

100 Best Communities for Young People

America's Promise Alliance

Community:

Greater Midland, MI

GREATER MIDLAND RESPONSES IN YELLOW

Section 1: Community Demographics

This section will not count toward your final score.

1.1 Total community population

What is the total population of your community?

40917

1.2 Community Youth Population

What is the number of 0-18 year olds in your community?

11579

1.3 Community Ethnicity

Please provide the ethnic breakdown of your community by providing percentages for each ethnicity.

(The total of the percentages provided need not equal 100%)

White: 93

Black or African American: 2

American Indian and Alaska Native: .5

Asian: 3

Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander: .1

Some other race: .7

Hispanic or Latino (of any race): .1

Section 2: Overview

This section is worth 50 points. A total of 500 points are available for the application.

In our search for America's 100 Best Communities for Young People, we are looking for communities that work across sectors to address the local dropout issue, reduce challenges young people face, and better prepare young people for college and the 21st century workforce. We understand the inherent challenges involved in significantly curbing the dropout rate, and therefore "Best" does not mean perfect, but committed.

2.1 Your Community as a 100 Best Communities for Young People

Why is your community one of America's 100 Best Communities for Young People?

(300 word maximum)

Greater Midland's youth are a top priority in the community. Countless programs encourage children to embrace healthy behaviors, volunteerism, educational excellence, and moral standards so they'll grow into well-adjusted, self-sufficient adults.

Healthy minds and bodies are cultivated through recreational outlets, including a community center offering financial assistance to underprivileged youth; a donation-funded soccer complex; faith-based programs; 20+ free, family-oriented Downtown Midland events; and more.

Many organizations provide safe, welcoming environments for youth. Children can attend Camp Fire, Salvation Army, and other before and afterschool programs. Midland Parks and Recreation offers summer activities specially geared for the disabled.

Community involvement contributes to effective learning. Job shadowing and co-op jobs are widespread. Likewise, career exploration opportunities and caring adults motivate students to continue their education.

When collaborating on this application, 19 organizational representatives noted three things about Midland's youth focus. First, the number of youth-devoted collaborations is impressive. Agencies partner on effective programs for area children, regardless of gender, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. Additionally, 11 local foundations foster a culture of generosity by annually donating millions to youth-centered initiatives. For example, our Midland-based minor league baseball foundation annually grants \$100,000+ to local nonprofits.

Second, we are quick to develop new initiatives surrounding current issues. For example, with youth prescription drug abuse on the rise nationally, three organizations partnered in 2009-2010 on "Dump Your Drugs," collecting and eliminating 561 pounds of unused/outdated drugs and keeping them out of children's hands. Additionally, Chippewa Nature Center's new Nature Preschool, one of only 12 such programs nationwide, teaches preschoolers to "think green".

Finally, while new initiatives are created, outstanding existing programs continue. For instance, an ongoing court/schools attendance protocol has contributed to an astounding 70% drop in

juvenile crime countywide since 1998.

It's for these reasons, and many more, that Greater Midland is a 100 Best Community.

2.2 Your Community's Biggest Challenge

What do you consider to be the biggest challenge your community faces in ensuring that all young people graduate?

Note: This question is for research purposes only and will not count toward your total score.

Other priorities taking precedence

Section 3: Collaboration, Partnerships and Youth as a Community Priority

This section is worth 125 points.

In our search for the nation's 100 Best Communities for Young People, we are looking for communities that have made a special commitment to focusing on youth and including young people in decision-making. That commitment should incorporate all sectors of the community, from local schools and youth service providers to businesses, charitable organizations and local government. And most importantly, that commitment should be carried out through concerted community efforts. The following questions will help us determine what your community is doing to make youth a priority.

3.1 Prioritizing Youth

How does your community make youth a priority in budgeting, policymaking, services, or other ways?

(300 word maximum)

Michigan continues to experience some of the greatest negative impacts of America's recession. Despite this, Greater Midland residents decisively passed a \$4.7 million education enhancement millage in 2009. Of Michigan's 57 intermediate districts, only two others have passed such a millage - both, before the recession began. Midlanders strongly support youth education.

A successful initiative through Midland courts and area schools keeps kids in school and out of trouble. Since 2001, the Court has authorized truancy officials at area schools to address attendance issues. When attendance problems arise, officials meet with students and parents to sign a contract stipulating that students attend school or face the courts. If truancy continues, students and families receive additional expectations and are informed that continued problems will result in counseling/other services; curfews; a modified educational setting; and/or specific GPA and attendance rate requirements. The program has been successful at reducing truancy and

other crimes. In fact, since 1998, juvenile crime has dropped an astonishing 70%, partly due to programs like this.

Similarly, in 2009, Midland Police began budgeting for two plain-clothes policemen to serve full-time at our two public high schools. The young officers are a non-imposing safe haven for teens, and are viewed as a positive addition to the hallway scene. They've been effective at anticipating and curbing potential problems and encouraging wavering students to stay in school.

Government also supports youth-centered programs. In 2008-2009, the City of Midland-run public library devoted 25% of its \$580,000 materials and programming budgets to youth literacy and leadership development. Midland Parks and Recreation budgeted \$3.9 million in 2009 for countless recreational programs and Midland's 72 parks, which offer safe places and family-oriented activity. City Council supports recreation subsidies so that children from all socioeconomic backgrounds can enjoy healthy activities at little or no cost.

3.2 Youth Leadership

How does your community support youth leadership or involve youth in local policy and/or budgeting decisions?

(300 word maximum)

Youth have many opportunities for leadership and policymaking in Greater Midland. Since 1992, Northwood University's Midland County Youth Leadership (MCYL) program has graduated 810 high school freshmen. This yearly conference is planned and implemented by MCYL alums (with adult guidance), and teaches team-building, diversity, effective decision-making, goal-setting, and the importance of giving back. Surveyed teens said the program gave them practical problem-solving tools, built their confidence, and influenced their life choices, as evidenced by an impressive 78% volunteerism rate among alums surveyed.

Midland Area Partnership for Drug-Free Youth and Midland Community Center coordinate LEAD, a group of high schoolers who gather weekly to plan healthy activities, attend conferences/camps, volunteer, create radio PSAs on advocacy issues, and mentor peers with the goal of keeping kids off drugs and alcohol. With the aid of such student-led programs, State Police data show that alcohol-related crashes among 16-20-year-olds have decreased 77% countywide since 2006.

Midland Area Community Foundation's Youth Action Council is comprised of 6-12-graders whose primary purpose is to review and award grants (\$40,000 annually) to local nonprofits. Its 20-30 members also collectively volunteer 60 hours/month, and attend trainings to enhance leadership skills.

Midland library's 11-year-old Teen Advisory Board meets monthly to develop programming, discuss library materials, and share ideas. From helping to design a new Teen Reading Room to volunteering through reading programs, 6-12-grade members learn positive values, social competency, and policymaking.

Annually, 1,200+ youth ages 5-19 participate in Midland County's 100-year-old 4H Club, becoming leaders through skill development, citizenship, and hands-on learning.

At school, youth learn leadership and the importance of community involvement through student council, Business Professionals of America, Distributive Education Clubs of America, and Key Clubs. Over 700 members strong, National Honor Society at Midland's two public high schools promotes leadership and selflessness through opportunities to mentor younger students.

3.3 Support for the Most Vulnerable Young People

How does your community work to ensure the well-being of the most vulnerable young people, including youth in foster care, GLBT youth, and others?

(300 word maximum)

Among the many programs aimed at helping our most vulnerable children, three are standouts:

-Midland County's Department of Human Services (DHS) facilitates a 25-35-member board comprised of 18-21-year-old foster kids who help ensure there are people and resources available to youth transitioning from foster care to adulthood. Mentors are available for youth, many of whom are victims of abuse or neglect. Partly due to this positive program, board members are more likely to graduate and continue on to higher education.

-Utilizing a local \$675,000 Dow Foundation grant, Midland Probate Court is starting a concentrated, evidence-based program for juvenile delinquents and their families. Along with Community Mental Health (CMH), the Court offers families multi-systemic therapy to address influences that contribute to serious antisocial or illegal youth behaviors. Therapy targets individual, family, peer, school, and neighborhood systems with the goal of empowering parents and developing their skills so they can positively and effectively address the difficulties of raising children. Youth, also, are empowered with coping skills. Statistics show that every dollar spent on therapy today means a \$12.40-\$38.52 return to taxpayers/crime victims in the years ahead.

-In 2008, the Court received a \$300,000 federal grant to establish Baby Court, a program directed at families of children 0-3 years that have come into the abuse/neglect system. The Court contracts with Mid-Michigan Community Action Agency (Early Head Start services), CMS, and the local Legacy Center for Student Success to provide - along with DHS - intense training and services for our youngest wards' parents so they are able to bond with and provide for their family. A team of agencies works with parents to address employment, housing, and transportation issues. Since many of these parents were also abused/neglected children, the program aims at stopping this generational cycle through education and skill development.

3.4 Community Collaboration

Please describe the ways in which your community collaborates to ensure positive outcomes for young people.

This may include public/private, multi-sector, school/community or other partnerships on the large or small scale.

In your response, please consider how long these community groups have existed, the sectors involved (e.g. local elected officials, media partners, schools, nonprofits, faith groups, young people), the leadership for these groups, and any successes the groups have had in serving young people and/or reducing dropout rates.

(300 word maximum)

Greater Midland's official collaborative body is the Health and Human Services Council (HHSC), a network of representatives from local nonprofits, courts, foundations, health and human services organizations, government, schools, churches, and others working to promote Midland's welfare. It's evolved over 20 years through the commitment of agencies that share common challenges and concerns. HHSC is currently overseeing development of a community-wide Youth Master Plan, which will result in understanding what's working, where gaps are, and what organizations can do to ensure that youth have access to needed services.

Other noteworthy collaborations include the following:

-Since 1990, Early On has targeted developmentally delayed or disabled children ages 0-3, involving Early Head Start, Community Mental Health, Family and Children's Services, Department of Human Services, and community centers. This collaborative has proven successful: The percentage of Midland children identified as needing special services is twice the State average, meaning more children are reached early and identified for programs geared for future school success.

-When State funding was significantly reduced in 2009, Midland County's Preschool Partnership kept a preschool's doors open through the collaboration of several local agencies, allowing 36 children an educational opportunity that might otherwise have been lost.

-Midland County Educational Service Agency's Great Start Collaborative brings 25 agencies/businesses/parental groups together to ensure a system of coordinated resources and supports to nurture and care for 0-5-year-olds.

-The Legacy Center for Student Success (TLC) researches children's non-school-related learning and thriving issues. TLC collaborates with multiple agencies and community groups to implement programming promoting success-enabling developmental assets in children. Studies show that more assets, such as positive peers in an adolescent's life, translate into fewer risk-taking behaviors. Results are very encouraging: In 2009 alone, delinquency was down 30% compared to 2008, and Probate Court costs were down \$700,000, partly due to the five-year-old initiative.

Section 4: The Five Promises

This section is worth 200 points.

Research and experience demonstrate that children's chances of success in life greatly increase when they experience the key supports – or “Five Promises” – they need to be successful. The Five Promises include Caring Adults, Safe Places, A Healthy Start, An Effective Education, and Opportunities to Help Others. According to Every Child, Every Promise (2006), more than two-thirds of America's young people experience too few of the Five Promises to have a reasonable chance of success. In this section you will be asked to provide examples of how your community helps bring the Five Promises into the lives of youth.

4.1 Caring Adults

What are your community's most significant challenges in ensuring that youth have access to and support from caring adults? What innovative solutions or evidence-based practices have been implemented to address these challenges?

(300 word maximum)

Although our youth generally have strong family and community support, there are always children who could easily slip through the cracks. Midland provides many ways to bring caring adults into children's lives.

Midland's Big Brothers Big Sisters boasts 300+ adult volunteers who serve as positive role models to children. To address the challenge of losing youth over summer breaks, BBBS implemented School Plus, resulting in obtaining fully-screened, long-term volunteers.

Creative 360's Facing Forward program pairs female mentors with teen girls through a facilitated arts curriculum. Relationships encourage trust, mutual support, and personal growth. Data shows that teens gain self-confidence, self-esteem, a willingness to try new things, and greater awareness of choices.

West Midland Family Center is challenged with keeping long-term mentors, partly due to location. Recruiting college-aged mentors, training youth staff members mentoring skills, and giving volunteers gas cards have been effective solutions.

Family and Children's Services free Doula program matches pregnant women (generally teens) with a trained volunteer for the duration of their pregnancy and the first year following birth.

Annually, the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (Shelterhouse) sponsors Girls on the Run, a 12-week program culminating in a 5K run. A self-esteem-enhancing, character-building curriculum, along with running, prepares girls for a lifetime of self-respect and healthy living. In 2009, female volunteers mentored/coached 200 girls with outcomes including improved body image and increased physical activity and self-esteem.

Midland Mentors serves at-risk youth at Midland's Juvenile Care Center. Over its three-year history, 66 adult mentors have been matched with 80 teens. Statistics from local sources (Legacy Center, Big Brothers Big Sisters) prove that mentored youth are 46% less likely to use drugs, 27% less likely to drink alcohol, and 33% less likely to hit. Additionally, they have higher achievement in school and better relationships with parents and peers.

4.2 Safe Places

Every child needs and deserves to be physically and emotionally safe in their homes, schools, neighborhoods, communities, and on the Internet. What are your community's most significant challenges in providing safe places for all young people to participate in out-of-school activities and programs? What innovative solutions or evidence-based practices have been implemented to address the challenges?

(300 word maximum)

Midland's primary challenge relating to safe places is financially-based: Some parents, especially single parents and the working poor, cannot afford supervised youth programs.

Many organizations provide aid. Midland Community Center, North Midland Family Center, Camp Fire USA, Salvation Army, Coleman Community Network, Junior Achievement, and many schools offer free and scholarship-based before and afterschool programs and summer day camps that provide safe surroundings, structure, and nurturing environments.

Chippewa Nature Center (CNC), serving 20,000+ children annually, provides safe, educational activity during and after school. Additionally, CNC's summertime Nature Day Camp offers 30+ supervised programs for those ages 3-16, with low-income campers receiving financial assistance as needed. Studies show that exposure to nature reduces illness, behavioral disorders, anxiety, and depression; increases problem-solving skills; and reduces ADHD symptoms.

Midland police partnering with local PTOs promote a free Block Parent program, whereby specific homes serve as "safe houses" for children walking to/from school.

Midland's Shelterhouse shelters victims of violence for free and offers prevention programs for youth with the goal of building healthy relationships, strong families, and safe communities. One such program, Safe Dates, has been proven to improve teens' relationship skills. In 2009, prevention programming reached 16,000+ people - many of these school-aged youth.

The faith-based ROCK Youth Center is a safe, inviting environment that equips youth with coping tools/skills. Free programs for middle- and high-schoolers promote personal growth. After school, there's martial arts, cooking, crafts, a computer lab, tutoring, and recreation. Friday Night Club ROCK includes sports, games, music, and more. In 2009, the ROCK, West Midland Family Center, and Midland's Partnership for Drug-Free Youth offered adult-involved youth activities including four pool parties (serving 450-600 kids each time), plus an event at Midland's minor-league baseball stadium.

Many teens have avoided negative choices because of such fun, supervised environments that keep them safe.

4.3 A Healthy Start

All children need healthy bodies, healthy minds, and healthful habits. These result from access to health care, regular health checkups and needed treatment, good nutrition and exercise, health education, and positive role models who demonstrate good physical and psychological health.

What are your community's most significant challenges in providing access to health care for all young people? What innovative solutions or evidence-based practices have been implemented to address the challenges?

(300 word maximum)

Greater Midland's challenges revolve around the fact that Michigan is in its eighth year of a recession. Michigan has relied on the auto industry for much of its prosperity for 100+ years. In recent years, two of the Big Three auto companies declared bankruptcy, and, while they have since reorganized, the new companies are much smaller. Michigan's unemployment is the highest in the nation. Locally, conditions are somewhat better, but the state problems affect Midland as well. Health insurance is becoming more difficult for employers to provide, leaving many without coverage.

Several highly effective initiatives are available locally to help those in need:

-State Medicaid is available for children at 150% of poverty, pregnant women at 185% of poverty, and adults at 100% of poverty.

-MICHild, through Michigan's Department of Community Health, insures children to 200% of poverty with a small monthly deductible.

-Through Children's Special Health Care Services, an RN coordinates family support and care to qualifying children with chronic special health needs. Diagnosis and treatment is free, with no income limitations.

-Midland County's Health Department offers childhood immunizations including flu vaccines (such as the recent H1N1), vision and hearing screening, and nursing services for developmentally delayed or disabled children, all without regard to ability to pay.

-Church and nonprofit funding aids are available for those not eligible for most programs, and local medical centers and providers donate care to needy children and families. For instance, over a 10-year period, Adopt-A-Child's Smile (through Midland's Safe and Sound Children Protection and Advocacy agency) has provided 1,025 needy children with dental services through participating local dentists.

-Midland groups also show their care through fundraisers that benefit our young. For instance, since 1988, Downtown Midland's Cruise'n Car Show has donated 60% of its profits annually towards children's health care.

4.4 Effective Education

Every child deserves to receive the skills needed for lifelong learning. To achieve this goal, there must be quality learning environments, challenging expectations, and constant formal and informal guidance and mentoring. What are your community's most significant challenges in ensuring that all young people 1) receive an effective education; 2) graduate from high school on time; and 3) graduate ready to pursue post-secondary education? What innovative solutions or evidence-based practices have been implemented to address the challenges?

(300 word maximum)

Midland – a community of two-career families, high education per capita, no career tech center, and expectations for advanced education – brings students academic pressure. Once again, Midland rises to the challenge: Our schools' curricula meet or exceed Michigan's new high school graduation requirements (among the nation's highest), and 80% of high schoolers enroll in some type of post-secondary experience.

Some students, however, become disenchanted with learning. Career exploration, from elementary through high school, makes learning relevant for these students, opening their minds to possibilities.

In elementary schools, tutors, adult- and peer-led reading programs, plus instructional and consultation teams for behavior and literacy intervention result in Midland students consistently scoring above average in state and national assessments.

Eighth graders participate in a career interest assessment. Following research, students choose careers; project themselves to age 25; and make lifestyle decisions as "adults" that affect their checkbooks.

Career-focused, hands-on summer camps and career showcases are prevalent. Businesses provide middle and high schoolers and their parents with discussion, tours, and demonstrations on the skills and education/training required to be workforce-ready.

Teens not functioning well in traditional schools can instead attend a career education academy offering classes, job shadowing, application/resume skills, local college occupational division tours, and work-study programs in partnership with 50 businesses plus community groups.

Youth falling behind or at risk of dropping out may choose online class credit recovery options, enabling them to learn at their own pace and graduate on time. Also, there's afterschool tutoring and professional screening and assessments to identify issues (Community Mental Health, Midland County Probation, and the schools). Education Training Connection (ETC) and Midland

Public Schools offer mentors; MITECH+, CMH, ETC, Rotary, and others provide camps, leadership development, and support programs; and Midland's Juvenile Care Center teaches parents new tools to work with their struggling children.

4.5 Opportunities to Help Others

Every child needs and deserves the chance to make a difference in their families, schools, communities, nation, and world, through models of caring behavior, awareness of the needs of others, a sense of personal responsibility, and opportunities for volunteering, leadership and service.

What are your community's most significant challenges in providing young people with community service and/or service-learning opportunities? What innovative solutions or evidence-based practices have been implemented to address the challenges?

(300 word maximum)

In recent years, the economy in Midland – like all of Michigan – has changed dramatically. Higher unemployment, businesses leaving the area or reducing staff, and lower housing values as well as reduced state and federal funding have affected our at one time financially-thriving community. Service organizations are in need of volunteers now more than ever. With so many demands on time and pocketbooks, many citizens are choosing to devote their energies to one service organization rather than several. This causes some groups to have an even greater need than usual for volunteers.

In Midland, we teach our young people the importance of volunteering and provide countless opportunities for them to give back, such as through clothing and food drives, American Red Cross programs, Lunch Box Learners (literacy tutoring), Midland library's Summer Reading Program (tutoring), Big Brothers Big Sisters, and homebound senior visits.

United Way's Volunteer Center connects young volunteers with 138 area schools and agencies that help them build leadership skills and develop a sense of personal responsibility for their community. This year alone, 300+ teens participated in United Way's Volunteer program.

In 2010, an impressive 96% of Northwood University's student population volunteered locally through a college credit-earning program called EXCEL. Also at Northwood, Circle K volunteers have logged 1,000+ hours of community service throughout Midland. 200+ students participate each year, raising thousands of dollars for charity while making a difference locally.

Midland's two Kiwanis Clubs sponsor high school student-led Key Clubs, offering youth opportunities to help others.

Midland County's Youth Action Council recommends grants to youth serving non-profits, and requires that each student member perform at least 10 community service hours annually.

These are just a few programs that give youth opportunities to help their neighbors and help

bridge the gap between community needs and lower volunteer numbers.

Section 5: Data and Outcomes

This section is worth 75 points.

As communities across the country mobilize to end the dropout crisis, we must gauge our success along the way. In consultation with the U.S. Department of Education, we will track several highly reliable national indicators that influence graduation rates. We understand that these indicators may not be tracked locally in the same manner as the aggregate data. However, the following questions will help us get a sense of where your community stands in usage and tracking of these and similar indicators. We will score these responses alongside your programmatic initiatives to gauge how your community is addressing its challenges, so “low” scores or non-responses due to a lack of community-level data in this section will not disqualify your community. Please be as complete as possible in your responses.

5.1 Elementary Schools

Please enter the number of elementary schools in your community.

12

5.2 Middle Schools

Please enter the number of middle schools in your community.

3

5.3 High Schools

Please enter the number of high schools in your community.

2

5.4 Adequate Yearly Progress Rate

Please enter the percentage of local schools meeting AYP in the most recent year for which data is available.

This information may be obtained by contacting local school districts. You may include trend data if available. (100 word maximum)

100%

Trend Data: All buildings met AYP. All As, one B rating for 2008-2009.

5.5 Graduation Rates

Please report the high school graduation rate for your community, and indicate if you are using the Editorial Projects in Education rate or a school district reported rate.

This data can be located via the Editorial Projects in Education graduation rates map at <http://www.edweek.org/apps/gmap/>. School district reported data is acceptable, but requires an explanation of the calculation. You may include trend data if available.

Example: 90% of County X ninth graders entering in 2000 graduated in 2004, compared with 87% for the previous class

90.18 (Self reported figures)

Calculations and Trend Data: Editorial Projects in Education figures found online were from 2006. Greater Midland used the more current Midland Public Schools District 2008-2009 Graduation Rate of 90.18%.

5.6 NAEP – Fourth Grade Reading

Please enter the average scores for the school district(s) in your community on NAEP fourth grade reading assessments.

This data may be available by contacting local school districts. If local school districts do not test this subject at this grade level, do not submit scores from other subjects or grades in this box. Please submit any alternate data on Section 6 of this application.

88

5.7 NAEP – Eighth Grade Math & Science

Please enter the average scores for the school district(s) in your community on NAEP eighth grade math and science assessments.

This data may be available by contacting local school districts. If local school districts do not test this subject at this grade level, do not submit scores from other subjects or grades in this box. Please submit any alternate data on Section 6 of this application.

Math: 91

Science: 87

5.8 Preschool Enrollment

Please report the number of young people enrolled in preschool programs in your community.

Available at the U.S. Census Bureau's American FactFinder online at <http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?lang=en>. Please report data from the 2006-8 American Community Survey. This data may also be located by contacting local school districts and/or private local preschool providers.

870

5.9 Ninth Grade Promotion

Please report the percentage of students promoted from 9th grade to 10th grade in community high schools in the most recent year for which data is available.

This data may be located by contacting local school districts.

99%

5.10 Violent Crime

Please report the number of violent crimes committed in your community.

Input your answer as recorded in the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Crime in the United States 2008 report online at http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2008/data/table_08.html.

60

5.11 Out-of-School Time Enrollment

Please report either 1) the number of hours of out-of-school time enrollment or 2) number of youth enrolled in out-of-school programs, and indicate which measure is used.

This data may be obtained by contacting local school districts and/or local out-of-school program providers.

9557 (Number of youth)

5.12 Uninsured Children

Please report the number of uninsured children in your community. Please report community-level data if available. Otherwise, you may report county-level data. Indicate which data type (community or county) you are reporting.

Available for select cities and counties through the Kids Count Data Center online at <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/bystate/Default.aspx>.

County-Level data

19431

5.13 CHIP/Medicaid Enrollment

Please report the number of youth enrolled in these programs in your community. Please report community-level data if available. Otherwise, you may report county-level data. Indicate which data type (community or county) you are reporting.

Available for select cities and counties through the Kids Count Data Center online at <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/bystate/Default.aspx>.

County-Level data
5932

5.14 Immunization Rate

Please express as the number of youth receiving immunizations. Please report community-level data if available. Otherwise, you may report county-level data. Indicate which data type (community or county) you are reporting.

Available for select cities and counties through the Kids Count Data Center online at <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/bystate/Default.aspx>.

County-Level data
905

5.15 Volunteering Rate

Please report your community's volunteering rate as a percentage of the total population.

Volunteering rates for 125 large- and mid-size communities are available through the Corporation for National and Community Service at <http://www.volunteeringinamerica.gov/rankings.cfm>. Additional data may be available by contacting a local United Way, Points of Light/Hands On Network affiliate, or other local service agency.

73%

5.16 Individuals Below Poverty Level

Please report the percentage of your community's population that is below the federal poverty level.

Please express as reported in the U.S. Census Bureau's American FactFinder online at <http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?lang=en>. Please report data from the 2006-8 American Community Survey.

9.8%

5.17 Child Poverty Rate

Please report the percentage of your community's youth that is below the federal poverty level.

Please express as reported in the U.S. Census Bureau's American FactFinder online at [http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html? lang=en](http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?lang=en). Please report data from the 2006-8 American Community Survey.

13.7%

5.18 Unemployment Rate

Please report the percentage of your community's workforce that is currently unemployed.

Please express as reported in the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, found online at <http://www.bls.gov/lau/tables.htm>.

11.2%

5.19 Post-Secondary Education Rate

Please report the percentage of your community's population age 25 or higher with a B.A./B.S. degree or higher.

Please express as reported in the U.S. Census Bureau's American FactFinder online at [http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html? lang=en](http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?lang=en). Please report data from the 2006-8 American Community Survey.

32.8%

Section 6: Additional Data and Outcomes

This section is worth up to 10 bonus points, not to exceed 75 points when added with your score from Data and Outcomes.

Please input any data you wish to have considered in addition to, or in lieu of, the data requested on the previous two pages of the application. This may include non-traditional data that may not be available in student information systems. You may present data that relates to "out of school time", extended day services, youth recreational services, health and human services, or other items. As part of your response, please explain how this data connects youth services to outcomes in your community.

This section will count for bonus points during scoring; therefore, if you have no additional data to submit, feel free to leave this response blank as it will not count against your score.

6.1 Additional Data Point #1

Input an additional data point you wish to report. Give this metric a name, describe it, and report the data itself.

If you have no data to report, type “No data” in each box.

Name: Online Credit Recovery Program

Description: First offered in summer 2009, e2020 (a Midland Public Schools’ e-tool) enables students to retake courses and recover credits via online, school-managed, one-on-one instruction. E2020 has been extended to the juvenile care system, allowing kids to continue their education despite incarceration. Courses are customized and self-paced, resulting in greater successes.

Data: In the first summer session (2009), 44 students attempted 64 credits. 62% of credits were successfully earned, moving students closer to graduation. Currently, 130 students are enrolled, with a district success rate of 72% of students who pass the courses successfully to earn credit toward graduation.

6.2 Additional Data Point #2

Input an additional data point you wish to report. Give this metric a name, describe it, and report the data itself.

Name: Out-of-School Time Enrollment

Description: An impressive 66% of Midland County K-12 students in public and private schools participate in school-related afterschool programs. This doesn’t include the countless students involved in non-school activities like faith-based programs, community theatre, volunteer-run soccer, Parks and Recreation programming, Little League, 4H, and Boy/Girl Scouts. Families highly support these programs.

Data: 9,557 of 14,481 total students in Midland County's K-12 school system participate in school-coordinated afterschool programs.

6.3 Additional Data Point #3

Input an additional data point you wish to report. Give this metric a name, describe it, and report the data itself.

Name: Youth Employment Opportunities

Description: Midland students participate in Cooperative Education programs that allow them to gain invaluable experience that’s focused on their future career interests. Of these students, 25% are special needs teens working in Midland businesses that provide them with the chance to work in return for experience plus school credits and/or payment.

Data: 200 students participate on an annual basis; 50 of these are special needs students.

Section 7: Youth Voice and Success Stories

This section is worth 50 points.

An essential component of your work in communities should be youth voice and leadership. Please have four youth from your community submit written testimonials of 200-300 words supporting your application. Each testimonial should include the young person's name, age and affiliation within the community. These testimonials may not be written or significantly edited by adults. Each testimonial should explain why the young people believe their community is one of America's 100 Best Communities for Young People, citing examples of key programs or initiatives that have helped young people stay on a course to success.

7.1 Youth Testimonial #1

(300 word maximum)

Hello! I'm Cheyenne Kersh. I'm 15 and a freshman at Meridian High School in Midland County.

I believe Midland is a 100 Best Community because it offers youth a lot. I have experienced some of the programs available, and they have significantly changed my life, like the Dow College Opportunity Program, Big Brothers Big Sisters, and Adopt-A-Child's Smile.

I am being raised by my single mother who struggles to make ends meet. It bothered me to look at my own teeth, so I didn't smile often. Braces were out of the question. My Big Sister arranged a meeting with her friend, who works with Adopt-A-Child's Smile, which helps low-income children who need dental care but can't afford it. Soon I found out I was getting braces!

I have been truly blessed through kind people who have cared to help people in need. Now that I have the braces, I can't stop smiling.

Midland County also has other things for youth that make it a 100 Best Community. We have several recreational centers, tennis courts, family centers and gyms. They provide youth with plenty of entertainment.

Not only do we provide entertainment, we also provide youth with a very safe city. I have never felt safer anywhere else than I do in Midland. Our police are always out and about to ensure our safety. Schools are also safe, and they're absolutely outstanding in performance and quality.

So, as you see, Midland County has a lot to offer. Being one of the 100 Best Communities for Youth in America would mean the world to us.

I am blessed to live here and not only accept help, but also to write this letter and hopefully give back to the community, and help ensure that these wonderful outreach programs stay alive to help others.

7.2 Youth Testimonial #2

(300 word maximum)

Hello, I'm Samantha Stover, a senior at Midland High School.

Midland has offered many opportunities for me to grow into a successful person. I have been involved in Business Professionals of America, National Honor Society, and the co-op program. These groups have not only allowed me to become a better student, but also a more well-rounded person ready to face any challenges that come my way.

Business Professionals of America helped me make important decisions in my life. Through BPA, I realized that I loved everything about finance and accounting. After placing in Regionals, I was invited to attend a State conference in Grand Rapids, Michigan. There were many seminars that we were able to attend to learn more about ourselves and our futures which helped me decide my ultimate career pathway.

Through National Honor Society, I have been able to learn more about our community's volunteer opportunities and through meetings, I have learned how to be a responsible leader in the community. NHS has allowed me to work with others and become active in the community through Lunchbox Learners, Big Brothers Big Sisters, and volunteering at the hospital.

My co-op program has allowed me to gain experience in the business field through my co-op position at Dow Chemical Company. While co-oping, I have become more prepared for the business world.

Midland High School offers advanced and honors classes and many business and computer classes to prepare me for college. The teachers at Midland High are more than willing to give me extra attention and advice outside of class. I do not know where I would be without their guidance and assistance.

Midland has provided me the experience of growing up in a community that has prepared me for the future, broadened my horizons, and made me a better person.

7.3 Youth Testimonial #3

(300 word maximum)

To anybody reading this, let me tell you how awesome the Midland community is. I'm Cassie Hillstrom, a 17-year-old Midland High student. Everywhere I've looked for it, I've found a helping hand, from teachers to parents to professional youth leaders to peers. I could name all the people that have helped me over the years, but the list would be way longer than I have space for, so I'll focus on an overview of some of the help I've received.

My peers got me interested in the Rotary Exchange Program. Many friends are involved in the program. One of them brought me to an exchange meeting and I got an application then, ready and willing to fill it out and get started.

Since I'd seen so many others before me do it, I didn't doubt that I'd go through with it and become an exchange student. But after a while, doubt crept in. My parents and teachers stepped up to encourage and inspire me. My teachers even wrote the letters I needed to go with my application.

After I was sure I was going to go on exchange, I told my youth group (LEAD, through the Community Center and Midland Partnership for Drug-Free Youth) and they quickly congratulated and supported me.

Last, but definitely not least, is Midland's Morning and Noon Rotary clubs which consist of everyday Midlanders doing extraordinary things for our community and communities abroad. They are sponsoring me and have also given me scholarships, without which I wouldn't be able to go.

Midland is an awesome place to live. We've got an amazing and supportive community. You'll always find help here, just as you'll have the chance to lend help. I really enjoy Midland and I'm willing to bet that everyone else here does too. Thanks, Midland!

7.4 Youth Testimonial #4

(300 word maximum)

Hi, my name's Justin Martin. I'm 18 years old. I believe that Midland is one of America's best 100 communities for young people because of all the things we have to do. There's the Midland Cinemas, bowling alleys, downtown, the Mall, roller rink, Loons stadium, and best of all the Chippewa Nature Center. All of these places help keep kids occupied and out of trouble.

What also helps are all the people who are there to watch over and help guide us to stay on track. I know I can personally say that if it weren't for places like the Nature Center, I wouldn't be where I am today. I used to be a kid who got in trouble and broke the law daily. But once I got hooked up with the Center and Curt Holsinger (Land Maintenance Coordinator), they helped me turn my life around and get it back on track.

When I first started working at the Center, I never thought I'd stick with it. But once I saw how proud my parents were and how I was starting to take pride in myself again, it made me feel really good. I truly believe I would still be on the path of self-destruction if I'd never become involved in the community.

Places like Windover High School also make Midland a great community because they offer youths who've made mistakes in the past opportunities to graduate. Our schools have the best principals, like Greg Armstead from Windover. His primary concern is to help youth in Midland. Greg is another person I can personally say I've seen help change over 100 kids' lives in positive ways.

The way Midland cares for their youth are one of the reasons why we have one of the top 100 communities in the nation.

7.5 Success Story

Please share with us one success story from your community. This story could highlight a young person whose life has been extraordinarily impacted by community efforts or a Caring Adult that goes above and beyond to improve the lives of children and help them graduate.

(200 word maximum)

Shawn, age 11, was adopted by and is living with his grandmother and sister.

In 2004, Shawn's grandmother came to Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) to have both siblings matched with an adult mentor. In June 2004, Shawn was matched to Michelle, a local college student. At the time, Shawn wanted a Big Brother, but agreed to be matched with Michelle until a Brother became available.

Michelle and Shawn met weekly, enjoying activities like bowling and rollerblading. Michelle gave Shawn consistent and caring one-on-one attention and exposure to new, exciting things.

Eventually a Big Brother was found for Shawn and, as promised, offered to him. Shawn's response? "No thanks! Michelle's like my real sister, and I don't want anyone else!"

With support from BBBS and Michelle, Shawn has made great improvements. His grandmother reported that since being matched, Shawn's no longer the "angry boy" who doesn't get to see his mother, and he's more confident and outgoing. She acknowledged BBBS and Michelle for making an "enormous difference in his life."

Michelle, too, reports that Shawn is more independent and seems more comfortable talking with adults.

Their six-year friendship is still going strong, and Shawn now knows that friendship isn't gender-specific!

Section 8: Additional Information

This section is worth up to 25 bonus points. The total score from this section, together with your scores from the Overview; Collaboration, Partnerships, and Youth as a Community Priority; The Five Promises; and Youth Voice and Success Stories sections may not exceed 425 points.

This section will count for bonus points during scoring; therefore, if you have no additional anecdotal information to submit, feel free to leave this response blank, as it will not count against your score.

8.1 Additional Information

Please share any other information you believe uniquely qualifies your community to be one of the 100 Best Communities for Young People. This may include information on any programs, services or initiatives that fall outside the Five Promises rubric, additional community partnerships, other awards your community has received, or other anecdotal evidence that clearly demonstrates your community's commitment to ending the dropout crisis and improving the lives of young people.

(300 word maximum)

The dropout crisis hasn't affected Greater Midland as much as some communities, possibly due to our many programs that promote education and aid students with learning difficulties. For instance, our youngest children receive volunteer-led afterschool homework assistance at Midland Community and North Midland Family centers; behavior and literacy intervention services at school; and, for 0-5-year-olds, one free book a month through Midland's Imagination Library. For secondary-level students, there's early evaluation of grades for grade recovery plus tutors. Community mentors and transition services for special needs students help struggling teens. Funding includes scholarships that, in many cases, cover half or all of the cost.

An impactful program for a unique student population is Juvenile Care Center's (JCC) Day Treatment program, providing individualized educational plans for 20 at-risk youth. In addition to a regular curriculum, Community Mental Health, Midland's Community Center, Michigan Works!, Rotary, Boy Scouts, Creative 360, Bay-Arenac Skill Center and others offer additional classes and programs on leadership, community service, substance abuse prevention, safe dating, and avoiding aggressive or socially inappropriate behavior. Tying this together is Raising Healthy Teens, whereby parents and staff utilize home visits, weekly phone calls, conferences, family nights, and various activities to successfully transition JCC teens to their home high schools. Students return to school caught up, (at times) ahead of schedule, and on track to graduate.

A local program that could fall outside of the Five Promises is Midland County Educational Service Agency's Sibshops, offering free monthly workshops for brothers and sisters of special needs children. Workshops help children ages 7-14 understand their family's circumstances and the needs of their special needs sibling; connect with other sibs experiencing the same challenges; and receive education and support within a recreational context. Through the five-year-old program, participants come to develop a happy, healthy outlook despite their challenges.