

# YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL

Advisor's Guide

# Welcome

Welcome to the YAC Advisors Guide!

This guide is designed to support Youth Advisory Council (YAC) advisors in leading a youth philanthropy council. It can also be a resource for anyone engaged in the youth philanthropy atmosphere as a tool for sparking ideas and additional learning.

Each section of this guide is set up in a way that you can read through one topic and gain an understanding of that content without needing to pull from other sections. You may find it helpful to read through multiple, but each section can be seen as independent of another.

It should be noted that this guide is a fluid document that is routinely updated as the needs and environments of YACs change and grow.

This comprehensive document from the Council of Michigan Foundations (CMF) is a collaborative effort that includes both YAC and YACer perspectives, Michigan Community Foundations Youth Project (MCFYP) and Learning to Give leadership and resources, with CMF staff support led by the 2022 Russell G. Mawby youth philanthropy intern Laken Chapin. It is with great appreciation to our partners that we present this guide supporting and empowering youth philanthropy!

*Disclaimers: 1. This guide serves as a recommendation to all YACs and does not strictly define everything that a YAC should be doing. 2. Within the guide, YACs are referred to as "councils" that are "committees" of community foundations though this wording may differ for your specific YAC or youth philanthropy group. 3. Resources from Learning to Give are targeted at grades K-12, not just YACer ages. 4. This guide is to be updated as YAC advisors and advocates use and review the content of this guide in the future.*

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# CMF, Learning to Give, MCFYP, and YAC

## [Council of Michigan Foundations \(CMF\)](#)

The Council of Michigan Foundations (CMF) is a statewide philanthropy-serving organization, of which many Michigan community foundations are members. CMF leads, strengthens and supports Michigan's community of philanthropy by emboldening and equipping CMF members in the relentless pursuit of equitable systems and inclusive diversity, fortifying the field through public policy action, fostering the growth of current and future philanthropy leaders and advancing exemplary philanthropic practices and field expertise.

## [Learning to Give \(LTG\)](#)

Learning to Give (LTG), inspires youth of all ages to grow their identity in relationship to their diverse community and practice philanthropy and civic engagement. LTG is a tool for YACs and YAC advisors to develop philanthropy knowledge, skills and experience. LTG shares one-of-a-kind, readily accessible resources to help our CMF community nurture all young people as they grow in their knowledge of philanthropy.

## [Youth Advisory Council \(YAC\)](#)

Across Michigan, more than 1,500 young people serve on 86 youth advisory councils (YACs). Each YAC is a subcommittee of a community foundation with a permanently endowed Youth Fund. They are composed of youth members ages 12-21 who engage in leadership development and community service and review and allocate grant dollars to local nonprofits' efforts affecting youth. In total, Michigan YACs' endowment fund assets exceed \$62 million.

Over 20 years ago, in efforts to increase the giving capacity of community foundations and to engage youth in the grantmaking process, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation sponsored a Youth Challenge for Community Foundations to create youth endowment funds. These endowment funds were to be used exclusively for grants allocated by youth advisory councils for local nonprofits' efforts affecting youth.

## [Michigan Community Foundations Youth Project \(MCFYP\)](#)

The Michigan Community Foundations Youth Project (MCFYP) was established by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation through a challenge grant with the purpose to involve young people in community philanthropy. The project that created YACs was this project, and now there is a committee housed at CMF that continues to oversee it.

Being a part of the MCFYP committee allows youth to take a very active role in service and grantmaking through the conference and regional trainings. It also allows them to help develop youth philanthropy throughout the state, nation and even the world. CMF provides support through programming and resources to MCFYP. The MCFYP Committee, which is composed of youth and YAC advisors from around the state, leads the development, design and facilitation of the annual Youth Grantmakers Summer Leadership Conference and supports other youth programming and resources.

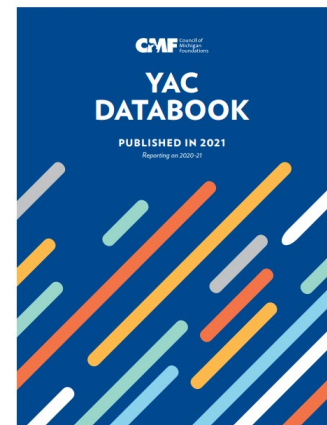
## CMF as a Resource

CMF is a national leader in engaging and developing the skills and voices of youth in philanthropy and within their communities. On CMF's website, [www.michiganfoundations.org](http://www.michiganfoundations.org), you can find resources in the [Knowledge Center](#) like this Guidebook, [historical youth philanthropy documents](#) from the field, and join the [YAC Advisors Online Community](#).

Online communities provide an interactive forum for members to engage with their peers on topics and issues important to their work. Members can join the conversation through ongoing group emails and online forums. Members can also curate content using the daily digest function that delivers all of the day's messages in one easy-to-read email, track conversations as they're happening and stay connected with their online community's activity through a dashboard. Here you can pose questions, request assistance on a specific topic or challenge and share resources.

Another resource available in the [Knowledge Center](#) is the YAC Databook. The Databook examines the important role of YACs across the state. In the 2021 Databook, over 75% of Michigan YACs were represented with information including grants, assets, demographics, community service and more (Henry Harris, 2021).

If you have any questions or wonderings, CMF is a resource for you on your YAC Advisor journey. Always feel free to reach out to us, that's what we're here for!



## Learning to Give as a Resource



Learning to Give is a comprehensive resource about youth philanthropy. The website includes background about the history and practice of philanthropy including activities that help youth:

- Know their community and their role in community.
- Develop their skills and knowledge of philanthropy.
- Explore ways to take action through philanthropy.

Following the creation of MCFYP, Learning to Give's original purpose was to ensure all youth learned the skills, knowledge and action of philanthropy as youth previously had not been exposed to in-depth philanthropy education. Learning to Give can be used by YACs who are learning about philanthropy themselves or teaching younger children about philanthropy. YACs can also learn about issues and ways they can take action. Currently, key tools for YACs include a youth group facilitator guide, issue area toolkits, philanthropy 101, group activities, lesson plans, and informational papers.

**Youth Facilitator Guide:** Learning to Give, in partnership with the Council of Michigan Foundations, developed the youth facilitator guide as a set of activities based on seven themes that emerged through a survey of Michigan YAC advisors and MCFYP advisors.

These videos, activities, ideas, toolkits, and discussion starters support engagement within your YAC. The blocks loosely follow the *service-learning process* that challenges youth to match their interests to community needs through investigation, preparation/planning, action, reflection and demonstration. Content may be used in any order.

Link to Youth Group Facilitator Guide: [Youth Group Facilitator Guide | Learning to Give](#)

**Issue Area Toolkits:** Each toolkit, developed in collaboration with a youth philanthropist, includes background on a featured issue, community connections to serve as experts and allies, lessons and activities, project ideas and planning guides. Some issue areas include Equity and Justice, Humans and the Environment and Homelessness and Poverty.

Examples of a toolkit: [Humans and the Environment Toolkit | Learning to Give](#)

**Philanthropy 101:** This guide introduces YACers to the elements of effective giving and informed critical thinking about community service through readings, research, site visits, and meetings with local leaders. It connects youth to their local community and, through community-based experiences, helps them become more aware of society's growing needs and their own interests. The course answers the following questions: What is philanthropy? Who am I in relationship to my community? In what ways can I give? How can I make a difference for a cause or issue about which I care?

Link to Philanthropy 101: [Philanthropy 101 Course Introduction | Learning to Give](#)

**Activities:** A variety of activities spark conversation and learning and may include envisioning and building community, discussing philanthropy themes in books, responding to film clips, sparking service projects, breaking the ice, learning about one another and exploring community nonprofits.

Example of an activity: [Blue Sky Envisioning Activity | Learning to Give](#)

**Lesson Plans:** Learning to Give has a searchable database of lesson plans that can be filtered by subject and grade level that explore the language, action, and issues of philanthropy. They are great for educators, youth leaders, and youth who want to teach younger children about philanthropy.

Example of a lesson plan unit: [Goodness in Everyday Acts | Learning to Give](#)

**Informational Papers:** These papers, written by graduate students in the field of philanthropy provide perspectives on philanthropy through people, organizations and concepts.

Example of an informational paper: [Community Foundations | Learning to Give](#)

Learning to Give welcomes feedback and wants to include ideas from YACs on the content of their website through shared stories and ideas. Contact Learning to Give [hello@learningtogive.org](mailto:hello@learningtogive.org).

Sign up for Learning to Give's monthly newsletter for ideas and discussion starters and follow their social media linked below.

Twitter: @learningtogive

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/learning-to-give/>

Newsletter: [Newsletter Signup | Learning to Give](#)



## Engaging with MCFYP

The Michigan Community Foundations Youth Project (MCFYP) Committee is comprised of Youth Advisory Council members (YACers) and YAC Advisors from around the state of Michigan. This committee represents YACs and supports youth philanthropy in the region.

The committee's primary functions include the following:

- Design and facilitate the Youth Grantmakers Summer Leadership Conference.
- Set the agenda and provide insight, perspectives and guidance on issues that affect YACs.
- Grow the pipeline of Michigan philanthropy.
- Serve as a representative of MCFYP and the Council of Michigan Foundations (CMF) on a state-wide level, as necessary.

## Joining the MCFYP Committee

To accomplish these stated functions, the committee meets virtually on a monthly basis unless stated otherwise. Committee members are required to participate in both a weekend winter planning retreat and the Youth Grantmakers Summer Leadership Conference in late June.

YACers entering 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, or 12<sup>th</sup> grade can apply to be on the committee. Applications usually open during the Youth Grantmakers Summer Leadership Conference and close in late July.

Committee member qualifications include:

- Skilled in group facilitation.
- Enjoys working as a team.
- Committed to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Exhibits leadership skills.
- Has a growth mindset.
- Committed to youth grantmaking.
- Demonstrates responsibility and organization.
- Engages as a nonprofit volunteer.

If a YACer from your YAC is interested in joining the MCFYP Committee, be sure to watch for communications from CMF in the summer months.

## Youth Grantmakers Summer Leadership Conference

Every summer, the MCFYP Committee and CMF staff plan the Youth Grantmakers Summer Leadership Conference, hosted by the MCFYP Committee and Russell G. Mawby youth philanthropy intern. This conference is an event where YACs from across the state are invited to connect with fellow youth over a weekend spent together. At this conference, youth are led through breakout sessions facilitated by MCFYP committee members about topics affecting youth with a philanthropic and grantmaking approach. YACers are also informed on the structure of YAC including topics of YAC history, fund development, needs assessment, community service and civic engagement. At the conference, there are multiple leadership development opportunities for both YACers and YAC advisors as well as spaces for youth to get to know each other.



YAC advisors are given opportunities to meet other advisors and learn about their experiences. One advisor from the 2022 conference remarked, “I always take home great information and ideas that will benefit our YAC. Plus, the fellowship and friendship with the other advisors is wonderful.”

Watch for emails from CMF regarding the conference for updates. Registration usually opens in May and the conference traditionally is held at Central Michigan University in mid-to-late June. The conference usually goes from Friday to Sunday, and housing and food are included in the price.



In the past, CMF has awarded scholarships in the case that finances become a barrier to a YAC’s attendance. Consider also contacting your community foundation about scholarships or budgeting them in your YAC’s yearly funds.

Linked below are recap videos from past conferences:

[2018 Youth Conference: Ignite](#)

[2019 Youth Conference: Spectrum](#)

[2022 Youth Conference: The Re-Up: Reflect, Reimagine, Respond](#)

## History of YACs

The Michigan Community Foundations Youth Project began as a \$35 million challenge grant to Michigan community foundations from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF) in 1991. WKKF challenged community foundations to a 2:1 match, up to \$1 million, to create a permanent endowment (Youth Fund) within each community foundation. The Youth Challenge was completed in 1997 after \$47.5 million was distributed out for 84 Youth Funds, overseen by youth advisory councils (YACs).

In 1998, YAC went national by participating in the Council on Foundations conference and joining then CMF president and CEO Dottie Johnson at the White House Conference of Philanthropy. Also, that year, YACers from other states started attending the Youth Grantmakers Summer Leadership Conference, a conference designed for youth grantmakers to gather once a year and commemorate their philanthropy efforts and learn about ways to grow their YAC's impact.

Also in 1998, the "Michigan Youth on Boards" Bill, drafted by YAC members, was passed. This bill allowed youth ages 16-17 to be voting members on nonprofit boards and is what allows current YAC members to be voting members on community foundation boards. (Johnson Center, 2015).

Dr. Russell G. Mawby, former CEO of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation served as the spokesperson and passionate leader of the project, advocating for the project through many speeches within various settings. Personal papers and speeches about the project are included in the *Russell Mawby Papers* Collection, housed by Grand Valley State University's Special Collections and Archives. The collection can be found here:

*Russell Mawby papers, JCPA-01. Grand Valley State University Special Collections and University Archives.* <https://gvsu.lyrasistechnology.org/repositories/2/resources/432>

The timeline of the Michigan Community Foundations Youth Project can be found here: [MCFYP Timeline](#)

## Connection of MCFYP to YAC

The Michigan Community Foundations Youth Project is what served as the catalyst to begin YACs in the state of Michigan. After the initial challenge grant period passed in 1997 for Youth Funds, the project was continued through the annual efforts of YACs in their communities and other project initiatives steered by the MCFYP Committee. The MCFYP Committee, made up of YAC members from across the state, serves as the advisory board for the youth project by helping to plan the Youth Grantmakers Summer Leadership Conference where YACers are invited to attend each year.

## Purpose of Youth Funds

Youth Funds were to be used in grantmaking towards youth projects and initiatives, validating the phrase, "By youth, for youth," as all grants would be voted on by a youth council. By allowing youth to decide where funding goes in their communities based on their knowledge and understanding of their

community's needs, youth would see and experience the impact of philanthropy. Youth would take ownership of their philanthropic efforts and begin a pipeline of giving of time, talent, ties, treasure, and testimony for years to come. Today, we see the remarkable ways in which YACs have grown and have grown communities by providing youth the resources to spark change and improvement.

To understand the historical outlook of Youth Funds, read Dr. Russell G. Mawby's speech "Why Youth? Why Community Foundations?" linked here: [\*\*"Why Youth? Why Community Foundations?"\*\*](#)

Other speeches about the Michigan Community Foundations Youth Project can be found in the *Russell Mawby Papers* at [\*\*https://gvsu.lyrasistechnology.org/repositories/2/resources/432\*\*](https://gvsu.lyrasistechnology.org/repositories/2/resources/432)

# YAC Best Practices

The YAC is a permanent advisory council of the community foundation with the primary responsibility of making funding recommendations for grants made from the community foundation's endowed Youth Fund. These Best Practices are intended to serve as a guide for YACs:

- 1:** The YAC has a minimum of seven official meetings each year.
- 2:** The YAC has a minimum of 12 members ages 12–21 who reflect the many forms of diversity found in the local youth community. For example, these may be race, gender identity, school and socioeconomic status.
- 3:** The YAC has one or more YAC advisors who are knowledgeable and supportive of youth development, youth leadership and the Michigan Community Foundations Youth Project.
- 4:** The YAC holds an annual orientation for all members and encourages them to participate in training opportunities that will strengthen their skills in philanthropy. The YAC utilizes resources available through the Council of Michigan Foundations in training and growing their skills including Learning to Give, Fall Training lesson plans and resource guides.
- 5:** The YAC assesses issues critical to youth in their respective community at least every three years. This typically takes place through a needs assessment.
- 6:** The YAC engages in a grantmaking process that is targeted towards needs presented in a needs assessment and is responsive to the timely critical issues of area youth annually.
- 7:** The YAC evaluates the effectiveness of each grant annually. Examples of this include site visits, grant reviews, follow ups and maintaining a connection with nonprofit partners.
- 8:** The YAC participates in a minimum of two community service projects annually. This can include a project targeted toward critical youth issues in the local community. For example- a project completed with nonprofit partners.
- 9:** The YAC engages in fund development activities to assist with the continual growth of the endowed Youth Fund annually.
- 10:** The YAC has at least one YAC member serving as a voting member on the community foundation Board of Trustees. Larger foundations are encouraged to have at least two.
- 11:** The YAC interacts with the community foundation board, staff and donors at least twice a year on a formal and informal level.
- 12:** The YAC has activities highlighted by the community foundation's annual report, website, newsletters, public presentations and other communication tools.
- 13:** The YAC conducts an annual self-assessment to reflect upon its strengths, challenges, use of best practices and opportunities for improvement.
- 14:** The YAC strives to participate in and attend the Youth Grantmakers Summer Leadership Conference, regional trainings and advisor trainings.
- 15:** The YAC centers grantmaking, recruitment, fund development, community service and all other activities in equity, diversity and inclusion.

Find the YAC Best Practices printable version and evaluation sheet here: [YAC Best Practices | Council of Michigan Foundations.](#)

# YAC Advisor Support

A YAC advisor's role in leading young philanthropists is key to the overall impact a YAC has on its community. As this position holds a lot of responsibility, it is helpful to know where you can look for support. This section will explore:

1. What is my role in a YAC Meeting?
2. Manage YAC as a Volunteer Advisor
3. YAC Advisor Spring Training

## What is my role in a YAC Meeting?

As a YAC advisor, you are often one of the few adults in a YAC meeting, or perhaps the only one. This unique position offers an opportunity for you to be an effective youth ally in supporting all of the efforts of your YAC.

As an adult in a room of youth, normality suggests that you should be leading meetings, organizing discussion, and assigning roles to those in the room because of the experience and knowledge that you bring. In being an *effective* adult ally, the role of leading is shifted to youth, and you get to serve as a valuable resource and support in their efforts.

If your YAC has a board of officers, utilize their leadership and skills to lead and facilitate YAC meetings. Consider meeting with your officers before a meeting to discuss what needs to be achieved in your meeting and make a plan or agenda for the time you have. This will give youth ownership of the time that your group has together from the start.

With officers or leaders in your YAC, discuss who will plan an icebreaker, what the sequence of discussions will be about, and which goals you all hope to achieve in the meeting. Make sure anyone who will be facilitating is comfortable and confident in what they are leading and that everyone is equipped. Remind youth leaders that you are a resource and there to support them, but that this time should be youth-led.

Your first YAC meeting of the year may look more like an informational and group-wide discussion, and you may even be facilitating the majority of this time. Because YACers are being introduced to the YAC space for the first time, you may need to provide more insight and knowledge on foundational questions as members may be meeting each other for the very first time.

Over the course of the academic year, however, your role will shift, and YAC meetings will be more youth led, and advisor supported.

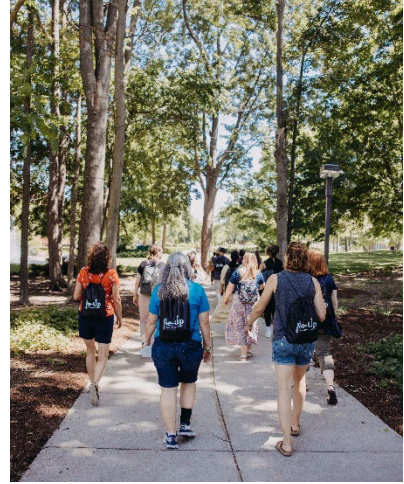
During a YAC meeting, consider the following ideas:

- Meet with YAC officers before your meeting and discuss the plan for the meeting.
- Greet all youth as they arrive at your meeting and be sure to connect with any adults dropping them off to create a welcoming environment.
- Take part in the introductions of everyone at the meeting and maybe even hop in on the icebreaker activity.
- If any youth asks you a question, be responsive and supportive. If you feel their question should be discussed with the whole group, ask if it's okay to save it for a time when everyone is listening. This way, you won't keep repeating yourself and everyone will be informed.
- Step into conversation if it is completely off-topic for a while or is deconstructive or offensive.
- Allow youth to have conversations about difficult topics.
- Allow youth to plan things that you think may fail.
- Allow youth to plan but help them with logistics that an adult will be needed for.

## Fail to Succeed

As a YAC advisor, the common idea that “the success of my YAC reflects on my professional career” is brought up often. In a youth council, and rather every group effort, “success” is a working definition. Particularly with youth, “success” isn’t clear-cut.

Some projects your YAC plans will fail. Some ideas that seemed really great at the time may turn out to take a lot of unexpected effort that no one can reasonably commit to. This is the reality with some programming, and it’s okay. With youth specifically, failure is a part of the “success” journey. Failure allows young people to learn what works and what doesn’t, and it opens the door for developing problem-solving skills, empathy, teamwork and perspective. When things don’t go as planned, youth are learning how to think on-the-spot and how to avoid problems in the future. All of these skills and new perspectives *are* successes.





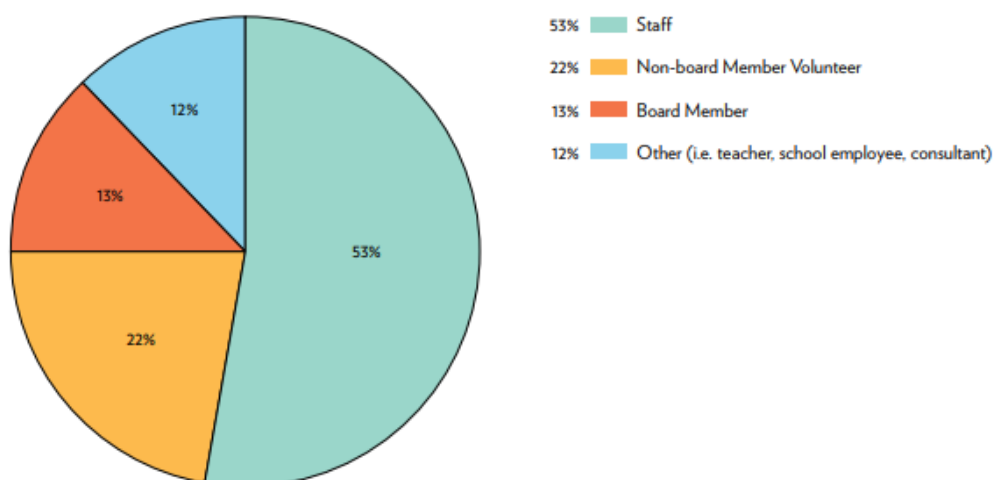
## Managing YAC as a Volunteer Advisor

YAC advisors can take on their roles as volunteers or as paid positions, depending on the community foundation. Some volunteer advisors receive a stipend and some do not. If you are a volunteer YAC advisor, it may be likely that you work a separate job in addition to advising a YAC. Your commitment to being a volunteer advisor may come with its challenges, but this section will explore how you can be supported in your position and where you can seek help.

*Did you know?* In 2021, CMF reported that in the years 2019-2020, 22% of YAC advisors were volunteers. Find more information about these results and other YAC statistics in the [2021 YAC Databook](#).

### YAC Advisors by Advisor Type

Responses: 59 / Totals may exceed 100% as YACs may have more than one advisor and/or advisors who fit in more than one category.



### Explore the “Why” of Being a YAC Advisor

Why did you choose to take on the role of a YAC Advisor? Starting with this key question may allow you to align your passions and ambitions to your position as a YAC advisor and serve as a foundation for your time as a volunteer. Explore these ideas when considering the “why” of being a YAC advisor:

- What areas of my life align with youth philanthropy and youth development?
- Where am I hoping to grow as a professional in advising a YAC?
- In what areas do I hope to learn from youth in this YAC?
- Who do I hope to be in the lives of these YACers?

## Where can I lean on for support?

Advising a YAC is a lot of responsibility. Knowing where you can lean on for support will help you to feel empowered. This guide was created in response to YAC advisors seeking support for ideas and information about YAC, but outside of this guide, consider looking around you for support.

Delegating responsibilities to your YAC officers is a great way to take some stress off you and give ownership to youth on your council by allowing them to take a leadership and administrative role in the efforts of your YAC. There are surely things that only an advisor can do but consider different items that you might be able to delegate to officers. (Examples: coming up with icebreakers, crafting agendas, posting to social media, etc.)

Your community foundation staff may also be able to serve as a resource for you in learning the details and specifics of your YAC. Because the Youth Fund is endowed in a community foundation, staff at your foundation could provide insight on finances, meetings spaces, historical documents, past members and other items you may have questions about.

YAC advisors also can find support through the [Online Community](#) at the Council of Michigan Foundations- an online platform where all YAC advisors are invited to share resources and questions with each other about things that arise in their YACs.

## YAC Advisor Spring Training

Every year, the Council of Michigan Foundations hosts an Advisor Spring Training for YAC Advisors to join with other advisors and engage in a training workshop. This training usually takes place in May and lasts for a usual workday. Program staff at CMF, along with MCFYP Committee advisors help to facilitate the training. Usually, a youth advocate is invited to conduct a workshop with advisors and train them in different areas related to youth advocacy.

Past topics of trainings included adult allyship, community mental health, supporting youth-led work, volunteer advisor support and others. Time for a roundtable discussion on general YAC questions is also provided.

This time serves as a space to connect with other advisors and hear about all the things they are doing in their YACs. There is a lot of time allocated for discussion of burning questions, and advisors leave the training with new ideas, answers to their concerns, and confidence in leading their YACs.

Be sure to watch out for emails from CMF regarding this training if you wish to attend.



# Council Development

A YAC is made up of youth and advisors with different backgrounds and experiences. Every member of the council brings something different to the table, but as a group, these individuals team together to impact their community in amazing ways. Developing a council in its leadership, cohesion, teamwork and philanthropic understanding allows for a YAC to make informed decisions as a unified team rather than a group of individuals. This section will explore how to develop a council in the following areas:

1. Icebreakers and Teambuilding
2. Growth Planning and Goals
3. Budgeting
4. YAC Fall Trainings
5. YAC Alumni

## Icebreakers and Teambuilding

Whenever your YAC meets, it may be helpful to start off with an icebreaker or teambuilding activity to help everyone to get comfortable.

If your YAC members don't know each other well, consider an icebreaker that uses identity or personal questions so they can get to know each other better. If your YAC seems close, try a fun teambuilding exercise. Ask a youth officer or member to plan and facilitate the icebreaker if that is possible. Share these documents with them for ideas:



[YAC In-Person Teambuilders and Icebreakers](#)

[YAC Virtual Teambuilders and Icebreakers](#)

## Growth Planning and Goals

As we think about developing a council, we should keep in mind three main goals for YACs:

1. To assess needs, assets, and priorities for area youth.
2. Promoting youth volunteerism and leadership.
3. Increasing the size of the Youth Fund through fund development activities.

In addition, YAC members should aim to grow as individuals. Being a YACer provides the opportunity to build skill sets that will contribute to one's development as a responsible community member.

With a growth outlook, have your YACers brainstorm areas where they think your YAC has room for growth and areas where they think they are doing well. These areas could include intergroup connections, individual professionalism, DEI understanding, mental health awareness, etc.

### Growth Action Plan Activity

Ask your YAC to split up into groups and create action plans for each of these areas that they would like to grow in, assigning one area to each group. An action plan could be outlined by:

1. Define the goal you wish to achieve.
2. What project, event, discussion, or program will allow the YAC to achieve this goal?
3. Explain the logistics of step 2- How will things play out?
4. What will the result be of the action plan?
5. Go into detail about all support, materials and resources that will be needed.
6. Finish with any remaining questions and/or concerns with your action plan.

Have your small groups present their action plans to the group and prioritize what plan would be best to grow your YAC as a group and its individual members. An example outline of an action plan could look like this for the goal "growing intergroup connections":

#### **Goal: Growing connections within our YAC**

1. Our YAC wants to get to know each other better and create an inclusive space where everyone feels comfortable.
2. To achieve this, we plan to have a weekend retreat day where our YAC members will meet and do teambuilding activities.
3. We will meet at the city park with prepared teambuilding activities and our officers will lead us through them. There will be downtime for yard games and conversation.
4. At the end of the retreat, our YAC members will be closer and more comfortable with each other.
5. Support: We will need to contract 1-2 extra adults from the community foundation to help support this time. Materials: Icebreakers and teambuilders and their respective materials that will help build trust, allow us to know each other better, and create group understandings.
6. What team builders and icebreakers will we use? What day would work best for everyone? How will we be transported to the park? Should we cater a lunch to the park, and if so, how will we do that? Etc.

## Budgeting

When planning for your YAC year, a topic of discussion should be budgeting and financing. Your YAC's focal point of the year is grantmaking. However, other activities including fund development, community service, teambuilders and other activities also need to be budgeted and accounted for to ensure that your YAC activities are all able to be supported.

## YAC Endowments

For every YAC endowment, a specific amount of income, or investment return, is earned after investing the Youth Fund each year, and this interest is what is available to fund a YAC's efforts for the year. Depending on the size of the Youth Fund at your community foundation, the income earned on the investment of the Youth Fund may vary. Community foundations, in general, make between 1-2% income on their investments each year and because the Youth Fund is included in their investments, you can expect about the same amount of income.

Not all of a YAC's funding has to be linked back to the Youth Fund. Sometimes, a YAC may campaign or fundraise for a certain project, and that money will be used for its intended purpose within the project. (Example: a YAC takes part in fundraising for its local CAN Council every year and uses the dollars for a specific project with that organization.) Also, some community foundations may have another youth-based fund that wasn't endowed from the Michigan Community Foundation Youth Project, but their YAC may oversee grantmaking efforts from that fund in addition to the Youth Fund established by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

## What is included in our budget?

The majority of a YAC's budget will go towards grantmaking, but there are other things to consider. Some YACs budget their money into two buckets- grantmaking and programming. Grantmaking includes all of the funds your YAC wants to use in its grant cycle(s). Programming includes everything else- community service, fund development, food, travel, development activities and other items. Some community foundations have a separate bucket for "operational costs" that include some or all the items under the programming category, leaving your YAC all of its budget for grantmaking. Be sure you are informed on how your specific community foundation operates so you know what is to be included in your budget.

## How do we decide on the budget?

The amount of money your group allocates to each budget category will differ for each YAC and your group's goals for that year.

It is always helpful to reevaluate how and why certain budget practices exist within your YAC and decide each year as a council if you want to stick to them. Within a budget meeting, explore the following questions with your YAC:

\*If you provide past budgets to your YAC during this conversation, it may be easier to decide on a budget for this year.

- Does our YAC provide food and refreshments at each meeting, and if so, how much will we need to make it through the year?
- Does our YAC purchase any merch, like t-shirts or bucket hats, and should these be out-of-pocket purchases by members, or should they be included in our budget?
- Do we need to pay any fees for our meeting space?
- Does our YAC need to set aside funding for possible travel?
- Does our YAC need to set aside funding for supplies like poster boards, markers, Expo markers, etc.?
- Do we need to set aside any funding for trainings, conferences or development opportunities?
- In the past, did we have any surprise expenses we need to consider for this year?
- Is there anything in our previous budget we can cut out?
- What did we like and what didn't we like about our last budget?
- Are there any new policies we need to consider?
- How much have we allocated to grants in the past?
- How much money do we want to have for grantmaking this year?

### How does budgeting for grant cycles work?

A grant cycle is, in essence, a time period where grants are applied for, decided on, and distributed. YACs are all unique in the type and amount of grant cycles they hold, but all have the goal of supporting youth betterment in their community. Depending on the amount of funding your YAC has to grant, it may make sense to have more than one grant cycle, different types of grant cycles, or ongoing/rolling grant cycles.

If you plan to have more than one grant cycle, consider how much will be divided between your grant cycles, or if the cycle(s) following your first one is dependent on if all funds were granted during a previous cycle. Some YACs divide their funds 50/50 between a fall and spring cycle, while others do it differently.

Some YACs also take part in an ongoing grant cycle where they are always accepting applications, usually for smaller grants. These can be called "rolling grant cycles" where nonprofits apply for mini-grants for timely needs they have. Your YAC may want to divide your grant money up and put a specific amount into this bucket if you believe a rolling cycle would be good for your community to have as a resource.

When announcing a grant cycle, your YAC can announce how much money they have to grant, but you don't have to. If your budget is more conservative, you may put a limit on the amount a nonprofit can apply for to be sure that you can grant towards more than one application during a grant cycle.



## How Your YAC Can Take Ownership of the Budget

Besides discussing and deciding on the budget as a group, your YAC can take part in the financials of your YAC throughout the entire year. Consider the following ideas for keeping your YAC informed about the finances of the Youth Fund:

- Elect a treasurer position on your council's e-board that oversees, with the support of an advisor, the details of the finances and reviews them with the council each meeting.
- Review with your YAC how to read a budget and an account ledger.
- Invite your community foundation's treasurer or financial advisor to speak about how finances work with the foundation.

## YAC Fall Trainings

YAC fall trainings are offered to Michigan YACs annually. These trainings are an event where CMF program staff step into your YAC's space and conduct a training on specific topics your YAC would benefit from. These topics range from:

- Commitment to YAC
- DEI
- Fund Development
- Grantmaking 101
- Leadership Development
- Public Policy and Advocacy
- Service Project
- Community Engagement
- Others

For YAC fall trainings, CMF sends out an interest survey in late summer to all YAC advisors in the state. These trainings take place from September to November and are also offered virtually or can be self-facilitated with CMF content and planning support. The actual training from CMF comes with no cost, but any outside costs like food, transportation and venue will be on the participating YACs.

CMF will meet with an advisor that wishes to take part in a fall training to discuss topics and content for the training. For in-person trainings, YAC advisors are responsible for finding and securing a venue, configuring transportation of members to the venue, any catering and any other items that might be needed at the training. CMF Staff will come prepared with their materials and lessons.

*Helpful Hint:* You'll note a lot of the titles of topics are found in this guide. A lot of the training's ideas have been intertwined with the ideas presented in this guide, so using what you find here to train your YAC could also be helpful.

## YAC Alumni

Members that graduate or age out of your YAC leave with an understanding and experience reflective of the importance of youth leadership, community engagement and philanthropy. These youth engage with society with tools and skills that their time in YAC helped to develop. After a YACer leaves their YAC, it may seem a bit challenging to know their next step in the philanthropic world.

As your YAC considers maintaining a connection with YAC alumni, consider what role they could have in the continued development of your YAC and community. Here are some ideas:

- Consider inviting YAC alumni back to do a workshop or training with your current members.
- Provide resources for YAC graduates on how they can stay engaged in philanthropy in the new areas they are living or in your community.
- Discuss with your foundation the possibility of having a YAC intern position that engages a YAC graduate with behind-the-scenes youth philanthropy work or assists in foundation needs.
- Host a roundtable discussion of YAC Alumni and young philanthropists in your community to discuss needs for young adults and ideas on where your foundation or YAC could help meet them.
- Maintain a connection with YAC alumni through email or letters that include opportunities to stay involved and learn about current efforts of your YAC.

*Helpful Hint:* To maintain contact with alumni YACers, it's important to have their most up to date contact information recorded and documented. Be sure to get this before your YACers graduate or age out and have a system for keeping it up to date.

## Recruiting Members to Your YAC

All that a YAC does and participates in starts with its members. The youth in your YAC represent youth voices in your community and as a YAC, you should seek a diverse, equitable and inclusive group that reflects the youth populations of your area. Youth at the grantmaking table have great responsibility in voicing and meeting the needs of their community, so knowing recruitment strategies is key to composing a diverse group of individuals with unique perspectives and experiences.

Recruiting members to your YAC may look different for each council, this section will explore:

1. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Breakdown for Recruitment
2. Recruiting Council Members

*“We believe that when funders make diversity, equity, and inclusion central to their missions, philanthropy has greater impact. That’s because having varied perspectives helps generate better ideas to solve the complex problems of a changing—and increasingly diverse—world.” – The Ford Foundation*

## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Breakdown for Recruitment

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion are often referenced in philanthropy. To understand their meanings and applications, explore the following questions with your YAC, led by a youth member:

**Diversity** – What does it mean to have a diverse YAC? Why should we seek to proactively engage, understand and draw on a variety of perspectives?

As Michigan grantmakers, our goal as a group should be to represent the various aspects of diversity found in our communities. We might use a survey, census or discussion to understand diversity in our community.

**Equity** – As youth grantmakers, how can we acknowledge that barriers and advantages exist? How can we act upon this information to ensure access to the same opportunities and an environment of respect and dignity for both our YAC and youth in our community?

YACers face different barriers in their membership and in the recruitment process. Every youth's involvement in YAC will not look the same, so we should seek to remember that every member enters with their own background and circumstances.

**Inclusion** – How can we create a positive experience for those who are underrepresented within YAC? What barriers stand in the way of building a culture of belonging?

It's important to consider what it looks like to have a YAC that makes everyone, particularly underserved, feel welcome and valued while given opportunities to grow.

When inviting voices to the table, it's imperative to listen once they are there.

## Focusing on Equity in Recruitment

As a YAC, understanding and acknowledging ideas of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) is great, but it is another challenge to actionably implement these ideas into everyday practices. To first understand the DEI challenges faced by your YAC in recruitment, consider every circumstance a young person may be experiencing in your community. Ask, “Are any of these circumstances barriers to a youth being recruited?”

Possible barriers to recruitment include:

**Accessibility:** What barriers exist that keep youth in your community from knowing that your YAC is recruiting new members? What will your YAC do to make sure every eligible youth has the opportunity to join your YAC? What makes a youth eligible?

**Language:** Is your recruiting process difficult to understand for youth and parents outside of the philanthropic field? Does your recruiting language assume a youth’s understanding of something that they wouldn’t know about outside of YAC? Is the language used in your recruiting more favorable to one community than another?

*Helpful Idea:* In this section of the guide, we are referring to the idea of “joining a YAC” as *recruiting* rather than *applying* to YAC. Instead of an *application*, we initially refer to a *recruiting document*. In young audiences, the idea of an application or application process may link to the idea of high-pressure or unachievable positions. With this connotation, a youth might not seek to engage with your YAC. Changing the language may invite more youth to join. In the section that discusses the decision process after documents have been turned in, this document will be referred to as an “application.”

**Time:** Does the time frame of your recruiting process create any barriers for youth? (For example, are your applications open over spring break or important cultural holidays in your community?) Does your recruiting process require excessive amounts of time for youth and parents that they cannot commit to? Does your recruiting process take youth out of other necessary priorities or commitments?

As you discuss these barriers and more, make action plans for how your YAC will break down these barriers and/or meet youth where they are with an equitable approach. Note: This Learning to Give [resource on Cultural Competence](#) can guide discussions about equity and inclusion.

*Did you know?* In 2021, CMF reported for the years 2019-2020, 32 of 58 YACs reported that they discuss DEI throughout their practices with current YACers. Find more information about these results and other YAC statistics in the [2021 YAC Databook](#).

Responses: 58

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YACs that **discuss DEI** throughout their practices with current YACers (recruitment, grantmaking, etc.).

## Recruiting Council Members

Every YAC observes different membership practices. Some YACs have a specific roster of youth members that attend every meeting. Other YACs serve more as a community space where any youth is welcome to join. Based on your community's needs and abilities, your YAC might look a lot different than its neighbor.

No matter a YAC's style, every YAC should aim to keep DEI at the center of member makeup. Within membership, each YAC should seek to recruit youth who value participation, community engagement and the needs of their peers. With all this in mind, the following guidelines can be used in the recruitment process:

### Discuss Council Representation

**Geographic:** Your YAC may serve a geographic region that includes many schools and cities. Does your YAC include members from different geographic regions within your YAC's area? Is the representation reflective of these communities, or does one area have more representation than another?

**Race and Ethnicity:** The region your YAC serves may have a diverse racial and ethnic makeup. Does your YAC membership reflect these populations in your community? Does your YAC actionably seek diversity in its membership?

**Socioeconomic Status:** Your community is made up of multiple socioeconomic groups and grants towards recipients in different socioeconomic circumstances. Does your YAC have a diverse range of members from different socioeconomic backgrounds?

**Education:** Some communities have higher percentages of homeschooled youth and youth enrolled in Individualized Education Programs (IEP). If applicable, does your YAC include youth from different educational atmospheres?

Other ideas regarding personal identity may include age, gender identity, national origin, sexual orientation, physical and/or mental abilities, family structure, hobbies and passions, religion and faith, careers, political beliefs, marital status, veteran status and resident immigration status.

### Discuss Other Important Details of Recruits

Not only is knowing personal identifiers valuable in recruitment but learning about a person's experience can provide a more well-rounded understanding of who they are. Everyone's life experiences differ from each other, and each person's experiences are treasured at a philanthropy table. Discuss with YAC members what experiences they want to learn about from recruits, keeping questions open-ended and broad. Some ideas include:

**Leadership:** Not every leadership experience is the same. Think about asking recruits to describe a time when they were a leader and what they learned from that experience. Some recruits may

be seeking YAC as an opportunity to be a leader, so ask where they would like to see themselves lead within the space of a YAC.

**Teamwork:** YAC efforts take a lot of collaboration and teamwork to reach the end goal. Think of asking your recruits about a time when they had to use teamwork to achieve a goal.

**Passions:** Our passions make us unique and our knowledge of them helps to create informed discussions within a philanthropy atmosphere. Ask your recruits what they are passionate about, and how their knowledge would be valuable in your YAC.

**Commitment:** Someone looking to join your YAC may seek to be on your committee for one year or continue through high school. A youth may have a lot of time to commit to your YAC or only a few hours a month. Consider asking recruits what commitment level they are seeking and review this through an equitable lens in understanding not all youth can serve in the same capacities.

Other topics to ask about could be a personal experience with inequity, difficult conversations, civic engagement and hobbies.

## Construct a Recruitment Document

When considering the actual format of your recruitment document, first consider what will be most accessible for the youth in your community. In areas where technology access is a challenge, a paper document may be best. In areas where youth can easily access technology, a Google survey could be the answer. If your region has a diverse makeup of technology availability, both platforms may be most equitable.

Whatever format your YAC uses, a recruitment document should include fields for the following information:

- Name
- Pronouns
- Identity questions
- Contact information
- Parent/guardian contact information
- Personal experience questions
- Goals for YAC membership
- Travel abilities specific to your YAC
- Parent/guardian consent for youth to apply
- Youth acknowledgement of responsibilities

Also included in the recruitment document should be a summary of what is expected of a YAC member in your YAC, approximate time commitments, specific dates of required attendance, an explanation of what your YAC does in your community, a date for when the document is due, where to turn in the document (provide a mailing address and digital site), a contact for questions and any other information your YAC deems valuable.



Your YAC can also ask a potential recruit to include letters of recommendation in their application. Be sure to provide guidelines on who these letters should be from and how many should be included.

Here is an [Example YACer Job Description](#) .

Here is an example of an [application used for the MCFYP Committee](#). It can be adapted for your YAC.

*Helpful Hint:* Transparency is valuable to anyone looking to join your YAC, so keeping obligations and expectations at the forefront of your recruiting is great.

## Discuss the Recruitment Process

You have your recruiting document, now it's time to recruit. There are many items to think about when distributing the document, so be sure to work through the process with your YAC and work to do the following:

- ✓ With your YACers as a part of the conversation, ask local school principals to allot a time where YACers can share the document with students in their homerooms or in the cafeteria during lunch.
- ✓ Highlight the recruiting document in schools' announcements with a place students can access it.
- ✓ Ask that YACers take initiative to distribute the document to their peers.
- ✓ Share the document in a community space where youth are often present.
- ✓ Use your network or your YACers' networks to share the document with youth that wouldn't have access to it in a school or community space.
- ✓ Challenge YACers to share the documents with youth they aren't as familiar with.
- ✓ Have your YAC construct a list of youth that would bring better representation to your group and make a plan to get them a document.
- ✓ Share that your YAC is recruiting on your foundation's and YAC's social media.
- ✓ If a school doesn't have representation in your YAC, contact school administrators and explain why your YAC is recruiting members from their school.

Things to be cautious with when distributing your document:

- ✗ Sharing the document only within your YACers' friend and family groups. This can leave out youth not within your YAC's immediate network.
- ✗ Putting the recruiting responsibility on advisors. Challenge your YACers to recruit and step in when help is needed.
- ✗ Being too selective when sharing the recruiting document. Not every YACer needs to be a youth with straight-A's, a list of leadership positions and multiple extracurriculars.
- ✗ Being ambiguous when recruiting a youth. You shouldn't have to "sell" YAC to a student, but make sure they have a clear understanding of what YAC is.

## Determine Who the New Members Will Be

Once your YAC has received and compiled its recruiting documents, your YAC will have the opportunity to go through them. If your YAC will only be recruiting a certain number of members, a meeting where your YAC goes through and votes on new members should be planned. If your YAC allows participation to all recruits, a meeting with your YAC to examine all the new members is still important so current members are aware of who will be joining them.

Considering most YACs recruit a certain number of members each year, we will examine what the decision process might look like. If this isn't the case for your YAC, your meeting might look similar to this, just without any final decision.

**Prepping your YAC for the review process:** If your YAC is seeking specific candidates according to their identity to create a better balance of representation in your group, be sure to share this with your YACers. Make sure each application is read thoroughly as every student that filled out the document probably put quite a bit of effort into it. Your applicants deserve to have their application read and considered. Also discuss any goals your YAC has for recruitment.

**Sorting applications:** As an advisor, you will be the first to receive all the applications from youth. Before presenting them to your YAC, there are a few things to do:

1. Make formal records of all applications, scanning them or copying them, to keep master copies separate from those presented to your YAC.
2. For the copies to be examined by your YAC, consider removing any sensitive information including addresses, unneeded contact information and signatures. Some YACs remove the names of applicants for the initial review to help minimize the potential of any prior assumptions and then share the names during the final review processes.
3. If you're seeking more representation from certain areas or demographics to create more diversity in your YAC, sort applications for readability to your YACers. For example, the applications could be sorted by city or school district.
4. Send your YACers a link to the applications so they can preview them before the meeting.

**Reading through applications as a YAC:** To keep things fair for all applicants, consider using the same methodology when reading through each application. A debrief or evaluation form may be useful in breaking down different details of someone's application. An evaluation form may include a space for a numerical ranking of different categories for each applicant. Using this would allow for a consensus at the end of the review process and each application would have a score, a useful tool in determining who will be accepted. Consider the following format for an evaluation form:

### Evaluation Form for YAC Applicants:

#### **Applicant Name:**

Rate the Applicant on the below areas, using a scale of 1-5. 1 being the lowest ranking and 5 being the highest ranking.

1. **Confidence:** The candidate's responses and recommendation letter support that the applicant is confident in their abilities and value to a group.

Your Rating of Applicant on scale of 1-5:

2. **Competence:** The applicant answered all questions completely.

Your Rating of Applicant on scale of 1-5:

3. **Commitment:** The applicant's other extracurriculars and activities will allow for the candidate to be committed to YAC activities.

Your Rating of Applicant on scale of 1-5:

4. **Contribution:** This applicant will bring unique and diverse experiences to the council.

Your Rating of Applicant on scale of 1-5:

5. **Compatibility:** This applicant will work well with the current council to meet objectives.

Your Rating of Applicant on scale of 1-5:

**Further Comments?** Specifically comment on this question: Should this applicant be selected to serve on the YAC?

**Deciding on new members:** After reading through applications, spend some time as a group discussing applicants and recruits. Some questions, led by one of your officers or members, could be:

- What applications stood out to your group? Why?
- Which applications confused you, and if they did, why? Ask the rest of the YAC for clarity.
- Which applicants would bring unique perspectives into your YAC? What are they?
- Which applicants does your YAC seem most like? Which applicants does your YAC seem most different from?

*If you omitted names of applicants from their applications, now would be the time to reintroduce them. If anyone would like to speak on an applicant's behalf respectfully and positively, open the floor for discussion.*

If your YAC is only accepting a certain number of youth, consider how your YAC will decide who to accept. Some methods could be:

- Have a Google Survey created with applicant names already listed, separated by identity categories if appropriate (For example, if you are only accepting one student from X school, your YAC can only choose one applicant from that school).
- Have YACers write on a piece of paper who they are voting for and turn them in to be counted.

**Informing applicants about their acceptance status:** Once your YAC has decided on its new members, be sure to notify all new members of their acceptance through an email or letter and share upcoming meeting dates. Also inform any applicants that were not accepted. It is important be professional and not leave any youth wondering. You could also include any extra information requests at this time for those who have been accepted.

Here is a template for informing a youth that they have been accepted:

Dear *[insert youth name]*,

*Thank you for your application to join the [insert name of YAC]. On behalf of the [insert YAC name], I am pleased to inform you that you have been accepted to join our council for the upcoming academic year. We look forward to meeting with you in person at our next meeting on [insert date and time]. If you are unable to attend this meeting for any reason, please contact [insert contact].*

*If for any reason you wish to decline this acceptance, please notify [insert contact].*

*Below are following dates to mark on your calendar for YAC events:*

*[insert dates]*

*Thank you.*

*Sincerely,*

*[insert name and signature]*

*[insert community foundation and position]*

Here is a template for informing a youth that their application has been declined:

Dear [insert youth name],

Thank you for your application to join the [insert name of YAC]. We appreciate your interest in our council and its efforts. After careful consideration, we regret to inform you that we are unable to accept your application at this time.

Please know that we appreciate your time in applying and hope that you might connect with us in future opportunities.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

[insert name of YAC]

### YACs Without a Recruitment Process

There are some YACs who welcome new members every meeting. Still, it is still important to gather information from each new youth that attends your meetings. It might be helpful to have a short form to be completed at the start of your meeting that asks for a youth's name, pronouns, age, gender, race, school district, contact information and parent contact information. You will be able to keep this information for your records, and it can come in handy if:

- ✓ The youth needs to document service hours that they completed at your meeting.
- ✓ You need to make a call to a parent if there is an emergency.
- ✓ You are analyzing the makeup of your YAC in accordance with representation.
- ✓ You are sending out announcements regarding workshops, opportunities and events.

# The Needs Assessment

As a YAC, your group is always aiming to meet the needs of the communities you serve. It can be hard to determine the needs of your community with only the voices at your YAC meeting, so a needs assessment can help to fill in the gaps. The needs assessment can feel like a big project to take on every three years, but with the right planning and execution, the process can be streamlined and very effective at determining the needs of your community.

This section will explore:

1. What is a Needs Assessment?
2. Conduct a Needs Assessment
3. Use Needs Assessment Results

## What is a Needs Assessment?

A needs assessment is a survey where youth in your community are asked to share what they believe are the present needs of youth. It is conducted by your YAC every two to three years. The needs assessment is created and distributed by your YAC, sometimes in partnership with another organization that is connected to youth betterment. Your YAC and any partners will collect the results of your needs assessment and examine results to find critical issues faced by youth in your community. With these results, you may also collect information like age, geographic location and other personal identifiers to determine if any issues are faced more heavily by specific youth.



*Helpful Hint:* If your YAC will be completing a needs assessment this school year consider bringing it up at a Fall Training or in one of your preliminary meetings.

This assessment is anonymous to protect youth privacy, and it is encouraged that your YAC share with those taking it that all their answers will be confidential.

## Conduct a Needs Assessment

Having a plan of action and base survey is helpful to getting the process started for a needs assessment. In this section, we'll explore how to conduct a needs assessment, but note that these items may look a little different for your YAC.

### Discuss The Importance of a Needs Assessment

Ask an experienced YACer to explain to the group why a needs assessment is important to the efforts made by your YAC. Be sure that these points are highlighted:

- 1. Our grantmaking is centered around the needs assessment.** Because a YAC grants to youth initiatives every year, it is important to know what needs are most pressing in the community so that our grants and request for proposals can be targeted towards them. Our YAC should strive to grant toward issues highlighted in our needs assessment results.
- 2. Our YAC cannot represent every youth voice in the community.** Our YAC is made up of a lot of unique and diverse individuals, but it is impossible for us to know everything going on in our community. Through a needs assessment, youth are given a chance to voice their needs.
- 3. Our community is different than it was three years ago.** YACs are asked to complete a needs assessment every two to three years because needs are often changing for youth over time. Different grades often have different views on what is a struggle, it's important to know how things may have shifted. Repeating the needs assessment allows for timely grantmaking and service projects.

### Decide What Topics Will Be Included in The Needs Assessment

In the beginning or end of the needs assessment, consider including the following fields to collect demographic factors within the youth taking the assessment. Remember, this survey is completely anonymous.

- Age
- Race
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- City their home resides in
- # of people in home
- Identifying socioeconomic status
- School District
- IEP/Homeschool if applicable
- Knowledge of your CF (Y/N)
- Knowledge of your YAC (Y/N)

There is a wide variety of topics to ask youth about, and because YACers are in schools and youth atmospheres, they can provide ideas on what may be good topics to include. Most needs assessments include questions on a variety of the following topics (some items are eliminated or reworded for younger audiences):



- Drug use in youth
- Drug use at home
- Substance Use Disorder
- Drug safety
- Alcohol consumption in youth
- Alcohol consumption at home
- Alcohol abuse
- Alcohol safety
- Drunk driving
- Vaping/smoking
- Tobacco use
- Sexual activity in youth
- Sexual abuse
- Sexual education
- Teen pregnancy
- Violence at school
- Violence at home
- Youth safety
- School safety
- LGBTQ+ inclusion
- LGBTQ+ resources
- Religion in school
- Economic security
- Access to a teen job
- Access to technology
- Access to transportation
- Access to basic needs
- Access to medical needs
- Access to shelter
- Access to clothing
- Access to counseling
- Mental health in individuals
- Mental health at home
- Mental health in school
- Anxiety and depression in youth
- Emotional abuse
- Suicide
- Homicide
- Bullying
- Peer pressure
- Violence
- Harassment/hazing
- Gossip/rumors
- Access to internet
- Ability to participate in extracurriculars
- Sports needs
- Educational needs
- Lack of educational opportunities
- College-related opportunities
- Scholarship opportunities
- Recognition of youth accomplishments
- First-generation resources
- Teacher-student relationships
- Coach-student relationships
- School facilities
- Politics in school
- Community spaces for youth
- After school programs
- Other

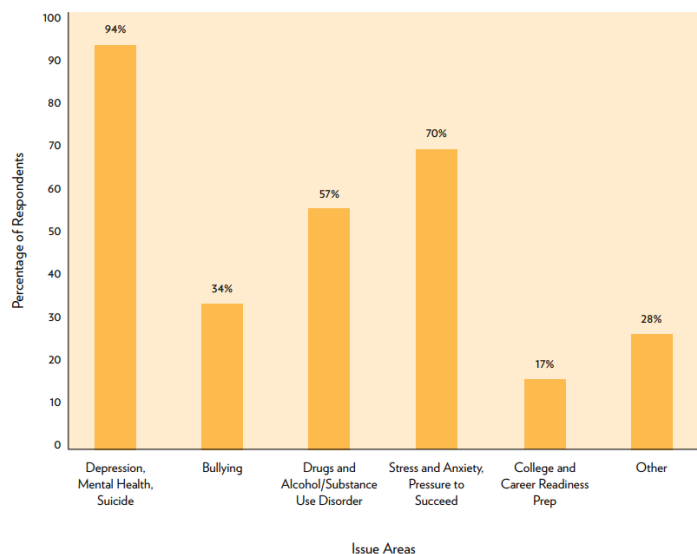
Other than demographics or the topics listed above, discuss as a YAC if you want to leave space for any additional comments or short-answer questions your YAC may wish to ask. Some short answer questions may be:

- In your opinion, where does your community need help?
- What is the best part about being a youth in your community?
- What is something your school struggles with?

*Did you know?* In 2021, CMF reported that 94% of YAC needs assessments returned mental health, suicide and depression as one of the top issues in youth communities for the years 2019-2020. Find more information about these results and other YAC statistics in the [2021 YAC Databook](#).

**Top Reported Issue Areas in Youth Needs Assessments**

Responses: 53



## Decide the Format of the Needs Assessment

Some YACs distribute physical copies of their needs assessment while others use an online survey. Using a platform like Google Forms, Alchemer or Survey Monkey allows for a more streamlined collection of results, but if your community is unable to complete an online survey, paper may be the best option. As a YAC, discuss the best method for running a needs assessment.

*Helpful Idea:* With younger populations (usually younger than 7<sup>th</sup> grade), a survey could still be effective, but your YAC could examine other avenues to use in assessing their needs. Consider administering your needs assessment in an interview style, asking a teacher or YACer to read off questions to the class and have a person take notes, or even create a more simplified survey.

As your YAC sets up their needs assessment, try to keep all questions formatted the same. If youth are being asked to rank issues in their community, the scale should be the same throughout. Also, try to keep related questions stringed together for conciseness.

Here are some example needs assessments from YACs:

[Huron County Needs Assessment](#)

[Muskegon Needs Assessment](#)

[SE Ottawa Needs Assessment](#)

Finally, keep in mind that YAC members should make the final decision on what their needs assessment looks like. Be sure to go through every question with your YAC, or have them do so in small groups, and ask:

- Is our list of highlighted issues comprehensive?
- How can we make this survey the easiest possible to take based on format?
- Should we consult any other organizations for their input or partnership before we finalize?
- Based on our target ages, do we need to take out any content for younger ages?
- Is there any need for us to conduct the assessment in an interview style?
- Should we consider giving our survey in another language or format to be equitable? (Spanish, Braille, verbal, etc.)

## Decide How to Distribute the Needs Assessment

The next step in the process is deciding how to distribute the needs assessment.

Consider how your YAC will communicate with schools and organizations in your community for distributing the needs assessment. Not all schools may be represented in your YAC, so consider how you may contact those schools. Asking for permission to give the assessment in a school will maintain a professional and respectful reputation for your YAC with school administrators. Connecting with administrators will also give opportunities to keep them up to date on your YAC's efforts.

To keep a structure to who will be asked to take the assessment and how to get it to them, consider the following:

**Age:** Because some younger grades may not have an understanding of the items in your survey, consider distributing your assessment to ages 12+, or highschoolers and middle schoolers. Consider creating another survey for younger ages.

**School:** It may be helpful to have YACers from each school distribute the assessment to their respective schools with support of administration and staff. If your YAC doesn't have representation from every school, discuss how your YAC will reach out to those not included. If your community has homeschooled youth, discuss how your YAC can get your assessment to those youth as well. Consider making separate copies of your needs assessment for each school so that results can be automatically divided by school district.

**Quantity:** Will your YAC ask every 11<sup>th</sup> grader at their schools to complete the assessment, or just a fraction? Depending on the size of schools, this may look different for each YAC. Based on your community's population, discuss with your YAC nominal quantities of youth you want to have complete your assessment.

**Timeline and Location:** When and where will your YACers have youth fill out this survey? In homerooms, in the cafeteria, at a monthly assembly? *(Often times, core subject classes are utilized for distributing the assessment because all students must take that subject each semester. (Ex/ every student in X school takes an English class, so connect with all English teachers for a time to distribute the assessment)* Will it be sent via email or QR Code? Is there a date that all of the surveys should be completed and turned into your YAC? Consider having the needs assessment completed on-the-spot so there aren't any worries about collecting them.

When your YAC decides all of the logistics of your needs assessment, assign responsibilities to different YAC members for different items related to your assessment. Consider putting the link to your needs assessment on your foundation's website for easy access. Also, consider making a social media post to let the community know what your YAC is up to.

## Use Needs Assessment Results

The needs assessment is so valuable in all that a YAC does. Let's examine how to go through the results and how to use your needs assessment in the rest of your YAC's activities.

### Gathering and Sorting Through Results

Once you are done collecting results from your needs assessment, it is time to sort through and record every response. In a YAC meeting, go through these results as a group. Consider asking the group these questions:

- Did any of these results surprise us?
- Were any of the results expected?
- Does anyone see any interesting trends in the data?
- Were there any errors in our distribution of the survey that should be noted for the group?
- What struggles did we run into? What went well?

Record your results. Make a formal report highlighting the top three to five issue areas. With any report, write a summary of why your YAC conducted the needs assessment and a brief description of who your YAC is. Remember, unless your YAC made an agreement with an outside organization or school, you don't have to share your raw data with anyone.

### Using the Results

Now that your YAC knows the top needs of youth in your community, you can use the results in all of the efforts your YAC takes part in. This includes community service projects and grantmaking. Consider these action items:

- Plan a service project based on the needs in your community.
- Make a goal to grant towards the issues that relate back to your needs assessment.
- Start an advocacy campaign in your schools based on the needs presented.
- Create a report of your results to share with the community.
- Conduct a request for proposals based on the top needs of youth in your community. Consider using following language in a request for proposals:

*The [insert foundation or fund title] is pleased to announce that the [insert name of YAC] is requesting proposals for the [insert year/month/season] that target [insert target area]. Projects or programs that directly impact the betterment of youth in the [insert name of community] community within this issue area are encouraged to apply. The YAC has [insert monetary amount] to grant towards this target area, so multiple requests may be fulfilled. Proposals are due [insert date] and can be sent to [insert email address] or mailed to [insert mailing address]. Find the document here: [insert link to RFP document]. Please reach out to [insert YAC advisor name] with any questions at [insert contact information]."*

After reviewing the results from your needs assessment, your YAC can choose to share them with the public through graphics or reports. Doing so allows your community to also be aware of the needs of youth. Below are a few examples of how different YACs have displayed their results:

*Grand Traverse Region Community Foundation YAC:* [GTRCF Results 2020](#)

*Cadillac YAC's results from a needs assessment:* [Results from Cadillac YAC 2016 Survey](#)

*C3's needs assessment Results:* [Charlevoix Assessment Presentation](#)

# Grantmaking

A YAC is a permanent advisory committee of a community foundation with the primary responsibility of making funding recommendations for grants made from the community foundation's endowed Youth Fund. This section will examine action items and group understandings about grantmaking for your YAC through Grantmaking 101. It may be helpful to reference ["Budgeting"](#) in the section "Council Development."

For a historical understanding on just how Youth Funds came to be at Michigan community foundations, explore the sections "History of YAC" and the speech "Why Youth? Why Community Foundations."

## Grantmaking 101

Every year, a YAC takes part in one or more grant cycles. As an advisor, it is important to understand how often your YAC will be conducting a grant cycle and how the process works. Note that grants from your community's YAC must be targeted directly towards projects that impact youth.

In recent years, YACs have been known to grant between \$5,000 to \$150,000 depending on the size of their endowment. It is important to connect with your foundation about the exact amount your YAC has to grant and if the balance you are given includes allotment for the rest of your YAC's financial needs, including food, travel, workshops, community service, events, etc. Once you have information on the amount your YAC can grant, share this information with your YAC's youth treasurer and your YAC as you discuss budgets and grant proposals.

To better understand just how an endowment works, explore the following analogy with your YAC: **An endowment is like an apple tree.** By envisioning the tree as the base endowment fund, the apples become the fruits of the tree. The apples also represent the interest that is gained each year by investing the endowment. Each year you can pick the apples and give them away, which is like granting out the interest from the endowment to the community, but you don't cut off a branch. That means that the next year, more apples will grow, and you pick them to give them away. Similarly, they can be used either to grow the tree by adding them to the bottom of the tree through composting or used to give to other people for their enjoyment. Adding the apples to the bottom as compost results in the same thing as adding some of the interest to the endowment - more interest (apples) for the next year.

## Grant Cycles

A grant cycle can be defined as a time period where a grantmaking organization opens their grant application, decides on which programs or projects they wish to partner with through funding, awards the grant and proceeds with follow ups. Some YACs have ongoing grant cycles while others have defined times set for their cycles, and some have both. Alignment needs with the community foundation may determine when your grant cycle is. In discussing with your YAC what form of grant cycle(s) would be best to meet the needs of your community, consider the following ideas:

**Traditional Grant Cycle:** Your YAC sets up a certain period of time, perhaps a month, where they notify the public that they are accepting grant applications. Your YAC can specify which target areas they hope to grant towards (ex/ mental health, education betterment, initiatives that challenge abuse and neglect etc.) and instruct that applicants propose only applications that fit your criteria. Criteria may include: a limited grant amount, a certain project/event type, certain geographic areas, certain time frames etc.

**Request for Proposals (RFP):** Similar to a traditional grant cycle, your YAC can announce that they are requesting proposals. This is a type of grant cycle that serves timely needs of the community, so less criteria may be given. This allows nonprofits in your community to seek funding for projects they are working on and/or projects they think would be good for your community. The target areas may not

align with your needs assessment, but they still could have a large impact on your youth community. You can have a specific timeline for an RFP or leave it open.

**Mini-grant cycle:** Mini-grant cycles are unique as they serve as small, but necessary, opportunities for funding different initiatives in your community. Mini-grants can be any amount you see fit, though often less than \$1,000. If a nonprofit needs immediate or just a small amount of funding, they could apply to a mini-grant cycle. Mini-grants often help fund things like food, transportation, signage, small projects, school projects. Some YACs keep a mini-grant cycle continuously open for their entire YAC year and vote on any applications at monthly meetings. Other YACs who have a sum of money left at the end of their other grant cycles sometimes open a mini-grant cycle to use up the rest of their budget and meet any needs in their community that didn't get recognized during other cycles.

Depending on the size of your endowment, applications received and yearly goals, your YAC may have more than one grant cycle. Familiarize yourself and your YAC with anything in your bylaws regarding the number of grant cycles your YAC has and what has been traditionally done. Explore the following ideas:

- Is our grant budget large enough to conduct multiple grant cycles or even keep applications open all year long?

*A YAC's yearly budget can range from below \$5,000 to above \$150,000 each year depending on the size of your endowment. Relying on one grant cycle to provide enough applications or proposals could work for your YAC, or you might need to explore a lengthened process.*

- How can we consider both needs in our needs assessment and timely needs of our community?

*Your YAC will seek to grant towards needs presented in your needs assessment, but timely needs may arise in your community that were not included. Consider having contingencies in place to account for the possibility of needing to grant towards a timely grant.*

- If we only have one grant cycle and don't grant all our budget, what will we do with the rest of the funds?

*A YAC is allowed to put their leftover budget back into their endowment, but other ideas should be explored on meeting timely needs in the community. This could be an opportunity to conduct a mini grant cycle, take part in proactive grantmaking or host a service project.*

## Equity in Grantmaking

Grantmaking has a direct impact on a community by funneling dollars towards projects and initiatives that seek to bring change for the betterment of society. Understanding that every project has its advantages and potential disadvantages, it is essential to examine all factors of a grant request through an equitable lens.

By having diverse representation at a grantmaking table, populations within your community can strive to have a voice in grantmaking decisions. However, acknowledging that not every voice can be represented on a committee, a YAC should seek to explore all possible consequences (good and bad) of



a grant before giving it. To maintain an equitable lens in the grantmaking process, approach the process with these questions in mind and discuss them as a YAC:

- Is our YAC's grantmaking process equitable in accessibility and availability? Can every nonprofit organization access our grant application and if not, can they contact us?
- Does the grant application we are reading create any barriers for other groups?
- Does the grant application we are reading give one population leverage over another?
- Could our YAC granting towards this project incite any inequity between groups of people?
- Does this grant highlight or deconstruct an issue in the community? (Are people going to learn about the issue, or is the project going to fight the issue?)
- Are youth, families, adults or a mixture being impacted by the grant?

### Understand Responsive vs. Proactive Grantmaking.

Each grant cycle, the timely matters and needs of your community may be different. The goals of your YAC may be different each year. For these reasons, there are two main types of grants that YACs make-responsive and proactive.

Responsive grants accommodate requests from nonprofits for programs that fall within youth community needs; responsive grantmaking means *reacting* to the needs of the local community. This type of grant usually happens when a nonprofit hears that your YAC has opened grant applications and applies for a grant.

Proactive grants are a little different. This type of grant requires the initiative of a YAC to find an issue within the community and request for a proposal to deal with the need. In proactive grantmaking, YACers *seek* out needs and organizations that wish to meet them and ask that they propose a grant for their project or program. Using the needs assessment, a YAC can better understand which needs are most prevalent.

### Create a Grant Application

In order for community members to apply for or propose a grant request, they will need an application format. This might look similar to the process of your foundations application process.

Within either the grant application or proposal document, always include:

- A description of your YAC and its role in your community.
- The timeline for your grant cycle.
- A contact for questions and concerns.
- An email and mailing address to return the documents to.
- The budget availability.
- Items that the YAC will not grant towards.
- Any other helpful information in relation to your grant cycle.

**Grant Application:** As your grant cycle opens, applicants will fill out the application with information about their project to be viewed by your YAC. Be sure to ask for the following information:

- Name of organization, name of lead person for the project, contact information.
- Name of project or program the grant will be used for.
- Grant dollar amount requested.
- Explanation of project/program and goals of the organization for the project/program.
- Approximate youth impact (# of youth being impacted by project).
- How does your project associate with the target areas of [insert issue areas from needs assessment]?
- Will the project proceed without the grant?
- Will the project proceed without the full grant amount?
- What is the budget of the project/program?
- What other means of fundraising have been or will be used?
- Obligations for follow-up after grant has been awarded.

Other than the application, your YAC can request that a grant applicant present their project to your YAC in-person at a grantmaking meeting, submit a video with their application or provide any other means of relaying their project to your group. These other means of requesting information are especially helpful when you may be interested in a proposed grant and more information is needed before making a decision.

### Announce Your YAC is Accepting Grant Applications or Proposals.

Once your YAC is ready to accept applications and proposals, it is vital to make sure your entire community is aware.

Using your YAC and community foundation's means of communication and networks, share that your YAC's grant cycle is in motion. Here is a sample caption for a grant application announcement:

*"The [insert foundation or fund title] is pleased to announce that the [insert name of YAC] is accepting grant applications for the [insert year/month/season] grant cycle. Projects or programs that directly impact the betterment of youth in target areas of [insert target areas] within the [insert community/region] are encouraged to apply. Applications are due [insert date] and can be sent to [insert email address] or mailed to [insert mailing address]. Find the application here: [insert link to application]. Please reach out to [insert YAC advisor name] with any questions at [insert contact information]."*

If your YAC is taking part in proactive grantmaking, encourage your YAC to make a list of groups in their network to notify about the grant application. Consider emailing the organization with the link to the application or sharing a one-pager that includes a QR code to the application link.

## Go Through the Applications or Proposals With Your YAC

As a YAC advisor, there are a few items to prepare before your YAC takes part in a grantmaking meeting:

**Collect all applications and proposals:** Compile every application or proposal you received from the public and make copies for your records. Knowing who and where documents came from is important.

**Sort through applications and proposals:** Depending on how many applications or proposals you received, sorting them could help a grantmaking meeting go smoother. You could sort the applications by the need they target, requested dollar amount, youth impact size or any other category.

**Invite grant applicants or proposal contacts to your grantmaking meeting:** If your YAC requested that all applications or proposals be presented in person or virtually by the applicant group, make sure to inform those who need to attend of the time and location of your meeting and what will be expected of them. Be as transparent as possible.

## Decide Recipients

With your YAC, discuss the pros and cons of granting towards each application or proposal. Think about

- Grant dollar amount requested.
- How the project/program fits into targeting youth needs in your community.
- Approximate youth impact (# of youth being impacted by project).
- Is the project or program realistic, can it be done as described?
- Will the project proposed proceed without the grant?
- Will the project proposed proceed without the full grant amount?
- Is the project equitable, inclusive, and accessible?
- Obligations for follow-up after the grant has been awarded.

Your YAC may have the budget to grant towards more than one application or proposal. They may want to grant towards more than one, but not grant the total amount requested. Be sure to make a list of questions for applicants and contact them.

To ensure equity is at the center of your grantmaking, be sure to consider the following questions when deciding on a grant:

- Is our YAC's grantmaking process equitable in accessibility and availability? Can every nonprofit organization access our grant application and if not, can they contact us?
- Does the grant application we are reading create any barriers for other groups?
- Does the grant application we are reading give one population leverage over another?
- Could our YAC granting towards this project incite any inequity between groups of people?
- Does this grant highlight or deconstruct an issue in the community? (Are people going to learn about the issue, or is the project going to fight the issue?)
- Are youth, families, adults, or a mixture being impacted by the grant?

If your YAC's goals don't align with the grant applications, discuss the possibility of not granting all funds available and extending your grant cycle, reinvesting your funds into your endowment, having a request for proposals or other ideas.

Once your student leaders feel there has been enough discussion, vote on the grants that your group will be granting towards as a YAC. Make sure all voices and opinions have been heard. Push your YAC to consider all things when it comes to the grant recipients and their goals.

As a YAC Advisor, you typically will have to confirm the grant recipients and amounts with your community foundation. This often looks like writing a brief report of your YAC's grant decisions and sharing it with the foundation's board of trustees for final approval. Be sure to be informed of your foundation's policy regarding this.

## Notify Applicants

Formally contact all applicants and proposal senders about the status of their application or proposal. For those that will be receiving their requested funds, consider the following:

Dear [insert recipient],

*On behalf of the [insert YAC name], I am pleased to inform you that your project, [insert project name] was selected as a grant recipient in our most recent grant cycle. Thank you for applying for your requested funds and allowing our YAC to learn of your organization and its efforts.*

*Your organization applied for [insert amount] and will be granted ["the full amount" / insert other amount] Please contact [insert name] to discuss where your grant funds can be sent.*

*As your project is wrapping up, our YAC would seek a follow up on how your project went and how youth received your efforts. Please send a few pictures and a summary of how your project went, along with the final project budget to [insert email address].*

*Sincerely,*

[insert name]

For those that will not be receiving grant funds, consider the following:

Dear [insert name],

*On behalf of the [insert YAC name], I wish to inform you on the status of your ["grant application" / "proposal"] for the [insert project name]. Unfortunately, your application was not selected. We sincerely thank you for your ["application"/"proposal"] and for allowing our YAC to gain insight into the efforts and mission of your organization. If you would like feedback on the reasoning of our decision, please reach out.*

*Please do not hesitate to apply to our future grant cycles taking place in [insert time]. We would enjoy staying connected with your organization for future opportunities.*

*Thank you.*

*Sincerely,*

[insert name]

## Ask for a Follow Up

To understand how your YAC's grants are being used in the community, ask your nonprofit partners for a follow up. Depending on the timeline of their project, this may come quickly or over time. It's encouraging for a YAC to hear first-hand how grants are being used as they grow in their understanding of philanthropy. You might also be able to use follow up summaries as testimonials or social media content for your YAC or foundation.

## Evaluate the Grant(s)

As your YAC receives follow-ups from its recipients, evaluate the grant and its success as a group. It is helpful to know if the grants your YAC made aligned with your goals and mission. If they didn't, or if your grant turned out differently than expected, it is also helpful to know areas to improve on. Consider exploring the following questions:

- Did the grant recipient follow through on their intentions?
  - Yes. How do we know this?
  - No. How could we have seen this earlier, and are we satisfied with the unintended outcome?
- Was there more information we should have asked from our grant recipient before or after granting to them?
- What impact did this grant have on youth?
  - Was it a positive or negative impact?
- Are there any benefits for our YAC or our community to staying connected with the recipient organization?
  - Yes. How will we stay in contact?
- Is there anything else we need to note about this grant?

# Community Service Project

One of the YAC Best Practices is to conduct a minimum of two community service projects a year that:

- Benefit another group, organization or the community in relation to youth and families.
- Allow YACers to engage in communities to learn lessons that will be utilized in the real world.
- Develop applicable skills.
- Provide the opportunity to reflect on community needs.
- Recognize how efforts can make a difference while fostering personal development.

A community service project is a tangible and actionable time where YACers can make a positive impact on the lives of their peers. Depending on the responses of your YAC's needs assessment, your YAC should seek to conduct a service project in relation to the specific needs of your community.

In this section, we'll explore:

1. Community Service Targeted Towards Youth and Families
2. Plan a Community Service Project

## Community Service Targeted Towards Youth and Families

While your YAC plans its community service projects, it is important to make sure that it is directly impacting the betterment of youth lives in your community. In a YAC meeting or subcommittee meeting where your group hopes to plan its community service project, consider having a youth leader ask the following questions:



- Who would we like to help?
- Do we want a community service activity that is reoccurring or a one-time event?
  - If our event is reoccurring, can we commit to it each year?
- What kind of impact do we want to have?
- What skills would we like to gain?
- What organizations or groups might we partner with?
  - Do any of our nonprofit partners have a need for our help, and/or could we plan a project with them?
- How will we evaluate and reflect upon the service we've done?

Encourage your YAC to center their service project around needs presented in the most recent needs assessment. This will ensure that their efforts are timely and will be directly influencing a present need in their community. If the service project was decided on in a subcommittee meeting, be sure to have them present it to the full YAC so everyone is on the same page.

LTG provides project ideas that directly impact youth in community. Find examples that you can use or adapt here: [Learning to Give Service Projects Targeted Towards Youth](#)

## Equity in Community Service

When your YAC plans its youth service projects, encourage conversation on how their project is maintaining equity. Explore questions like:

- What will the immediate and lasting impacts of our project be?
- Are there any potential cautions we should take when completing this project?
- Have we consulted the audience or recipients of this project to see if this is really a need for them? Have we asked for their guidance on the best way to go about the project?
- Is our project raising any barrier or obstacle to another group?
- Is our project respectfully inclusive of races, genders and identities?
- Should we seek to be informed on a population's cultural norms before taking part in community service?

## Plan a Community Service Project

As you plan your service project, outline the following categories:

**Timeline:** When will our community service project take place? Will there be certain action items along the way that our YAC will need to accomplish? Outline necessary tasks in chronological order and with each task, assign a YAC member(s) that will oversee that part of the project, along with any needed contacts.

**Cost:** Will we need to budget for our community service project? Consider how much we can and want to spend on a project. Remember, our budget includes grants, food, supplies, fund development efforts and community service projects, along with any other items.

**Audience:** Who will be impacted by our community service project? How does our impact relate to the size of our audience? Is our audience focused on one specific area of our community?

**Support Needs:** Will we need to reach out for more support outside of we YAC?

LTG provides countless resources on community service planning and education on service that your YAC can utilize. Find community service planning resources below:

**[Open Doors to your Community:](#)** Learn about different ways you can open your time, talent, treasure, ties, and testimony to different parts of your community.

**[Projects Targeted Towards Youth:](#)** Discover project ideas that can impact youth in your community.

**[Toolkits:](#)** These toolkits explore different issue areas in your community that may be helpful if they are present in your community.



# Youth Fund Development

Fund development is a prolonged effort to build the endowment or capacity of an organization so that it will be able to carry out its goals into the future. It creates sustainable growth through relationships with donors who see the value of your organization and their contribution.

Community foundations in Michigan began involving young people in fund development when they were offered a challenge grant with a 2:1 match by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. The purpose of the grant—the Michigan Community Foundations Youth Project—was to both increase their unrestricted grantmaking assets and to engage youth in philanthropy by establishing endowed Youth Funds advised by YACs.

The Youth Fund is permanently endowed and invested to earn interest which is then used as a portion of payout for grants. To grow the fund, YACs take part in fund development so that they can, hopefully, make larger or more grants each grant cycle. Fund development differs from fundraising as fundraising is typically a one-time event where funds are raised for a timely purpose and are not invested for a prolonged goal.

For more information on endowments, check out [Endowment Building and Management | Learning to Give](#).

In this section, we'll explore:

1. Fund Development Process
2. Fund Development Follow Ups

## Fund Development Process

There are so many ways that a YAC can engage in fund development. This opportunity provides not only a chance to grow a YAC's endowment but also a time to inform your community about YAC and your foundation through highlighting efforts with potential and current donors.

The goal of fund development is not only to convince a donor to donate to your YAC but also to create a long-term relationship with a donor and your YAC. Keeping this in mind, it is important that during fund development, a YAC:

- Is professional.
- Works closely with its foundation and its network.
- Establishes goals.
- Is prepared for a long-term process of fund development.
- Knows key points about your YAC and its efforts when communicating with donors.

Donors in your community will be eager to donate if they are well-informed and have a clear understanding of what your YAC is doing. Because your community foundation is familiar with communicating with donors, it may be helpful to invite some of your staff or trustees to collaborate with your YAC on how they will partake in fund development.

Community foundation staff and trustees can help connect your YAC with past and prospective donors, create group presentations and assist with special fund development events. Be sure that the efforts are still youth-led and adult-supported.

## Equity in Fund Development

During fund development, YACers will be connecting with a diverse group of people with their own unique identities and backgrounds. When funding and money is introduced to a conversation, it is crucial to consider that everything your YAC does is done in an equitable manner.

Consider the following questions as your YAC takes part in fund development:

- Is the manner that we are doing fund development equitable to those we are seeking funding from? Should we explore other avenues for contacting donors?
- Are we asking donors for funding that are currently undergoing stressful circumstances? Should we abstain from contacting them this year?
- Are the individual YACers contacting donors the best members to do so, or should we consider personal ties and testimony when assigning roles?
- Do any of our donors hold strong partisan ties or advocate for specific ideas that could jeopardize the nonpartisanship of our YAC if we received funding from them?
- Is our fund development space a safe space for youth and donors?

## Planning Fund Development

Fund development, as previously stated, is a long-term practice that does not really “end” for a YAC, though it might look different each year.

At the beginning of the YAC calendar, one topic to start discussing is fund development. Ask a returning YACer to explain the *what*, *why* and *how* of fund development to your YAC. As a YAC, start to brainstorm what fund development might look like for that year. Ask questions like:

- What is important to consider during fund development this year?
- Has there been any updates in legislation we need to know about?
- What method do we want to use for fund development?
- What do we hope to accomplish and how much money do we wish to receive?

If you have a bigger group, have your YAC split into groups and think through what should go into a fund development plan for a year. Be specific with dollar amounts, donor numbers, events, and other items. Using as much detail as possible, ask that group to develop a plan split up by month. Within the plans, follow-ups and evaluation plans should be included.

If your group is struggling with ideas, some fund development projects might look like:

- Sending formal letters to a list of donors that explain your YAC’s efforts and mission and why you are focusing on fund development. If the donor is interested, ask that they return their donation to the foundation or schedule a meeting to discuss a possible donation. Invite donors to attend a meet-and-greet with your YAC after a period of time has passed since you first sent the letters. Have YACers follow up with donors who did not respond.
- Hosting an event at a local venue where past and potential donors are invited to meet your YAC and hear a presentation about your YAC’s efforts and mission. At the end of the event, provide attendees an opportunity to donate and stay connected with your YAC.

*Helpful Hint: One of the most effective ways to increase a YAC’s donors is to tap into your YAC’s network. Donors are often more willing to donate to an organization that they have personal ties to, so encourage your YACers to think creatively about people in their lives who might be passionate about supporting youth philanthropy.*

## Participating in Fund Development

After hearing all the ideas for fund development from your YAC, decide as a group which plan(s) of action your YAC will take. Make a formal list of goals for this year’s fund development plan and a timeline that your YAC will stick to.

A few ways to ensure your YAC has success in fund development are:

- Assign specific roles and deadlines to YAC members and plan a follow up date to ensure tasks are complete.
- Ensure all members understand their roles and other’s roles to hold each other accountable.
- Ensure all YAC members are aware of the goals of the Fund Development plan.

- Explore ideas of professionalism, trustworthiness and integrity with your YAC.
- Have a clear definition of why your YAC is asking donors for funds.

When discussing YAC with donors, consider highlighting the [Ten Reasons to Give](#) document.

Other planning resources used in the past can be found below:

[Fund Development Overview](#)

[Fund Development Plan](#)

## Fund Development Follow Ups

For every donor contacted within your Fund Development efforts, you should complete some sort of follow up as a YAC.

For new donors or previous donors that donated again, be sure to send a thank you and a reminder of what their funds are going towards. Share contact information and social media resources so that they can stay up to date on the efforts of your YAC. Also provide information on filing their donation for tax-exemption. Typically, donations are tax exempt, but check in with your foundation to learn more about specific guidelines.

For donors that you contacted and expressed that they have decided not to donate, thank them for their time and remind them that your YAC is always accepting donations if they change their mind. Share contact information and social media resources in the case they wish to stay up to date on your YAC's efforts.

Below are a template and example thank-you letter written by 2021 Mawby Intern, Rachel Chambers.

[YAC Donor Thank You Letter Template](#)

[YAC Donor Thank You Letter Example](#)

# YAC Member Development

Every YAC is unique in its efforts based on the community it serves and its leadership. However, in order to grow, every YACer should keep striving to develop their skills and understanding of philanthropy. As members come and go, ensuring the returning members have a firm understanding to share with new members is key to keeping everyone informed and engaged.

In this section, we'll explore:

1. Commitment to YAC vs. Engagement in YAC
2. Leadership Development
3. Facilitation Training
4. Joining the MCFYP Committee

## Commitment vs. Engagement

YACs function best when members attend meetings and are involved in meetings. It is the hope that YACers are committed and engaged in YAC. As a group, you can more effectively make commitment and engagement a norm if expectations are clear from the start and there is a group-wide understanding of what one's role is as a YAC member.

First, define commitment and engagement as a group and discuss why they are important. Here are some base definitions you can add to:

**Commitment:** The aspect of attending every meeting and dedicating the time you are responsible for to your YAC and other related activities.

**Engagement:** Not only showing up and dedicating your time and effort but putting effort to enhance the meeting in your own way. Taking part in discussions and adding feedback towards topics.

Explore with your YAC real-life examples of commitment and engagement. The table below has some examples:

Commitment	Both	Engagement
Showing up to each meeting	Showing up to every meeting and taking part in each one	Adding feedback towards topics
Completing necessary paperwork	Gives accurate opinions on grants that were read	Giving opinion and feedback of grants to full group
Reading your grants	Always attends related YAC events and includes everyone while doing so	Looking to make a difference while working on a service project
Attending service projects	Takes initiative and follows through	Takes initiative
Attend optional activities	Always goes that extra "mile" for the YAC and succeeds	Tries to involve others

*Remember This:* In encouraging commitment and engagement, keep equity in mind. Some youth may have external reasons that they cannot be as committed or engaged as they hope they could be. Be sure to be open and understanding with youth regarding these circumstances. As a YAC, discuss equity within your group and how you hope to keep an equitable focus within commitment and engagement.

## Leadership Development

Youth leadership supports youth in growing their ability to know their strengths and challenges and how to use each of them. Youth leadership develops a young person's self-esteem and motivations while helping them to set goals and dreams for the people they lead and their own life.

Every young person can be a leader. Within your YAC, you probably have members that resemble what society defines as leaders- they lead conversation, facilitate meetings, hear the voices of others and help develop plans for the group. These are all great leadership qualities, but there are so many more! To help determine the leadership styles of your group you can use this [exercise](#) by WE.



Developing leadership skills within your YAC creates a domino effect. The members of your YAC take new skills and apply them in their daily lives at school, sports and other committees. To get leadership discussions flowing, consider:

- Asking members of your foundation's board to speak to at one of your meetings to answer questions about leadership.
- Invite a youth leadership training organization to one of your meetings for a workshop.
- Have a roundtable discussion about leadership methods your YACers are already using.

## Implementing a YAC Board

Within your YAC, you are encouraged to have your group elect an executive board. As a YAC advisor, having an executive board to help with facilitation and management to divide up all the responsibilities of overseeing a YAC is helpful. Having youth members lead your YAC will allow for more youth engagement and initiative within your YAC.

As far as electing roles, this can be done towards the end of the YAC calendar or at the beginning of the YAC calendar. If your YAC invites new members to the last meeting of the year, it might be helpful to have them meet your council and get an idea of who their fellow members are and then vote on an e-board in the fall. Or you might find it better to elect your board without new members present.

The following roles are common within a YAC:

### **President (or Co-Chairs if your YAC decides to have two presidents):**

- Facilitates executive board meetings and YAC meetings.
- Maintains contact with organization advisor.
- Serves as a spokesperson for the organization.

### **Vice President:**

- Assumes the duties of the President in their absence.



- Helps to manage the executive board (development and helps ensure organizations tasks are achieved).
- Facilitates election of officers at election meetings.
- Implements icebreakers and group bonding ideas.

**Secretary:**

- Keeps a record of all members of the organization.
- Prepares an agenda with support for all meetings.
- Notifies all members of meetings.
- Maintains attendance at all meetings.

**Treasurer:**

- Serves as chair of the finance committee.
- Keeps all financial records of the organizations.
- Prepare annual budget with support.
- Prepares and submits financials reports where applicable.

**Social Media Chair:**

- Creates and posts content for YAC social media page.
- Includes YAC input for ideas on social media.
- Verifies all content with YAC advisor before posting.
- Notifies audience about events, efforts, grant cycles, RFP, etc.

**Responsibilities of all council members:**

- Represents organization at official functions.
- Provides encouragement and motivation to fellow officers and members.
- Remains fair and impartial during organization decision making process.
- When there are bias/strong feelings on a particular matter/conflict of interest that person should abstain from voting.

In order to divide up focus areas and responsibilities within your YAC, beyond having an e-board, consider also dividing up members into subcommittees that focus on one topic of your YAC's efforts. By having a committee that helps in planning and developing certain activities to later share and include the rest of the group on, your YAC may be able to be more efficient and spark interest from members for certain topics.

**Possible committees:**

- Community Service
- Marketing/Public Relations
- Recruitment
- Fund Development

\*When in committee meetings, officer titles of the overall board cannot utilize leverage or hierarchal privilege. The chair of the committee is in charge.

### Equity in Having a YAC Board

In the process of recruiting YAC officers, consider if your YAC's process is equitable in all standpoints. Not every officer should have similar personal identifiers, nor should every officer bring the same perspective. When considering how your YAC board is put together, explore the following ideas:

- What makes someone eligible to be on the board, and are these equitable requirements?
  - Attendance history
  - Age/grade/time spent in YAC
  - Involvement in YAC in the past
  - Leadership experience outside of YAC
- Does the role an officer is nominated for fit their goals and skills, and/or will it require them to grow in certain areas?
- Does your board include individuals with different backgrounds, identities, leadership styles and perspectives?
- Is the size of our board reasonable for the size of our YAC?
- Have the responsibilities of each position been clearly outlined and are they understood by each officer?
- Youth officers may require guidance and leeway in how to lead and facilitate- are your officers well supported?
- Are there understood and available resources for your officers if they seek to grow and learn more about their position?

## Facilitation Training

As your YAC holds meetings, both youth and YAC advisors have a role in facilitating the time spent together with members. YAC meetings are to be mainly led by youth or youth officers in your YAC, and the advisor serves as a guide or resource to lean on as YACers converse and figure things out. As an advisor, it is important to note that young people may not be equipped on how to facilitate a meeting or lead a large group conversation. Be aware of the comfortability of your youth in these spaces and ensure they are equipped with the skills and resources to do what is being asked of them.

### Youth Facilitation

Whether it's a youth member or youth officer in your YAC (often a co-chair or president) facilitating a YAC meeting, ensure that they are equipped to lead a meeting. If things go as planned, a meeting should feel conversational, and many youth voices should be heard.

### YAC Advisor Facilitation

YAC advisors have a different facilitation role than youth in a YAC meeting, but nonetheless important in ensuring your YAC meets its goals and obligations in each meeting. Be sure to know the difference between facilitating and directing.

**Facilitating:** Leading a group in conversation and topical matters through guiding and thought-provoking questions. A facilitator often speaks the least out of everyone in the room and interjects with the purposes of providing more context, steering the group toward a consensus, or just supporting the conversation. Facilitating gives those in the room opportunity to speak and be heard by the rest of the room.

**Directing:** Leading a meeting through speaking and informing an audience on specific topics. Usually, directing a meeting is needed when the audience is unfamiliar with tasks at hand. However, solely directing an audience and *telling* them what to do and the answer to unknowns can lead to disengagement.

There is a proper balance to an advisor's role in a meeting. If your YAC needs direction, give it, but be sure to leave space for wondering, questioning, and brainstorming. If there is a topic you are sharing about and believe a youth could inform their peers on that topic, ask them to speak. Open the floor to anyone with information or background on a topic to share what they know and correct if needed.

Check out the [YAC Facilitation Guide](#) for more details on facilitating a YAC meeting from both the advisor and youth perspectives.

# YAC Civic and Community Engagement

YAC members are already engaged in their communities through philanthropic efforts. As your YAC integrates its efforts with the needs of your area, it is helpful to know how to participate in civic and community engagement within and outside of a YAC atmosphere. By being informed on how to best approach grantmaking and service in spaces where differing opinions and ties are present, your YACers can best engage with citizens in a respectful but knowledgeable manner.

In this section, we will explore:

1. Community Engagement
2. Youth Interaction with your Community Foundation
3. Guidelines and Policies for Working with Youth
4. Critical Conversations with Youth
5. Civic Engagement
6. Public Policy and Youth Advocacy

*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.” - Margaret Mead*

## Community Engagement

Engaging with one's community can take on many different appearances. For a young person, this may look like joining a club, playing a sport, going to youth group, or volunteering at a library, as well as many other activities.

"Community" is a very inclusive word. Throughout this guide, "community" refers to the geographic region that your YAC represents and the young people that live there. This section takes on the same definition but examines "community" even further to take on an individual lens for each young person. A young person's individual community might include their peers, teachers, mentors, family and friends while their geographic community includes *everyone*. For a YACer, the YAC is also included in their personal community.



Engaging with one's personal community helps to create a sense of belonging and purpose. When young people have a community to call their own, they grow their passions and tune into what they find important.

### Barriers to Community Engagement with Youth

When considering how young people can be engaged in their personal communities, understand that barriers exist that can make it difficult. Within your YAC, acknowledging that there are barriers creates an empathy-filled environment that will allow everyone to understand that community engagement, though great, comes with challenges. With your YAC, have a youth member lead a discussion about the barriers members are facing with community engagement. Also discuss how your YAC may bring awareness to these barriers that youth face and create change in your community. Here are some examples of barriers:

- Structural barriers
  - Transportation- I can't get to engagement opportunities.
  - Food- How can I give to the hungry if I struggle with food insecurity? How can I take part in activities without the fuel to get me through the day?
  - Equipment- I don't have the equipment to play this sport, therefore I cannot play.
  - Policies- Young people aren't allowed in this space, or I can't pay the dues to take part in this activity.
- Barriers from resistance by adults
  - Negative attitudes and stereotypes about young people.
  - Plans that are inaccessible to young people, that may overlap with school hours.
  - A lack of resources allocated to young peoples' projects.
- Barriers from resistance by young people
  - Repeating what adults have said or guessing what adults want to hear.
  - Refusing to participate: "That's not my job."

- Scheduling conflicts.
- Experience barriers
  - Youth aren't as experienced as adults.
  - Young people have a limited voice in meetings.
  - Making meetings and events appealing to young people.
  - The same young people are always invited.
  - Young people to try something that didn't work in the past; they're not allowed to fail.
  - Young people may not be aware of unspoken norms.
  - There isn't an understanding of how young people can contribute.
- Demographic barriers
  - There is a racial gap between younger and older generations.
  - Young people with harder socioeconomic situations cannot participate as easily.

*Here's an Idea:* At the 2022 YAC Advisor Spring Training, youth advocate Julia Cuneo was invited to facilitate a discussion on effective adult allyship. If your YAC is interested in examining youth-led community engagement that challenges barriers and would benefit from a workshop, check out [Julia's resources](#) for this (Cuneo, 2022).

## Youth Interaction with Your Community Foundation or Fund

The connection between your YAC and your community foundation should be interactive in both formal and informal environments, just as an adult committee might be.

To create ties between the foundation and YAC, consider inviting adult members of your foundation to a meet-and-greet with your YAC with facilitated questions. This would be a great chance for YACers to learn about the roles and work happening within the broader foundation and for foundation staff to learn about youth leadership.

As your YAC and foundation members get to know one another, doors open for project support, networking, brainstorming, reviews, and other areas where your groups can work together. Your YACers are technically “members” of your foundation as council members, so they should be treated in the same regard.

Also, YAC projects and initiatives should be highlighted in your foundation’s annual report, newsletters, and other communications, all the more reason to keep connected.

## Youth Representation on a Foundation Board

Your community is made up of all demographics, including varied ages. If a community foundation is making key decisions on grants and initiatives in a community, youth voice should be included in the discussion. To achieve this, and be in agreement with YAC Best Practice # 10, a YAC member can serve as a voting member or trustee on your community foundation board. More than one youth member can sit on your board, and they do not need to be an officer in your YAC. A YAC student can sit on either the grant committee or board of your foundation, or both.

*Did you know?* In 1998, the “Michigan Youth on Boards” Bill, drafted by YACers, was passed, allowing youth ages 16-17 years old to be voting members on nonprofit boards (Johnson Center, 2015).

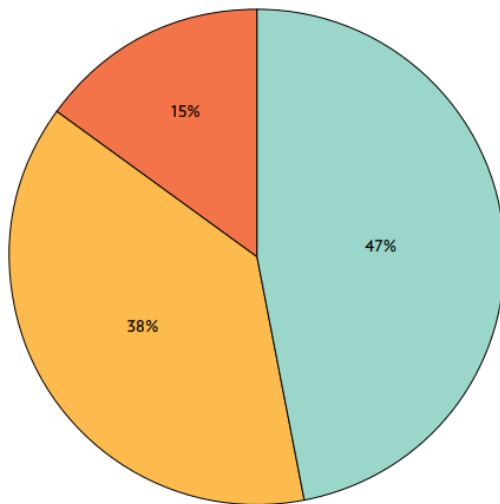
Be sure that your foundation is well informed on the importance of youth representation on their board and/or grant committee. Youth on the board should be treated as a fellow board member or trustee, not a tokenized youth trustee.

With all this, it is important to keep the parents/guardians of youth trustees or members informed of their involvement with your foundation as this is a dominantly adult space. You might find it beneficial to invite a youth board member’s parent/guardian to meet with your foundation board, so they know who their child is serving with.

*Did you know?* In 2021, CMF reported that 42% of YACs had one or more voting members on their community foundation board of trustees in the years 2019-2020. CMF also reported that 22% of YACs have one or more voting members on their community foundation grant committee. Find more information about these results and other YAC statistics in the [2021 YAC Databook](#).

### YAC Representation and Voting on the Board of Trustees

Responses: 60



- 47% Yes, one or more YAC members serve as full voting members on the Board.
- 38% No, YAC members have no involvement with Board meetings.
- 15% YAC members participate in Board meetings but are not permitted to vote.

Among 46 students identified as voting members on their foundation's board across all respondents, respondents indicated that 22 of the students (or 48%) belong to a historically underrepresented racial, ethnic, cultural or religious group.

*In 2019-20, the percentage of students belonging to a historically underrepresented group was 54%.*



## Guidelines and Policies for Working with Youth

As a YAC advisor, it is important to know your position as an adult and how other adults should interact with your YAC. See [these guidelines](#) for adults, including advisors, working with YACs. A few notes about the document:

- These documents were made for YAC advisors and their interaction with youth at the foundation level.
- *Disclaimer:* This document was created in partnership with attorneys and while these are the best practices, they are not mandatory for each YAC. They are however, recommended.
- Consider adapting these documents for times when other adults are being invited into your YAC's space.

### Other Useful Documents:

Other documents below may be useful as you work with youth.

#### [Volunteer Background Check Consent Form](#)

For any volunteer that works with your YAC, a background check may be needed. This is to be certain as possible that the adults entering a YAC environment are safe and trustworthy as they work with youth.

#### [Volunteer Vehicle Use Agreement](#)

Any time that a youth is being driven by someone other than their parent or themselves, it is important that the driver is aware of what is expected of them as they drive youth from one place to another. For example, a volunteer should not drive a minor alone, nor should they have a history of license infractions or accidents.

#### [Youth Code of Conduct](#)

When an adult is engaging with youth in any organized space, they should be aware and agree to expectations of interacting with youth. Youth should also be aware of what expected behavior is of them in a formal space. A code of conduct document may be helpful so that everyone is on the same page.

## Critical Conversations with Youth

Everyone involved in YAC brings different perspectives and lived experiences. Some youth may feel strongly for one cause while others feel strongly for another. Remember, youth having these discussions is *good* as they learn how to speak respectfully, openly, and empathetically with others about things they disagree on. Even if a conversation isn't regarding a disagreement but rather just a heavy topic, it's also valuable that your youth know the boundaries and comfortability of those in the room for entering into specific conversations.



If, and when, your YAC enters hard conversations, allow your YACers to lead and facilitate the conversation, and only step in if things get out of hand (ex/ someone speaks in an unacceptable manner for your space).

Consider the following points if you feel your YAC will be discussing a hard topic:

- At the beginning of every meeting, run through expectations of how conversations should go. Highlight topics of your meeting being a safe space, listening and not interrupting, using critical thinking, challenging a topic and not a person, and steering clear of comments that target an individual.
- If youth are having a hard time not interrupting, consider a “speaking stick” so that only someone with the stick is allowed to speak. You could use a marker or pen if needed.
- If the conversation is divided, perhaps on a certain grant application, have your youth facilitator make a pros/cons list that everyone can view so ideas are recorded and visible.

Learning to Give provides this resource on having hard conversations: [Critical Conversations | Learning to Give](#)

## Civic Engagement

As a philanthropic council, your YAC is already engaging in civic engagement. Civic engagement can take on many forms but often happens in spaces linked to government, business, and philanthropy. Our civic duty includes working together for the good of all by taking on responsibilities that include staying informed, uplifting issues, checking in on our friends, speaking against injustice, volunteering, and voting.

To best engage with your community, look to align your YAC's efforts with timely needs, putting your focus on news, happenings, and events going on. By keeping your YAC informed on the happenings of your community, they can better involve themselves in civic efforts within and outside of your YAC. This might look like:

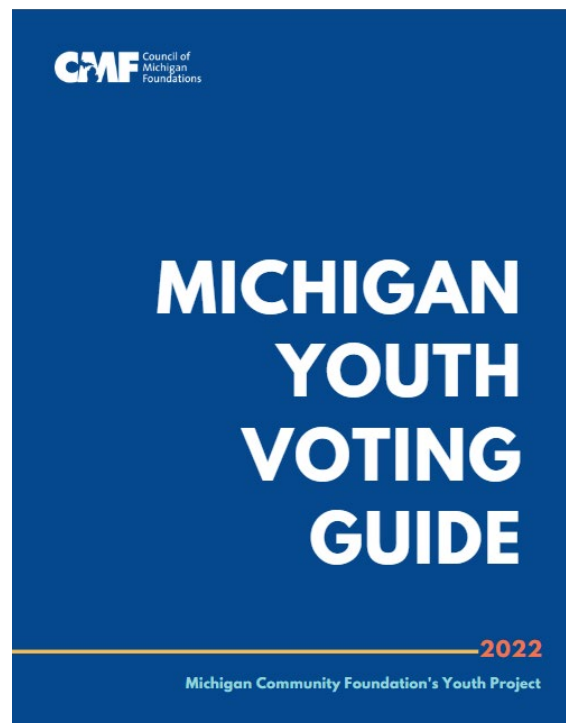
- Having one of your YAC officers do a briefing at the beginning of each YAC meeting about happenings within your community
- Invite local volunteer organizations to share their support needs with your YAC each month so your members can stay involved, even if your whole YAC can't volunteer
- Include your YAC's interest in community engagement in your foundation's communications in case any foundation member knows of opportunities
- Attending city council or townhall meetings to stay informed and speak up on issues in your community
- Starting a YAC-led campaign based on a need presented in the needs assessment

## Youth Voters Guide

Even though some youth are not old enough to vote, they can still play a key role in civic action within a community. CMF in partnership with the Michigan Community Foundations Youth Project created the 2022 Youth Voters Guide. This guide, though dated 2022, includes multiple resources for youth to learn about being civically engaged in their communities.

Consider going through this guide with your youth each year and discussing your YAC's role in being civically engaged in your community. CMF revisits and updates this guide every couple of years, so be sure to check for updated versions on their website.

Find the guide in [CMF's Knowledge Center](#).



## Public Policy and Youth Advocacy

### What is public policy and advocacy?

Public policy is the principles on which social laws are based. It is the rules and laws that govern behavior vs. just policies. Public policy is often proposed to solve relevant and real-world problems, in everything from traffic laws to governance of public schools to civil rights. Public policy that concerns your YAC may be local, regional, or national.

YACers as civically engaged youth in society can help advocate for public policy that betters not only youth, but all people.

In grantmaking, advocacy can take many forms, including:

1. Funding groups that partake in advocacy through hosting convenings, doing research, or supporting bringing awareness to a cause.
2. Using the philanthropy voice as a means of advocacy through giving of time, talent, ties, treasure, and testimony

Advocacy includes ways to publicly support a particular cause or policy. It helps to lift the voices of those not easily heard.

Advocacy can also be to make systemic change. For example, a grant can fund bringing in a mental health worker to a school for an assembly, but advocating could take it a step further to have that position become a long-term role that is funded through the school systems, looking at the system (school) more than just the issue (mental health).

In all that a YAC does, it is vital to ensure that everything advocated for is of nonpartisan nature and the needs being spoken on do not tie to one specific partisan motive. In the nonprofit sector, nonpartisanship ensures that we can reach and align with needs without political boundary. Foundations are not to take political stances, nor are YACs.

### Understanding Advocacy

As a YAC, you are already taking part in advocacy. In learning about and acting in accordance with the needs presented in your needs assessment, you are advocating for unmet or underserved needs in your community. In granting towards any initiative or cause for youth, your YAC is advocating for areas of youth betterment. In doing community service, your YAC is advocating for whatever need you serve towards. By knowing the power a YAC has to advocate, it is also important to know how to advocate to make the biggest and best impact possible. As a YAC, explore the ways your YAC can advocate best by exploring the passions and experiences of your members. We can best advocate for things that we are knowledgeable about and passionate about, so ask your YAC, “What are we experts in?”

Here are some ideas:

- We know about the struggles youth face with college planning and career exploration. We can advocate for initiatives that provide more exposure and resources.

- Students in our community struggle with scholarship displacement when they go to college. We want to advocate with the community foundation that awards scholarships for methods on how to avoid displacement.
- Our community faces behavioral struggles and has a high expulsion rate in schools. We want to keep youth in schools and want to advocate for initiatives that target the source of the problem.
- Our YAC really values education on philanthropy, so we want to advocate for implementing philanthropy lessons into our schools' curriculums.
- Literacy rates in our community are low. We want to advocate for age appropriate free or reduced cost reading programs to be provided to every household in our county.

## Social Media for YAC

Keeping your YAC, foundation, and community informed of YAC efforts is helpful to maintain support and awareness. One way to do so is through social media. Popular social media platforms are always changing in the youth atmosphere, but the following platforms are recommended for both youth and adult audiences:

- Instagram
- LinkedIn

Some YACs appoint a member as their social media or communications chair to oversee the social media posts related to YAC, and this member holds a position on the board of the YAC. If this is something your YAC is interested in, consider connecting this student with whoever oversees the social media of your foundation so that they can collaborate or align on content. A YAC might seek to follow their community foundation's social media guidelines.

Regarding the social media content that your YAC posts, consider sharing:

- Key dates for grant cycles, events, service projects, and recruiting
- Pictures from meetings and events (with consent of those in them)
- Campaign material your YAC is involved in
- Educational material about youth philanthropy (check out Learning to Give for resources on this)
- Member highlights
- Nonprofit partners

Be sure to keep your content community-friendly by sticking to inclusive terminology. Your YAC's content should reflect **nonpartisanship, cultural competency, inclusion, and professionalism**. Remember, social media content represents the voice behind your YAC, so be sure to converse with your YAC about what is important for your audience to see.

In your social media efforts, report inappropriate behavior (by the page or connections posted onto/tagged to the page) and discuss what the policies and boundaries are for your YAC. If tagging organizations in a post, be sure to tag official pages and not personal ones. Be sure that everyone in your YAC has signed a social media consent form for their image to be used. If they decline, keep their image from your page.

To advertise your social media platforms, encourage recruits, grant applicants, donors, foundation trustees, community members, and others to give your pages a follow. At any event you host as a YAC, sharing usernames and handles can bring awareness to YAC, also.

Follow the MCFYP Instagram page at [mcfyp\\_official](#) for an example.

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## Appendix B- Resources

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## Philanthropy Terms and Definitions

**Philanthropy:** The giving of time, talent, ties, testimony, or treasure. The effort or inclination to increase the well-being of humankind, by charitable aid or donations. The literal translation is “love of mankind/humankind.”

**Foundation:** An organization, recognized by the IRS as a nonprofit with the goal of enhancing the quality of life through grantmaking.

**Community Foundation:** A foundation developed to enhance the quality of life for its local community through grantmaking with support from local community members as donors, volunteers, and board members.

**Endowment:** A permanent fund of money held by an institution for the purpose of providing long-term support of a specific purpose. The funds originate from the donations of individuals, corporations, and other entities in order to provide a long-term funding structure for the organization's work.

**Fund Development:** The raising of money to serve a nonprofit's mission, oftentimes through the development of relationships with individuals, corporations, foundations, and other entities that donate money, goods, and services.

**Grantmaking:** The process of providing grants to nonprofit organizations from a formal grantmaking organization.

**Challenge Grant:** A type of grant used to incentivize donors to give by matching gifts to provide a multiplying effect for the original gift. Otherwise known as a "matching grant."

**Proactive Grantmaking:** The process by which a grant maker, after assessing the needs of its community, requests proposals for grants on a targeted issue or works with a specific organization to positively affect its community.

**Grant Cycle:** The time period when a foundation decides on a group of grant applications. Foundations may offer only one grant cycle per year or multiple grant cycles, with specific grant application and announcement deadlines throughout the year.

**RFP (Request For Proposals):** An invitation for organizations to submit grant proposals targeted at the types of programs or issues that the grant maker wants to support.

**Youth Empowerment:** The process by which young people gain the ability and authority to make decisions and implement change in their own lives and the lives of other people.

**PR (Public Relations):** The use of various communication tools (i.e. press releases, interviews, social media, etc.) aimed at promoting the mission and/or work of an organization.

**Needs Assessments:** The methods of determining the areas of greatest concern within a community to better inform the grantmaking and service priorities of an organization.

**Community Service:** The volunteer work done by individuals and organizations to benefit the community.

**Council of Michigan Foundations (CMF):** The Council of Michigan Foundations (CMF) is a statewide philanthropy-serving organization, of which many Michigan community foundations are members. CMF leads, strengthens and supports Michigan's community of philanthropy by emboldening and equipping CMF members in the relentless pursuit of equitable systems and inclusive diversity, fortifying the field through public policy action, fostering the growth of current and future philanthropy leaders and advancing exemplary philanthropic practices and field expertise.

**Donor:** A person who contributes money, goods, or services to a nonprofit organization, public charity or fund.

**Form 990:** The annual federal return form that tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organizations must file with the IRS.

**Nonprofit Organization:** A term describing the IRS designation of an organization whose income is not used for the benefit or private gain of people with an interest in the organization. The organizational income must be used solely to support its charitable purpose and operations.

## DEI Terms and Definitions

**Diversity:** The understanding that each individual is unique and recognizing our individual differences. The practice of including people from a range of different demographic backgrounds.

**Equality:** Equality alludes to identical apportionment. When we talk about equality, we are talking about equal sharing and exact division. The state of being equal, especially in status, rights and opportunities.

**Equity:** represents fairness and actions to achieve equality of outcomes and access to opportunities. This involves recognizing that systems and policies have put particular groups at a disadvantage, in regard to race, gender, socioeconomics and other factors and demographics. When we say equity, we refer to the qualities of justness, fairness, impartiality, and even-handedness.

**Inclusion:** The process of seeking out and consider the perspectives of diverse individuals to overcome current and historic systemic barriers and exclusion, thus ensuring that all individuals have equitable opportunity to participate in society and philanthropy.

**Intersectionality:** A methodology to examine how biological, social, and cultural categories like gender, race, class, ability, and others interact on multiple levels. Intersectionality allows us to consider the ways that parts of people are bound and relate within cultural patterns of oppression/ privilege.

**LGBTQA+:** An acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, asexual, and more. These terms are used to describe a person's sexual orientation or gender identity (*Defining LGBTQIA+*).

**Race:** A social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on physical appearance, ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, cultural history, and ethnic classification.

**Social Identity:** The parts of a person's identity from belonging to particular groups including age, ethnicity, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, veteran status, education, marriage status, familiar status and socioeconomic status.

**Pronouns:** The linguistic tools used to refer to people. These should never be assumed.