



SPECIFIC WAYS TO INVOLVE YOUNG PEOPLE

Boards of Directors:

Young people make great board members. Even though they may not have years of formal experience, youth offer intelligence, creative thinking, and a valuable outlook on the world that is seldom introduced into the governance of organizations. It's best to have at least two youth board members with voting privileges.

Youth Advisory Boards:

Youth Advisory Boards have no governing authority but they offer regular feedback and advice to an organization. Young people are uniquely qualified to say what works for young people.

Task Force:

Task Forces are short-term entities created for a specific purpose. Usually, task forces are designed to address specific issues such as violence in the schools, or other hot topics that are given funding or cause to meet by an organization designed to address the need.

On Policy Committees:

Young people can take part in advising on specific policies regarding program: dress code, reimbursement policy, hiring, budgeting, or other pertinent policy or organizational issues. Policy committees, unlike many advisory boards, have an institutionalized role in the organization, according to the organization's bylaws and serve in a significant advisory capacity in all areas.

Youth Councils:

Youth Councils are groups of young people that exist on their own, outside of a regular Board of Directors and other adult governing structures. Youth Councils govern themselves and decide what projects they will work on.

Young People on "Adult" advisory boards:

Include young people on an advisory board of adults.

Personnel Advisory Boards:

As an adult, ask 3 or 4 young people that you respect to help you process the issues your organization is considering about. Ask them to give you good advice about how things are going in the organization and how you can do your job better.

As staff:

Young people can be great staff members. Think about how you can hire young people. Young people can be given responsibility of planning an event or program. Be sure to not ask them to perform above their abilities or inappropriate to their certain skill level.



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As a hiring team:

Have young people help hire new staff members. This is especially important when hiring for administration or program staff.

Have a Peace Table:

Set up a table or a space in your program or school for young people to talk about conflicts that are happening between them. It is an agreed safe space without fighting, where they try to work it out on their own.

As Peer Mediators:

Young people trained in meditation skills can negotiate conflicts in programs and schools. This allows young people to help one another through conflicts, improving their own conflict resolution skills and offering a peer perspective.

Have a youth court:

Young people can have a voice within the program or school decision making and disciplinary action.

As Budget Reviewers:

Ask young people to help you think about the budget, how it is designed and implemented, and advise you on possible budget cuts. Everyone involved will gain a greater overview of the organization's financial situation. Awareness of budget restraints and allowances also helps young people participate in organizational planning.

Peer mentors:

Young people can mentor other young people to help them learn new skills. For example, how to be a member of a Board.

- Young people with younger people –
A young person can mentor someone who is younger than them and be their friend.
- Young people with adults –
Young people and adults can meet once a week and share their knowledge or have one-time meetings where young people teach adults.

As advocates:

Young people can often be more powerful advocates for youth involvement than adults. They understand youth involvement differently, and people sometimes listen to them more than adults who advocate for youth involvement. Young people can go to public meetings and hearings like school committee meetings.

Youth Speakers Bureaus:



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Youth speakers will act as advocates, but will also speak at conferences and make presentations at events. This group can promote themselves as experts or storytellers to be called on for youth issues.

Speak Outs:

This is an opportunity for young people to tell adults what they think and how they feel on a particular topic. It is a powerful tool for tapping into the opinions and feelings of young people. One example is to ask a panel the following four questions:

- 1) What do you love about being _____?
- 2) What is really tough about being _____?
- 3) Imagine the perfect ally for you - someone who is outside your group but advocates for and supports your group.
- 4) What's the one thing you never want said about _____ again?

Youth Action Forums:

Youth Action Forums are community-based methods of needs assessment and problem solving. Forums bring youth together to discuss the social problems facing their communities and challenges them to find methods of addressing these problems.

As Trainers:

Young people can train other young people and/or adults. For instance at Youth on Board, young people are Assistant Trainers who assist Lead Trainers, or act as Lead Trainers themselves, in implementing curriculum and leading workshops on topics related to youth in decision making and youth/adult relationships for various organizations.

Young people on Adult Grant-making committees:

Grant-making committee consists of a group of people that make decisions on how to allocate funds to community projects. Young people can be involved in the grant selection process.

Youth Peer Grant Programs:

In Youth Peer Grant programs, a group of young people make decisions on how to allocate funds to community projects. Young people are involved in the entire grant selection process from proposals to selection of grant recipients.