



Youth Leadership Forum (YLF)

What is YLF?

- 5-day training on leadership and advocacy
- Information to help youth transition to employment, post-secondary education, and independent living
- Helps youth feel proud of having a disability, and recognize their strengths
- Develops self and community advocacy skills
- Held at Sacramento State University July 21-25, 2014

How is YLF organized and funded?

- YLF 2014 will be planned through an interagency structure:
 - Lead agency: CA Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities
 - Partner agencies: DOR, EDD, SCDD, SILC, CFILC, CDE, CHIIP, CWIB, Friends, Inc.
 - Heavy involvement from YLF alumni
- Governance Committee and planning workgroups
- Funded by DOR case service dollars, state agency sponsorship and in-kind support, and private donations

Who attends YLF?

- Student “delegates”: high school juniors and seniors living throughout California, different types of disabilities:
 - Deaf and hard of hearing
 - Blind and low vision
 - Learning disabilities
 - Intellectual disabilities/Autism
 - Physical disabilities
 - Mental health disabilities
 - Chronic health disabilities
- Can self-certify they have a disability

Who Staffs YLF?

- Staff:
 - Co-counselors, peer counselors, and group assistants
 - 90% are graduates (“alumni”) of the program
 - Strive for diversity (regional, ethnic, and disability)



What happens at YLF?

- Small group discussions
- Alumni sharing panels on dating and relationships, bullying, employment, and living independently
- Presentation on disability history and culture
- “Living on My Own and Reaching my Career Goals” panel
 - Panelists are professionals with disabilities



What happens at YLF?, cont.

- Assistive Technology and Resource Fair
- Develop policy recommendations and visit legislators
- Create a personal leadership and advocacy plan
- Performers with disabilities (dancers, poets, musicians)
- Talent Show
- Dance!



2013 YLF Policy

Recommendations: Education

- Improve the availability of accommodations provided in schools
- Improve the process for Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)
- Students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to be prepared for and take the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE)
- Analyze the causes and effects of bullying students with disabilities; Increase the availability of school assemblies, workshops, and campaigns on bullying

Policy Recommendations: Employment

- Address barriers within the job application process
- Youth with disabilities receive career training for jobs in high-growth industries
- Reduce budget cuts to the Department of Rehabilitation

Evaluation

- **July 2013 Youth Employment Rate**

- Age 16-19 (disability): 19.4%

- Age 16-19 (no disability): 33.3 %

13.9% difference

- Age 20-24 (disability): 33.0 %

- Age 20-24 (no disability): 65.5%

32.5% difference

- **YLF Alumni Employment Rates**
(graduates from 1992-2012)

- Employed Full-time: 13.5%

- Employed Part-time: 12.4%

- **Not employed, currently seeking employment: 22.5%**

- Not employed and not seeking employment: 18.0%

How does YLF benefit youth?

- Information and resources to improve their post-school outcomes
- Build long-lasting relationships and mentorships with individuals with disabilities
- Establish a positive disability identity
- Build advocacy skills
 - Often become involved in advocacy on a local, state, and national level

- Network of over 1,200 alumni throughout the state
 - Master contact list
 - Facebook group
- Alumni Activities Workgroup
 - Ensure alumni involvement in YLF planning process (leadership development & mentoring opportunity)
 - Support recent graduates in becoming involved in local community
 - Share information with alumni about mentoring and employment opportunities



YLF Alumni

YLF Student Delegate Applications

Delegate Applications:

- Contact/personal info
- Activities
- 1-2 page essay
- Looking for leadership potential
- Due February 15th (may be extended)
- Please distribute flyers!
- Invite an alumni to come to your classroom:
 - Contact rachel.stewart@dor.ca.gov

For more information

Website: www.dor.ca.gov/ylf

Email: ylf@dor.ca.gov

Phone: 855-894-3436

Post-YLF Activities

- Sharing the message of YLF:
 - Presentations to recruit delegates
 - Presentations on disability history
- Involvement in Youth Organizing (YO!) Disabled and Proud (www.yodisabledproud.org)
 - Campaigns on:
 - Bullying
 - Reasonable Accommodations
 - Disability History

Questions?



Contact Us

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