

Introduction

The Tool-Kit is aimed at equipping communities in North Carolina with information necessary for establishing alternative-to-suspension programs. By working together, schools and communities can provide productive programs so that educational opportunities for youth are continued. This document was developed as a collaborative effort of the Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention – Center for the Prevention of School Violence (DJJDP – Center), the Attorney General’s Office and the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation. The Tool-Kit contains useful information in planning, establishing, and maintaining alternative-to-suspension programs. Much like building a physical structure, building a program requires ordered steps or “phases” to ensure stability and durability. Six phases for establishing and maintaining successful alternative-to-suspension programs are identified along with potential resources or “tools” useful for completing each process. The phases are as follows:

Phase I – “The Survey”

Assessing the Need for the Program

Phase one provides information about conducting a needs assessment. The assessment determines how well a community is currently meeting the needs of short-term suspended, long-term suspended, and expelled students. Determining what is needed is critical to successful programming. Results from the assessment outline the desired resources and services.

Phase II – “The Building Plan”

Planning the Program

Phase two addresses planning program efforts. Planning focuses on decisions to be made prior to the actual implementation of an alternative-to-suspension program. Also included in this phase are descriptions of successful programs identified throughout the state and tools to aid in creating the program plan.

Phase III – “Securing Financing”

Finding Funding for the Program

Phase three offers a detailed description on how to secure funding for a program. A step-by-step description on finding and securing grants as well as a grant application are included.

Phase IV – “The Construction”

Implementing the Program

Phase four includes factors to be considered during the implementation phase of program development. Implementation is a critical phase and should only occur after extensive assessment and planning have taken place.

Phase V – “The Inspection”

Evaluating the Impact and Success of the Program

Phase five provides a detailed explanation for conducting a successful evaluation. In order to demonstrate program effectiveness, an evaluation must be performed. By analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data, program accomplishments and challenges can be identified and improvements can be made.

Phase VI – “Upkeep and Maintenance”

Sustaining the Program

Phase six explores the steps needed to sustain an alternative-to-suspension program and provides tools to engage community support. Also included in this section are resources and ideas for communicating with key stakeholders and overcoming potential barriers.