

Environment is everything.

Young people need to feel safe and supported in order to learn and lead. As a crucial part of the Forum's mission to change the odds that young people are ready for college, work, and life, the Weikart Center helps out-of-school time (OST) systems build the safe, supportive, interactive, and engaging environments that are foundational to youth development.

Based on decades of expert research and real-world experience, the Weikart Center's pyramid of program quality takes the abstract idea of quality and breaks it down into manageable targets for continuous improvement efforts.



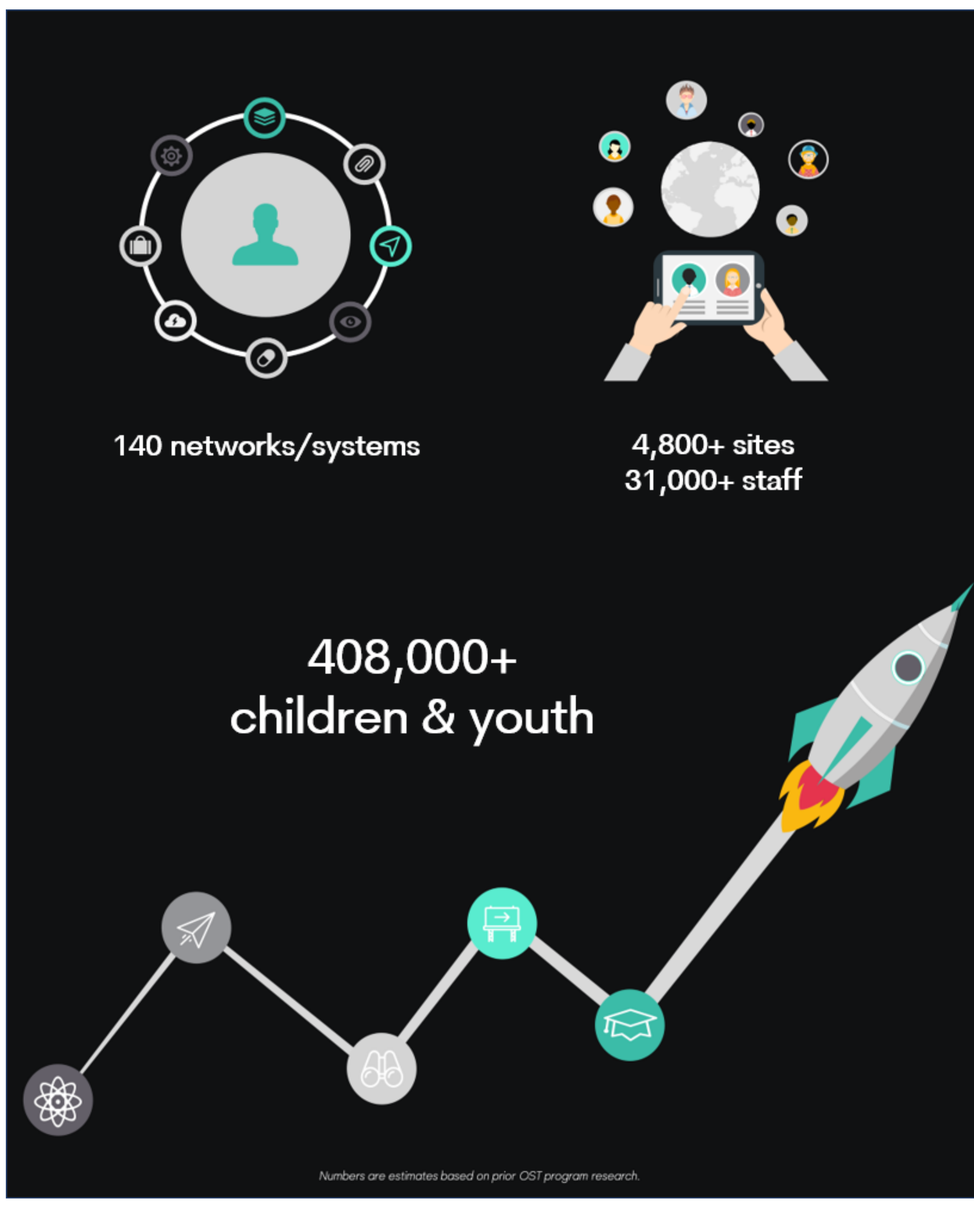
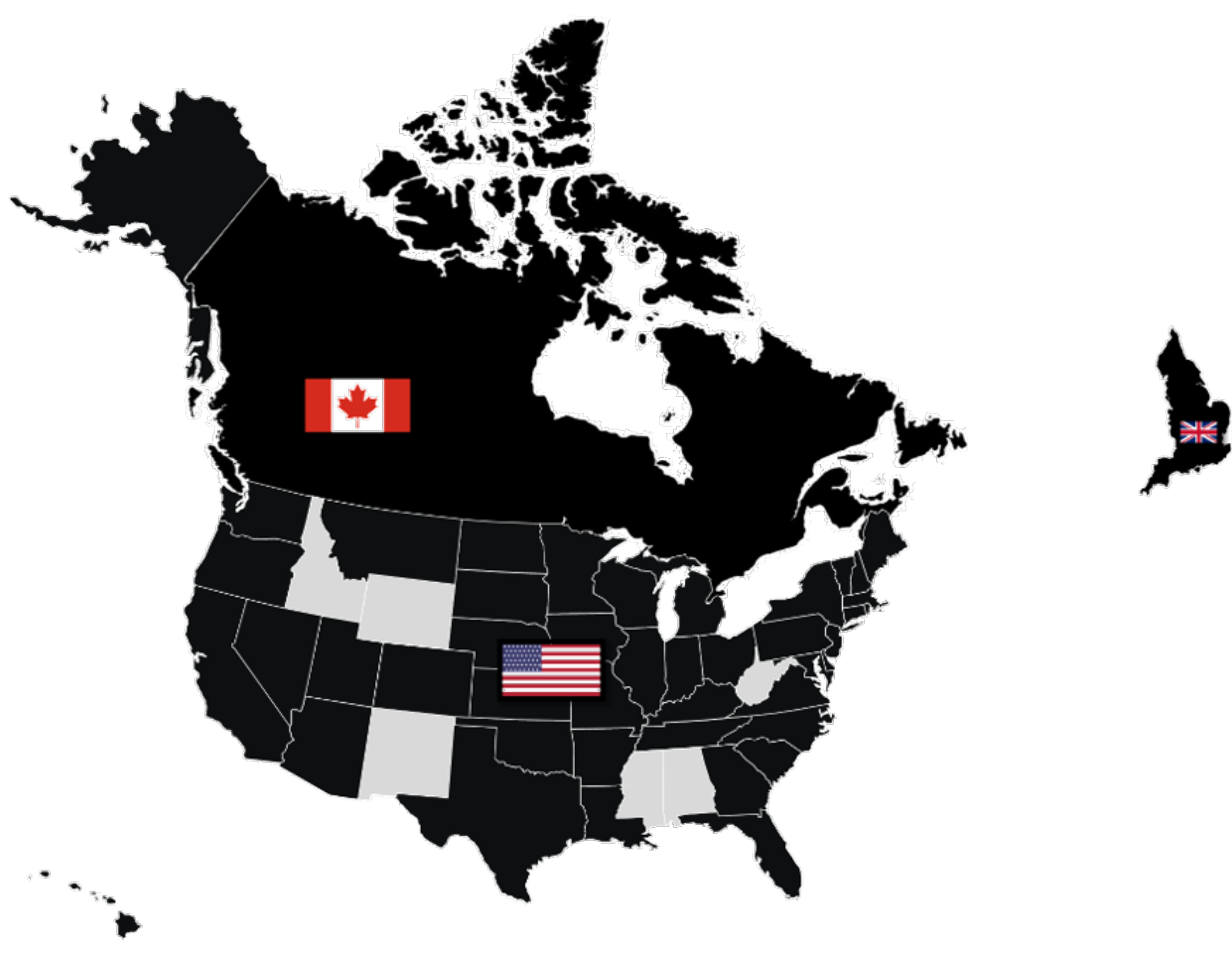
Building a **safe** environment is the first step to improving the quality of experiences for young people. Ensuring that an environment also feels **supportive** is the second prerequisite for creating a space where young people feel empowered to learn and lead. Once a space is safe and supportive, making it as **interactive** and **engaging** as possible rounds out the kind of environment essential to young people's ability to develop skills and reach higher-order goals.

The Weikart Center's signature Youth Program Quality Improvement (YPQI) approach harnesses the power of research evidence and the experience of practitioners to improve the quality of youth experiences in OST programming from the ground up. The YPQI uses evidence-based materials and practices that can be customized and applied in any program type, size, or setting.

From data-driven tools to expert trainings, we equip leaders with the positive youth development and SEL-informed resources they need to create a culture of continuous improvement for staff and young people.

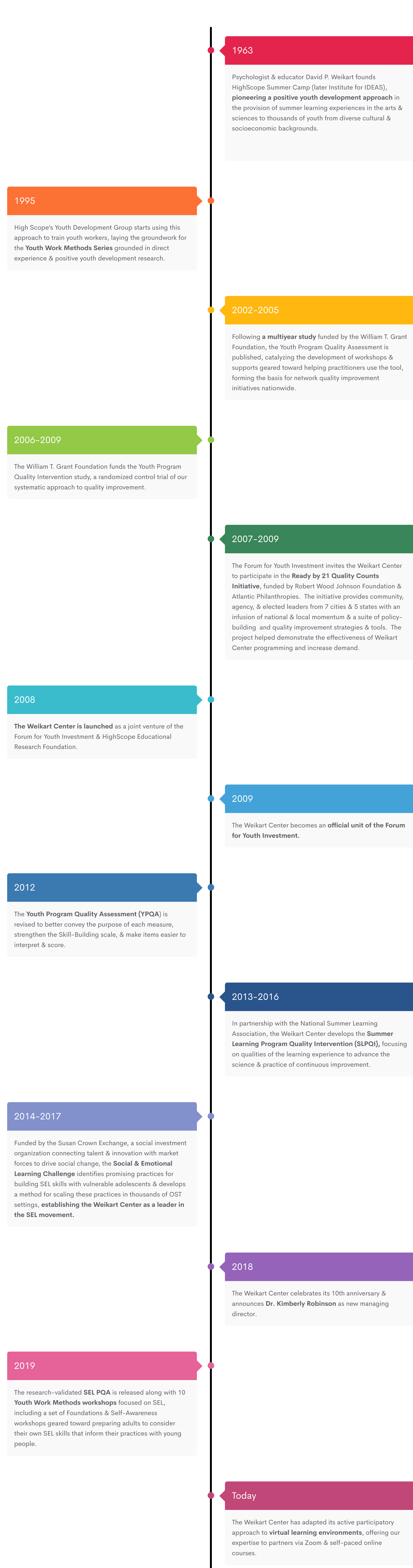
Our Reach

Youth leaders in nearly every state have used the YPQI to improve the quality of youth experiences in OST programming. The Weikart Center has worked with partners in Mexico and supports ongoing efforts in Canada and the U.K. as well.



We've been dedicated for decades.

Scroll the timeline to learn more about the history of the Weikart Center & the research behind the resources we offer.



[See more of our work](#)

Our Vision

All young people reach their fullest potential – in education, work, and life.

Contact Us

Tools & Trainings

[Assessments](#)

[Training Workshops](#)

[Capacity Building Workshops](#)

[Upcoming Events](#)

Materials to make quality happen.

Partnering with the Weikart Center means you and your team will benefit from an ecosystem of engaging resources tailored to the ways in which adults learn best. It also means that our approach has been field-tested by experts like you and backed by decades of research.

Staff turnover and other challenges can make it difficult for quality improvement efforts to stick. The Weikart Center works with each partner to create a culture of continuous improvement tailored to their programs' needs.

Use the tabs above to explore the resources we offer to help build **safe**, **supportive**, **interactive**, & **engaging** environments in which young people can successfully develop higher-order learning & leadership skills.



Youth Work Methods Pyramid of Program Quality

YPQI Roles & Responsibilities

[The YPQI Theory of Change](#)

[The YPQI Process](#)

[>> YPQI Roles & Responsibilities <<](#)

Creating a culture of continuous improvement involves engaging everyone.

The Youth Program Quality Intervention (YPQI) is a dynamic approach to improving the quality of youth experiences that recognizes the importance of supporting all staff within the organization or system. The YPQI empowers youth workers to take charge of team & personal professional development with the goal of nurturing a safe, supportive, interactive, and engaging environment for young people.

Specifically, the YPQI engages network leaders, site leaders, program staff, external assessors, & network consultants, trainers, and coaches. The chart below offers a sample breakdown of the different roles & responsibilities involved in the YPQI in the three key phases of the process: Assess, Plan, & Improve.

	Network Leader	Site Leader	Program Staff	External Assessors	Network Consultants, Trainers, & Coaches
ASSESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan trainings Coordinate external assessment Manage program self-assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend <i>PQA Basics</i> (live or online!) Train staff & lead team program self-assessment Attend <i>Scores Reporter Webinar</i> Enter data into <i>Online Scores Reporter</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend <i>PQA Basics</i> (live or online!) Participate in program self-assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend <i>External Assessor Reliability Training</i> Conduct external assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support site team through program self-assessment Attend <i>Youth Work Management Training of Trainers</i> Attend <i>Youth Work Methods Training of Trainers</i> Attend <i>Coaching for Continuous Improvement Training</i>
PLAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan trainings Activate network consultants, trainers, & coaches Manage improvement planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend <i>Planning with Data</i> Lead team improvement planning Attend <i>Improvement Planning Webinar</i> Enter plan into <i>Online Scores Reporter</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend <i>Planning with Data</i> Participate in improvement planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend <i>Planning with Data</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support site team improvement planning Facilitate <i>Planning with Data</i>
IMPROVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan trainings Activate network consultants, trainers, & coaches Support sites in improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend <i>Quality Coaching</i> Lead staff in improving point-of-service practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend <i>Youth Work Methods</i> workshops Improve point-of-service practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct external assessment upon request 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support team in improvement Deliver <i>Youth Work Methods workshops</i> to program staff Deliver <i>Quality Coaching workshops</i> to program managers & staff

the core four

YPQI SITE PRACTICES FOR SUCCESS

- 1 quality assessment
- 2 improvement planning
- 3 coaching by site leaders to support staff practice
- 4 staff attendance at targeted trainings for professional skill building

[EXPLORE TOOLS & TRAININGS](#)

[REVIEW THE YPQI PROCESS](#)