

From: Report of the Youth Policy Council of the Youth Committee of the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission. January 2010

Criteria for Data Used in the Report

There are two types of data that can be used in discussing issues like the ones addressed in this report. One type of data describes the status or circumstances of various populations in a geographic region (in this case, Connecticut as a state) and identifies issues facing the state's population (e.g., percent of low-birth-weight babies; on-time high school graduation rate, or percent unemployed). The other type of data describes how well particular programs (e.g., out-of-school time, work and learn, mentoring) currently being used are working. The data used in this report are of the first type – population-level data, chosen for their power to describe circumstances regarding youth statewide that can be most helpful in discussions of what needs to be done for the state as a whole. Data from particular programs (data that tell us "what works"), on the other hand, while important for understanding how much benefit we are gaining from our current investments, are not nearly as helpful in understanding the status of youth across the state, and the needs that have not yet been met. In order to achieve such a statewide population-level scope, as well as to ensure clarity and consistency in the interpretation of the indicators discussed in this report, we have established the following criteria for the indicators used. Each indicator:

- Represents the status of youth on a statewide basis;
- Does not use data from individual programs;
- Represents some or all of the age range from 12-21;
- Has data that is collected in the same manner on a regular basis over time;
- Has data available for three or more years; and
- Has reliability and validity confirmed by national experts or established institutions.