

2023 Annual Report



California Youth
Leadership Forum
for Students with
Disabilities (YLF)



Prepared by
CCEPD Staff



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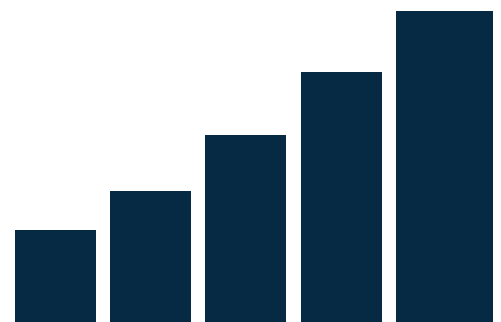
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Overview

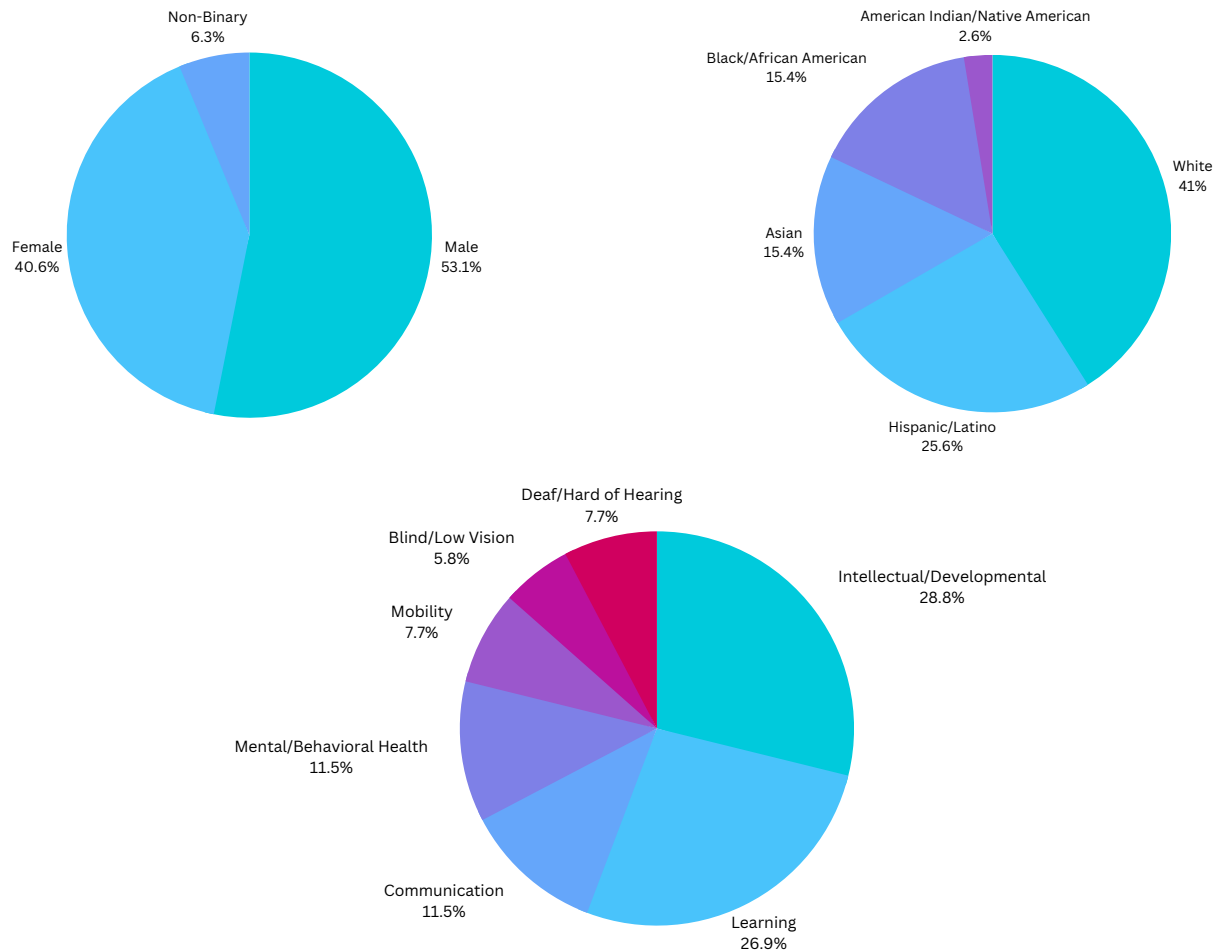
As a national program in over 30 states, the Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) began in California and is a statewide self-advocacy and leadership development program created for high school students with disabilities. Concentrated on pre-employment transition services, delegates engage in leadership activities focused on post-secondary education, career readiness, independent living, financial literacy, and self-advocacy.

Activities throughout the week are designed to build delegates' confidence and self-advocacy skills to set goals for their lives, education and training, and employment.

The program has been held in person at California State University, Sacramento since 1992. YLF 2023 was held through a hybrid virtual/in-person format July 13-19, 2023. Following three days of virtual programming, participants journeyed to California State University, Sacramento, for the remaining three days of the program. The program in 2024 will return to be fully in-person.



Demographics



In 2023, 32 delegates (17 males, 13 females, 2 non-binary) had the opportunity to learn from peers, guest speakers, and volunteer staff members, many of whom are YLF alumni themselves. Many delegates shared overlaps within demographic categories, such as multiple disabilities and ethnicities. For example, disabilities included intellectual/developmental (15), learning (14), communication (6), and mental/behavioral health (6), mobility (4), deaf/hard of hearing (4) and blind/low vision (3). Ethnicities included white (16), Hispanic/Latino (10), Asian (6), Black/African American (6), and American Indian/Native American (1). Most delegates had recently finished their junior year (14), while 11 recently finished their sophomore year, and 7 recently finished their senior year. Delegates resided as south as San Diego County and as north as Del Norte County.

Year-Round Activities



YLF Alumni Workshop

Life after High School: Exploring the transition

Where & When

Virtually held on Zoom
Register now - <https://bit.ly/3qnJA1c>

Friday, September 8, 2023
03:30 PM - 04:30 PM

About this workshop

Are you starting to think about life after high school and not sure what's next? Maybe you just graduated this year and are figuring out what you want to do next? Join us for a workshop on how to prepare for life after high school: Exploring the transition

Presented by

  DAYLE MCINTOSH CENTER

In addition to the six-day summer program, additional activities have been developed for YLF alumni in recent years. YLF hosted a pre-YLF mixer for delegates and families to get to know one another, answer questions and get excited about YLF. Virtual alumni workshops are held following YLF covering topics such as transition after high school, money management, apprenticeships/internships, career planning and work-based learning. Social activities and peer mentoring opportunities have also been offered. Additionally, all alumni are given the chance to participate in the national Association of Youth Leadership Forums events.

Administrative Changes

In 2023, YLF welcomed a new YLF Project Manager, Matt Baker. The transition to new leadership provided the opportunity for YLF partners to evaluate and modernize the program. Since 2020, virtual components of the program have been introduced, and they are continuously being enhanced. YLF partners worked to update the workbooks and facilitation plans for staff, streamline, and condense informational forms, and create a new logo and are introducing an online application process for 2024 YLF delegate and staff applicants. Marketing and outreach are also a continuing top priority for 2024.



YLF 2023 Snapshot



In 2023, the hybrid program was held July 13-19, 2023. Virtual programming sessions included presentations and panels on topics like Disability History: The Story of Us, Discovering Resources to Reach our Goals, and Education and Career. Panels and presentations were made up of members of the disability community, including former alumni of the program sharing their personal journeys and experiences. The virtual program also included a virtual talent show where delegates had the chance to share their talents and build self-confidence. Following three days of virtual programming, participants journeyed to California State University, Sacramento, for the remaining three days of the program. In-Person programming included a presentation on Disability Identity: Where do I fit in?, and a panel on Community Participation and Legislative Advocacy. Delegates also had the opportunity to do a college tour, enjoy a BBQ dinner, attend a disability movie night, socialize at a dance, visit the CA state Capitol and attend a networking luncheon and graduation ceremony with our 2023 sponsors and partners. All YLF 2023 activities supported the participants' goals of self-advocacy and taking an active role in their transition after high school for success in post-secondary education goals, career and employment opportunities, and independent living.

2023 Delegate Testimonials



"I will advocate more not just for myself, but the entire disability community as much as I can."

- Lynn, Orange County, 17

"YLF has given me clarity and a different outlook on life. I plan on doing more research in how being disabled intersects with other communities."

- Maren, Los Angeles County, 15

"I see my future differently now that I have more options."

- Peter, Yuba County, 16

"My biggest takeaway from YLF is the large amount of support organizations that are available."

- Liam, Ventura County, 17



2023 Outcomes

In 2023, the delegate evaluation survey was updated to measure outcomes and growth in key concepts of self-advocacy and understanding of supports needed to live independently. Youth completed a before and after survey measuring their growth in areas such as disability history, self-advocacy, resources, career goals and supports needed, and independent living skills.

The highest improvements for youth were the understanding of the disability rights movement and its leaders, knowledge about the American with Disabilities Act, and knowing about their local independent living center. Youth acknowledged now knowing many youth or adults with disabilities. YLF helps connect youth with mentors to help establish belonging and community.

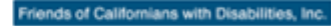
Other survey questions focused on confidence levels of decision-making and interpersonal communications with others. Youth also indicated that they are comfortable making decisions, expressing their opinions, and are capable as others in society. Another goal of the program is to develop youth's confidence in interpersonal communications, which is being met.

As for career goals and needed support, youth acknowledged increased knowledge in locating resources. While chosen professions remained unclear, program administrators have determined this is due to youth evaluating their initial career goals and training needs after exposure to additional opportunities.

YLF 2023

Partners & Sponsors

**Special thanks to our 2023
YLF Partners + Sponsors:**



A very special thank you to our YLF 2023 Partners and Sponsors. Without your commitment and support we could not do the amazing work we do supporting transition age youth! Thanks to Connected to Lead, Association of California State Employees with Disabilities (ACSED), California Department of Social Services (CDSS), California Department of Education (CDE), California Workforce Development Board (CWDB), Department of Rehabilitation (DOR), State Independent Living Council (SILC), Friends Inc., Employment Development Department (EDD), Disability Rights California (DRC), Department of Developmental Services (DDS), Northrop Grumman, Molina Healthcare, Elevance Health and Strapping Store.

Regional YLF Events and YLF 2024

In addition to the statewide summer program and year-round activities, regional YLF pilot events are being developed in Sacramento, Los Angeles, and San Diego. The California Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities staff have been working with various local partners to develop programming for these events. These weekend programs will include many of the same curriculum topics covered in the traditional summer program, but in a condensed manner. While not a prerequisite or feeder into the statewide program, regional YLF delegates will have the opportunity to apply for the summer program. Sacramento will hold a regional event on October 20-22, 2023. San Diego and Los Angeles partners plan to introduce their respective programs in early 2024.

YLF 2024 Planning is underway. YLF 2024 is tentatively scheduled for July 14-20, 2024. YLF 2024 is planning to be held fully in-person.



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YOUR FUTURE



Keynote Speaker
Kyla Aquino-Irving



MC
Matt Baker



Keynote Speaker
Rosemary McDonnell

TH LEADERSHIP FORUM FOR STUDENTS

WITH DISABILITIES



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