



YEP Updates

For the 3rd quarter of the year, the YEP continues to increase our involvement at both the local and state level with numerous requests for youth voice and participation. Several ambassadors have been added to the program over this past quarter as well, including Amy (Mendocino), Jonathan (TBD) and Diana (LA) to the team!

Additionally, counties and youth ambassadors participated in a semi-annual evaluation process, which highlighted the great work that is being done statewide, as well as overall high satisfaction with the program and advocacy done by the youth. Overall, 92% of youth and counties felt the technical assistance provided was meeting or exceeding their needs. Respondents commented that the following were strengths of the program:

- Youth representation at meetings
- Youth insight for decision making
- Improve/increase professional development of youth
- Positive support from YEP team
- Passionate and responsive youth who are motivated to improve the system



The Youth Engagement Project (YEP) is pleased to share the sixth 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), and 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. [Read more here.](#)

Youth Ambassador Updates

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

Statewide Prevention Convening

In February, two lead ambassadors, Aliyana and Nancy, participated in the Statewide Prevention Convening in various ways. Aliyana served as the chair of the Tribal and Lived Expert Subcommittee and partnered with Margo Fudge, YEP Program Director and the Preventing and Addressing Child Trafficking team to share the role that youth/lived experts play in the work around prevention. In addition, both Nancy and Aliyana participated in the Welcome and Lived Expert Panel, representing the youth and parent perspective.

2025 CDSS Chafee Stakeholder Meeting Keynote Address

In January, Alexander and Joseph provided the keynote address regarding their experiences utilizing the Chafee Grant and ways their social workers supported them. They included the impact from graduating from high school to their pursuit of higher education. Their words were powerful and impactful, with both receiving kudos and thanks following the event.



UC Davis Complex Care Webinar

In addition, the YEP team was invited to participate in a webinar regarding complex care, hosted by UC-Davis and CDSS on February 19, 2025. Six Ambassadors, including Lauren, Alexander, Sophia, Michael, Chantel and Amy participated and courageously shared their stories of their complex care journey, as well as possible solutions for change. [You can watch the recorded session here.](#)

Peer Partner Webinar

Youth Ambassador Selena was able to participate in the Peer Partner Webinar: Peer Partners an Introduction to the Youth and Parent Partner Role where she was able to speak. [The recording can be viewed here.](#)

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



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 several counties.

San Luis Obispo

Friendsgiving 2024

- Youth Ambassadors assisted with assembling 50 bags containing supplies and delivered to those experiencing homelessness on Thanksgiving Day.
- Items were donated by the community, ambassadors, staff and the YEP program

See Something Say Something Campaign

- Ambassadors went into the community to share Human Trafficking Awareness materials that are placed in businesses, more specifically in bathrooms to be visible for victims.
- This project is a collaborative effort with Freedom Calling, a local nonprofit organization.

Glenn County Office of Education

- Utilizing their Youth Ambassadors to work closely with youth who were at risk of not graduating from high school. Some of the youth had zero credits in their sophomore year and were not on track to finish school.
 - The Youth Ambassadors visited schools and encouraged the students to attend tutoring sessions, assisted with goal setting, obtaining school supplies and offering food for those who needed additional support. As a result of their efforts, 6 youth graduated early, reaching an important milestone!



To become a YEP County, please complete the brief application [here](#).

The Kudos Corner

We are pleased to recognize Youth Ambassador **Ruben** who is supporting both Marin and Sonoma counties. Ruben is a recent recipient of the Family Fellowship Scholarship, which empowers foster youth to build a brighter future. As a result of this award, Foster Love recorded a video of Ruben's appreciation, which can be viewed [here](#).

Lead Ambassador **Sophia** will be transitioning from her current role with YEP to a full-time position within CFPIC as a Project Associate! This opportunity will leverage Sophia's lived expertise in the prevention space. Welcome aboard Sophia!!

Lead Ambassador **Aliyana** was recently accepted into the Congressional Leadership Academy, where she will represent California at the national level to advocate for child welfare improvements.

In addition, Nevada County's Youth Ambassadors, **Angel and Skyy** hosted a youth panel for new foster parents and CASA. They raised a significant amount of money, including \$1,000 from one donor. This money will be used to send youth to the Foster Youth Education Summit in April.

Lead Ambassador **Angel** was able to participate in a fundraiser for a local organization, TLC, which raised an impressive amount of money for their program, exceeding \$160,000!



Upcoming News...



Our YEP team will be supporting the work of the Foster Youth Services Coordinating Program to maximize the success of the Foster Youth Education Summit by lifting up the voices of scholars with lived expertise. Eight Youth Ambassadors will be assisting with the Student Program planning and will coach and support 13 youth from across the state who will be part of the Summit's plenary session on the second day. They will also be supporting the work that will be done to share the voice of lived experts, specifically around education.

On April 24, 2025, the California Department of Social Services will be hosting an Independent Living Program (ILP) Convening which will be attended by many counties. YEP, in partnership with Yolo, Sacramento and San Joaquin will share innovative practices to improve ILP outcomes across the counties.

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