Compass Counseling

Compass Counseling serves over 430 youth in community based, alternative high schools and provides over 15,000 hours of service each year.

Compass Counseling funds positions at 11 program sites and provides supportive services outside the classroom environment to targeted youth and young adults, ages 14-24, attending Alternative Schools Network high schools and learning centers. Counselors work with students to help them achieve their personal and educational goals. This program is funded through the Illinois Department of Human Services and the City of Chicago Department of Family and Support Services.

Who's Eligible
Youth eligible for the program must be:
- Between the ages 14 to 21
- Attending a participating alternative high school
- Legal residents and a resident of the city of Chicago

Program Objectives
- To Serve 430 youth with 15,211.5 hours of counseling services annually.
- To keep 75% of participating youth in school until they have achieved personal educational goals.
- To enable 35% of participating youth to secure and maintain part-time and full-time employment.
- To prevent institutionalization of 99% of participants.
- To assist 60% of participating youth with developing, sustaining, or improving their social function skills.
- To ensure that 100% of participating youth will be aware of benefits opportunities available to them through the Illinois Department of Human Services.

Program Services
To achieve these objectives, Counselors are based at alternative high schools across the city and meet with students at their schools or off-site. Currently, the program has counselors located at 11 different alternative schools. They deliver a wide variety of services, including:

Individual Counseling – enables the student to interact one-on-one with a counselor. Discussions may address personal problems at home, personal barriers to successful employment, difficulty in peer environments, or completion of high school or GED. Through this core service, students may also develop vocational or educational goals and receive the necessary support to accomplish their goals.

Group Counseling – facilitated by counselors, group counseling encourages students to share experiences of successful coping techniques. It offers students opportunities to discuss barriers to education and employment such as negative work experiences and other personal and social difficulties. Group counseling may include presentations and discussion with potential employers and representatives from colleges and training programs. It may also include presentations or discussions on effective problem solving and life skills.

Family Counseling – counselors will interact with a student’s family members if their cooperation is needed to help the student achieve self-support goals. This service includes home visits, general referral services for other family members to reduce in-home stress, and other activities that directly influence the participant’s success in the ASN program. Our goal is to enlist the family’s support to help the participant stay in school until graduation or attainment of a GED.

Advocacy – alternative school students may require an advocate in a wide range of situations involving the police, courts, educational systems, employment intervention, and completion of employment plans. Although time-consuming, this essential linkage service can make the difference between success and failure in helping a student to complete an education and employment plan.

Health Coordination – includes counseling activities directed toward giving out information regarding available health services, family planning, personal hygiene and drug abuse. This service also includes time spent accompanying students on visits to local health clinics and providing follow-up support.

For more information, contact:
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