



COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the Center on Youth Voice, Youth Choice?

The Center on Youth Voice, Youth Choice (“the Center” or “CYVYC,” <https://youth-voice.org>) was founded in Fall of 2020 through a grant from the Administration on Community Living. During the course of this five-year grant, we are supporting states to promote alternatives to guardianship, so that fewer youth with intellectual or developmental disabilities (IDD) have legal guardians. We also are giving youth with IDD opportunities to lead efforts in their States to promote alternatives to guardianship. We are currently seeking to recruit 3 new State Teams to be part of our Community of Practice and to support Youth Ambassadors in those states to be leaders for change.

What is a State Team?

A State Team is a group of organizations and leaders who are working to promote guardianship alternatives in their state. State Teams should include a broad range of stakeholders and members should be racially, culturally, and geographically diverse. We believe that many State Teams already exist in one form or another. If you already have a coalition that has been working on alternatives to guardianship (for example, a coalition working on a Supported Decision-Making initiative), that group can be your proposed State Team. Each team should have one lead or “backbone” organization, which will be responsible for moving the initiative forward. Finally, and importantly, State Teams must be co-led by a youth with IDD aged 14-26. It is okay if you do not yet know who this youth will be when you apply, as long as you are committed to recruiting and co-leading with them.

What is the Community of Practice?

The Community of Practice is a learning community made up of CYVYC State Teams that supports state-level systems change, innovation, and identification of best practices. The Community of Practice supports and informs the work of each individual State Team, creates a platform for the sharing of resources, and allows the State Teams to learn from each other and problem-solve together. It also provides an opportunity for State Teams to receive mentorship from the State Teams established in prior years of the grant.

Over the course of five years, the Center will establish and facilitate the Community of Practice in partnership with at least 11 State Teams. In our first year, we selected and provided technical assistance to 3 State Teams (from Georgia, Vermont, and Wisconsin). In our second year, we selected 5 additional State Teams (from Indiana, Michigan, New Jersey, Oregon, and South Carolina). In our third year, we will be selecting State Teams from 3 additional states.

How does the Community of Practice Work?

The Community of Practice provides both cross-state learning opportunities and access to the Center's individualized technical assistance for each State Team. Through the Community of Practice activities, the State Teams will consult directly with the Center's leading national experts on advancing alternatives to guardianship, including Supported Decision-Making. The Community of Practice is intended to share and build on existing state-level initiatives. It aims to break down silos, amplify work already being done, and provide targeted assistance to states as they strategize about how to have a greater impact.

More specifically:

- The Community of Practice meets online quarterly for shared learning opportunities and discussion. This means that the State Teams regularly come together for a facilitated conversation around their work on alternatives to guardianship. Subject matter experts from the Center participate in these meetings to share ideas, facilitate discussion, and identify themes, including where there might be a need for training, research, and additional conversation. These meetings are an important way to identify and share best practices to reduce the possibility of guardianship for youth ages 14-26.
- Each State Team will develop and implement a customized action plan with support from the Center. Action plans will address outreach, goals and objectives, policy and practice change, coalition-building, sharing of knowledge, and sustainability.
- State Teams will provide individualized support to Youth Ambassadors (see below) from their state as they participate in a training series on leadership and alternatives to guardianship and contribute to implementing the state action plans. This will include identifying a specific State Team liaison who will coordinate support for the Youth Ambassadors. This liaison is expected to attend the virtual Youth Ambassador training sessions and post-curriculum monthly meetings with CYVYC staff and other youth.
- State Teams will also receive individualized phone or video-based support monthly for the first 12 months and at least every other month for 12 additional months as they develop goals and implement an action plan.

Who are Youth Ambassadors?

Youth Ambassadors are youth who have IDD and are between the ages of 14 and 26. They live in the states that have Center-supported States Teams, and they work with their State Team to implement each of their action plans. They are individuals who want to be leaders, educate others, and make improvements within their state so more youth can avoid guardianship and access alternatives. Over the five-year grant, the Center will provide a total of 44 Youth Ambassadors training, mentoring, and leadership development on guardianship alternatives. For more information on the Youth Ambassadors and their work, you can visit: <https://youth-voice.org/youth-ambassadors/>.

Youth Ambassadors are the most important part of the CYVYC project. For this reason, the application asks for ideas for how your state would recruit and support Youth Ambassadors. The goal in Year 3 is to recruit, support, and engage a total of 12 Youth Ambassadors across the 3 new State Teams.

Why Should You Consider Applying to be a State Team?

There are many benefits to being selected as a State Team:

- State Teams receive free and extensive individualized technical assistance from the Center's national experts, including support in developing and implementing customized action plans for their states. This technical assistance is facilitated by the Center for Public Representation (CPR).
- State Teams get to learn from each other as part of a Community of Practice. This includes receiving mentorship from the prior year's cohort of State Teams.
- State Team's Youth Ambassadors receive:
 - Extensive training on self-advocacy, leadership, and alternatives to guardianship from the Self Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE), Institute for Community Inclusion at UMass Boston (ICI), the Georgia Advocacy Office, and experts from the Harvard Law School Project on Disability. This will include a virtual curriculum made up of 13 sessions, which are 90 minutes each.
 - Ongoing and regular office hours for those Youth Ambassadors who want to discuss any questions about the training series or other project issues.
 - Post-curriculum monthly meetings where Youth Ambassadors collaborate and continue to connect with youth leaders from other states.
 - Financial support from CYVYC in the form of a \$750 stipend for their participation in this project.

How are the State Teams Selected?

To apply to participate, please fill out our online application [here](#).

Applications are due by 5 PM PST on February 24, 2023.

We urge you to keep your answers brief, as there will also be an interview process for finalists. A selection committee made up of Center on Youth Voice, Youth Choice partners, other affiliates, and people with IDD will review and score applications, consider geographical diversity, and conduct informal video interviews with some of the applicants. We hope to announce the selection of the third group of State Teams in April 2023.

Where Can You Learn More About CYVYC?

You can visit <https://youth-voice.org> to learn more about CYVYC, its State Teams, and the Youth Ambassadors and their curriculum. Come see videos showcasing Youth Ambassador projects, promising practices identified with the help of our State Teams, and other resources on advancing alternatives to guardianship for youth with IDD.

Do You Have Any Questions?

If you have any questions about the application process or need any accommodations, please contact Morgan Whitlatch, mwhitlatch@cpr-ma.org, 202-596-6116.