

Grantee Story

Accelerating
Learning and
Results



PropelNext Grantees Team Up to Amplify Services

Jodi Schwartz, executive director of LYRIC, sensed an opportunity. The San Francisco Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) had agreed to provide special funding for services for transitional age youth, those that are 18-24 and disconnected from school or the labor market. This was an important victory for LYRIC, a community organization for LGBTQ youth (the double Q stands for “queer and questioning”), and a coalition of advocates that had spent years pushing the City to make such funds available. She knew that a grant would enable LYRIC to boost its impact on the lives of young people. She also knew that her PropelNext training had imbued her with enhanced skills to deliver robust programs and to use data to continuously improve. It deepened her relationships with a network of youth organization leaders.

When DCYF released the first RFP for services for transitional age youth in 2015, Schwartz placed calls to two peer organizations in San Francisco that are also PropelNext grantees or alumni: Huckleberry Youth Programs and New Door Ventures. Together with three other local organizations they crafted a proposal. “The PropelNext experience strengthened our collaboration and made us more effective as partners,” Schwartz said.

Impacts

Grantee-led collaborative won \$900K grant.

DCYF expanded youth program funding by an additional \$1.7M

“The PropelNext experience strengthened our collaboration and made us more effective as partners.”

*Jodi Schwartz
Executive Director,
LYRIC*

“We told DCYF they were missing out on an incredible opportunity because they could benefit from our PropelNext learning.”

*Mollie Brown
Director of Programs &
Community
Development,
Huckleberry Youth
Programs*

The group envisioned a seamless system to improve educational and developmental outcomes for young people. It would make obtaining services easier and less intimidating for youth by cutting down duplicative paperwork and intrusive questions. Building out the collaborative with three other local partners, six organizations would make themselves more accessible by developing an intentional partnership: a client who signed up with any one of them could access services from any of the six of them. Any door would be the right door, they agreed.

The group developed a collaborative plan quickly, thanks to their common language and shared understanding of how to implement change, gained from their participation in PropelNext. The three PropelNext grantees were able to share their learning with the other three organizations and proceed efficiently together. In just three months, the group submitted its application—as TAY (Transitional Age Youth) Connect—with high hopes. While it was well received, they were not selected. Many groups would have thrown in the towel at this point, but this team took a different approach: it scheduled a meeting with DCYF.

“We told DCYF they were missing out on an incredible opportunity because they could benefit from our PropelNext learning,” said Mollie Brown, director of programs and community development at Huckleberry Youth Programs. To make its case, the group presented quantitative data that the City had been unable to capture. In the prior fiscal year (2014-15), TAY Connect had collectively served 1,793, or 24%, of the City’s approximate 7,500 disconnected transitional age youth.

Officials were wowed. A few weeks later, the City announced it was committing additional funds for its transitional age youth RFP and as the group with the next highest score for a collaborative project, TAY Connect was informed that the City was granting it \$900,000 over the next two years. Additionally, DCYF expanded the pool of agencies who applied individually with proposals for innovative programming for disconnected transitional age youth, totaling \$1.7 million in new, incremental money.

[more →](#)

“PropelNext gave me the knowledge to bridge the gap between what the City said it wanted and what it really needed.”

*Tess Reynolds
CEO,
New Door Ventures*

The six organizations were thrilled. Not only would they receive support for their collaborative vision, but they had also enlarged the pot of money the City was committing to disconnected transitional age youth. Their efforts catalyzed the growth of services for transitional age youth throughout the City.

Tess Reynolds, CEO of New Door, is leading development of the new program model for the collaborative work. Reynolds had been part of the first PropelNext cohort, and she is using the PropelNext framework for youth program design, implementation and performance management to craft a model for collective impact that is built on data. The group has developed a common target population definition and screening tool, a hypothesis statement, outcome goals, and data reporting tools. “PropelNext gave me the knowledge to bridge the gap between what the City said it wanted and what it really needed,” said Reynolds. “I would not have tackled this without PropelNext.”

Meanwhile, service providers throughout San Francisco are observing and learning. It is too early to measure the collaborative’s outcomes, but the group is learning a lot about making more effective referrals and deepening partnerships. Huckleberry is now providing individual and group psychotherapy onsite at LYRIC with plans to expand to New Door, and New Door has referred youth to participate in LYRIC’s Fellowship – its new paid two-year leadership program for trans/gender non-conforming transitional age youth launched through PropelNext and funded, in part, with its new City funding.

LYRIC
PropelNext California 2018
<http://lyric.org>

New Door Ventures
PropelNext 2015
<http://www.newdoor.org>

Huckleberry Youth Programs
PropelNext California 2018
<http://huckleberryyouth.org>

Huckleberry’s Mollie Brown recently made a presentation at a city-wide meeting. “This is a way to start communicating with the City about what it really takes to produce outcomes for this type of youth,” she said.

The PropelNext experience catalyzed a powerful collaboration among these San Francisco leaders, positioning them to transform the lives of more young people and secure critical resources to fuel their efforts.