Ready for Life (RFL)
Truancy Diversion
UNLV-Public Administration
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Who is Our Evaluation Project Proposed For?

- Ready for Life (RFL): A movement created by NPEF (Nevada Public Education Foundation), to connect youth to school and work by age 25

- RFL philosophy: “Communities must work together to build strong, connected systems that develop youth assets.”

- Other stakeholders: Clark County School District, Court system, policymakers, professionals, families, communities and society at large
# Nevada’s Education Crisis

- **Nevada’s High School Graduation Rates (Class 2007)**

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<th>State Reported</th>
<th>U.S. Dept. of Education</th>
<th>Independently Reported</th>
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<td>67%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>42%</td>
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Problem in Southern Nevada

- Unique demographics about truancy in Southern Nevada
  - 2010 Truancy Court Statistics
    - Hispanic 72%, White 16%, Black 11%,
    - 50% single parent families
    - Average age 13-16
    - High non-English speaking households
    - On average youth come to court with over 30 unexcused absences
  - Unique nature of Las Vegas
    - Transient population
    - Service oriented, job industry 24/7
    - High unemployment rates
    - Undereducated workforce/population
Research Goal

• Goal: Provide strategic recommendations to help reduce *truancy* in Southern Nevada public schools

  – Truancy: any type of unexcused absence from school

  – NV Attendance Law: *truant* if you do not have an excused absence for at least 1 class period (NRS 392.130[2]) and a *habitual truant* if you have been truant 3 or more times within one school year, (NRS 392.140[1]).
Overall Findings

• Understanding the Social & Financial Impact of Truancy
• Ready for Life—How does it operate?
• Best Practices in and Out of Southern NV
• Implications & Recommendations
Financial Impact

- **Nevada High Schools:**
  - Over 23,900 students did not graduate from Nevada’s high schools in 2010;
  - the lost lifetime earnings in Nevada for that class of dropouts alone total
  - over $6.2 billion.

- Nevada could save as much as $230 million in health care costs over the
  - lifetimes of each class of dropouts had they earned their diplomas.

- If Nevada’s high schools graduated all of their students ready for college,
  - the state could save as much as $25.8 million a year in community college
  - remediation costs and lost earnings.

- Nevada’s economy could see a combination of crime-related savings and
  - additional revenue of about $78.4 million each year if the male high school
  - graduation rate increased by just 5 percent.
Ready for Life - How it works?

• Convene intermediaries across sectors
• Connect intermediaries broker and provide services
• Sustain intermediaries influence policy to sustain effective practices
• Measure intermediaries ensure quality and impact
Best Practices: Southern Nevada

- Clark County Truancy Court Program
- Truancy Diversion Program
- Program goal: use incentives over punitive measures to decrease absenteeism in CCSD middle and high schools
- 10-12 week program monitoring/reviewing habitual truants based on point system
Best Practices: Outside of Nevada

- Communicate truancy rules clearly and enforce consequences quickly and fairly
- Interventions with students that are chronically truant
- Provision of educational experiences that youth feel are safe, interesting and relevant
- Truancy education and services for parents
- Strong community collaborations
  - Law enforcement agencies
  - Small business owners
Plan of Action

• Understanding the problem
  – Root causes of truancy

• Develop a strategic response
  – Collaborative effort among families, schools, and community

• Implementation of the strategic response
  – need to have well established and well communicated best practices and procedures

• Monitor & evaluate
  – A framework within which to evaluate and analyze findings
Plan of Action-cont.

- Encourage/engage parents in child’s education
- Early response to truancy is key
- Alternative solutions for credit retrieval
- Encourage use of *Parentlink*
- Bi-lingual communication needs to be present and consistent
- Schools need consistent and well-communicated attendance polices
- All schools should have access to truancy diversion programs
Next Steps

- Findings will be used by stakeholders to:
  - understand and analyze current policies
  - identify truancy reduction methods that are both effective and appropriate to Southern Nevada public schools
- Final evaluation project may be presented to SNRPC on Youth in May 2011
- Creation of parent pamphlet on how to help their child be a successful student
Questions???

Thank you!