



CALIFORNIA YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM
FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

2016 YLF INFORMATIONAL GUIDE

**Attention Parents/Guardians or High
School Juniors & Seniors with
Disabilities!!!**

Read information below to apply to the California Youth Leadership Forum for Students with Disabilities (YLF)!

What is the YLF?

- YLF is an exciting and free five-day leadership development program **for selected students with disabilities** that provides information on everything from assistive technology to resources that can help high school students transition to independent living, college, and/or employment. There is no cost to you for your child to attend.
- In 1992, the California Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities (CGCEPD) created the YLF after the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which created unprecedented opportunities for young people with disabilities to fully develop as positive, contributing members of our society. The YLF enables them to learn from each other and from successful adults with disabilities.

In January 2012, the CGCEPD's name changed to the [California Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities](#) (CCEPD). The CCEPD is required by legislation to coordinate an annual event for youth with disabilities and has voted to adopt the YLF for the past three years from 2013-2015 and again for the next three years from 2016-2018.

Through the CCEPD leadership, the YLF is administrated and produced with a collaborative partnership of state agencies, non-profit organizations and private industry. This group, along with volunteers that include YLF alumni create a fun-filled learning experience for the future leaders of tomorrow.

- 2016 will be the 25th year of the YLF, which also has been replicated by 30 other states and territories.
- At YLF, delegates create a “Personal Leadership Plan” to help reach their future education, independent living, and career goals. Youth meet and interact with state and national leaders with disabilities, which may include celebrities, politicians, entertainers, and other adult role models with disabilities. Participants also make lifelong friendships with other delegates and alumni from all over the state, and connections with mentors with disabilities who can support them. The forum takes place for one week each summer, typically in July, in the Sacramento region. Delegates and staff may stay at a college dormitory or at a hotel.
- The YLF is often the first time some participants have been away from their parent/guardian as a caregiver. The YLF has highly skilled, trained staff on-site who work closely with the parent/guardian in advance and during the week of the forum to ensure the delegate’s accessibility needs are met. Delegates learn the basics of managing their own personal care assistant or direct support staff; critical skills for future independent living.

Who can attend?

- This amazing opportunity is only available to: California residents who are high school students in the 11th or 12th grade (during the 2015-2016 school year) with a disability. Some age and grade exceptions may be made (including high school sophomores and students in the adult transition or 18-22 programs). Disabilities may include but not limited to: hearing, intellectual/developmental, learning, mental/behavioral health, mobility and visual. Students must have demonstrated leadership potential in school and in the community.

How are students selected?

- Once applications are submitted, they are reviewed by the Student Selection Committee and applicants are contacted to arrange an interview.
- Local interviews will take place during February and/or March of 2016. The Student Selection Committee makes final selections by April.
- All applicants will be notified through mail and/or email. Approximately 50 students are chosen to attend each year.

What happens if selected to attend the YLF?

- Delegates are asked to fill out a confirmation form and provide additional information, including reasonable accommodation needs.
- The YLF staff sends more detailed information about the forum's schedule and activities in May, June, and early July.
- All appropriate expenses are paid by the YLF sponsors and partners. This includes travel, lodging, food, and accommodations such as sign language interpreters, personal care attendants, direct support staff, and document translation (alternate formats).

What happens after attending YLF?

- The YLF Alumni are required to share what they have learned at YLF with not only their parent or guardian, but also by giving presentations at their high schools and other community organizations, encouraging other students to apply for future YLFs, and sharing knowledge gained at the YLF with friends. The CCEPD office and past YLF Alumni will continue to communicate with each alumni in their local areas to participate in various leadership activities. They will receive guidance and information through the YLF's Alumni Activities Committee.
- At the YLF's comprehensive Resource Fair, delegates will learn about a variety of services, organizations and groups that may be a great asset to their success.
- The YLF prepares students with disabilities in California to be stronger leaders and to give back to their communities.

How do you apply?

1. Visit www.dor.ca.gov/YLF to download the application.
2. E-mail the application, essay and letter of recommendation(s) to YLF@dor.ca.gov.
Print and sign the signature page (page 7), then mail it to:

**YLF/CCEPD
721 Capitol Mall, Sixth Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814**

Complete application packet must include:

- Completed application
- Essay
- One or two letters of Recommendation

Incomplete applications may not be accepted.

Applications must be submitted electronically. If additional assistance in submitting the application is needed, please contact us at YLF@dor.ca.gov or at (855) 894-3436. For relay services please call 711.

If you are assisting a student with the application, please be sure they are clear on what YLF is and why **they** want to participate.

What is the deadline to apply?

Complete application packet must be e-mailed by **January 15, 2016**, and the signature page must be post-marked by **January 15, 2016**.

Who do you contact for further information or questions?

(855) 894-3436 (voice) • For relay services please call 711 • YLF@dor.ca.gov (email)

Here is what a few YLF Alumni have to say about their experience at YLF:

“YLF was the first time I was ever exposed to positive role models with disabilities, which completely gave me a new perspective of my life.”

“I have gotten so much information, enlightenment if not more. I am grateful to have this experience because I know it is super competitive. I am honored. My parents and family are proud. I am grateful to the staff that helped me. I have soaked it up like a sponge, and I will squeeze it all out when I get home!”

“I came to YLF and I was like, what am I getting myself into? I was not aware of this community and how closer we all are. YLF is a family, we are a family. I had no idea that there are so many different ways and different programs to be involved in. I am inspired to take charge and try to get things fixed and done right in my community. I will not let my music stay inside me, I will let it out!”

“The lessons I have learned at YLF, and continue to learn through the [alumni network] have allowed me to develop and succeed, not just as a person, but as a person with a disability.”

“I attended YLF in 1995. It was a life-changing experience. What I learned at YLF made me expect more of myself and challenge society to see disability as a natural part of life. This resulted in launching my career in public policy and advocacy, and it would not have happened if not for the California Youth Leadership Forum.”