

Pathways to Partnership

Frequently Asked Questions on Compensation for Family, Youth, and Consumer Involvement

From the Partnering with Youth and Families Committee
National Child Traumatic Stress Network

The NCTSN's Partnering with Youth and Families Committee is dedicated to building partnerships among youth, families, and professionals based on mutual respect and a common commitment to healing. By encouraging consumers to participate at all levels of program design, development, and implementation, service providers can ensure that youth and families are integral partners in the delivery and evaluation of services. The following questions and answers are designed to help Network centers address some of the compensation issues that arise when working with youth and family members.

Why should youth and family members be compensated for their involvement in Network activities?

Financial and logistical issues can be significant barriers for many youth and families who wish to participate in an advisory or peer-to-peer capacity. Providing compensation can help to overcome these barriers, and also shows respect for the experience and contributions of the individuals involved.

Is it okay if a person wants to volunteer their services or their time?

Of course! The important thing is that the person feels free to volunteer and is not pressured to do so. If a person truly wants to volunteer, the agency should keep track of the time spent as an in-kind contribution to the grant (if applicable).

Is it appropriate to involve individuals or families who are currently in treatment?

Centers may want to establish a policy on this question, with input from family and youth. Some centers seek input from families still in treatment on non-treatment related topics (i.e., waiting room design, hours of service). The most important consideration is that the people in treatment always feel free to decline a request and feel no threat to their ongoing treatment.

What activities might be eligible for compensation?

Some form of compensation or reimbursement is appropriate for any activity or level of participation that goes beyond the scope of regular meetings, including:

- Participation on phone calls, especially conference calls
- Preparation/review of materials
- Participation in focus groups

- Attendance at Network face-to-face meetings
- Participation on a panel with other Network members at a conference
- Providing consultation

How should compensation be structured?

Individual organizations will have different policies about ways to compensate non-employees. It is important to talk with your organization's financial manager when deciding on compensation policies. Some possible options include:

- An hourly rate or flat retainer
- A contract for participation on a community advisory board
- Reimbursement for travel expenses (travel, room, board)
- Reimbursement for time spent on advisory boards, meetings, and preparation time

Keep in mind that cash compensation may have to be reported to the IRS as 1099 earned income, and could jeopardize a family's receipt of public funds or services. In these cases, alternative forms of compensation may be more appropriate, such as:

- Gift cards
- Child care
- Meals
- Tickets to movies or other local entertainment
- Access to computer training or other skill building activities
- Recognition events with food and special certificates for youth and family participants

Whatever form of compensation is chosen, your organization's compensation policies should be as consistent and clear as possible.

Should we make distinctions in pay rates between youth and adults?

Yes, based on age and experience. Clearly define "youth" for your organization. Rates may also vary based on experience and actual work requested. Remember that youth may have valuable experiences and skills that adults do not have.

Should we pay more if someone takes on a leadership role?

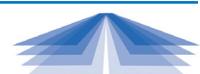
Yes. People who take on leadership roles take on more responsibility, and compensation should reflect that fact. For example, if a person spends time developing and preparing for a presentation, compensation should include the value of the advance preparation.

If a person misses work to attend a meeting, should we try to make up for the salary lost?

No. Compensation should be set at a standard rate. Variations in salary make it impractical to assign a value to work missed.

If a person's employer will pay for the time spent on NCTSN activities, should that individual be paid in addition by the Network?

No. If a person works for an organization that will pay for time spent on family involvement issues, extra compensation is not necessary.



Who should pay for family/youth involvement in Network collaborative groups?

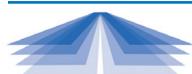
This depends on the work being done. If the work is for an individual center (e.g., participation on a community advisory board) then the center should compensate the youth or family member. If the work is for the Network (e.g., presenting at the All-Network Conference or participating in a collaborative group), then the National Center for Child Traumatic Stress (NCCTS) and/or SAMHSA should cover expenses or provide compensation.

As there is a limited budget for providing compensation through the NCCTS, Network members are encouraged to contact the NCCTS as early as possible to discuss their needs and plans. In some cases, the NCCTS and Network centers might agree to share responsibility for compensation for participation in Network activities. At all times, Network centers should collaborate with the NCCTS and SAMHSA to ensure that youth and families are compensated fairly.

Are there any other sources of support for youth and family involvement?

Numerous funding sources are available to support youth and family involvement, including Medicaid, federal mental health block grants to states, corporations, foundations, and local, state, and federal grants or cooperative agreements.¹ The resources listed in **Table 1** offer useful information on funding strategies and compensation rates for youth and family members.

Table 1. Additional Resources of Compensation for Family and Youth Involvement ²⁻⁴		
Organization	Resource	URL
California Network of Mental Health Client (Sacramento, CA)/ Recovery Innovations, (Phoenix, AZ)	<i>Minnesota peer support implementation: Consultant's report.</i> Concise review of various state approaches to implementing Medicaid-reimbursed peer support services	http://www.californiaclients.org/pdf/Sue%20Watson%20Presentation%20Attachment.pdf
Healthy & Ready to Work National Resource Center	<i>Family/youth leaders consultation rates.</i> Examples of compensation rates for youth and family member participation	http://www.hrtw.org/yac/consultation_rates.doc
Research and Training Center for Children's Mental Health, University of South Florida (Tampa, FL)	<i>Effective financing strategies for systems of care: Examples from the field—A resource compendium for developing a comprehensive financing plan.</i> Findings from a five-year study of finance strategies for building effective systems of care for children, adolescents, and families coping with serious emotional disturbances. Includes many examples of financing to support family and youth partnerships	http://rtckids.fmhi.usf.edu/rtcpubs/hctrking/pubs/Study03-exp-fr-field.pdf



How can I find out what other organizations in the Network are doing?

Examples of cash amounts and other compensation practices provided to family/youth/consumers by other organizations may be obtained by contacting the NCTSN Partnering with Youth and Families Committee at youthandfamilies@nctsn.org.

References

1. National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health. (2008). *Family peer-to-peer support programs in children's mental health: A critical issues guide*. Rockville, MD: National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health.
2. Stroul, B.A., Pires, S.A., Armstrong, M.I., McCarthy, J., Pizzigati, K., & Wood, G.M. (2008). *Effective financing strategies for systems of care: Examples from the field—A resource compendium for developing a comprehensive financing plan*. Tampa, FL: University of South Florida, Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute (FMHI), Research and Training Center for Children's Mental Health. Available at <http://rtckids.fmhi.usf.edu/rtcpubs/hctrking/pubs/Study03-exp-fr-field.pdf>
3. Johnson, E. (2008). *Minnesota peer support implementation: Consultant's report*. Phoenix, Arizona: Recovery Innovations. Accessed July 10, 2009 from <http://www.californiaclients.org/pdf/Sue%20Watson%20Presentation%20Attachment.pdf>
4. Hackett, P. (2005). *Family/youth leaders consultation rates*. Augusta, ME: Healthy & Ready to Work National Resource Center. Accessed July 10, 2009 from http://www.hrtw.org/yac/consultation_rates.doc

In 2008, the NCTSN released *Pathways to Partnerships with Youth and Families* to provide trauma-treating entities with a method for considering the role of youth and families in their organizations. Many sites have requested more technical assistance before beginning their efforts. This tip sheet was designed to provide additional information on compensation research and models. It is not meant to be an exhaustive guide, but rather a starting place for organizations seeking to develop compensation guidelines in their programming.

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