Youth Protection: Centralizing a Decentralized Process

Dr. Marcy Huey
Executive Director of Institutional Compliance
mhuey@fa.ua.edu
205.348.2334

Jennifer Clark
Financial Affairs Policy Manager
jclark@fa.ua.edu
205.348.2304
Youth Protection Program Goals

• To provide a centralized point for registration and coordination of the Programs before they begin
• To identify, simplify and streamline the institutional requirements for a Program
• To facilitate required training, background checks, documents, etc., for Program staff
Step One: 
Gather the team and make a plan!
Policy Working Group

Included representatives from:
- Academics
- Athletics
- Housing
- Administration
- Defined scope of Youth Protection Program
- Developed Policy
- Developed supporting reference material
- Coordinated conversations with all areas/divisions of campus to raise awareness and encourage support prior to submitting Policy for approval

Compliance, Ethics, and Regulatory Affairs

- Developed Registration Process
  - Program Registration Form
  - Identified existing documents and resources in use
- Developed Review Process
  - Workflow for submitted registration approval
  - Multi-departmental review and notification
- Developed document retention procedures and document repository to keep records
Resources Consulted

- UA Internal Audit
- Higher Education Protection Network
- UA Housing
- Office of Legal Counsel
- Various other college and university programs

Youth Protection Program Highlights

Online Registration Form
- Dates
- Description of activities
- Estimated number of participants by age group
- Housing needs
- Accommodations for participants with special needs

Required Attachments
- Emergency Plan
- Liability Waivers
- Housing Agreements/Behavioral Standards
- Agenda
- Parent Package/Communications
- Transportation Plans
- Program Staff List
- Medication Management Plan
Approval Workflow

Step Two: Implementation
Soft Rollout

• Key departments were invited to participate in the registration process in order to test it before the policy went into effect.
• Participating Departments Included:
  • Athletics
  • Early College
  • Journalism
  • Business
  • Engineering
  • Music
  • Education

Trial Run Stats:
• 51 programs registered
• 1030 background checks complete
• 838 trainings completed
• 1 program staff member declined
• Over 8,000 youth participants
• 3 exhausted FTEs

Solicit Feedback

• Program directors were surveyed about their experiences with registration.
• In-person Survey Results Review sessions were held with program directors and workflow partners.
“Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new.”

Albert Einstein

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**Soft Rollout – Lessons Learned**

- Keeping track of training and background check records was very cumbersome and time consuming.
- Program Coordinators weren’t always up-to-speed on what to expect next.
- Many of our standard waivers and emergency plans were not written with children in mind.
- The online form wasn’t flexible enough for our variety of programs.
- Needed a way to keep track of staff who had been trained and checked through other programs.
- Small or new programs needed more help gathering the required documentation.
Step Three:
Ongoing Process Improvement

Youth Protection 2.0

- Rebuilt the online form to make it more user friendly.
- Created a separate workflow for staff verification.
- Moved training to a different system with easier reporting.
- Worked with IT to combine the data from training and background and match it to staff records.
- Set up a library of pre-written email templates to be sent at certain stages.
- Created templates for waivers, emergency plans, and medical forms that specifically address youth participants.
Updated Workflow

- Added 5 new partners
- Separated Staff Workflow
- Automation

Communication

- Email Campaigns
  - Deans, Directors, Department Heads
  - Budget managers
  - Student group leadership
  - University-wide mailing list
- Ongoing Training
  - “Getting Started” Information Session
  - Monthly Special Topic Sessions
  - Departmental Staff Meetings
- Employee news
- Information screens
- Website/Blog posts
- Employee Organizations (Faculty Senate, Professional Staff Association, Office/Clerical/Technical Staff Association)
- Dedicated email address: youthprotection@fa.ua.edu
Youth Protection 3.0

Takeaways

- Collaboration is key!
  - Working group should include reviewers, service providers, and program coordinators.
- Everyone makes mistakes. Own them and learn from them.
- Provide a “penalty free” trial period.
- Always be approachable.
- Consider your bandwidth when planning.
- Allow room for flexibility.