



Over the past decade, Youth Leadership Institute (YLI) has refined a Youth Councils model that gives young people the skills and opportunities to take on community problems that are important to them. YLI has supported dozens of Youth Councils working on a range of issues – economic justice; alcohol, tobacco, and other drug prevention; nutrition and physical activity; educational equity; violence prevention; community development; and diversity and tolerance.

THE YLI YOUTH COUNCIL MODEL

Core Program Stages Description

Readiness	YLI assesses the readiness of the target community, including potential partner organizations (schools, community-based nonprofits, faith organizations, etc.), to support the work of a Youth Council.
Recruitment	YLI recruits members of the Youth Council, with a high priority placed on engaging young people who are marginalized by race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, geography, sexual orientation, or other factors.
Training	YLI trains Youth Council members in a set of skills that will be critical to their work, including research and data analysis, policy development, advocacy strategy, community organizing theory and practice, media advocacy, and project planning and evaluation.
Stakeholder Involvement	Students conduct meetings with key stakeholders, such as elected officials and other policymakers, staff at key foundations and community organizations, educators, and other community leaders.
Community Assessment	Youth Council uses a variety of quantitative and qualitative methods – surveys, focus groups, interviews, direct observation, town hall meetings, review and analysis of existing data sources – to examine community needs and define its focus issue.
Peer Engagement	Youth Council members seek to engage their peers in dialogue and project participation via regular bulletins and updates, presentations, convenings, and social events.
Action Planning	Based on the community assessment, as well as input from stakeholders and peers, the Youth Council develops its policy objective, related goals, and a plan of action.
Media Advocacy	Youth Council develops and implements media advocacy strategies to build public awareness of and support for its targeted policy change.
Policy Implementation & Monitoring	Youth Council works with local officials to ensure youth input in the implementation of policy or system change and establishes a process for monitoring and enforcement.
Reflection & Evaluation	Youth Council assesses its efforts, experiences, and impact, and identifies ways to share lessons with youth-led groups in other communities.

YLI YOUTH COUNCIL MODEL

Advancing the Youth Leadership Field Through Program Innovation

YLI specializes in developing, testing, and refining youth leadership program models, then seeding their wide replication across communities facing diverse challenges. Some of YLI's highlights in program replication include:

- Working with the Friday Night Live system, the largest youth leadership and development network in California, to integrate a model for youth-led decision-making in alcohol, tobacco, drug, and violence prevention in more than 50 counties statewide.
- Developing a nationally recognized "Prevention Youth Council" model for youth-led public policy advocacy, and supporting dozens of counties with local adaptation.
- As a partnership with community foundations across North Carolina, supporting dozens of localities in implementing YLI's youth philanthropy model.

Founded in 1989 with the mission of building communities where young people and their adult allies come together to create positive social change, YLI continues to develop innovative support mechanisms for young people. The outcome is that young people are taking leadership roles in addressing the critical issues facing them and their communities, including an important array of health concerns: alcohol, tobacco and other drug use; nutrition and obesity; teen pregnancy; youth violence; and self-esteem and marginalization issues among young women.

With training and ongoing support from YLI, young people identify and advocate for policy-, systems-, and community-level solutions that address urgent health challenges and promote young people's positive and productive development. YLI seeks to create systems for institutions such as health, education, prevention, employment, self-sufficiency, businesses, government, and schools that more effectively address the health and developmental needs of youth, while also better reflecting the unique concerns and viewpoints of young people and their adult allies.

YLI's work encompasses community-based programs that target three Bay Area counties (San Francisco, Marin, and San Mateo), Fresno and Merced County in the Central Valley, and Long Beach and the Eastern Coachella Valley in Southern California, as well as national training, evaluation and consulting services that seek to foster adaptation of evidence-based "best practices" in youth leadership across California and nationwide.

YLI's broad experience in program replication has enabled the institution to build capacity in providing customized training and support that enables youth across California and nationally to assume new leadership roles in creating safer, healthier community environments.