



Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (CYBHI)

California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Office of Health Equity (OHE) Youth Co-Lab (YCL)

Purpose:

The Youth Co-Lab is an internal committee comprised of 12 youth (ages 14 to 25) and 2 youth leaders (ages 21 to 25) who will partner with CDPH-OHE for a co-designed three-year campaign. While all 14 youth members engage in content review, the leaders assist with operations, workshops, outreach, and recruitment in partnership with CDPH-OHE to co-design the CYBHI public education and change campaign. The Youth Co-Lab will ensure that the unique voices, needs, and ideas held by California's youth are integrated into all aspects of the campaign. Youth members will serve as contracted employees (KAIP) and will assist CDPH with ensuring campaign alignment with the initiative goal of youth engagement and co-design. The Youth Co-Lab will prioritize self-determination and collaborative decision-making for youth to drive the creative messaging for media-generated content, to ultimately enact meaningful change in existing social norms around mental health; impacting community readiness to seek support services.

Member Duties:

Youth members engage with media content alignment, offering insights for the co-designed campaign through content suggestions, media review, and participation in evaluation surveys. Leaders facilitate Youth Co-Lab meetings, support peers' unique voices, and model positive behavior. The content review involves feedback on State-wide campaign media materials and discussions on personal identity and mental health topics.

Outreach, Application, and Selection Process:

CDPH will partner with the Social Changery, the Department of Rehabilitation, and the Sacramento Youth Mental Health committee to build awareness of the Youth Co-Lab membership opportunity. Though all youth are welcome to apply for membership, CDPH-OHE aims to amplify the voices of youth from marginalized communities including African American/Black, Asian and Pacific Islander, Latino, Native American/Indigenous, LGBTQ+, current and former foster youth, justice-involved youth, transition age youth, persons with disabilities, and those who live in rural regions in California. Prospective candidates must complete a membership application available on the CDPH-OHE website.

Member Composition and Retention:

CDPH-OHE designed the Youth Co-Lab with equity and a three-year retention goal, utilizing strategies such as motivation assessment, fair compensation, incentives, professional growth, safety agreements, school service hours, and targeted youth-led initiatives. Staff selection emphasizes youth development experience, identity alignment, and constant collaboration for innovative retention approaches. Maintaining a complete committee is crucial for campaign success. To ensure continuity, CDPH-OHE will establish a waitlist of 10 spots for potential youth members, reviewed quarterly.

Membership Requirements:

The Youth Co-Lab shall be comprised of children and youth from California, prioritizing representation of the campaign's five priority populations and underserved groups. A flexible commitment of 8 hours per month for youth members and 12 hours for leaders is expected. For those under 18 years old, a school-acquired work permit is mandatory, and background checks are required for youth members 18 years and older, including leaders working with the youth co-lab members. This requirement is in alignment with California labor laws. The hiring and onboarding process for youth members will be conducted by KAIP in conjunction with CDPH-OHE. The youth will be employees of KAIP; thus, KAIP will be conducting oversight and ensuring compliance with all youth labor laws as prescribed by California Law.

Timeline

The Co-Lab program materials are currently under final review. The webpage and application launch will occur in September 2023, with employment offer letters anticipated in October 2023, including the waitlist candidates.