizations is worth such an effort as the result would be an overall
stronger collective impact.

Regardless of whether the City takes on the central role of coordinating communication, organizations providing services for teens must increase communication about what each one is providing. By doing so, organizations would reduce duplicated efforts, increase opportunities for collaboration, be able to promote services of other organizations, and--perhaps most importantly--be able to refer teens to other organizations as appropriate.

For example, through the organization interviews, the committee realized that often families struggle to find simple necessities such as toothbrushes and toothpaste, clean socks and soap. As Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs demonstrates, until basic needs are met, focus on the next level is often too difficult. Most organizations serving teens in Denver focus on that next level and are unable to meet basic needs due to a variety of constraints. However, some organizations exist solely to meet teens’ basic needs. Connecting organizations in this situation provides one compelling example of how a coordinated effort to connect organizations and eliminate the knowledge gap would result in a stronger collective impact.

It is possible that a tool to partially close this knowledge gap already exists; the Denver-based non-profit Civic Canopy helped develop the Community Partnership System (CPS), an afterschool program locator that might be expanded to include organizations serving teens rather than only those offering out-of-school time activities. Alternately, if this particular resource cannot be expanded, it might be used as a model for connecting organizations serving teens in Denver.

In addition to improved communication among organizations that serve teens, the committee recommends improved marketing efforts to teens. Coordinating the efforts of the organizations working with the teen population will not go far enough; the message must also reach the appropriate constituents. For example, as mentioned earlier, the findings in this report suggest that internet marketing is not as effective; still, some organizations rely heavily on this marketing method and others believe their organization should begin or enhance internet marketing. Such efforts may result in wasted organizational resources. In order to determine the most effective marketing strategies--and perhaps even collaborate on marketing in terms of referrals--the committee recommends that organizations take advantage of the opportunity provided by coordinated communication efforts to address how to most effectively market to teens.

Coordinated communication would not only fill the knowledge gap and generate more effective marketing, but would also open other opportunities as well. For example, the committee recognizes the need to serve emerging adults as was
articulated by a number of organizations interviewed. One key way to serve them
has already been described: providing relevant internships. Some organizations
already provide internship and/or service learning opportunities for teens and others
are planning to do so. Bringing all organizations together will allow for such
collaborative possibilities as referring teens to internships of interest, or modeling
new internship programs on existing successful programs. This committee believes
that increased internship opportunities alone would greatly contribute to emerging
adults’ success. The committee also believes that coordinated communication
would result in more opportunities and paths to success for teens.

Overall, the committee recommends that the Library, and all community
organizations and City agencies, consider the teen as a whole person. Those
serving teens must recognize that teens may have developmental trauma or
difficult circumstances that might affect their behavior now and in the future.
Organizations serving teens, therefore, must work together to create opportunities
that develop resiliency, grit and determination, in order for teens to overcome past
and present circumstances and thrive as adults. The committee’s
recommendations to DPL and to the community of Denver are starting points for
this imperative task. If taken together, the result would be a truly remarkable
collective impact.
CONCLUSION

The committee began the asset mapping project with a neutral perspective on its own knowledge of services to and for teens in Denver; the members had a working knowledge of existing services, but believed there were additional services and information to discover. The information the committee gathered notably changed its perceptions of services to and for teens in Denver. This includes perceptions of what services are available to teens as well as perceptions of language and phrasing when referring to teens. For example, over the course of the project, the committee began to recognize the importance of nuances and details such as how age groups are defined. Another example is the new and useful terminology the committee learned from organizations, such as developmental trauma, resilience, emerging adults and wraparound services.

The committee also learned about varied approaches to teen services, such as addressing the whole person versus offering niche programming to different segments of the teen population, and the importance of examining and treating traumatic, underlying causes of teen behavior rather than addressing the presenting behavior.

Approaches to teen services varied significantly between organizations, and this may account for an unsettling disconnect in communication between organizations, including between the organizations and the Library. Interview responses from organizations revealed this disconnect either explicitly or implicitly. For example, interview respondents provided such conflicting statements as: there are not enough services for teens in Denver; there are too many services for teens in Denver; or, teens and organizations are unaware of what services exist for teens in Denver. The Library was not exempt from this knowledge gap; when asked what services DPL might provide organizations, the responses were largely limited to services that DPL already offers, indicating that organizations are not aware of the services DPL offers.

Perhaps because of the protective and enthusiastic nature with which the committee views existing Library services for teens, and the new enthusiasm gained from learning about teen services provided by organizations, the committee became inspired to position the Library as a leader in connecting teen services providers in the community. The committee is energized by this collaborative possibility, and believes the Library might function in much the same way as it does in the current “Earlier Is Easier” Awareness Campaign, which hopes to harness the work of many local early childhood organizations to bring greater awareness to the importance of early literacy for very young children (birth to 3 year olds.)

The committee also believes that this project has significantly informed the plans to
emphasize and further develop its Out of School Learning Initiative with an expansion of services aimed at teens, and that the Library is on the right track to do so. Many interview responses reinforced longstanding DPL assumptions and ideas related to positive youth development. Specifically, the committee heard that a Positive Youth Development framework--regarding youth as assets, not problems to be solved--is the best approach to teen services. Furthermore, though it is sometimes difficult to acquire, the teen voice is proving to be essential to the success of teen services. This idea was already being explored at DPL by such projects as the Teen-Initiated Program Mini-Grants and the existence of Teen Advisory Boards to inform branch teen services.

Many youth-serving organizations, by their nature or their funding, must focus on the needs, problems and deficiencies of the youth they serve. This report is an attempt to focus on assets, skills and capacities. Both asset mapping and positive youth development emphasize the positive, while acknowledging the negative, and both are necessary in providing the best possible opportunities for the teens in our community. Community builders--like the organizations that participated in this project and the Library--can then connect the assets to multiply their power and effectiveness.

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7 These grants were provided to groups of teens at DPL who presented an approved proposal for programming at their location. Some grant winners include teens who hosted a Harry Potter after hours party at a location, and another after hours murder mystery party.
Teen Asset Map of Denver

- Individuals (including libraries)
- Associations
- Institutions (including libraries)
- Physical (including libraries)
- Local Economy (including libraries)
- Community Stories (including libraries)
APPENDIX B
TEEN ASSETS IN DENVER

INDIVIDUALS - talents and skills of local residents

Teens with talents and skills in:
Art and music
Computers and technology
Health and fitness
Sports
STEM (Science, technology, engineering, math)

Teens involved in various organizations such as:
After school clubs and teams
Church youth groups
Civic groups
Peer mentor programs
School clubs and teams

Teens involved in specific organizations such as:
Denver Public Library
  ● Teen Advisory Boards
  ● Youth assistants for programs such as After School is Cool and STEM
Mayor's Youth Commission
Mile High Youth Corps
Museum of Contemporary Art Teen Council: TeCo
PlatteForum
YESS Institute
Youth on Record
YouthBiz Inc.
YouthRoots

ASSOCIATIONS - the power of voluntary networks of people

Faith-based groups
Outdoor clubs
Service clubs
Youth groups

Note: This particular category of assets did not surface as plentiful for teens as the other asset categories.
INSTITUTIONS - the resources of public, private and nonprofit institutions

General:
After school programs such as chess clubs, choirs, math teams, etc.
Businesses
Libraries
School sports programs
Public and private schools
Recreational sports programs
Service agencies

Policy Makers:
City and County of Denver:
- City Council
- Human Services Department
- Juvenile Services Center
- Mayor's Office of Children's Affairs
- Parks and Recreation Department
- Police Department
  - Gang Task Force
- Safety Department
- Sheriff Department
Denver Housing Authority
Denver Out of School Time Alliance
Denver Public Schools
- AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination)
- Department of Extended Learning
- Department of Community/Parent Engagement
- Health Clinics
- Office of Post-Secondary Readiness

Practitioners:
Denver Public Library including:
- Ask Us 24/7 homework help
- ideaLAB at Central Library
- Reference Appointment Services
- Teen Advisory Board opportunities at various locations
- Teen book clubs at various locations
- Teen collections
- Teen Facebook and Twitter
- Teen gaming at various locations
- Teen-initiated programs at several branches
- Teen spaces at various locations
- Teen Summer of Reading program
- Teen Tech Club at Central Library
- Teen volunteer opportunities
- Teen web site, eVolver (http://teens.denverlibrary.org)
- Trained library staff
- Youth Assistants for After School is Cool program

ALATeen
Art from Ashes
Art Street
Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Colorado
Bluff Lake Nature Center
Boy Scouts
Boys and Girls Club of Metro Denver
  - PACE
Bridge Project
Byrne Urban Scholars
Cafe Cultura
Catholic Charities
Children's Hospital
City Year Denver
Colfax Community Network
College for Colorado
Colorado Anti-Violence Program
Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition
Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity & Reproductive Rights (COLOR)
Colorado State Youth Development Plan
Colorado Uplift
Colorado Youth at Risk
Colorado Youth Matter
Colorado Youth for a Change
Community Partnership System (includes DPS, OST Alliance & Mayor's Office of Children's Affairs)
Conflict Center
Day Treatment Program (DAYS)
Denver Acute @ Denver Health
Denver Children's Advocacy Center
Denver Children's Home
Denver Indian Center Inc
Denver Indian Health & Family Services
Denver Kids, Inc
Denver Pregnancy Prevention Partnership (umbrella organization for DAYS, COLOR & DPS School Based Health Clinics)
Denver Scholarship Foundation
Denver Youth Naturally
Devereux Colorado
Dry Bones
Eating Disorder Center of Denver
Eating Recovery Center
Father Woody's
Florence Crittenton Services of Colorado
Food Addicts in Recovery
Friends for Youth
Gabriel House
Gang Reduction Initiative of Denver (GRID)
Generations Schools
Gilliam Youth Detention Center
Girl Scouts
Girls Athletic Leadership School (GALS)
Girls Inc of Metro Denver
Going Green Living Bling
GRASP
I Have a Dream Foundation
Kempe Foundation for the Prevention & Treatment of Child Abuse & Neglect
Legal Center for People with Disabilities & Older People
Lutheran Family Services Rocky Mountains
Mental Health Center of Denver
Mi Casa Resource Center
Minds Matter
Museum of Contemporary Art (Teen Intern Council)
Open Door Youth Gang Alternatives
Open World Learning (OWL)
Padres y Jovenes Unidos (Parents and Youth United)
Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains
Project PAVE
Project VOYCE (Voices of Youth Changing Education)
RAFT
Rainbow Alley, The Center
Rocky Mountain Children's Law Center
Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network
SafetoTell
Savio
Servicios de la Raza-YES (Youth Experiencing Success)
Smart-Girl  
Sock's Place  
Steps to Success Program  
Street Fraternity  
Tennyson Center for Children  
Think 360  
United Way  
University of Colorado, Denver Center on Domestic Violence  
Urban League of Metropolitan Denver  
  • Nulites Program  
Urban Peak  
  • The Spot  
Volunteers of America - Bannock Youth Center  
YESS Institute  
You Can Play Project  
Youth Coordination Committee of Denver  
Youth Mentoring Collaborative

**PHYSICAL ASSETS - *the physical infrastructure and space in a community (land, property, equipment, buildings)***

**General:**  
Camps  
Churches  
Coffee shops  
Libraries  
Movie theaters  
Parks  
Public and private schools  
Recreation centers and pools  
School libraries  
Shelters  
Shopping centers  
Skate parks

**Specifically:**  
16th Street Mall  
Denver Art Museum  
Denver Juvenile Services Center  
Denver Parks and Recreation Centers  
Denver Public Library:  
  • Teen spaces at various locations
LOCAL ECONOMY ASSETS - the economic resources and potential of local places

General:

Apprenticeships
Community service
Internships
Neighborhood odd jobs (babysitting, snow shoveling, etc.)
Peer-to-peer mentorships
Service learning activities
Volunteer opportunities

Specific opportunities:

City and County of Denver’s Office of Economic Development, Workforce Development, Youth Services
Denver Open Media
Denver Parks and Recreation
Denver Public Library
Emily Griffith Opportunity School
Goodwill Industries of Denver
Greenway Foundation
Metro Volunteers
Mile High Youth Corps
Park Hill Bike Depot
PlatteForum
RedLine
Volunteers of America
YouthBiz Inc.
Youth on Record

COMMUNITY STORIES - the local history and culture of a community

General:
Authors
Churches
Coffee shops
Community and neighborhood newspapers
Cultural groups
Cultures
Farmers’ markets
Families
Festivals and fairs
Long-time residents
Neighborhood associations
Organizational newsletters
Private schools
Public schools
Small and local businesses

**Specifically:**
City Council
Denver Post’s YourHub
Denver Public Library
  - Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library
  - Western History/Genealogy Department
History Colorado
Kirkland Museum
Museum of Contemporary Art
RedLine
APPENDIX C
ORGANIZATION INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Who are your primary constituents?
2. What are the key issues facing your constituents?
3. What are your key priorities for your organization over the next 3-5 years?
4. How do you define success with your program?
5. How do you get information about how best to serve teens?
6. How do you find teens to participate in your program?
7. What are any emerging issues for your organization in serving teens?
8. From your perspective, what gaps exist in service to teens in Denver?
9. Do you see ways the Library might support what you are trying to accomplish?
10. With whom else should we talk, including any of your partners?
11. Is there anything else you would like to say?
12. Would you like a copy of our report?
APPENDIX D
LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS INTERVIEWED

ALATeen
Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Colorado
Boys and Girls Club of Metro Denver
Bridge Project
City and County of Denver
- Human Services Department
- Juvenile Services Center
- Mayor's Office of Children's Affairs
- Mayor's Youth Commission
- Office of Economic Development, Workforce Development, Youth Services
- Parks and Recreation Department
- Police Department
- Sheriff Department
- Safety Department
Colorado Anti-Violence Program
Colorado Youth for a Change
Denver After School Alliance
Denver Indian Center Inc
Denver Kids, Inc
Denver Open Media
Denver Public Library Teen Advisory Boards
- Athmar Branch
- Bear Valley Branch
- Green Valley Ranch Branch
- Park Hill Branch
- Sam Gary Branch
Denver Public Schools
- AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination)
- Department of Extended Learning
- Department of Community/Parent Engagement
- Office of Post-Secondary Readiness
Devereux Colorado
Eating Disorder Center of Denver
Friends for Youth
Girl Scouts
Girls Inc of Metro Denver
Goodwill Industries of Denver
I Have a Dream Foundation
Legal Center for People with Disabilities & Older People
Mental Health Center of Denver
Mi Casa Resource Center
Open Door Youth Gang Alternatives
Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains
PlatteForum
Project PAVE
Rainbow Alley (The Center)
RedLine
Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network
Servicios de la Raza-YES (Youth Experiencing Success)
Urban Peak
YESS Institute
YouthBiz
APPENDIX E
DPL STAFF SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. In which branch or department do you work? For this survey, we want to hear from those working face-to-face with teens.
2. Are you comfortable working with teens?
3. Why or why not?
4. Do you perceive your branch as a teen-friendly library location?
5. Why or why not?
6. If you work directly with teens, what do you think they want to do at the Library?
7. What are you doing to serve teens? Please list all activities you offer in a year.
8. Do you feel that your teen collection is adequate to meet the needs of your teens?
9. Why or why not?
10. Do you have a teen space (formal or flexible)?
11. What kinds of services would you like your branch or department to provide for teens?
12. What kinds of services would you like the Library to provide for teens?
13. What are the challenges you face in serving teens?
14. Check any of the following ways you would like to be notified about what other branches are doing for teens?
   - Teen Services Roundtable section on Staffweb
   - Teen Services Roundtable Meeting
   - Dewey’s Dispatch
   - Teen Staff Newsletter
   - Other
   - Not interested
15. If you listed Other, how would you like to received information?
16. How do you use eVolver\(^8\) with teens?
17. If you listed Other, how else do you use eVolver?
18. Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

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\(^8\) eVolver is DPL’s teen website. You can view it here: http://teens.denverlibrary.org/
APPENDIX F
DPL STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

“Teens are people too. Each group has its own challenges, it is true. Teens are no different, but when shown compassion and patience, are great library customers.”—response in the DPL Staff Survey on Teens

The Teen Survey results are in and it is mostly good news! We heard from every branch and many departments and a wonderful 97.9% of those who responded to the survey (144 people) said they were comfortable working with teens! Experience and being able to relate to teens were the top reasons for this comfort, but many indicated that they have teenagers at home which helps them as well.

73.4% of respondents perceive their branch/department as teen-friendly! Many feel this way because of the staff that work there and the programs they provide, but they also feel it could be better. Those who do not perceive their branch/department as teen friendly say that it’s because they don’t have many teens at their locations or that the lack of funding for teen programs is a barrier.

64.2% of respondents feel that the teen collection is adequate to meet the needs of the teens at their location. And 61.9% of respondents have a teen space in their branch/department whether it be formal or flexible.

But 50.4% of staff who responded to the survey say they don’t use eVolver nor do they show it to their teens. This is a very high number! What can we do to change this???

Overall, the survey gave us much more positive feelings than we even expected. And there is so much out there being done for Denver teens on many levels that make us so happy. Your colleagues are helping with homework; giving leadership opportunities to teens in the forms of jobs, volunteer positions, and Teen Advisory Boards; providing Reader’s Advisory to our teen collection; holding book clubs, games nights, and After Hours Events and so much more! Thank you to everyone who responded to our survey and thank you to all that you are doing for teens in your service areas.
APPENDIX G
DPL TEEN ADVISORY BOARD QUESTIONS

1. How do you find out what’s going on?
2. What do you wish would go on?
3. What is the best way to find out about stuff?
4. What spaces feel safe to you?
5. What is missing from your neighborhood?
6. What is missing from your neighborhood library?
7. What would you want to get involved in?
8. What are you passionate about?
9. Why did you want to get involved?
10. What made you feel welcome?
11. Do you use the teen web site? Why? Why not?
APPENDIX H
DPL TEEN ADVISORY BOARD RESULTS

How do you find out what’s going on?
Friends 2
internet/Google 3
library 3
library website
news 2
school 2
social networks or signed up newsletters
Word of Mouth

What do you wish would go on?
author visits
celebrities coming to Denver
community projects/work
digital art programs
food trucks in NE Denver
learning opportunities for teens
make models, paint them, display them in library
more advertisement for the library on teen stuff
more music
music festivals
programs focused on history
programs focused on science
teen social events
watch movies

What is the best way to find out about stuff?
ask friends
Calendar of library/other events to email to the schools
email
e-newsletters
evites
Facebook
Google +
Internet 2
YouTube
What spaces feel safe to you?
church
Downtown (with some debate)
everywhere
Facebook
home 3
library 5
museum, zoo
school 2
somewhere with an emergency exit
studio
quiet rooms 2

What is missing from your neighborhood?
animal shelter
book store
closer rec center or gym
dedicated bike path
events for teens 2
everything!
feeling of community
more high schools
movie theater
shopping/mall 2
teens
trust

What is missing from the Library?
fast internet
food
more computers
more tech (gaming, iPads)
open space
teen events
tutors

What would you want to get involved in?
animal adoption program
anything book related
arts program
community 2
community clean up (Team Green)
empowering girls
fashion design and modeling
helping the community with kid stuff
indie film scene
more events at the library
music program
traveling program

What are you passionate about?
anime
animals 2
art 2
debate
education/school/teaching 3
food
helping the community 2
history
making people happy
movies & entertainment 3
music
my life, my family
reading/books 4
shelter
sleep
sports
writing 2

Why did you want to get involved?
connecting with others with similar interests
everyone is nice 3
fun 4
having something to do
love the library 3
music and singing program
parents
positive for the community 3
trying something new 2
we are a family at the library
What made you feel welcome?
building 2
people were nice
other teens 3
staff 3

Do you use the teen web site? If so, why?
Homework help
TAB page
Teen Events at the library

Why not?
didn’t know about it 2
don’t like it
don’t think of it
no computer at home
teen site doesn’t have much functionality 2
APPENDIX I
TEEN ASSET MAPPING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS TO DPL

Internal (policy/practice)
- Create meaningful, directed internships to teens and emerging adults. Have internships be structured with obvious relevance to the teen’s interests, job skill acquisition, and impact to the Library.
- Hire teens/emerging adults as shelvers and clerks (consider hiring people who don’t already have degrees).
- Look at creating programming for the 18-25 crowd.
- Offer tutoring.
- Offer computer skills/job finding/resume classes for teens.
- Provide GED services.
- Offer year-round teen programming at more locations.
- Offer literacy classes.
- Provide life skills classes or help.
- Offer immigration services.
- Have funding for teen programming available throughout the year.
- Examine DPL’s policy of teen programming being exclusively for those who are still in high school. Specifically, would it be acceptable to allow older teens/emerging adults to participate in teen programs?
- Develop best practices for teen programming.

Internal (staff education)
- Provide cultural competency classes.
- Look at how we can be more welcoming to teens.
- Train staff on how to interact with teens. Provide scripts, if necessary. Create the expectation that we serve all customers, not just the ones that are easy to deal with.
- Consider how to provide culturally appropriate services and programs.
- Offer mental health first aid training.
- Offer classes on how to work with and connect to homeless teens.

Volunteer possibilities
- Find people in the community who would like to tutor at their local library.
- Find teens who need service hours who could tutor.
- Offer teens a chance to act as docents – perhaps teaching people how to create an email account, etc.

Outreach ideas
- Have staff talk to local nonprofits and neighborhood organizations when they do outreach for SOR.
- Start having staff do outreach more often through the year—not just for SOR
- Send monthly emails to local contacts about what is going on at the library. Send PDFs of program flyers as well as the calendar of events for the local branch
- Develop collaborative off-site programming
- Connect with people and organizations who offer internships, help teens make connections to these organizations
- Work with Urban Peak on programming possibilities (either on their property, or homeless only programming at the library)
- Connect with local National Honor Society chapters in high schools to recruit volunteers
- Use Teen Advisory Boards to help deliver marketing materials and create marketing

**Offerings to external parties**

- Offer free space and resources for tutors and non-profits who serve teens
- Create specialized events for neighborhood groups and nonprofits

**New or improved library services**

- Hold town hall meetings for people to talk about the state of teens in Denver
- Host a ‘local resources night’ where non-profits and other service providers have representatives at the library to connect with interested community members. Invite city council representatives as well
- Offer tutoring/GED classes specifically for teens
- Host events for mentors and mentees—provide resource lists and specialized help
- Develop a mobile ideaLAB with staff
- Create a teen OBOD where teens + the library pick a GOOD book
- Have roving teen programming specialists— if there aren’t staff members comfortable with offering teen programming, they can have someone come in and bring the awesome
- Support teen-initiated library programs

**Relevant questions**

- How can the Library demonstrate that teens are important to our community and our organization?
- How can the Library empower teens to give back to their community?
- How can the Library make teens feel like their input is welcome?
- How can we be more welcoming to teens while balancing the needs of the library at large? Is there really a conflict?
- What services can we provide for Denver’s homeless teens?
- What does ‘user friendly’ mean to teens?
- How can we market to and reach teens effectively?
• How can we create robust and mutually beneficial connections with local non-profits?
• How can we find and serve the teens who aren’t in either the exceptional or trouble categories- the middle kids who still need help and mentors.
• How do we best serve the emerging adult population including people who have aged out of library programs but still have a desire to participate?

**Expectations**

• Every location should be able to handle and serve teens, regardless of demographics
• More staff should know what teen services are available
• To serve teens adequately, funding and coordination is required
APPENDIX J
POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS

Collaborative Programming
● Denver Open Media (try offering live streaming of DOM classes in CTC again)
● Denver Safety Department (join Youth Coordination Committee of Denver, Street Fraternity, and Steps to Success; host events for mentors and kids – making resources available for mentors)
● Girl Scouts (co-programming, especially interested in ideaLAB, STEM and OBOD)
● Planned Parenthood (trainings for teens on sexual health and healthy relationships)
● RedLine
● Urban Peak

Communication
● Denver Police (be more vigilant in reporting crimes)

Emerging Adulthood Programs
● Rainbow Alley

GED Classes
● Denver Office of Economic Development

Job Skills
● Denver Human Services Department (engaging kids with learning opportunities including vocational education, job search and skills development and assistance with research on alternatives, helping them understand career paths)
● Denver Office of Economic Development
● Goodwill Industries

Leadership/Volunteering Opportunities
● Big Brothers, Big Sisters
● Eating Disorder Center of Denver
● Girl Scouts (providing leadership opportunities for older Girl Scouts which is a requirement of the program)
● PlatteForum (service learning project)
● YESS Institute

Literacy Skills/Homework Help/Tutoring
● Big Brothers/Big Sisters
• Bridge Project (teach research skills/databases to after school students)
• Colorado Youth for a Change
• Denver Public Schools AVID

**Participation in Fairs**
• Big Brothers, Big Sisters (Future Fairs--more than just college info; career alternatives, scholarships, financial aid paperwork)
• YouthBiz

**Positive Youth Interactions**
• Denver Human Services (starting with younger kids and helping them see alternatives in healthy behavior, messaging about positive choices and dignity; providing education for parents on positive choices, parenting, etc.)
• Open Door Youth Gang Alternatives
• Planned Parenthood
• Urban Peak

**Promotional/Cross Promotional Help**
• Al-Anon Service Center (referrals)
• Denver Indian Center (referrals)
• Denver Open Media (ideaLab and DOM youth program specifically but also CTC and DOM classes cross-promotion and continue to communicate on CTC class offerings and technology plans so can prevent duplication)
• Denver Parks and Recreation (would like more shared direct information about what’s happening at the Library, particularly interested in ideaLAB, Summer of Reading, after school programs, DPL Connect; would like to establish a deeper relationship between neighborhood rec centers and branch libraries)
• Denver Public Schools-Transitions Team-Office of Post-Secondary Readiness
• Denver Safety Department (information, educate stakeholders on what we do, access to information and books – there is an open space there for this type of agency program)
• Eating Disorder Center Of Denver (referrals)
• Girl Scouts (helping communicate about Girl Scouts, learning more about Library)
• Mayor’s Office of Children’s Affairs
• Mayor’s Youth Commission (Help Helps campaign)
• Planned Parenthood
• Rainbow Alley
• Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Networks (referrals)
• Urban Peak (referrals)
• YESS Institute
Tech Skills (ideaLAB)
- Colorado Anti-Violence Project
- Denver Safety Department (at Juvenile Services Center, help using computers)
- Girl Scouts (and STEM)
- I Have a Dream Foundation
- PlatteForum
- RedLine

Train DPL staff
- Denver Safety Department (can provide mental health first aid training)
- Girl Scouts (willing to help us with teens--they have a curriculum)
- Mental Health Center of Denver (can provide mental health first aid training that addresses young people)
- Planned Parenthood
- Urban Peak

Youth Voice
- Colorado Anti-Violence Project (student films)
- I Have a Dream Foundation (book talks, showcase their research, work, and creative pieces)
- RedLine (Creative Literacy: art to get into reading, reading as a way to get into art)
- YESS Institute
APPENDIX K
DENVER TEEN DEMOGRAPHICS MAP
APPENDIX L
REFERENCES

Asset-Based Community Development

Describes the asset-based community development model with directions on how to use it to strengthen neighborhood communities.

Provides an explanation of asset-based community development, a framework for understanding the potential of this model, and advocates for its use when building communities.

Using the Asset-Based Community Development Model in Library Settings

Includes a wealth of progressive and useful information, namely a chapter exploring how Asset-Based Community Development principles inform librarianship.

Advocates for and provides an example of asset mapping prior to determining a service expansion for immigrant communities.

Explores how libraries might be positioned as community planners and decision makers, and includes a large list of literature on the topic of libraries and community engagement.

Argues that social change requires coordination among organizations, and identifies five “conditions of collective success.”

Describes the role of libraries in community development utilizing the asset-based community development model. The report includes a toolkit for libraries.

Advocates for and provides an example of identifying assets prior to establishing a library’s place in its community.

Summarizes previous work using the asset-based community development model in library settings, and advocates for libraries’ continued focus on community development.

This report suggests that libraries are key leaders and partners in civic engagement.

Suggests that library staff going in person to build relationships with community leaders is important, and that libraries are appropriate community asset mappers. The authors also detail a methodology similar to this team’s approach.

Describes how the Vancouver Public Library utilized the community development model to first build relationships between the library and the community, and second, identify barriers to library use.

Community Development & Positive Youth Development

Connects community building efforts to positive behavioral outcomes in youth.

communities: Implications for research, policy, and practice. New York: Springer. Provides evidence that ties asset-building communities to positive youth development.


**Positive Youth Development**


Ties positive youth development efforts directly to school success.

Summarizes teen cell phone and internet usage; implications of this research will be useful for targeted marketing to teens.

Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA). (March 2008). Retrieved from http://yalsa.al.org/guidelines/referenceguidelines.pdf
Advocates for library services for teens and provides guidelines for implementing those services.

Provides a list of the developmental assets for teens (ages 12-18) and includes a definition of each asset.

Provides a list of asset names, asset definitions, and the “Library Connection” to the asset.

Advocates for teen-directed teen services, providing evidence to substantiate this approach and examples of what this approach looks like in practice.

Advocacy toolkit for providing library services to teens.

Local Resources

City and County of Denver Office of Children’s Affairs. (February 2013). Denver Neighborhood Challenges and Opportunities. City and County of Denver (CO).
Identifies key areas in Denver where disadvantaged populations reside; includes maps of disconnected youth and high school drop-out rates.