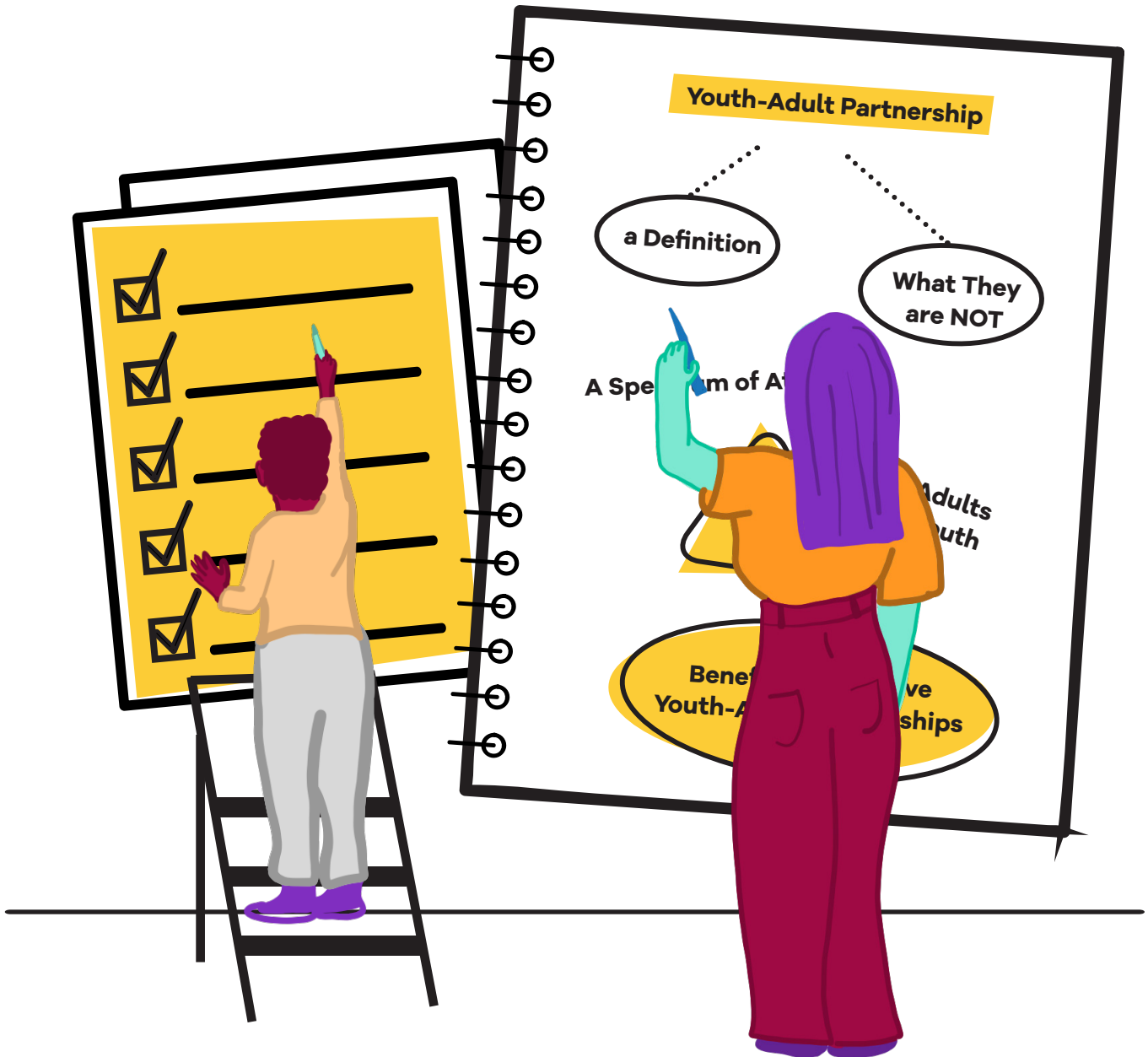


Engaging Young Parents:

A Toolkit for Youth-Serving Organizations and Agencies



Introduction

For decades, government agencies, nonprofits, and private foundations have invested funding and engaged in programming to reduce teenage pregnancy in the United States. However, society's framing of teen pregnancy as a "*problem that must be solved*" has led to widespread stigma of young people who do become pregnant and parent children. As a result, young parents face serious challenges to education, stability, and achieving their life goals--**problems caused not by parenting itself but by the failure of policies, systems and attitudes in our country to support young families.**

Further, when it comes to solutions, young parents are often excluded from the decision-making table, both by structural and cultural forces, ranging from lack of childcare to the pervasive stigmas associated with young parenthood. We believe that young parents are the foremost experts of their own lives and, as we work towards a world in which young parents and their children can thrive, their leadership is crucial.

Engaging Young Parents: A Toolkit for Youth-Serving Organizations and Agencies is designed to help youth-serving institutions authentically engage young parents as partners and leaders in their organization's efforts to serve young families. The toolkit provides best practices, tips and resources to create a Young Parent Leadership Council (YPLC) comprised of eight to ten young parent-leaders who can offer insights into the barriers and opportunities young parents face, partner with adult staff to advocate for improvements to programs, policies and systems to better meet the needs of young parents, their families and communities, and help build pathways of economic opportunity for YPLC members and other young parents in your community.

Of course, meaningful inclusion is a process, and requires more than simply recruiting a young parent to attend meetings or give feedback on materials. It requires a youth-adult partnership philosophy that authentically centers young parents in helping to identify the problems and barriers they face and together advocating for the equitable and just opportunities and resources due them.

This Tool kit is designed to help organizations authentically and meaningfully partner with young parents. It can be used alone or in concert with *The Young Parents' Advocacy Toolkit* also published by Advocates for Youth and designed for young parents who wish to organize in their communities to create change for their families. *The Young Parents' Advocacy Toolkit* contains tips and tools gathered from young parent-activists across the U.S. and walks young parents through the steps of organizing a campaign to demand change in the policies, practices and institutions that impede their ability to achieve the goals they set out for themselves and their children.

We hope these toolkits assist you, the adult ally, to work together with young families to shift the paradigm and shatter the stigma associated with young parenthood. We believe young parents should be treated with dignity and respect and afforded the economic, educational and social power to exercise their bodily autonomy and make informed decisions for themselves and their families. We trust these resources will assist you in moving your community and the young parents you serve ever closer to this vision.

Deb Hauser, President, Advocates for Youth

Tips for Creating Effective Young Parent Leadership Councils through a Youth-Adult Partnership Model

Using a Youth-Adult Partnership model to engage young parents in your organization offers potential benefits to your agency as well as to the young parents in your community. Young parents gain experience, skills and confidence while your organization gains a fresh perspective on the experiences, hopes and dreams of young parents—what is working and what impedes their progress and wellbeing. Organizations can then work in partnership with young parents to develop more effective outreach and to improve their services for young parents in the community. You can also work in partnership to advocate for policies, practices and services that afford young parents and their families the right to quality education, economic opportunity, and racial and reproductive justice.

The essence of youth involvement is a partnership between adults and young people - one in which each party has the opportunity to make suggestions and decisions and in which the contribution of each is recognized and valued.

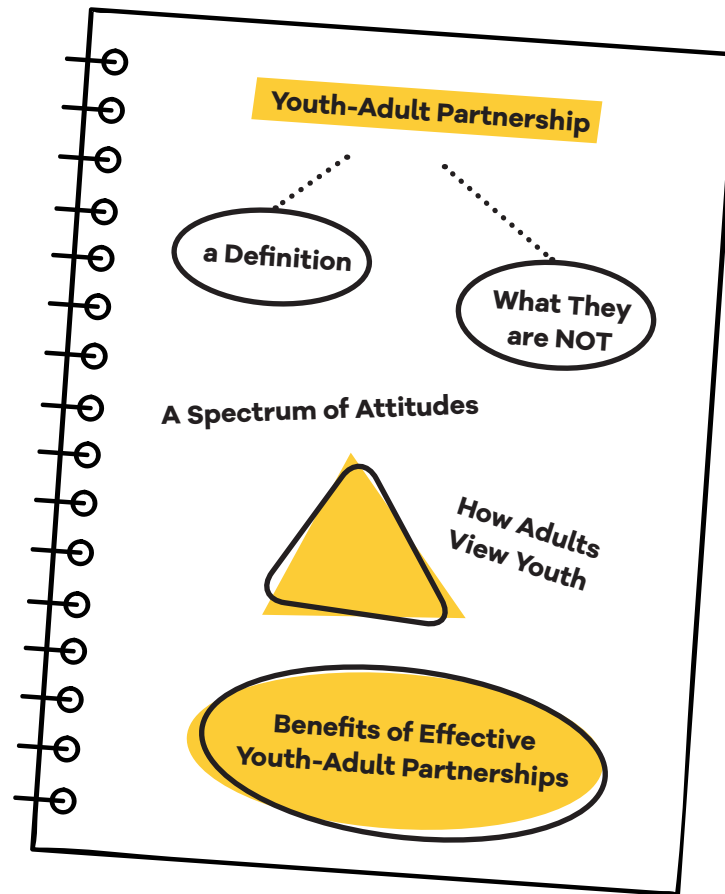
One strategy for engaging young parents in your organization is to create a Young Parent Leadership Council by recruiting eight to ten young parents to work in partnership with your staff. These young parents can form an advisory council to help your organization better understand the barriers and supports young parents in your community experience. They can advise on program design, service delivery and even assist with monitoring and evaluation. In addition, the organization can provide these young parents with training, support and affirmation to help them become peer educators, advocates and leaders and further strengthen your organization as well as the young people's employability.

Following are tips for engaging young parents in the work of your organization. The focus here is to help you create an effective Young Parent Leadership Council using the principles of youth-adult partnerships.

- 1** Recognize that involving young parents is a two-way street. Youth and adults must work to make the relationship effective and meaningful
- 2** Identify at least a half-time staff person to manage the agency's work with the YPLC. Ideally, this person would reflect the young parents in your community in race/ethnicity and have been a young parent themselves. This staff person should be responsible for, and have sufficient time to contact young parents on an individual basis at least monthly, coordinate logistics of monthly in-person or online meetings with the whole YPLC; represent the interests and opinions of the young parents in day to day work at the agency; and advocate within the agency for increased involvement of the YPLC. (See sample job description on page X)
- 3** Assess agency policies with regard to engaging young people, specifically young parents. Does the agency have a youth-adult interaction policy? Will you need YPLC members to sign waivers of liability to join the YPLC? Do you have insurance to cover childcare should you choose to offer it? Will you pay young people for their work? If so, how much and how often?
- 4** Provide agency staff with the training they need to work effectively with young parents. At minimum, this should include a Youth-Adult Partnership Training, a training on values clarification and another on unconscious bias. Provide the YPLC program manager staff development opportunities to learn more about peer education, advocacy and organizing.
- 5** Involve a critical mass of young parents in the agency's work. One young person cannot represent all young families. Create a leadership council of at least eight to ten young parents. Include young fathers as well as young moms.
- 6** Define categories of young parent expertise you wish to include on the council. For example, include young parents with expertise in social media and digital organizing, someone with experience designing or implementing advocacy campaigns, someone with good public speaking skills, perhaps someone who is artistic, and some folks who know youth culture.

- 7** Make certain that the young parents you invite to join the YPLC represent the target population the agency is trying to reach in your community. Request that other local or state agencies, school counselors, and faith-based groups nominate young parents for inclusion on the YPLC. Reach out to local pediatricians, staff at the local WIC and Mommy and Me groups. Young parents who are connected to other agencies and networks will be better supported between meetings and can leverage their networks for outreach and building support for the YPLC's goals and objectives. (See pages XX for sample nominations and recruitment flyers)
- 8** Ask young parents to fill out applications and interview candidates before inviting them to become a YPLC member. (See page X for a sample application)
- 9** Choose young parents who are leaders, have the expertise needed and are well supported in the community. (See page X for sample interview questions)
- 10** Provide young parents meaningful stipends or wages to recognize, professionalize and incentivize their efforts.
- 11** Recognize young parents may need funds prior to conducting activities and make arrangements with your finance department to make funds available before YPLC members incur expenses.
- 12** Provide young parents with the training they need to have confidence in their peer education and advocacy efforts, as well as to work collaboratively with adults in the agency, within a community coalition, and with other young people. One resource to assist you with this training is the Young Parents' Advocacy Toolkit developed by Advocates for Youth in consultation with young parents around the country.
- 13** Work collaboratively with YPLC members to select, plan and implement an advocacy campaign to improve a policy, practice or service in the agency or community. Targets might include decision makers at a local high school or college, social service agency, community employer. Consider campaigns targeting city councils or state legislatures to improve policies affecting young families. (See workplan templates, pages XX)
- 14** Clearly define and express agency expectations for young parents' involvement. Share these expectations with the youth and with adult staff.
- 15** Be cognizant that timing is an issue. Hold YPLC meetings when young parents are available. Make meetings both in person and virtual. Some groups hold meetings monthly, others bi-weekly. Ask YPLC members what will work for them.
- 16** Connect regularly—and at least monthly—with YPLC members individually by phone or web-call to ask how they are doing and to provide individual assistance, resources and suggestions to advance their advocacy efforts.
- 17** Provide childcare or childcare stipends to help YPLC members be fully present at in-person or virtual meetings and during events.
- 18** Provide transportation stipends to help YPLC members attend in person meetings and/or other community activities.
- 19** Provide young parents with other professional development opportunities such as going to conferences, attending networking events, speaking with the media, joining a community coalition and participating in training sessions on issues of interest to them.
- 20** Provide young parents with feedback and clearly demonstrate the impact of their efforts.
- 21** Celebrate small and large wins.
- 22** Be flexible.

The Youth-Adult Partnership Model of Youth Engagement



Youth-serving organizations that actively involve youth in their work are often more relevant and sustainable than organizations that develop programs designed, implemented, and evaluated only by adults. Indeed, organizations that build young people's skills as activists and spokespeople have the added impact of helping them to develop skills that will serve them long into adulthood, while also creating a pipeline of emerging young leaders for the organization and the field.

Further, organizations that effectively employ youth-adult partnerships often find their programs become more relevant to their young constituents.

The Youth-Adult Partnership (YAP) Model recognizes that both young people and adults have value to add to an organization, program or advocacy effort. Further YAPs value these contributions equally. YAPs recognize young people as the experts in their own lives. They recognize and affirm young people's right to be at the center of designing, implementing and assessing policies, programs and systems that affect their health and well-being. They are due respect and a seat at the table. Concurrently, adults have value to add as well. Adults may know the research, or have years of experience working in the field; they may have access to resources like funding or networks that include policy makers. In a youth-adult partnership model young people and adults work side-by-side to create, implement and assess programs, policies and services that impact youth.

Youth-Adult Partnership--a Definition

- Integrates young people's realistic perspectives with professional adults' experiences.
- Offers each party the opportunity to suggest and make decisions.
- Recognizes and values the contribution of each.
- Allows youth and adults to work in full partnership envisioning, developing, implementing, and evaluating programs.

Youth-Adult Partnership: What They are NOT

- A strategy to hide the fact that programs are designed, developed and run by adults
- Tokenism is not partnership
- Having youth around with no clear role
- Assigning youth tasks that the adults do not want to do
- Having youth make appearances without training
- Having one youth on a board or council

A Spectrum of Attitudes: How Adults View Youth

- **YOUTH AS OBJECTS**
 - Adults know what is best for young people and control situations in which they allow them to be involved
- **YOUTH AS RECIPIENTS**
 - Adults allow young people to take part in decision-making because they think the experience will be "good for them."
- **YOUTH AS PARTNERS**
 - Adults respect young people as having something significant to offer and recognize the greater impact youth bring to a project. Youth are encouraged to become meaningfully involved in all aspects of the program.

Benefits of Effective Youth-Adult Partnerships

Adults benefit by:

- Experiencing the competence of youth first hand;
- Deepening their own commitment and energy from working with youth;
- Developing a better understand of the needs and concerns of young people;
- Receiving fresh ideas and different perspectives.

Youth engaged in youth-adult partnerships benefit by:

- Building their leadership skills;
- Building their employment skills;
- Deepening their relationships with caring adults in a professional setting;
- Acquiring valuable knowledge, skills and experiences;
- Engaging in meaningful and purposeful activities.

Organizations benefit from youth-adult partnerships because:

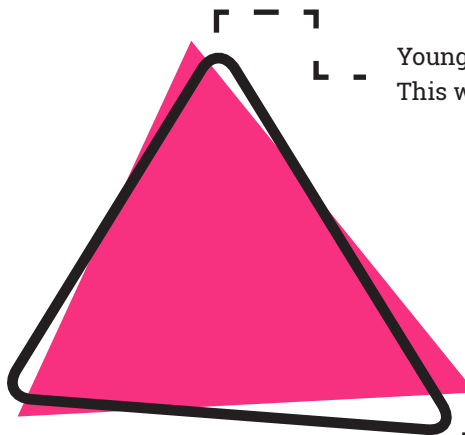
- Young people help clarify the organization's mission;
- Adults and organizations become more connected and responsive to youth in the community;
- They begin to place a greater value on inclusiveness; and
- They are able to demonstrate commitment to youth development and youth inclusion.

SPECTRUM OF ATTITUDES

Young people as **objects**:
I know what is best for you!

- 7

L -



Young people as **recipients**:
This will be a great experience for you!

Young people as **partners**:
Your opinion is not only valued but needed!

Tips for Adults in Working with Young Parent Leaders

1. Be open to and nonjudgmental about young parents' insights and suggestions.

Let them know that their involvement is important.

2. Take advantage of the expertise that young parents offer.

Young people know about, and should be encouraged to share the needs of their community.

Affirm this input.

3. Make sure youth will participate in meaningful ways.

Young parents should be involved in making decisions from the beginning of the project. Actively ask young peoples' opinions.

4. Be honest about expectations for the project,

what you want young parents to contribute, and how you hope to benefit from their participation.

Don't expect more from a young person than you would from an adult. Keep expectations realistic; hold young parents to your expectations. Do not patronize youth by lowering your expectations.

5. Integrate young parents into group and coalition efforts.

Schedule meetings when they can attend, and in a location accessible to them. Like everyone else, keep young people informed about plans and meeting times.

6. Treat young parents as individuals.

Don't assume one young parent represents the views of many youth. Assure the young person that you are interested in her/his individual opinion and don't expect him/her to speak for an entire population.

7. Be prepared ahead of time to offer support.

Think about kinds of support (financial, logistical, training, emotional, childcare, etc.) it will take to involve young parents in the project, and who will be responsible for providing this support.

8. Make the work interactive, fun, and valuable.

Like adults, youth are more likely to get involved and remain active in projects that are interesting and fulfilling.

9. Many young parents feel intimidated by adults.

Some young parents have experienced stigma and judgment from adult. Many are not used to participating in discussions with adults and being heard. Some may feel they have nothing to contribute. It will require time and commitment to get the input of these youth. Be aware of this factor and work to overcome it.

10. Don't make assumptions about what individual young parents are like.

11. Don't move too fast.

Remember that it takes time to develop trust and rapport with youth because some young parents are unsure about adults' intentions. Take the time and make the effort to develop a good relationship with these young people before expecting much. Remember, too, that this work is often new to young parents; take the time to explain why actions are being taken. Young parents may interpret adults' being abrupt and hurried as a sign of disinterest in youth's participation so go slow and explain what's going on.

12. Remember that there are times when young parents need to say, "No."

They have many competing interests and responsibilities in their lives. Their education is important. Their children are important. Their relationships and communities are important. Having fun is important. They need time and energy for these interests and responsibilities.

Tips for Youth in Working with Adult Professionals

1. Most adults have good intentions.

Remember that they are simply not used to working in partnership with young people.

2. Criticism doesn't necessarily mean condescension or that an adult doesn't value your contribution.

It may mean the adult is treating you the same way he/she would an adult colleague. Remember that adults are used to critiquing each other's work and offering constructive ideas to improve a project. Just because an adult doesn't agree with someone, it doesn't mean that he/she disrespects that person.

3. Adults may not be aware of the capabilities of young people.

They can be told a hundred times that young people are mature, but showing them is the best way to make the case.

4. Adults often feel responsible for the success or failure of the project.

This is what makes it hard for them to share power. They may need reassurance that you are willing to share in both the successes and the failures.

5. Adults are just as uncertain as youth.

They have just learned to disguise it better.

6. Sometimes adults use phrases and expressions, whether consciously or not, that annoy young people and are red flags that they aren't treating youth as partners.

Like an annoying drip of water, these phrases and expressions can erode a relationship. Be prepared to call adults on their language (e.g. using words like "kids" to describe youth or "teen mom" instead of "young parent" or "young families").

7. Don't be afraid to ask for clarification.

Adults often use words, phrases, and acronyms that you might not understand. Adults new to the program may not understand them either. The language of the social justice world is riddled with terms that may bewilder any newcomer.

8. Don't be afraid to say, "No."

Adults will understand that you have other important commitments, like your education, family, friends, hobbies, and sports.

9. Adult professionals often have studied the science of behavior change,

thus their perspectives may reflect "what is really working in the field." At times, this "theoretical" framework may seem boring, but if you ask them to present it in a palatable way, it often makes a whole lot of sense in designing effective programs.



Sample Job Description/ Announcement for YPLC Program Manager

[ORGANIZATION]

POSITION DESCRIPTION

TITLE: Program Manager, Young Parents Leadership Council

SCALE LEVEL: Program Manager

PROGRAM: Policy [Outreach; Field Organizing] Department

SUPERVISOR: [Manager]

ORGANIZATIONAL DESCRIPTION: XX

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION: The Young Parents Leadership Council is a program of [Organization] composed of 10 dynamic young parent leaders working in support of education, economic, racial and reproductive justice for all young parents and their families. Working closely with the Program Manager, YPLC members develop and implement strategies to advocate for improvements to policies, programs and services affecting the health and wellbeing of young parents and their children. Council goals include: 1) Raising awareness and shifting cultural attitudes among the public and decisions makers in support of attitudes, policies, program and systems that recognize the rights of young families to quality and affordable education, a fair wage, and a more just and equitable world for themselves and their children.

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION: The YPLC Program Manager will work to build the capacity of young parent activists to advocate for improved attitudes, policies, practices and systems that inhibit young parents and their families from reaching their life goals. The coordinator will recruit the council, support council members by providing training and access to resources, and ensure that each council member is fully supported in his or her own individual and the groups' collective project work plan. In addition, the coordinator will work to ensure the council is integrated into the other work of [organization]. Further, the coordinator will assist in the development of advocacy messages, conduct trainings, provide logistical support for programs, and draft and disseminate advocacy alerts for the YPLC.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Takes primary responsibility for recruiting, coordinating, and supporting the ten-member YPLC.
- Provides technical assistance, training and resources to youth council in the conduct of their advocacy plans including strategic planning, legislative strategy, event planning, conducting action events, and online campaigns.
- Works with the [supervisor] and other staff to conduct strategic planning.
- Works in coalition with other organizations interested in local and state policy, practice and systems that affect young families.
- Creates and maintains a state-wide/city wide/county wide young parents' activist network.
- Identifies and documents successful advocacy strategies
- Writes monthly reports on activities.
- Assists [manager] with other tasks as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS: Previous experience designing, conducting and/or assessing advocacy and organizing campaigns necessary. Life experience as a young parent preferred. Must be comfortable conducting trainings. Experience with event planning helpful. Must have a demonstrated interest in economic, racial and reproductive justice. A demonstrated capacity to work with diverse groups is necessary. Experience as a young parent or youth activist preferred.

Must be a self-starter, able to prioritize and meet deadlines. Good organization, interpersonal, writing, and communication skills. Commitment to [Organization]’s mission and goals.

Some travel required.

SALARY RANGE: Commensurate with experience.

TO APPLY: Interested parties should send the following items via email to [email address] (with subject line “YPLC Program Manager”) or via fax to [number], attention: Supervisor.

- 1 page cover letter with salary history and requirements
- 1-2 page resume
- 3 references
- 2-3 page writing sample

Youth Recruitment: Suggested Criteria to Consider

YPLC members should be selected through an open application process conducted by the organization's YPLC program manager. Returning YPLC members may be involved with this process by conducting phone interviews or helping to review applications. After council recruitment and selection, the selected members commit to participating for one year—often a school year, including in several weekend skills-building trainings throughout the year, and about 15 hours of work per month. Youth should be compensated for their time with a monthly, hourly or weekly stipend or wage.

EXPERIENCE LEVEL

Young parents who are “rising stars” (new to the movement but are “go-getters”) have the potential to be involved with your program for several years helping to bridge institutional knowledge throughout the years. Young parents who have past experience of successful advocacy efforts in their schools and community are more likely to deliver results and hopefully take some of the work off of the YPLC program manager. In addition, it is ideal to select young parents who have “latent potential.” These are young people who stand to gain significant skills from being a part of the YPLC (i.e. those who have not had formal training in the past).

DEMOGRAPHICS

Always strive to recruit a diverse cohort of young parents in terms of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, education access, ability, immigration status, and young people involved with the system, etc.

SKILLS

While we recognize that as YPLC program managers you will work with your young parents to build upon their skills, young parents with a background or an interest in building up the following skills can be helpful throughout the year:

- Public speaking
- Social media
- Ability to communicate their message to others
- Personality/ability to engage others
- Experience leveraging resources (fundraising, relationships, skill set, etc.) towards advocating for a goal
- Writers
- Artists

AFFILIATION

Young parents who are connected to a community or campus organization are more likely to have an initial base of support to tap into and more resources to leverage outside of the YPLC. If a young person is a “rising star” and is not connected, you can assist them in building relationships, and ultimately a strong base, to work with.

PASSION

Those who are most committed to the work are those who are most passionate about it! Young parents are often motivated by wanting to do right by their children. This determination and drive is key to keeping them engaged in doing related advocacy work throughout the year. Some young parents will already come the passion and ideas to make change in their communities. Keep in mind that while the young parents you invite to participate on the YPLC do not need to come into the youth program with deep knowledge of the policies, programs and systems that impact their lives, they do need to be willing to learn and advocate for YPLC goals and objectives.

SAMPLE NOMINATION FLYER

Nominate Young Leaders for the XXX Young Parent Leadership Council

XXX Organization is in search of XXX County superstar young parents to join its Young Parents Leadership Council (YPLC). The YPLC is composed of 10 dynamic young parents working in support of educational equity and economic, racial and reproductive justice for all young parents and their families. Working closely with XXX organization, YPLC members will develop and implement strategies to advocate for improvements to policies, programs and services affecting the health and wellbeing of young parents and their children in our county and state.

COUNCIL GOALS:

1. Raise awareness and shift cultural attitudes among decision makers and the public towards attitudes, policies, systems that support young families.
2. Advocate for changes to attitudes, policies and practices that impede the success of young families.
3. Empower other young parents and their allies to get involved in their communities.

WHAT DOES THE YOUNG PARENT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL EXPECT?

- That you are passionate about creating a better world for yourself and your children.
- That you will attend all trainings and meetings. Our first general meeting will be held on X from X to X.
- That you will to meet with the legislators in your district to advocate for young parent centered policies.
- That you will meet with decision makers at your school, workplace or at social service agencies you attend to advocate for improved policies and practices.
- That you will work with local, state, and national media as needed.
- That you will share ideas and collaborate with other YPLC members and the staff at XXX organization.
- That you will recruit many other young parents in your area to get involved in our work (i.e. starting a petition, forming Facebook groups, organizing a letter writing campaign, etc.).

WHAT YOUNG PARENT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL MEMBERS CAN EXPECT?

- Monthly (weekly) stipend (or hourly wage).
- Stipends to assist you with childcare.
- To meet, work with, and learn from amazing young parents and community organizations.
- To gain information and skills that you will be able to capitalize on throughout your school and work careers.
- To collaborate and make connections with adult staff and organizations who care about these issues as much as you do.
- To share your experience and perspective.
- Hard work, excitement, and fun...all while making a difference!

ABOUT US: XXX Organization's mission is to . . .

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

XXX Organization is counting on government offices, community leaders and other non-profit agencies to nominate young parents to join this program. Please fill out the attached nomination form or simply email us your nominations.

Send nominations to: XXX, YPLC Program Manager

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

Sample Recruitment Flyer

JOIN THE YOUNG PARENTS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

[Organization] is searching for 10 [state/city/county] superstar young parents to be part of the Young Parents Leadership Council. The YPLC is composed of 10 dynamic young parents working in support of education, economic, racial and reproductive justice for all young parents and their families. Working closely with the Program Manager, YPLC members will develop and implement strategies to advocate for improvements to policies, programs and services affecting the health and wellbeing of their children and young parents' education and economic opportunities to thrive.

COUNCIL GOALS:

1. Raise awareness and shift cultural attitudes among decision makers and the public towards attitudes, policies, systems that support young families.
2. Advocate for changes to attitudes, policies and practices that impede the success of young families.
3. Empower other young parents and their allies to get involved in their communities.

WHAT DOES THE YOUNG PARENT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL EXPECT?

- That you are passionate about creating a better world for yourself and your children.
- That you will attend all trainings and meetings. Our first general meeting will be held on X from X to X.
- That you will meet with the legislators in your district to advocate for young parent centered policies.
- That you will meet with decision makers at your school, workplace or at social service agencies you attend to advocate for improved policies and practices.
- That you will work with local, state, and national media as needed.
- That you will share ideas and collaborate with other YPLC members and the staff at XXX organization.
- That you will recruit many other young parents in your area to get involved in our work (i.e. starting a petition, forming Facebook groups, organizing a letter writing campaign, etc.).

WHAT YOUNG PARENT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL MEMBERS CAN EXPECT?

- Monthly (weekly) stipend (or hourly wage).
- Stipends to assist you with childcare.
- To meet, work with, and learn from amazing young parents and community organizations.
- To gain information and skills that you will be able to capitalize on throughout your school and work careers.
- To collaborate and make connections with adult staff and organizations who care about these issues as much as you do.
- To share your experience and perspective.
- Hard work, excitement, and fun...all while making a difference!

ABOUT US:

[Organization] XXX's mission is to . . .

INTERESTED?

Please fill out the attached application and email, fax, or mail your application back by [name] by [date]. We will then conduct interviews for selected candidates.

QUESTIONS?

Contact: XXX, Program Manager at:

Email [x] or call [x].

Sample Template: Young Parent Leadership Council Application

First Name: _____

Last Name: _____

Preferred Name/Nickname: _____

Date of Birth (MM/DD/YYYY): _____ (you must be age XX or under)

CURRENT ADDRESS

Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

SCHOOL ADDRESS (IF APPLICABLE)

Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

PERMANENT ADDRESS (IF DIFFERENT FROM CURRENT ADDRESS)

Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Best address to receive mail: current school permanent

Best way to contact you: e-mail phone

Email address at school if applicable: _____

An additional email address (e.g. Gmail): _____

Phone Number: _____ cell home school

Alternate Phone Number: _____ cell home school

Race/Ethnicity (optional): _____

Please attach a separate page with responses to the following questions:

1. Tell us about your interest in becoming a member of the young parent leadership council. What do you hope to gain? Why are you interested in applying for this position?
2. In your opinion, what is a barrier that affects the ability of young parents in your community to meet their life goals for themselves and their children?
3. What education, experience, or knowledge do you have related to advocacy an organizing?
4. What ideas do you have for helping the YPLC achieve its goal of increasing access to education, economic, racial or reproductive justice for young parents in your community?
5. Please list your current and/or estimated commitments for the upcoming year (school, work, extracurricular, community, etc.).
6. How did you hear about the Young Parent Leadership Council?

Please provide one person (*not a family member*) who can serve as a reference for you:

Name: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____

E-mail: _____

Relationship to you: _____

Please email your completed application, by (Date Application is Due) to:

Name of Program Coordinator

Title

Partner Organization

Phone Number

E-mail Address

Social media:

Sample Interview Questions

INTEREST IN WORKING ON THE YPLC

- Why do you want to be a member of this leadership council?
- What does the phrase “young parents’ rights” mean to you?
- What issues are you currently involved with in your school or community?
- If you join the YPLC, what issues are you most interested in working on/learning about and why?

EXPERIENCE AND BACKGROUND WORKING IN ADVOCACY

- Are you involved in any students’ groups on campus or community-based organizations? If so, describe the organization’s mission and your involvement.
- What experience do you have working in advocacy or organizing?
- If selected for the YPLC, what ideas do you have to carry out a campaign to advance the rights and wellbeing of young parents and their children in your school/community?
- What are some creative ways to get information out to your peers? To decision makers?
- If selected, what top 3 skills would you bring to the YPLC?

ABILITY TO WORK WITH DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

- Share an experience where you were outside of your comfort zone?
- Share an experience where you had to work with someone of a different background and/or lived experience (race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, etc.) than you?

GENERAL FIT ON YPLC/ PERSONALITY

- What do you think are the biggest challenges facing young parents in your community today?
- Are there any other things you would like to share that would help me to understand you- and choose the best candidate to serve on the leadership council?
- What things about your personality do you feel your peers would be able to relate to?
- What do you like to do in your free time?

ASSESSING AND REMOVING BARRIERS TO POSSIBLE PARTICIPATION

- I understand that you may be in school/working and taking care of your family. What limitations would you have if invited to join the YPLC?
- Do you need assistance if any do you need with childcare in order to participate?
- What assistance if any do you need regarding transportation to meetings?
- Are there particular days of the week or times of day that would work for you to be able to participate at meetings?

Last day to apply is **[date]**. No phone calls or walk-ins, please.

Sample YPLC Acceptance Letter

DATE

Dear (insert name)

Congratulations!

You have been accepted to serve as a member of the Young Parents Leadership Council for XXX organization.

We have an exciting and dynamic group of young people, ages 14 to 24 from [City/county/state] who will work together over the next year. You were chosen from a pool of qualified candidates, and we are excited to offer you the opportunity to be part of our program.

As a member of the Young Parents Leadership Council (YPLC) you will receive a \$XXX stipend [monthly/weekly/hourly] to work from [date] to [date] with staff members of [name of organization] to play an important role in designing and implementing advocacy campaigns to improve policies, practices and services affecting the lives of young parents and their children.

All YPLC members are required to participate in one upcoming training to be held XX where you will develop your advocacy and organizing skills, and learn how to create and implement advocacy campaigns. Your participation in this training is required. If you are unable to attend, please contact XX, Program Manager, as soon as possible so that we can make other arrangements for you. Food, childcare and transportation vouchers will be covered on both days.

Please confirm your acceptance by XX by signing and returning the attached contract to XX.

If you have any questions, please text, call or e-mail me. We are so happy to have you on board!

Sincerely,

Program Manager

Sample YPLC Member Contract

Congratulations. You have been accepted as one of 10 young parent leaders to serve on [Organization]'s Young Parents Leadership Council (YPLC). As a member of the council, you will work closely with the YPLC Program Manager and your fellow YPLC members to develop and implement advocacy campaigns to improve public attitudes, policies, programs and/or services affecting the health and wellbeing of young parents and their children.

By agreeing to serve on the YPLC, you are agreeing to assist the council in meeting its goals to:

1. Raise awareness and shift cultural attitudes among the public and decision makers in order to drive support young parents and their families.
2. Advocate for economic, education, health and other policies, practices and services that can propel the success of young parents and their families.
3. Empower other young parents and their allies to join YPLC's advocacy campaigns.

Please initial each item to indicate agreement.

As a member of the Young Parents Leadership Council, I agree to:

_____ Attend and fully participate in the YPLC advocacy and organizing training to be held on [date].

_____ Participate in at least 80 percent of monthly meetings, either in person or online.

_____ Participate in monthly phone calls with the YPLC program manager.

_____ Submit a monthly activity report to the YPLC program manager.

_____ Support and promote the activities of the YPLC advocacy campaign.

_____ Respond in a timely manner to requests from [organization] staff or other YPLC members.

_____ Learn with an open mind and respect the ideas of others, even if they are different from my own.

_____ Discuss my concerns, suggestions, or questions about the YPLC with the Program Manager.

_____ Ask for help from the YPLC program manager and/or other YPLC members when needed.

Please indicate if you accept or decline becoming a member of the YPLC for [date/year of the term].

_____ Yes, I will be a member of the Young Parent Leadership Council for [date/year of the term].

_____ No, I will not be a member of the Young Parents Leadership Council for [date/year of the term].

Signature _____

Date _____

Print Name _____

Sample Rejection Letter

(DATE)

Dear (Insert Name),

Thank you for your interest in the Young Parents Leadership Council and your dedication to working on issues of importance to young parents and their children.

Unfortunately, we are unable to extend an offer for you to become a member of the Council at this time. We received numerous applications for just a few available openings and the decisions were very difficult, especially with such a talented pool of qualified applicants.

We encourage you to continue your work on these issues and to keep up-to-date with new information and resources that become available. Please visit [organization]'s website at [web address] for additional information and to learn about other ways to get involved in this movement.

Again, thank you for taking the time to apply and congratulations on all you have achieved so far!

Sincerely,

Name of Program Manager

Title

Organization

Phone Number

E-mail

Sample Work Plan Template

Organization Mission:

Council Mission:

Council Goal(s):

Advocacy Goal(s):

Short Term:

Long Term:

20xx-20xx Workplan:

OBJECTIVE I: *By XX recruit, support, and sustain a diverse YPLC composed of 10 members.*

Activities/Deadlines:

OBJECTIVE II: *By XX, provide YPLC members with advocacy and organizing training to improve their knowledge and skills as activists.*

Activities/Deadlines:

OBJECTIVE III: *By XX, work with the YPLC to identify and prioritize a demand to improve the health and wellbeing of young parents and their children in your community.*

Activities/Deadlines:

OBJECTIVE IV: *By XX, collaboratively with YPLC design an advocacy campaign based on strategies and tools from the Young Parents Advocacy Toolkit and targeting at least one improvement to policy, practice or services affecting young parents and their families.*

Activities/Deadlines:

OBJECTIVE V: *By XX, work with the YPLC to conduct at least five community outreach events targeting key stakeholders, policymakers and community leaders.*

Activities/Deadlines:

OBJECTIVE VI: *By XXX, engage at least 50 additional young parents and other youth allies in YPLC advocacy strategies and tactics to grow the YPLC base.*

Activities/Deadlines:

OBJECTIVE V: *By XX, reach 5,000 people in the community through social and traditional media, centering young parents as the experts in their own lives and as partners in identifying and working towards policy and programmatic solutions.*

Activities/Deadlines:

SMARTIE Advocacy Goals
 Your goals should be **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**elevant and **T**ime-Bound. Inclusive and **E**quitable.

Training and Other Council Activities
 Council meet and greet
 Monthly council meetings
 Advocacy Day / Training

Example Outreach Tactics
 Tabling in your community
 Canvassing
 Host social events + trainings
 Partner with student groups

Base Building Process
 1. Conduct outreach
 2. Build relationships
 3. Engage base
 (Base = leaders, members + supporters)

Communicating Your Issue
 Photo campaigns
 Social and traditional media
 Interactive displays
 Newsletters / Email