

State Youth Council Application

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Must be received by FRIDAY JULY 1ST, 2011

What & Why...

Youth voice is critical to improving child welfare - not just youth presenting to policy makers, but as part of the decision-making processes impacting children and youth in foster care and their families. To achieve this, California Department of Social Services, County Welfare Directors Association and the Co-Investment Partnership are partnering with California Connected by 25 Initiative and California Youth Connection to create a State Youth Council, where Ambassadors will be trained in the process of policy implementation, public speaking and other leadership skills. Youth Council Ambassadors will act as technical assistants, providing valuable insights about policies and practices that engage youth, build youth-adult partnerships and improve the foster care system.

Who...

We are looking for current or former foster youth 14-24 years old with diverse experiences. One youth from each of the following 13 counties will be selected to participate on the Youth Council: Fresno, Glenn, Humboldt, Monterey, Napa, Los Angeles, Orange, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Francisco, Santa Clara, Solano and Ventura.

You must be...

- Passionate about improving foster care in California;
- Interested in working with peers to provide the Department of Social Services, County Child Welfare Agencies, and others with thoughtful input on issues affecting children and youth in or transitioning from foster care;
- Energetic and willing to learn new skills;
- Able to think beyond your own personal experiences in order to represent the ideas and recommendations of other California youth; and
- Committed to full participation in meetings and other activities of this unique State Youth Council (10-20 hours/month) for 12-18 months.

The 13 Youth Council Ambassadors will represent, to the best of their ability, all the youth in foster care across California, so we are looking for youth with a range of experiences, including but not limited to...

- Current and former foster youth
- Parenting youth
- Foster homes
- Group homes
- Kinship care
- Tribal Youth
- Working full-time
- Experiences with homelessness
- Enrolled in college or trade schools
- Transitional housing (THP-Plus/THPP)
- Cross system youth (mental health, juvenile justice, etc.)
- College support programs (i.e. Guardian Scholars, Renaissance Scholars, etc.)

Qualification Requirements & Benefits

YOUTH COUNCIL AMBASSADORS...

- Are current or former foster youth 14-24 years old
- Live in Fresno, Glenn, Humboldt, Monterey, Napa, Los Angeles, Orange, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Francisco, Santa Clara, Solano or Ventura
- Are able to travel up to once a month to Sacramento regardless of work or school commitments
- Feel comfortable when speaking in public and making presentations to groups, with training and support from staff

- Receive a stipend for your participation in day-long State Youth Council Meetings – there will be 6 meetings over the course of the year, plus 1-2 retreats – and work in between meetings
 - \$150 per meeting, 6 meetings total
 - Additional stipend available for work between in person meetings – up to additional \$125 every other month
- Will have all travel coordinated and paid for

YOUTH COUNCIL AMBASSADORS ARE COMMITTED TO...

- Professionalism
- Follow through with commitments
- High communication – consistent phone number or point of contact (i.e. Facebook, email, etc.)
- Increasing leadership skills

THE ROLE OF A STATE YOUTH COUNCIL AMBASSADOR

The Ambassadors of the State Youth Council will be representing all of the 65,000 foster youth in California, which means that you MUST...

- Think strategically about the best ways to implement AB12 and other statewide legislation in counties similar and very different from your own
- Work locally to engage youth in your county/region in this work (through focus groups, surveys, etc.) - this will be supported by the Youth Council staff in partnership with others county partners, such as local CYC chapters, youth advisory boards, your self-identified Adult Ally and other local child welfare partners
- Communicate with your county's Department of Social Services (a.k.a. Human Services, Child Welfare, etc.) to coordinate your travel to Sacramento meetings and share the work of the State Youth Council
- Outreach to other youth leaders in your county to communicate and share the work of the State Youth Council (staff will help you create a communications plan)
- Attend Youth Council meetings and trainings/retreats up to once per month regardless of work or school commitments (meetings will be held in Sacramento, trainings/retreats may be in other locations to be determined)
- Communicate with the Youth Council staff for 1-on-1 check-ins
- Participate on monthly conference calls with other Youth Council Ambassadors to check-in and follow up on tasks

COUNCIL AMBASSADORS MUST ATTEND YOUTH COUNCIL MEETINGS IN SACRAMENTO

- Meetings are mandatory and will be all day long
- Youth council meetings will take place in Sacramento 6 times throughout the year
- Several meetings, including the initial retreat, will require overnight stays in Sacramento or other location to be determined
- Your travel to monthly meetings will be coordinated and pre-paid by a representative of your county's Department of Human Services (a.k.a. Human Services, Child Welfare, etc.). Travel to retreats will be handled separately by CYC (see section below).

COUNCIL AMBASSADORS MUST ATTEND THE KICKOFF RETREAT

- The kickoff retreat will provide an overview of the State Youth Council, government structure and AB12
- This retreat is mandatory and will be held in early to mid August
- The initial retreat, will require overnight stays in Sacramento or other location to be determined
- Your travel for the initial retreat will be coordinated and paid for by CYC

WHAT YOU'LL GET AS A YOUTH COUNCIL AMBASSADOR

- Opportunity to participate in state and local improvements in child welfare policy and practice by providing technical assistance around policies and practices that engage youth, build youth-adult partnerships and improve the foster care system.
- Experience networking with state and local child welfare professionals and youth in your county and across the state
- Training in public speaking, conducting focus groups/survey/etc., meeting with policy makers, and more!
- Regular travel to Sacramento
- A stipend of \$150/meeting for attending the in person State Youth Council meetings in Sacramento (\$150 per meeting, 6 meetings total)
- Additional stipend up to \$125 every other month for work done between in person meetings

THE SELECTION PROCESS

We are looking to create a council that represents the diversity and experiences of youth in foster care in California including:

- Cultural/Ethnic diversity
- Gender (including LGBTQ)
- Educational experience
- Career experience
- Previous leadership and or training experience
- Ability to advocate or provide training

Important dates:

- Application due: Friday JULY 1ST
- Interviews for final candidates: first 2 weeks in July
- Retreat: early/mid August

Youth Council Ambassador Application Part I

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Application must be received by FRIDAY JULY 1ST, 2011

LEGAL NAME: _____ **Date of Birth:** _____
Name as it appears on my ID (Needed for booking travel) Month Day Year

COUNTY OF RESIDENCE: (i.e. San Francisco) : _____

PHONE # 1: (_____) _____ **PHONE # 2:** (_____) _____
Area Code (Best # to reach me on) Area Code (Other # to reach me- home, friend, foster parent)

EMAIL: _____
PRINT CLEARLY & IN ALL CAPITALS

MAILING ADDRESS: _____
Street/P.O. Box Apt #

City Zip

SPECIAL MAILING INSTRUCTIONS: _____
(i.e. Send to the attention of my social worker, foster parent, etc.)

ADULT ALLY

What is an adult ally? Simply put, an adult ally is someone who is committed to helping you engage in the Youth Council by taking the time to support you and take the steps needed to help make sure you are successful in your role as Youth Council Ambassador. Please see the "What Makes a Good Adult Ally" section at the end of this application.

If you do not have someone in mind, DO NOT WORRY! If selected to participate on the Youth Council either your county point person or a Youth Council staff will work with you to identify someone who can play this role for you.

Adult Ally's Name (Please Print) _____

Phone number: _____

Email: _____

Relationship to Youth Council Applicant: _____

- Yes, I have read the "What Makes a Good Adult Ally" document provided and agree to support _____ in her/his participation in CYC's State Youth Council in this way. I will participate on 1 hour monthly conference calls designed to update and engage adult allies in the Youth Council's ongoing work.**

Adult Ally's Signature _____ **Date** _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT

Name (Please Print) _____

Phone number: _____

Email: _____

Relationship to Youth Council Applicant: _____

Facilitator Application Part II

You may either type your responses below or use a separate piece of paper to provide your responses.

1. What opportunities do youth think participating in the State Youth Council will provide to you?
2. What does advocacy mean to you?
3. How have you advocated for yourself or others?
4. What leadership skills and/or experiences do you have that will you bring to the Youth Council? Please give us as much information as possible (ex. advocacy efforts, youth councils, advisory boards, facilitating/leading group meetings or trainings, etc.).
5. Have you participated in any of the following leadership opportunities? If so, please fill in name in space provided when necessary.
 - California Youth Connection: Chapter _____
 - California Connected by 25, BSC on ILP, or other Initiative convenings w/ a county team
 - Youth Training Project (YTP)
 - Youth Advisory Board: _____
 - Presenter/Trainer regarding foster youth issues in other meetings/forums: _____
 - Other (anything else you're involved in: Gay Straight Alliance, Amnesty International, student council, etc.): _____
6. Is there anything else you'd like us know?

QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions, please contact Janay Swain @ 916.752.1861 or janay@calyouthconn.org.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: FRIDAY JULY 1, 2011
--

SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION!

Please email your application to Chantel Johnson at chantel@calyouthconn.org or fax it to: Attention Chantel, at California Youth Connection, at 916.651.6568. You can also reach Chantel at 916.651.8897.

****After submitting your application, please follow up with Chantel by email or phone to make sure your application was received.****

FOR STAFF USE ONLY

STAFF FOLLOW-UP:

___ Let Applicant know application was received.

___ Contact applicant and notify them of their application outcome.

Approved: _____ Denied: _____ (check one)

Date of contact outcome: _____

Interested in future contact about focus groups and feedback opportunities?

___ Yes ___ No



What Makes a Good Adult Ally?

**Based on ideas from Independent Living Program Breakthrough Series Collaborative youth members
Adapted from the CA ILP BSC document designed for County Teams**

What is an ally?

Simply put, an ally is someone who believes in youth empowerment, supports the work that the youth are doing and will take the steps needed to help the youth to be successful. In a youth program an ally is a staff member or volunteer who is committed to helping the youth truly engage and become empowered in a project or organization

Why is it important to have an ally in youth programs?

- Engagement is key to empowering youth—adults must take the extra steps needed to engage youth and keep them engaged
- Youth and adults look at things through different “lenses”. Allies help bridge the gap, bringing together creative ideas from both sides making transformation richer and more sustainable
- Allies can act as a liaison for youth and the rest of the team, making sure that youth “voice” is heard and that youth are continuously engaged in a program or organization

What characteristics make a good ally?

Someone who...

- Holds on to youth rather than youth having to hang on to her/him
- Has the youth perspective, seeks it, and honors it
- Is realistic and knows what is doable
- Youth can ask questions to when s/he doesn't understand
- Is able to listen and make a youth feel heard
- Gives real, honest feedback
- Gives realistic feedback and helps youth think through pros/cons
- Youth can call anytime and s/he always call youth back
- Will always follow up with youth
- Makes youth feel connected
- Makes an effort to seek youth's input about what s/he thinks and gives youth room to make suggestions
- Has qualities youth can relate to when they interact
- Is flexible in her/his communications: Facebook, e-mail, phone, text
- When youth makes mistakes, takes time to look at strategies that will help next time and does not discourage youth if things are not done, instead s/he helps youth figure out how to overcome the potential barriers
- Is supportive
- Has authority to get things done, makes things happen, and will follow through—or knows who to contact
- Is able to work through things with youth
- Is focused and committed
- Is passionate about empowering youth
- Helps break things down into small steps



How do allies help engage youth?

- Allies help youth stay in the loop
- Allies make sure youth know when meetings and activities are scheduled
- Allies give youth reminders a few days before and the day of meetings/activities in whatever way works for the youth (text, email, etc.)
- Allies take the youth's schedule into consideration when scheduling meetings or calls that youth can and/or should be involved in
- Allies make sure youth understand acronyms and jargon used in meetings
- Allies keep youth up-to-date on events happening in the county and community
- Allies keep youth informed about everything going on within the program or organization that they want youth input on, even if the youth misses meetings
- Allies will take the time if youth miss a meeting to recap, explain, set goals and expectations, give assignments and follow up with the youth to see how they are doing
- Allies, when youth need to miss a meeting, will ask the youth if it is okay to share her/his thoughts and ideas with the group and report back to youth that ideas were shared and everyone's responses
- Allies act as a liaison for youth and their ideas in other meetings, relaying youth's thoughts and ideas to others beyond the program or organization
- Allies can help both youth and adults recognize that it takes stepping outside of their comfort zone to "meet the other half way"

What can youth do to reach out to an ally or potential ally?

Youth can...

- Identify someone that would make a good ally and ask her/him officially to be an ally
- Go to lunch or have a meeting to establish expectations of both the ally and youth – by making the more formal invitation, youth are communicating that they have expectations of an ally—that they may end up calling the ally more than other members of the team
- Begin to build a relationship, share information and thoughts about the program/organization and get to know each other