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## A Statewide Train-the-Trainer Model for Effective Entrepreneurship and Workforce Readiness Programming

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## A Statewide Train-the-Trainer Model for Effective Entrepreneurship and Workforce Readiness Programming

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**Abstract:** *A statewide youth and adult train-the-trainer model that integrates workforce readiness and entrepreneurship can have a profound effect on young people's academic performance, interest in college, and overall youth development. Participants in workforce and entrepreneurship programs develop personal resources that have value in school, in the workplace, and in the local community (Entwisle,*

*Alexander, & Olson, 2000). To increase the collaborative entrepreneurship and workforce readiness efforts in Maryland, 4-H Youth Development Educators created an interactive youth and adult train-the-trainer model to implement workforce readiness and entrepreneurship educational programs in local communities.*

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## **Introduction**

Nationally, within the last 6 years, 4-H has developed the Get in the Act workforce readiness and Be the E entrepreneurship curricula. At the same time, several Maryland counties and Baltimore City were conducting local 4-H entrepreneurship and workforce programs (EWR), and our team recognized the opportunity to launch a statewide initiative to reach all 24 4-H county/city programs. To increase the collaborative entrepreneurship and workforce readiness efforts in Maryland, 4-H Youth Development educators created an interactive youth and adult train-the-trainer model to implement workforce readiness and entrepreneurship educational programs in local communities.

### **The Relevance of Entrepreneurship and Workforce Readiness**

Based on a 2010 Corporate Voices Workforce readiness "Public Policy Polling Workforce Options" survey report, 56% of the respondents feel that more than a quarter of the nation's youth do not have the skills they need to be prepared to work, and 21% feel that more than half of the nation's youth do not possess the skill sets to be workforce-ready. There is a need to increase access for young people to programs that build the necessary skills to ensure that they are ready for college, work, and life (Forum for Youth Investment, 2010). Additionally, as shared by Lindner and Cox (1998), entrepreneurial skills will become increasingly necessary for workers to compete in the workforce. "Workforce preparation programs can have profound effects on young people's school performance, including improved attendance, grades, and graduation rates (Hughes, Bailey, & Karp, 2002)."

This is believed to stem from developing complex decision-making skills through participation in programs such as entrepreneurship, where students have the opportunity to make meaningful decisions on their own (Castellano, Stringfield, & Stone III, 2003). Workforce preparation programs also provide a sense of integration into the community, establishing ties with organizations and individuals who can provide support and assistance (Israel, Beaulieu, & Hartless, 2001).

### **Why a Youth and Adult Train-the-Trainer Model?**

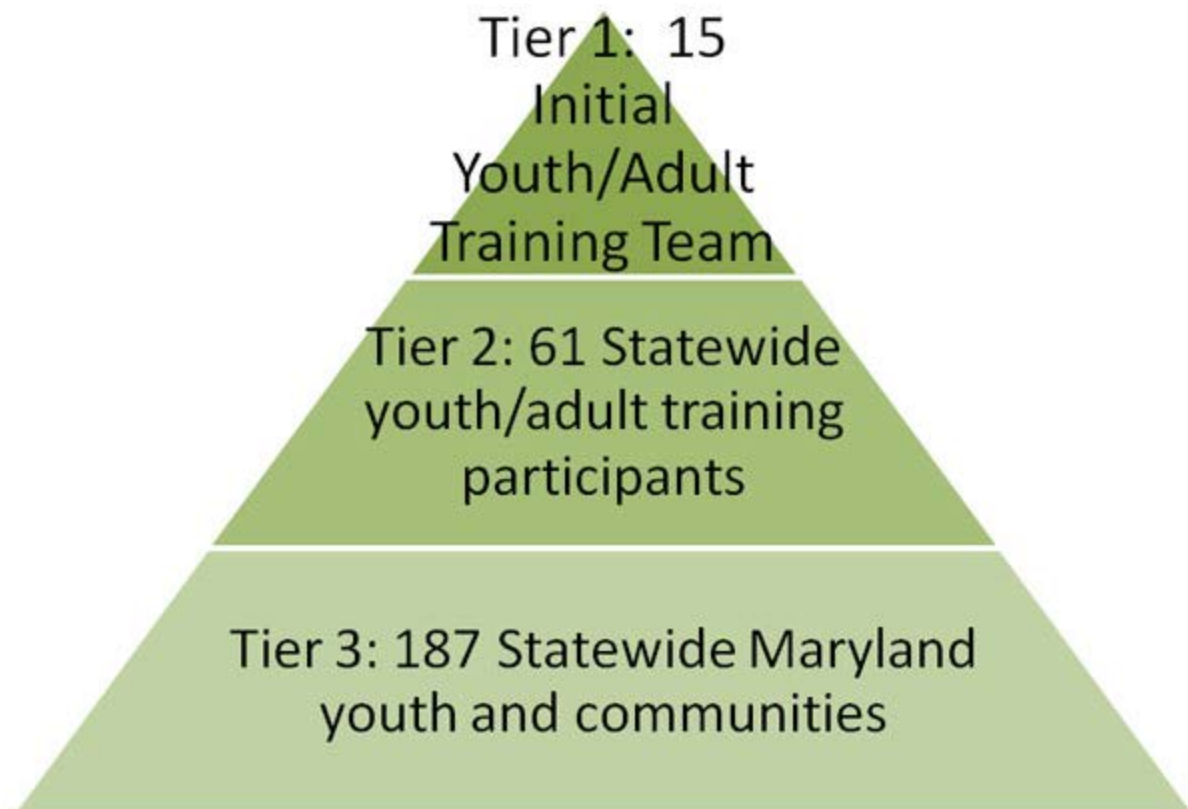
Research shows that youth benefit from partnerships when they are seen as individuals who are competent and able to contribute to important decisions that affect their communities (Russell, Polen, & Hoffman-Tepper, 2008). "Youth and adult partnership research indicates that this approach to working with youth is associated with a decrease in risk behaviors, stronger communication and leadership skills, increased status and stature in the community, and improved competencies and self-esteem (Russell et al., 2008)." Youth-targeted programs that involve youth in the program design, implementation, and evaluation stages are inclined to be more relevant and effective.

A train-the-trainer model is an effective method to increase program capacity and outreach efforts throughout the state. Developing a youth and adult train-the-trainer team that reflects diverse communities throughout the state and receives intensive training and team-building opportunities can lead to new 4-H entrepreneurship and/or workforce clubs, innovative businesses, camping programs, career exploration workshops, and other local initiatives.

Figure 1, below, illustrates the program capacity of the youth and adult Train the Trainer model.

**Figure 1.**

Program Capacity of the Train-the-Trainer Model



## **How to Utilize the Train-the-Trainer Model to Facilitate EWR Programs**

- Conduct a needs assessment of the local needs in your state.
- Create an evaluation tool and process to evaluate program outcomes.
- Identify a diverse statewide youth and adult training team.
- Provide training to the youth and adult training team in EWR curricula, facilitation, and leadership.
- Provide opportunities for team building and to demonstrate learned skills.
- Allow for the youth and adult training team to deliver initial statewide programming (statewide workshops, local training sessions, etc.).
- Provide funding opportunities to support local EWR efforts (camp programs, workshops, afterschool programs, career exploration sessions, entrepreneurial businesses, etc.) to increase statewide EWR efforts.

### **Benefits of a Statewide EWR Program**

The use of a statewide youth and adult train-the-trainer model that integrates workforce preparation and entrepreneurship is a successful strategy for expanding the use of 4-H curriculum across the state, developing teams of youth and adults who are prepared to use the curriculum in innovative ways and providing opportunities for youth to practice working with others while they gain workforce skills and explore opportunities for entrepreneurship. Training-team members develop critical thinking, decision-making, leadership, and communication skills as they worked together to plan and deliver training. These skills are transferable to the delivery of other 4-H programs and have real-life application for the work world.

The model expands the practice of incorporating workforce readiness and entrepreneurship skills into existing 4-H programs. At the same time, this model can be used to effectively deliver workforce readiness and entrepreneurship programs to meet the needs of new and diverse youth audiences across that state. These program efforts provide opportunities for youth to gain skills that are necessary for success in school, in college, and in the world of work.

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