

Youth Engagement Project Newsletter

Growing Strong-Together



INTRODUCTION

The Youth Engagement Project (YEP) is pleased to share the seventh 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.

For this new quarter of the 25-26 fiscal year, the YEP continues to increase our involvement at both the local and state level with several requests for youth voice and participation. Numerous ambassadors have been added to the program over this past quarter as well. We would like to welcome: Joshua (Marin), Angel (LA), Mya (LA) and Mya (San Diego) to the team!

Additionally, three new counties are in the process of being onboarded, including Kern, Placer and Yuba. We are thrilled to have them join the team and look forward to working closely with them.

YOUTH AMBASSADOR UPDATES

This first quarter has been extremely busy for the youth ambassadors who are off and running with their respective projects. Below is a sample of all the places you can find YEP:

Statewide Prevention Convening - Aliyana and Michael are participating in the Statewide Prevention Convening in various ways, ensuring that the planning of the event includes youth voice and perspectives.

West Coast Trainers Conference - In partnership with UC - Davis, **Margo Fudge, Ayaan Jones, Lauren and Amy** presented on the importance of informing trainings with lived experts. Feedback from the training was very positive, with the majority of the attendees feeling that the content was relevant and informative.

On September 20, 2025, **Alex** was included in fundraising efforts and video production for the **Marin Court Appointed Special Advocates**. Marin CASA fundraiser raised \$1.3 million dollars at the event.



Diverse Perspectives Training - Lauren was able to provide training to Stanislaus County staff regarding the importance of lifting up diverse perspectives, such as lived experts, when working with youth.

To become a YEP County, please complete the brief application [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 look at 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.

The **County of Stanislaus** is providing support for LGBTQ+ youth through a multi-disciplinary team which meets monthly to discuss youth specific needs. Youth Ambassadors helped to create a survey that will be shared with youth and adult allies to better understand the needs of youth in care who identify as LGBTQ+.

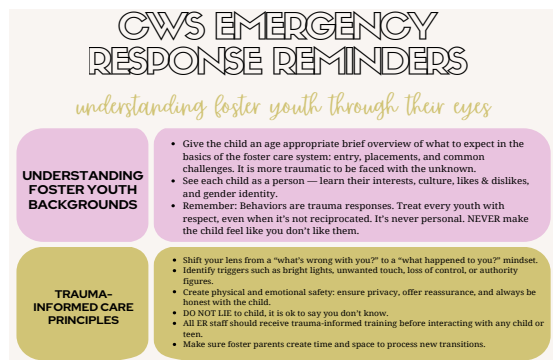
The **County of Nevada** has developed a robust action plan of ways to involve their youth ambassadors over the course of the fiscal year, with one of their first tasks to provide a training to social workers that highlights the impacts of removals on children. The training provides useful tips that social workers should remember when taking youth into protective custody.

THE KUDOS CORNER

Leo was recently hired to the communications team at the San Luis Obispo Food Bank after his graduation from California State University - San Marcos. We are so proud of him!

Jonny has been selected to be part of a panel presentation at Beyond the Bench, which will be held in Los Angeles in November.

Several months ago, Youth Ambassadors provided their lived expertise to inform a project regarding health equity for youth in the child welfare system. The product of that work, a report from Children Now, details recommendations for improving the health care system and care coordination for children and youth in foster care. The report can be accessed [here](#):



UPCOMING NEWS

The YEP team participated in the [The Impact of Kinship Care: Voices of Former Foster Youth](#) webinar with a focus on kin first placements. The webinar included youth voices **Amy, Selena, Sophia, Lauren and Mike**.

Our YEP team will again 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.

Ten Youth Ambassadors will be assisting with the Student Program planning and will coach and support 10 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. The Summit will be held April 19-21 in Sacramento.

The YEP team, in conjunction with the Preventing and Addressing Child Trafficking team has applied for a grant opportunity through the California Department of Public Health that relates to providing LGBTQ+ youth in foster care greater support. The grant is for an 18 month period of time, and would allow CFPIC an opportunity to build capacity at the local level.

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