



WELCOME TO THE

Youth Engagement Project Newsletter- ***Ongoing Growth and Opportunity***

The Youth Engagement Project (YEP) is pleased to share the fifth edition of our quarterly newsletter, highlighting the meaningful work being done by both YEP counties and Youth Ambassadors, as well as updates on the program as a whole.

YEP, a flagship program for the Child and Family Policy Institute of California (CFPIC), with funding from the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), encourages youth engagement by lifting up youth voices to improve child welfare systems in local jurisdictions and at the state level.

For the first quarter of the fiscal year, the YEP program has been extremely busy as we shift to gain depth in the work that we do, as well as being asked to be present in additional spaces. Recently, several new Ambassadors have been added, as well as additional counties, bringing us to a total of 20 counties and 39 youth! Existing Youth Ambassadors continue to grow in their role while newer youth are getting acclimated to expectations and opportunities.

Youth Ambassador Updates

Youth ambassadors continue to be very busy with numerous requests for youth voice opportunities, with some examples listed below:

California Foster Youth Education Summit

The California Foster Youth Education Task Force will be partnering with the YEP to design and facilitate the youth portion of the Foster Youth Education Summit April 6-8, 2025. The theme for this year is “Imagine * Inspire * Innovate: Make Every Connection Matter” and will include the support of 8 Youth Ambassadors to help support 30 youth attendees who will present in a variety of ways, sharing youth perspectives.

Peer Partner Hubs

Over the past several months, numerous Youth Ambassadors including Lauren, Selena and Aliyana, have participated in the ongoing meetings where they shared their work as youth ambassadors with those in attendance. The larger group learned more about understanding and supporting individuals with autism.

Prevention Convening

The Statewide Collaborative Prevention Convening, is an annual event in which diverse partners throughout California gather to share and learn from one another to promote community, family, and child well-being. YEP Lead Ambassadors Aliyana Montevirgen and Nancy Perez are participating in bi-weekly planning meetings, and Aliyana has also been selected as the co-lead for the Tribal & Community Engagement Subcommittee, an exciting nod to her great work.

Catalyst Training

Several members of YEP are scheduled to present at the Catalyst Training on December 5. Margo, Ayaan, Angelique Becerra and Lauren Mendez will discuss the importance of authentic youth engagement and offer tips and best practices.

Child Welfare Policy Roundtable

Sophia Jeffe recently spoke at the September Policy Roundtable meeting about her educational experience while in foster care and her journey to become a college graduate. Her presentation can be viewed [here](#):

County Welfare Directors Association Presentation (CWDA)

A cadre of youth and staff from San Luis Obispo recently presented at the CWDA conference around their YEP program. Nancy, Miranda, Leo, Leann, and Julie highlighted their work and received great feedback. In addition, YEP Program Director, Margo Fudge presented with a team from CFPIC regarding the importance of engagement with lived experts.

Ambassador Updates

California Foster Youth Education Summit

Prevention Convening

Peer Partner Hubs

Catalyst Training

County Welfare Directors Association Presentation

Child Welfare Policy Roundtable



For more information or to apply to be a Youth Ambassador, [click here](#).

Youth Engagement Project Updates

Meet our New Ambassadors

We would like to welcome our newest Ambassadors to the program. We are excited to have their knowledge and lived expertise to provide additional support to their counties. Their biographies and photos can be found here: [YEP Youth Ambassadors - Child and Family Policy Institute of California](#):

- Angel- Nevada
- Skyy- Nevada
- Ruben- Sonoma/Marin
- Nathan- County To Be Determined
- Rocco- Riverside
- Jeremiah- County To Be Determined



YEP Skills Coach Institute

We previously shared about a new support for our Youth Ambassadors called the YEP Skills Coaching Institute. The Coaching Institute is a dedicated experience for Youth Ambassadors to be connected to and receive coaching by other Lived Experts of Foster Care who have firsthand experience in navigating life after care, creating thriving lives professionally and personally. Coaches can expect to impact the next generation by focusing on three key areas: Relationship Building and Networking, Professional Development and Life Skills/Self Sufficiency. Expected benefits of being a coach include:

- **Participating in a community approach to Lived Experience Empowerment (in and beyond foster care)**
- **Collective impact & movement toward self-sufficiency and thriving**
- **Supporting a current or former foster youth in developing or strengthening a skill**
- **Sharing knowledge = power**

The Coaching Institute launched this month with 5 youth connected to Skills Coaches! For those interested in becoming a YEP Skills Coach, please click [here](#) for additional information and application process!

County Partner Updates

Each YEP county has been matched with 2-3 Youth Ambassadors who are able to support county-level projects for approximately 8-10 hours per month, as counties discuss various ways to infuse youth voice and lived experience into their practices and policies. This portion of the newsletter highlights the innovative work done by two counties, Marin and Yolo to create system change by lifting up youth voices.

Marin County

Marin is a new county to YEP, but has wasted no time developing a work plan. The county is partnering with their local education system and has prioritized adding youth voices to their Executive Advisory Committee. The first meeting will be held in November, with the Youth Ambassadors slated to attend. They are also working on several meet and greets with social work staff and resource families to get to know each other to facilitate communication and learning opportunities.

Yolo County

Yolo is also another new county, but has already been utilizing their Ambassador to conduct research and reviews of existing Independent Living curriculum to share with other students, as well as various topics that are impactful to youth, such as allowances and dating. Her trainings have been well received thus far!

The Kudos Corner

A few of our Youth Ambassadors have reached impressive milestones this quarter that we wish to recognize!

- **Alex- Hired by the County of Sonoma as a Children's Residential Care Counselor.**
- **Brisa- Hired by County of Sacramento as a Social Worker.**
- **Tiffany- Graduated from cosmetology school.**
- **Michael- Completed Foster Youth Boot Camp.**

Additional noteworthy kudos includes a quote below from Cynthia and her leadership team from San Joaquin who had the following to say about Youth Ambassador Tiffany:

"We are truly sad to see Tiffany go and will miss her energy. She grew leaps and bounds as an ambassador, a leader, a mentor, and a professional and I have thoroughly enjoyed seeing her blossom".

For more information or questions about the Youth Engagement Project, click [here](#) or send us an [email](#).