

Hosting a Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) in 5 Steps

Before you can decide the level of involvement you want to have you will need to find out if your state has a YLF. You can do that by contacting the [National Association of Youth Leadership Forums \(AYLF\)](#). Once on the website click on the map and find out if your state has a YLF. Once you have determined that, you can decide what roles may be available for your CIL.

If your state does not have a YLF or if it is not following the AYLF established guiding principles, then you can contact AYLF to let them know you would like to start one that would be willing to follow the guiding principles.

Here is a great way to get started:

- 1. Join the AYLF monthly phone calls.** These calls will give you an idea of what other programs are doing in different states. You can learn how each state is carrying out the program and more about the planning process. You can also visit their website to see what materials you may need to start the program.
- 2. Find Funding.** This may be a challenge since you will have to obtain funding for this event. The YLF program ensures that youth with disabilities can fully participate without cost to them. There are multiple ways to fund this event including:
 - Centers for Independent Living can use Subchapter (Part) C and Subchapter (Part) B (depending on how it is to be allocated),
 - Private funding,
 - Sponsorships,
 - Donations,
 - Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Innovation and Expansion (I&E),
 - Developmental Disabilities Councils,
 - Grants, foundations, and more
- 3. Organize a Team.** You will need a team of creative, energetic, and dedicated people who can assist in planning the forum. The team should be led by individuals with disabilities. YLF alumni are also great leaders/members. Adding other youth with disabilities to this team is also valuable as are organizations/partners that might be able to physically, and possibly financially, assist. These organizations and partners need to understand the philosophy behind the program and the critical importance of consumer control, youth-led decisions.
- 4. Find support for developing and conducting a YLF.**
 - Reach out to the AYLF for guidance.
 - Have your CIL request free Peer Mentoring (technical assistance) from the Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL). A knowledgeable, experienced mentor will come to your center and support you

or you may decide to visit and observe their program. <https://april-rural.org/index.php/peer-to-peer/peer-to-peer-info>

- Use your team members and YLF in other states to provide information and guidance. Be sure to spend effort early in the process to develop a step by step timeline that will keep you focused and on track.

5. Develop an evaluation tool. As you are planning, be sure to include evaluation measures. This will help you identify the outcomes and will also improve the program. This type of data will also help you attract future funders.

You can conduct evaluations many ways. Try electronic surveys, paper surveys, saying statements and doing thumbs up and thumbs down voting, and more. You may want to do a pre/post survey with the participants to see their progress.

Make sure you know your purpose of evaluating. What information do you want to collect? Is it for funders? Did the students learn anything, if so what? Were they satisfied with the program, and did they have an opportunity to provide input to improve the program? Do you want to look at outcome measures? Did the new information provided change the student's life?

To learn more about YLF, view the YLF Introduction factsheet.



A publication of Independent Living Research Utilization (ILRU), developed in collaboration with the Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL) and Utah State University Center for Persons with Disabilities, with input from CIL youth program staff and consumers. Support for development of this report was provided by the U.S. Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201 under grant number 90ILTA0001. Grantees undertaking projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official Administration for Community Living policy.

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