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Preparing Youth to Participate In State Policy Making

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*Requested by
Assemblymember Wilmer Amina Carter*

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C A L I F O R N I A

R E S E A R C H B U R E A U

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By Lisa K. Foster, MSW, MPA

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Internet Access

This report is also available through the Internet at the California State Library's home page (www.library.ca.gov) under California Research Bureau Reports. The report is formatted for printing pages on both sides (back to back) so some pages are intentionally left blank.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Young people can provide unique insights and perspectives that even the most diligent adult policymakers and advocates are unable to offer. Adding youth voices to the policymaking process, and encouraging youth participation in developing the policies that directly affect them, can result in more thoughtful and effective policy.

Over the past five years the California Research Bureau (CRB) has presented public policy forums that have included the voices of young people sharing their experiences and views about issues that affect them. Our experience at the CRB has found that young people need preparation, training, and support to be effective participants in policymaking and to ensure that the experience is a positive one for them. Other researchers support this view.¹

The CRB surveyed policymakers, youth, and the organizations that serve youth to explore how young people may best be prepared to effectively participate in state policymaking activities. This report presents information about how youth organizations currently prepare youth for their role. It also presents the perspectives of state policymakers on how youth can most effectively participate in the policymaking process, and describes how young people feel about their preparation and participation.

YOUTH-SERVING ORGANIZATIONS

Fourteen youth organizations responded to the survey of organizations that engage youth in state policy activities (see Appendix A for a list of organizations). Their responses reflect the following five themes:

- These organizations engage in a wide range of state policy activities, from ongoing legislative advocacy and annual programs to ad-hoc events.
- Half of the organizations provide eight or more hours of preparation and training for youth prior to their participation in state policymaking activities, the remaining organizations generally provide less than three hours. Three organizations have developed written outlines or training curricula.
- The top three preparation and training activities are engaging in an informal discussion with youth, providing an orientation to state policy and legislation, and teaching youth to interview others for information. The top three skill-building activities are public speaking, problem solving, and critical thinking.
- There are several barriers and challenges to youth participation in state policymaking including getting youth to the policy table given conflicting demands on their time and activities. In addition, some policymakers are resistant to hearing and considering youth's views.
- Twelve of the organizations use both informal feedback from their participants and/or audience and written evaluations from youth participants as the primary methods of evaluation for their preparation activities. However, there is no

consensus among organizations about how to determine effectiveness for these activities.

STATE POLICYMAKERS

The responses of 58 policymakers to the survey of state policymakers reflect six themes:

- Youth input is important when developing policy on issues that affect young people. Youth should be invited into the policymaking process; for example, they should be included as presenters with adult researchers and program experts in policy forums.
- It is important to include youth from diverse backgrounds.
- Youth must be adequately prepared to participate effectively in policymaking. Specifically, they need to be familiar with the legislative process and know the policy area and its background to understand the context. They need to be trained in public speaking (to be clear and succinct) and understand the purpose of the forum, their audience, and time constraints.
- Policymakers are most interested in hearing from youth about their specific experiences and opinions in a policy context (for example, what they have learned, what they wish had been different, and what has helped them the most about a specific law or program). They are interested in their specific recommendations.
- Youth need to be focused and policy-relevant in their presentations. (Policymakers identified this factor as the most important for youth participating in policy activities.) Personal, compelling stories are important, but they must be tied to policy.
- Policymakers must provide youth with meaningful (not token) places at the policy table, and actually listen to and consider their experiences and opinions.

YOUNG PEOPLE FROM YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS

The CRB asked the organizations that participated in the youth organization survey to forward the youth survey to their youth members. The responses of the 50-plus youth who completed a youth survey reflect four themes:

- Youth want to be involved in policymaking, and they want more opportunities to participate.
- Youth have much to contribute; they want to be taken seriously and have their input considered. They also want to work in partnership with adults.
- Youth need and want more preparation, training, and practice related to all aspects of the policymaking process.

- Even if they feel their impact on policy has been minimal, youth feel that participation in the policymaking process has been a beneficial personal experience.

LINKING YOUTH VOICES TO STATE POLICY: OBSERVATIONS AND OPTIONS

Based on the survey responses, additional interviews and the literature, we offer some observations and options related to preparing and training youth to effectively participate in state policymaking.

The key to getting and keeping a seat at the policy table is preparation. Based on input from policymakers and youth, the following are specific preparation activities that appear to be necessary to give youth the ability to effectively participate in the state-level policymaking process:

- ✓ Instruction on the public policy process, such as the legislative and/or administrative process and timeframes
- ✓ Instruction on the specific policy area, including background (to understand the context) and issues
- ✓ Instruction on the purpose of the hearing, forum or other event, the audience, expected outcomes, and expectations of youth participants
- ✓ Training and practice in public speaking, including how to be clear and succinct
- ✓ Direction and coaching on how to effectively share personal experiences, including how to be focused and relate experience to policy

Following are some ways that youth organizations can target their training activities to help ensure that youth are prepared to effectively participate in state-level policymaking.

- Review their training activities to ensure that they include adequate preparation in the knowledge and skills identified on page 31.
- Share resources (such as basic training materials), ideas, and efforts to prepare youth with other youth organizations with similar goals.
- Develop common indicators of effectiveness for youth organizations to use across programs for evaluating their preparation and training activities.*
- Work with state policymakers to routinely include youth and to create structures to institutionalize youth participation (such as a State Youth Advisory Council).
- Partner with state policymakers to create an environment where youth voices are heard and respected. Youth organizations can promote and provide training for youth/adult partnerships.

* The California Center for Civic Participation and Youth Development has started to work in this area and plans to host an evaluation summit.

OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN POLICYMAKING

Young people are the decision-makers and leaders of the future. In the past few years there has been an increasing recognition that youth are able to make significant contributions and effectively participate in formulating policies and decisions that affect their lives.* According to the organizations that work with them, young people can provide unique insights and perspectives that even the most diligent adult policymakers and advocates are unable to offer. They can share what works and what doesn't for young people, and how the systems that serve them – including foster care, juvenile justice, mental health and education – can do a better job.

State policymakers – legislators and administration officials– create, implement, and administer a range of policies affecting young people and increasingly are interested in hearing from youth about these issues. Adding young people's voices to the policymaking process, and encouraging their participation in developing the policies that directly affect them, can result in more thoughtful and effective policy and programs.

Including youth in the policymaking process is becoming more common and institutionalized. In California this activity primarily occurs at the local level – over 100 youth commissions, committees, and advisory boards in cities and counties have added youth voices to the public decision-making process. At the state-level, several youth-serving organizations promote the active involvement of young people in policymaking. And, while California does not have a youth council or other formal mechanism to include youth in state-level policymaking, several other states have established administrative or legislative youth advisory councils.**

PREPARING YOUTH FOR EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION

Young people can be very effective in identifying problems and advocating for specific solutions that meet their needs. For example, California foster youth have successfully promoted the need to prepare more foster youth for college by expanding educational services and college grant programs.

However, youth effectiveness can be undermined when they are not adequately prepared to participate in public policy discussions. Their stories, while deeply moving, may not clearly link to policy changes. Suggestions that do not reflect a basic knowledge of the

* The terms “youth” and “young person” are used interchangeably in this report. The young people described in this report range from ages 11 to 21, most are ages 15-18.

** See *Involving Youth in Policymaking and Coordinating Youth Policy: State-Level Structures in California and Other States* (by L. Foster and others), California Research Bureau, 2005, available at <http://www.library.ca.gov/crb/05/05/05-005.pdf>.

issue may be discounted. And, the process may be frustrating and deeply disappointing for youth who expect quick responses to their input. Training is very important.*

Before youth can effectively participate in policy, they must receive training. The few circumstances when policymakers justifiably doubt the value of youth input occur when teens are placed in situations for which they are unprepared.

California Center for Civic Participation and Youth Development²

i have a lot to say just like any other youth i met but my problem is that i struggle in speaking up. i struggle in public speaking and talking to elders about the problems we have today. if only there was a way to help me feel comfortable and express [myself] then people will listen to my thoughts. therefore, the point i made was to show that you cannot just ask a question to a youth and expect them to know what they want to say. you have to guide them through if they are struggling in what they want to say. help us... or at least help me.

Youth Survey Respondent

BRINGING YOUNG PEOPLE TO THE POLICY TABLE

In 2005, the California Research Bureau and the California Council on Youth Relations convened five public policy forums to inform policymakers about how young people's experiences in the foster care, juvenile justice, and school systems affected their mental health. The youth also shared their perspectives on how best to help youth to become self-sufficient, contributing adults.

As a follow-up to these forums, participating youth developed ten recommendations on how mental health services can be improved by making basic changes in public service systems, and in the way therapists, case managers, and probation officers are trained to do their jobs.

The recommendations were packaged into a 12-minute DVD – *BRINGING YOUNG PEOPLE TO THE POLICY TABLE* – produced by YO!TV, a youth-run production team. (If you would like a copy of the DVD, contact Patricia Johnson at pjohnson@newamericamedia.org.)

The California Wellness Foundation funded this project.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

Over the past five years, the California Research Bureau (CRB) has presented a number of public policy forums that have included the voices of young people sharing their personal experiences and insights while addressing issues such as the impact of a parent's arrest, mental health services and homelessness. For the most part, their presentations have been moving and effective, although not always. In addition, we were concerned about how to appropriately assist youth who were reliving and presenting difficult and emotional experiences during these forums.

Based on this experience, we surveyed policymakers, youth and the organizations that serve youth to find out how young people may best be prepared to effectively participate in state policymaking activities.

This report presents information about how youth organizations currently prepare youth

* For purposes of this report, training is defined as providing instruction to build skills and information to build a knowledge base for the purpose of effectively participating in state policymaking.

to participate in state-level policymaking. It also presents the recommendations of state policymakers on how youth can most effectively participate, and the perspectives of young people about their preparation and participation.

We conducted three surveys to gather data, supplemented by interviews. We asked youth organizations about the type and intensity of the preparation or training they currently provide to the young people involved in their programs. We surveyed youth involved in those programs and state policymakers to identify the needs and expectations of both groups.

Based on the survey responses, interviews, and literature, we identify some options for organizations and policymakers related to creating opportunities and preparing for youth to effectively participate in state policymaking.

PREPARING YOUTH TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STATE POLICYMAKING PROCESS

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Young people want to be involved as change-makers in their lives, their families and their communities. They are disproportionately involved in and affected by the problems that beset communities and states – drugs, violence, poor education, lack of jobs – and they must be part of the solution.

Core Principles for Engaging Young People in Community Change³

Training is an essential component in all aspects of involving youth in the policy process. Good training maximizes the likelihood that the experience is positive and productive for both youth and adults... Too often youth members are invited to participate in an adult setting but are not provided with the necessary training and support to make a meaningful contribution.

The California Adolescent Health Collaborative⁴

For the purposes of this report, “participating in state policymaking” means engaging in social change through the state-level legislative and administrative processes that turn ideas into state policy. Participation consists of a range of activities including researching and developing proposals and educating legislators or state department officials about specific issues and advocating for needed services.

According to the Forum for Youth Investment and Impact Strategies, youth who are actively engaged in social change efforts generally have three core strengths.⁵

- Capacity: knowledge, leadership and action skills.
- Motivation: understanding and awareness of issues and root causes, systems, and strategies for change, commitment and a sense of responsibility.
- Opportunity: chances to act on passions, use skills, and generate change through relevant, sustained action.

We have found that young people require ongoing training and support to effectively engage in social change efforts. Other researchers and program directors corroborate this view.⁶ However, there are few studies that focus on how to best train youth to participate in policymaking at the *state level*. Most focus on the local community level, including the schools. In addition, while the literature consistently identifies the need for, and importance of, preparation and training, it generally does not identify the training content or specific types of training methods that should be provided.

Preparing youth for their specific involvement helps them in several ways and better ensures a positive experience for all involved. Youth can be more influential when they are familiar with an issue and are able to express their view in a policy context. In addition, when youth learn about their audience – what that audience expects and what to expect from them – they can more effectively deliver their message.

To engage meaningfully in decision-making, youth need necessary skills and knowledge. They need training on the policy process itself – how legislation is passed, implemented, and administered – and how to impact it. They need ongoing training and support while they learn new skills such as presentation and public speaking, facilitation, and engaging in collaborative processes.⁷ Other important skills necessary for effective civic action include research, critical thinking, and problem solving.⁸

SURVEY OF YOUTH-SERVING ORGANIZATIONS

Young people should have a real voice in their communities. They should have the chance to be advocates and policymakers, and to participate in the decisions that shape how they live, learn, work and play.

Youth Leadership Institute⁹

Several youth-serving organizations in California promote the active involvement of young people in the state-level policymaking process. For some organizations, this is their primary goal. However, most encourage state-level involvement in addition to preparing and supporting youth to participate in local government and community efforts to shape policy.

Organizations that work with youth generally agree that young people need to develop skills to effectively participate and influence policy. Many provide training in such areas as leadership, public speaking, research, and advocacy. They create opportunities for youth to shape policy through participating in hearings, boards, and commissions on the state and local levels. Some engage youth in focused policy projects such as supporting or opposing specific legislation.

Other organizations that work with youth take a less structured approach and focus their efforts on helping the youth convey what they – the youth – want to say and on providing youth access to present their views. Their intent is to present the “unpolished” voices of youth who are impacted by the systems shaped by state policy.

The CRB sent online surveys to 19 youth-serving organizations whose activities likely included preparing and supporting young people to participate in the state policymaking process. We asked them how they currently prepare young people for this task. Fourteen organizations returned completed surveys. These organizations and their missions are listed in Appendix A. (Some organizations that train youth in the state policymaking process are not represented as they did not return a survey.)

YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS

The CRB survey asked youth organizations to describe themselves. Most are private, non-profits although three are publicly funded. Four of the organizations list social justice (foster care, juvenile justice) as their primary purpose and four list youth leadership. Additional focuses include education, health/mental health, substance use, and self-sufficiency.

Only one seeks exclusively to influence state-level policy, 13 also seek to impact policy at the community level, and three also focus on the federal level.* Thirteen of the organizations operate statewide and one serves only Northern California.

Target Population

Most (11) of the organizations serve youth ages 15-18; over half also serve youth ages 19-21+. Two of the youth organizations provide programs for young people ages 11-14.

The survey asked organizations to identify their specific target youth population. Six indicate that they serve all youth, and five focus their programs on youth in the schools and in the education area. Most of the organizations target at-risk, marginalized, or non-traditional youth either exclusively or as part of their recruitment process. At-risk youth include youth in foster care, the juvenile justice and mental health systems. Marginalized and non-traditional youth include gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered youth, those living in underrepresented and low-income communities, and young people who would normally not be involved in school or community activities.

Youth exposure to policy activities is relatively short in most of the organizations. Nine report that youth typically participate in their programs and activities for less than one year. Among youth from these organizations, one-third participate for less than three months, one-third participate for three to six months, and one-third participate for six months to one year. In four organizations, young people typically participate in policymaking for one to two years; and in one organization they generally participate for over two years.

State Policy Activities

The thirteen organizations participating in the CRB survey identified a wide range of experiences that they provide to young people. Twelve explicitly offer opportunities such as training youth to gather information through conducting interviews and focus groups, testifying at hearings, and participating on panels for involving youth in state policymaking.

Youth organizations also promote partnerships between youth and adults. A youth/adult partnership is defined as one in which adults and young people work together in a respectful relationship on issues or policies, and the contributions of each is recognized and valued.

PREPARING ADULTS TO WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Adults play critical roles as supporters and educators, providing guidance and connecting youth to the information and resources they need. Successful youth/adult partnerships require that adults learn to nurture effective youth participation. To do this they need on-going training on how best to support youth and fulfill their roles as adult partners. They may also need to change their own understanding and beliefs about youth and how to work with them.

J. O'Donoghue and others, "Youth Participation," *The Prevention Researcher*, 2006.

* Some respondents checked more than one option so individual response numbers are sometimes greater than the total number of respondents. In addition, percentages are rounded off in this section.

Eleven organizations advocate for youth and connect youth with community resources, while ten provide training and mentoring. Ten organizations also prepare adults to work with youth (see box on page 11).

PREPARATION FOR PARTICIPATION IN POLICYMAKING

Preparation and Training: Process and Activities

Half of the 14 organizations in the survey provide youth with eight or more hours of preparation and training, six spend less than three hours, and one offers between three and eight hours.

SOME TRAINING APPROACHES

- Training by the California Center for Civic Participation and Youth Development can range from “two hours to two years” but typically takes two to three days. Youth conduct interviews, surveys, and focus groups with peers and adults to educate themselves on issues before providing input on policy.
- Equality California provides a one-day training for youth leaders on organizing young people, legislative advocacy, and media advocacy. The trained youth leaders then work in small groups with other youth to educate legislators.
- The California Council on Youth Relations prepares youth who are experienced with the issue to participate on discussion panels with researchers and program experts. Youth are told what to expect and what is expected from them. They are encouraged to focus on one or two main points and provided time to practice what they want to say, generally in a few one-hour one-on-one conversations.

Three organizations report that they have developed written preparation outlines or training curricula. Some training materials focus on current issues. Prepared materials include “Playing the Policy Game,” and “Legislative Advocacy 101 Power Point Presentation” that train young people and develop skills.

All of the 14 youth organizations engage in informal discussions with youth as part of their preparation and training process for participation in state policymaking activities. The next most common activities include an orientation to policy and legislation and teaching youth how to interview for information (each reported by 12 organizations).

Ten youth organizations also engage young people in general public speaking practice and offer adult-conducted training. Nine provide youth with training and practice on making presentations and participating on panels, and training for adults in working with youth. Eight organizations provide youth-conducted peer training, youth-conducted research, more intensive policy/legislative training for youth, and specific topic-related training (like foster care).

Public speaking practice is the number one skill-building activity, offered to youth by 12 organizations. It is followed by building skills in the areas of problem solving (11), critical thinking (ten), writing (eight), researching (seven), and interviewing (six).

Survey participants added advocacy and negotiating skills to the list, along with skill building associated with learning the political landscape and political power.

State-Level Policy Activities

The organizations responding to the CRB survey engage in a range of state policy activities from annual programs to ad-hoc events. Annual events include Model Legislature programs, Youth Summits, policy conferences, Day at the Capitol, Town Hall Meetings, and summer internships.

For example, Equality California annually sponsors a three-day event that includes training and meetings with lawmakers to discuss the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered youth.¹⁰ The California Youth Connection (CYC) holds an annual “Day at the Capitol” where their current and former foster care youth members learn how to present ideas to legislators, and then make legislative visits to advocate for changes in the law.¹¹ The CYC also holds annual policy conferences (see box at right).

The LegiSchool Project – an educational collaboration between the California State University, Sacramento, and the State Legislature – provides opportunities for high school students throughout the state to participate in debates about state issues. This is accomplished via interactive, televised Town Hall Meetings that are broadcast live from the Capitol five times a year. Comprehensive study packets are available for classroom use prior to each Town Hall Meeting. In addition, a day-long Student Journalism Summit that includes a student-run press conference is held annually.¹²

California Project LEAN (Leaders Encouraging Activities and Nutrition) involves youth in developing the state’s nutritional and physical education standards.

CALIFORNIA YOUTH CONNECTION

The California Youth Connection (CYC) is guided by current and former foster youth with the assistance of other community members. It promotes their participation in policy development and legislative change to improve the foster care system.

During the past 20 years, the CYC has evolved into a statewide organization respected for its ability to identify and address issues and advocate for the needs of foster youth. It has played an increasingly effective role in the state policymaking process and is currently considered a primary stakeholder that is routinely included in legislative discussions and decisions about foster care.

The CYC identifies pertinent new legislation, takes positions on all related legislation, and testifies at hearings. Members also participate on the California Blue Ribbon Commission on Foster Care and the National Governor’s Academy on Transitioning Foster Youth.

Most recently, the CYC was involved in the 2006 Assembly Select Committee on Foster Care hearings. Members described the challenges that youth face growing up in foster care, their positive and negative experiences in relative care, and the need for increased funding for independent living program services. For the hearing on permanent connections for emancipating youth, CYC participated in identifying topics and speakers and organizing the event.

CYC Website at www.calyouthission.org

At least three responding organizations are training and supporting youth participating in the Mental Health Services Act* planning and implementation processes: the California Adolescent Health Collaborative, the California Council on Youth Relations, and the California Center for Civic Participation and Youth Development (CCPYD).

CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL COUNCILS (CASC)

As Governmental Affairs Program Director, I received most of my training in the form of youth-to-youth mentoring. My predecessor in the GAP Position, a college student now, met with me on numerous occasions to give me detailed information on the State Board of Education and Legislature. Our sessions included how to write a letter of support/ neutrality/non-support for a bill, speak at bill hearings, visit policymakers and lobby at the Capitol for youth legislation. We also went over contacts that would be useful to me during my term as GAP Director. In my opinion, I learned the most from the youth-to-youth mentoring training sessions. We finished the majority of our training in about a month, and I continued to contact my predecessor throughout the year.

In addition, I attended three annual CASC conferences/camps that gave me leadership, education policy, and public speaking skills. However, I would say that most of my public speaking skills came from being on my high school Speech and Debate team prior to CASC.

Personally, after preliminary training, I felt as though there were a lot of things I had to learn for myself by making constant visits to the Capitol and getting experience firsthand.

Zack Windheim
GAP Director
CASC

Organizations like CCPYD and the Youth Leadership Institute work with other youth groups to support youth engagement in a range of activities. For example, CCPYD offers an annual Capitol Focus Program in which 80 youth participate in a three-day program to explore and present youth perspectives on health, transportation, corrections, social services, and education.

In addition, CCPYD trains and supports a diverse group of 30 high school students from ten communities throughout the state who participate on the Statewide Youth Board on Obesity Prevention (SYBOP). The purpose of the SYBOP is to partner with the Legislature, the California Department of Health Services, and the Task Force on Youth and Workplace Wellness to provide input on relevant policy and programs.¹³

Barriers to Participating in State Policy¹⁴

Getting young people to the policy table a major challenge. Like adults, youth are busy; they go to school, have extra-curricular activities, and some have jobs. Most policy discussions and decisions happen during school hours when young people are generally not available. Many need transportation or help with transportation costs to participate.

In addition, young people come with diverse experiences, interests, and talents. Some have already had opportunities to learn and practice skills like debating and making presentations

* Proposition 63 (known as the Mental Health Services Act or MHSA), passed in November 2004, provides for increased funding, personnel and other resources to support county mental health programs and monitor progress toward statewide goals. The Act addresses a broad continuum of prevention, early intervention and service needs and the necessary infrastructure, technology and training elements to support this system, including programs targeting youth.

that help them interact with adults and participate in policymaking.

Others have not had these opportunities. In addition, they may struggle with learning disabilities, or are “at-risk” youth in the foster care, juvenile justice, or mental health systems. They may lack the self-confidence and previous successes or experiences that would help them participate in policymaking. As a result, they may need additional preparation and support, like an accepting environment, to feel adequately prepared to participate. In spite of the extra effort involved, these are often the young people that legislators, state officials, and other policymakers most want to hear from as they are directly affected by specific state policies such as foster care legislation.

Preparing at-risk and other vulnerable youth to share their experiences requires that adult partners help navigate the challenges that often arise for these young people and provide direct emotional and practical support. In addition, it is very important that the youth have an opportunity to debrief after providing their input.¹⁵

Time is a barrier for adults working with youth. For example, it is hard for teachers to set aside significant time to devote to state government on teaching how to effectively participate in policymaking. Organizations associated with schools have found that identifying teachers and counselors who are willing to travel to Sacramento with students for policymaking activities is difficult.

Perhaps most importantly, state agencies and organizations lack awareness that they need to change their own decision-making structures and policies to promote youth participation. Youth-serving organizations report that they need state government partnerships to facilitate long-term youth involvement.

Youth organizations in the survey also comment that policymakers are not always receptive to hearing young peoples’ views. The organizations report “*some reluctance from policymakers about the value of having youth not just share their personal experiences, but also offer recommendations for policy change.*” They find a lack of understanding about the importance of preparing and training young people before they join in policy discussions. Examples include a policymaker request for a youth representative to be sent to a “next day” panel. In such cases, young people may not be able to effectively participate.

Evaluating the Effectiveness of Preparation/Training

This is a wide-open area, and practitioners have not developed a consensus around indicators of effectiveness.

California Center for Civic Participation and Youth Development

The youth we work with are often beset with a barrage of circumstances that increase the likelihood of emergencies coming up that will exempt them from participation, often at the last minute. For this and related reasons these young peoples’ voices are often left out of the policy discussion, even when the discussion impacts them directly.

California Council on
Youth Relations

Twelve of the responding organizations report using both informal feedback and written evaluations from their youth participants and/or audience as the primary methods for evaluating their training activities. Five organizations also rely on written evaluations from target audiences (policymakers) and independent program evaluation. One organization employs pre- and post- evaluations of the youth to measure gains in knowledge and skill, with a follow-up evaluation every six months. Another organization gauges effectiveness, in part, based on future legislator requests for support.

Do Youth Organizations Judge Youth Participation to be Successful?

Five of the organizations responding to the survey report that their experience with youth participation in state policymaking has been *mostly* successful. Half of the organizations describe their experience as having been somewhat less successful.*

Two organizations rate their youth participation as not very successful. In one case, the organization teaches young people how the state policymaking system works and develops leadership skills, but the youth must get involved in policymaking activities on their own. The second organization reports that it needs to provide better workshops and experiences to help prepare youth, particularly around confidence-building and self-esteem issues.

SUMMARY OF YOUTH ORGANIZATION RESPONSES

The survey responses of youth organizations reflect several themes:

Let's not assume that youth only have meaningful things to say about policies that are closely associated with them (education, mental health, etc). Youth input is valuable in many others areas (economic development, community design, environment, etc.)

California Center for
Civic Participation and
Youth Development

- Half of the 14 organizations provide eight or more hours of preparation and training for youth who will be participating in state policymaking; the rest generally spend less than three hours. Three organizations have developed written outlines or training curricula.
- The top three preparation and training activities are: 1) engaging in an informal discussion with youth, 2) providing an orientation to policy and legislation, and 3) teaching youth to interview for information. The top three skill-building activities are public speaking, problem solving, and critical thinking.
- The organizations participating in the survey engage in a range of state policy activities, from ongoing legislative advocacy and annual programs to ad-hoc events.

* These seven organizations identified their experience as *generally successful*. The question posed to youth organizations provided the choices of *mostly successful*, *generally successful*, and *not very successful*. In retrospect, the terms “mostly” and “generally” are similar and may have led to confusion although they were presented in an hierarchical order.

- There are several barriers and challenges to youth participating in state policymaking, including conflicting demands on their time and activities. In addition, some policymakers are resistant to hearing and considering youth's views.
- Twelve of the organizations use both informal feedback from their participants and/or audience, and written evaluations from youth participants as the primary methods of evaluation for their activities.

STATE POLICYMAKER VIEWS ON YOUTH PARTICIPATION SURVEY OF STATE POLICYMAKERS

The CRB sent a short online survey to over 100 state-level policymakers to determine their expectations and needs for youth participation in state policy discussions. We distributed the survey to legislative and administrative staff who have attended a CRB forum, including the most recent events that featured youth participation. In addition, we sent the survey to selected individuals, including new legislative staff, who occupy key positions.

We received 58 responses: 26 legislative staff and 20 agency and department staff returned the surveys. The other 14 respondents included research staff and staff from the governor's office, fiscal and oversight offices, and the judicial branch.*

Most of the respondents describe themselves as being involved in developing policy or involved in both developing and implementing policy. Most are very experienced in state-level policy work: over half report being involved more than ten years, and one-quarter have been involved for five to ten years.

Most of the survey respondents have previously attended a policy forum that included youth sharing their experiences and/or making policy recommendations.

SURVEY RESPONSES

Youth Participation in State Policymaking

Close to 60 percent of the survey respondents felt that youth **must** be included in policy activities that affect them: *“Nothing without them, for them philosophy; necessary to include the targeted audience when creating policies that will serve them.”*

The remaining respondents felt that they **should** be included in these activities: *“Although it is often appropriate to consult youth in policy discussions on issues impacting them, it may not always be feasible or responsible.”*

Impact of Youth Participation on Attendance at Policy Events

Over 40 percent of the survey respondents would be more likely to attend a policy forum that included youth participation. An almost equal number would not be influenced to attend by youth presenters/participants. The other respondents (16 percent) indicated that their decision “would depend” upon the subject of the forum and its relation to youth.

* Some respondents checked more than one option so individual response numbers are sometimes greater than the total respondents. In addition, percentages are rounded off in this section.

Most Effective Format

Youth should not be limited to presentations. We need to interact with them as well.

Most of the survey respondents (86 percent) think that presentations by youth, along with adult research and program experts, are the most effective policy forum format.* Five respondents think presentations by adults alone and written input from youth are the most effective, and three are of the opinion that presentations by youth alone are most effective.

Individual Youth v. Youth Representing a Group or Organization

Slightly more than half of the survey respondents would give equal weight to the input of youth speaking on their own as to a youth who is representing a group or organization. One-third would give more weight to a youth representing an organization, four of the 58 respondents would give more weight to an individual youth, and six respondents specified “Other,” such as this response: *“It depends if the youth representing an organization has surveyed the members of the organization and then speaks from those results. If not, their opinions would be equal.”*

Hearing from Youth Participants

... It doesn't help to tell me that youth need caring adults. I need specific info about what the state can do to help.

Eighty-four percent of policymakers responding to the survey would like to know specific details from youth such as what they have learned from their experiences, what they wish had been different, and what has helped them the most. An almost equal number would like to hear their **specific** recommendations on state policy actions based on their experiences. In addition, seventy-five percent of policymakers are interested in youth’s stories and experiences, and in their **general** policy suggestions.

Some policymakers brought up additional benefits related to youth participation, such as getting reaction to policy alternatives under consideration.

Help them put their experiences into context – to emphasize that individual experiences should be related to the needs of all children and youth in the system.

Preparing Youth to Participate

Survey respondents identified the following activities as the most important for organizations to do to prepare youth for participation.

- training youth on the legislative process
- briefing youth on the purpose of the forum, their audience, and any time constraints
- training and practice in public speaking, including how to be

* This format reflects the public policy forum model developed by CRB which includes presentations by adult research and program experts and youth who are or have been directly impacted by state policies.

clear and succinct

- educating youth on the policy area, and on the policy and political background so they understand the context

Important factors

Policymakers identified the following five factors as most important for youth participating in policy forums and other activities.

1. being focused and policy relevant in their presentation (82%)
2. identifying specific recommendations (80%)
3. being knowledgeable about specific issues (76%)
4. being familiar with the policymaking process (74%)
5. sharing compelling, authentic stories (71%)

Again, practice and experience makes a lot of difference in how the story is told and how input is made is critical to success.

Only eight policymakers considered general suggestions by youth to be important.

Current Level of Youth Participation

Policymakers were asked to estimate the extent to which youth currently participate in state policymaking. Over two-thirds of those responding described the current level of youth participation using terms such as “minimal,” “limited,” or “token.”

A concern running through the responses is that policymakers hear from only a few, perhaps unrepresentative, youth voices. Participation by diverse groups of youth (beyond the “class presidents”) is lacking. In addition, youth participation is difficult to achieve and maintain.

A second concern was that youth have not been provided with adequate direction to fully participate or participate in a meaningful way. For example, one policymaker expressed the opinion that there is too much unedited self-revelation and storytelling without policy context. Another felt that youth are given responsibilities beyond their abilities: “*Youth as keynote speaker (too overwhelming for some youth). Youth making recommendations without knowing about systems. Turns audience off, negates their previous comments or personal story.*”

Some policymakers also expressed concern that token youth are sometimes included to “complete the program.”

Other respondents had a different perspective. One individual noted that the youth participants had been very well informed in forums he/she had attended. Five individuals felt that youth were “fairly engaged” in state policymaking. Three mentioned that foster youth are well represented; the California Youth Connection (see box on page 13) was singled out as doing an excellent job in guiding and educating their members.

Best Ways to Participate and Suggestions to Increase Youth Participation

Half the respondents answered this optional open-ended question: “What are the best ways for youth to participate in state policymaking?”

Adult mentoring is usually critical for ensuring that youth are able to translate their experiences into policy recommendations.

- ✓ become knowledgeable about issues affecting peers and identify possible solutions to problems and concerns
- ✓ become familiar with the policymaking process
- ✓ testify at hearings and speak at forums and conferences
- ✓ meet with legislators and participate on state boards, committees, task and working groups
- ✓ write letters, complete surveys, etc., to relay views

Survey respondents also suggested the following actions to increase youth participation:

- Legislators should include youth testimony in hearings wherever possible, and encourage youth to send letters of support/opposition for pertinent bills.
- Policymakers should spend more time at the local district level involving youth (in the schools or through organizations) and holding focus groups at places where youth congregate (teen centers, coffee houses, etc.).
- Policymakers should develop a civil service classification at a living wage above student assistant so youth can be hired as junior policy assistants and inform policy while learning the policymaking process.
- Organizations should prepare youth well and compensate them. They also should engage and train diverse youth populations.
- Support from the Legislature and Governor is needed for developing youth’s capacity to participate.

SUMMARY OF INPUT FROM POLICYMAKERS

I believe youth should be invited, should be prepared for their role in particular settings, but should not be scripted or asked to represent a particular point of view. Even their stories alone help shape the viewpoint of policymakers. I do believe that hearing the good about the system is as important as hearing what needs to change, and the horror stories.

Policymaker Survey Respondent

The survey responses of policymakers reflect six themes:

- Youth input is important when developing policy on issues that affect young people. Youth should be invited into the policymaking process; for example, they should be included as presenters with adult researchers and program experts in policy forums.
- It is important to include youth from diverse backgrounds.

- Youth must be adequately prepared to participate effectively in policymaking. Specifically, they need to be familiar with the legislative process and know the policy area and its background to understand the context. They need to be trained in public speaking (to be clear and succinct) and understand the purpose of the forum, their audience, and time constraints.
- Policymakers are most interested in hearing from youth about their specific experiences and opinions in a policy context (for example, what they have learned, what they wish had been different, and what has helped them the most about a specific law or program).
- Youth need to be focused and policy-relevant in their presentations. Personal stories must be tied to policy.
- Policymakers must provide youth with meaningful (not token) places at the policy table and actually listen to and consider their experiences and opinions.

WHAT YOUTH THINK ABOUT PARTICIPATING IN STATE POLICY

I feel that state lawmakers need to be reminded of the problems teens are facing through the teens' voices.

I feel sometimes that we are looked at as only "kids" and that our thoughts and ideas are not taken seriously.

Youth Survey Respondents

SURVEY OF YOUTH

The CRB distributed a third survey to young people involved in youth organizations in order to get their perspectives on the preparation they have received to participate in state policymaking and their feelings about that participation. After youth organizations filled out the survey, we sent a link to the short online youth survey and asked them to forward it to their youth members. We heard from some that they sent the survey link to all of their current members. Other organizations may have sent the link to a select group of youth; if so, this method may have affected the responses received.

One hundred and sixteen young people responded to the youth survey and completed the first section that asked for demographic information and how long they had been involved with state policymaking activities. Well over half of these youth completed questions in the second section of the survey on *Preparation and/or Training* and slightly under half answered questions in the last survey section on *Participating in Policy Decisions*.

The survey was designed to be anonymous to encourage responses. However, a major drawback to this approach is that it is not possible to match the youth survey responses to the forwarding youth organizations. Thus we are not able to differentiate among youth responses on that basis. Nor are we able to determine if youth from all organizations are represented in the survey.

YOUTH RESPONDENTS DESCRIBED

The survey asked the participating youth for the following demographic information:

- Age: Youth ages 15-18 represent close to 71 percent of those who completed the survey, youth ages 19 and above almost 21 percent, and young people who completed ages 11-14 completed eight percent of the responses.
- Gender: Females represent 69 percent of the youth completing the survey.
- Race/Ethnicity: Almost half of the surveys (49 percent) were completed by Caucasian youth, followed by Asian/Pacific Islander (31 percent), Hispanic (ten percent), and African-American (nine percent) youth.
- Geographic Area: Three-fifths of the youth who responded to the survey live in Northern California, including 37 percent in the Bay Area. Four percent live in

the Central Valley. The rest (35 percent) live in Southern California, including seven percent in the Los Angeles area.

Thirty-one percent of the youth surveyed had been involved with the youth organization for one to three years and thirty percent for less than six months. Twenty-two percent of the youth had been involved for six months to a year and seventeen percent had been involved for over three years.

PREPARATION AND TRAINING

Preparation for Participating

Young people were asked whether their organization had prepared them in advance to participate in state-level policy activities. Two-thirds of those who answered indicated that they received some preparation: almost a quarter had received specific training, and 40% percent had received a general orientation. Over a quarter of the youth answered “No” to this question.

Preparation/Training Activities

Young people were asked to check which of the following activities were included in their preparation for state-level policymaking. The activities are listed below:

1. Adult-led training (52%)
2. Information about state policy process and legislation – less than one day (46%)
3. Information about specific state programs or issues (43%)
4. Public speaking practice – general (43%)
5. Presentation practice – specific issues (43%)
6. Peer-led (youth) training (40%)
7. Information about state policy process and legislation – more than one day (17%)
8. None (15%)

Four “Other” responses include comments about receiving background information on state legislation and policies, training on ethics, and a workshop on personal skills.

Youth reported receiving preparation/training in the following skills related to participating in policymaking:

1. How to solve problems (59%)
2. How to speak in public (59%)
3. How to think critically (46%)
4. How to communicate in writing (35%)
5. How to interview people (24%)

6. How to research (21%)

Fifteen percent of the youth respondents marked the “Other” box and stated that they did not receive preparation or training in any of the skills listed above.

Young people were also asked how much time their organization had spent preparing them to participate in state policymaking.

- Less than one day (36%)
- One to three days (28%)
- Three to five days (15%)
- More than one week (3%)
- More than two weeks (11%)

Six percent of the youth responding to this question stated that their organization had not prepared them.

Eighty-two percent of the responding youth felt that the preparation they received was enough for them to be effective in state policymaking. Eighteen percent felt it was not enough. These youth asked for more preparation and practice, including basic information on the state policymaking process (such as how bills are passed) and how to gain influence.

Observations and Suggestions from Youth About Preparation for Policymaking

I think we should be taught till we know it. Youth Survey Respondent

Survey participants were asked for their observations or suggestions about the level or type of preparation young people need to be effective participants in state policymaking.

The most common responses relate to the type of preparation respondents feel that youth need. Below are some examples.

- a thorough understanding of the topic, including extensive background knowledge and being updated on the most current issues
- a better understanding of their audience
- a thorough preparation in public speaking and presentation skills
- more events to get more practice and experience
- more refresher courses and interaction with other policymaking panels

I suggest youth are given a clear overview of how youth can affect policy-making with past examples that demonstrate this process... Also important for youth is an understanding of the realities of policy change...it takes a very long time for any change, youth-inspired or not, to actually happen... I think youth need to be prepared to understand how long the process takes when they first start to become participants in policymaking.

The second most common responses relate to *how* to prepare or train youth. These include:

- more youth-led policymaking trainings and activities
- many levels of training as youth have varying degrees of experience and knowledge
- interactive learning and group discussions
- hands-on experience
- more exciting and understandable information (“*teenagers are not going to learn about the legislative details of state budgets from boring speakers*”)
- seeing how policymaking happens

In addition, three young people mentioned the importance of adult involvement, including the need for guidance and to have involved adults appreciate their contributions.

PARTICIPATING IN POLICY DISCUSSIONS

Sharing Views with State Policymakers

Young people were asked to indicate how they had participated or shared their views with state-level policymakers. Fifty-three youth responded to this question.

Half participated through presentations given by youth only, and close to half participated in panel discussions that included adults. Twenty-eight percent were involved in one-on-one meetings, twenty-seven percent in forums that also included adult program and research experts, and twenty-three percent made individual presentations to a group of policymakers.

The ten “Other” responses primarily described local government interactions and the LegiSchool Student Run Press Conference process. One youth described a group of youth interacting with an individual state representative.

Young people were also asked what they thought were effective ways to share their views with policymakers. They identified the following:

1. Presentations by youth and adult program and research experts (66%)
2. One-on-one meetings between policymakers and youth (64%)
3. Panel discussions with policymakers (53%)
4. Presentations by youth only (51%)
5. Individual presentations to groups of policymakers (46%)

Five were not sure what would be effective. One youth reminded organizations that they “*must make sure the youths are comfortable to even start with public speaking.*”

Rating Involvement in State Policymaking

Nearly eighty percent of the youth who responded to this question felt their involvement in state-level policy decisions had been worthwhile. The rest were “Not Sure.” (There weren’t any “No” responses.)

Most of the responding youth wrote about how they had personally benefited, primarily through increased learning and the experience it provided them. Some felt empowered. Their involvement helped them become more mature and responsible, exposed them to career options, and aided their entrance to college.

I learned from it and I felt like I mattered.

A small number (11 percent) thought that their impact was not significant. “*I think we help our community but we don’t really have much impact on policy discussions so that could improve.*”

What Youth Would Like to Share with Policymakers

Youth were asked: “What would you like to tell state policymakers about youth being involved in state policy?” They said:

- *I think we have much to contribute and should be treated with seriousness and respect.*
- *Youth opinions are valid and unique. Policymakers should heed the words of youth and utilize their knowledge and experience.*
- *I would like to tell them that youth do care and do want to voice their own opinions. Some adults are rather condescending and do not necessary listen to us youth at all. I would like to see this attitude change and develop into partnerships between youth and adults.*

Most of the responses to this question indicated that young people feel they have a lot to contribute and both need and want to be involved in the policymaking process. They would like to have more opportunities to be involved, such as through youth panels, youth commissions or councils, and legislative or administrative youth programs.

SUMMARY OF YOUTH INPUT

“We can help out as long as we are informed and prepared, our opinions are usually well thought out and true, and most likely will help out the youth of California as well as keep in mind everyone else.”

The survey responses of young people to this survey reflect several themes:

- Even if they feel their impact on policy has been minimal, participation in the policymaking process has been a beneficial experience.

- Youth want to be involved in policymaking, and they want more opportunities to participate.
- Youth have much to contribute; they want to be taken seriously and have their input considered. They want to work in partnership with adults.
- Youth generally feel they are adequately prepared to participate in state policymaking. However, close to one-fifth want more preparation, training and practice related to all aspects of the policymaking process.

LINKING YOUTH VOICES TO STATE POLICY: OBSERVATIONS AND OPTIONS

OBSERVATIONS

Youth want to be involved in policymaking. They want more opportunities to participate, and they want to work in partnership with adults, to be respected and have their input considered on an equal basis.

Policymakers in the Legislature and the Administration agree that youth should be included in the policymaking process about issues that affect them. They also agree that they need to listen to and consider youth's experiences and opinions.

At this point in time, however, most policymakers describe the current level of youth participation as minimal or, sometimes, token. Some also express concern that youth have not been provided with adequate direction to participate in a meaningful way.

The key to getting and keeping a seat at the policy table is preparation. Based on input from policymakers and youth, the following are specific preparation activities deemed to be the *minimum* necessary to provide youth with the ability to fully participate in the state-level policymaking process:

- ✓ Instruction on the public policy process, such as the legislative process administrative structures and timeframes
- ✓ Instruction on the specific policy area and political context, including background (to understand the context) and issues
- ✓ Instruction on the purpose of the hearing, forum or other event, the audience, expected outcomes, and expectations of youth participants
- ✓ Training and practice in public speaking, including how to be clear and succinct
- ✓ Direction and coaching on how to effectively share personal experiences, including how to be focused and relate experience to policy

The organizations we surveyed provide youth with preparation and training – in varying amounts – that cover some or all of the above activities. For example, most include an orientation to the policy process/legislation and training in public speaking. In addition, there is a range of other important preparation and training in skills such as problem solving, critical thinking, and research skills – that organizations provide to youth. Each organization's preparation and training is tailored to its specific program. We found no standardized approach among the organizations.

OPTIONS FOR ADDRESSING PREPARATION NEEDS

Following are some ways that youth organizations can target their training activities to help ensure youth are prepared to effectively participate in state-level policymaking.

- Review their training activities to ensure that they include adequate preparation in the knowledge and skills identified on page 31.

- Share resources (such as basic training materials), ideas, and efforts to prepare youth with other youth organizations with similar goals.
- Develop common indicators of effectiveness for youth organizations to use across programs for evaluating their preparation and training activities.*
- Work with state policymakers to routinely include youth and to create structures to institutionalize youth participation (such as a Youth Advisory Council).
- Partner with state policymakers to create an environment where youth voices are heard and respected. Youth organizations can promote and provide training for youth/adult partnerships.

* The California Center for Civic Participation and Youth Development has started to work in this area and plans to host an evaluation summit.

APPENDIX A – Youth Organizations

YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS THAT PARTICIPATED IN CRB SURVEY		
ORGANIZATION	CONTACT	MISSION
<p>Black Youth Leadership Project (BYLP) P.O. Box 188905 Sacramento, CA 95818</p>	<p>Sieglinde Johnson 916 319-3300 seiglinde.Johnson@sen.ca.gov</p>	<p>To encourage African American high school and college students to increase their interaction with our state’s political and community leaders. BYLP seeks to make the Capitol and its legislative staff of African American descent more accessible to the community and schools.</p>
<p>The California Adolescent Health Collaborative (AHC)* 555 12th St., 10th Floor Oakland, CA 94607 www.californiateenhealth.org</p> <p>*This organization has historically partnered with other youth agencies instead of working with youth directly, but has done youth training recently around the Mental Health Services Act.</p>	<p>Sandi Goldstein Director 510 285-5632 sgoldstein@phi.org</p>	<p>To increase understanding and support of adolescent health and well-being in California through convening, analysis and education, and technical assistance. We recognize that many adolescent health issues are rooted in a common set of social, environmental, and systemic factors and are committed to an assets-based, comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach to improving the health and well-being of California youth.</p>
<p>California Center for Civic Participation & Youth Development (CCPYD) 1220 H Street, Suite 102 Sacramento, CA 95814 www.californiacenter.org</p>	<p>James Muldavin Executive Director 916 443-2229 muldavin@californiacenter.org</p>	<p>To encourage and prepare young people and the public at-large in California to become active and objectively well-informed citizens who are willing and able to formulate judgments independently and make positive economic, cultural and political contributions to their schools, their communities and our state.</p>

YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS THAT PARTICIPATED IN CRB SURVEY

ORGANIZATION	CONTACT	MISSION
<p>California Coalition for Youth (CCY) 1220 H St., Ste. 103 Sacramento, CA 95814 www.calyouth.org</p>	<p>Heather Dearing Executive Director 916 340-0505 heather@calyouth.org</p>	<p>To be the place that improves and empowers the lives of California's youth by: partnering with youth; linking with youth-serving programs throughout the state; advocating for youth rights; connecting youth to resources; and educating communities, policymakers, and stakeholders.</p>
<p>California Council on Youth Relations (CCYR) 275 9th Street San Francisco, CA 94103 http://news.newamericamedia.org</p>	<p>Allegra Harrison Youth Services Coordinator 415 503-4170 aharrison@newamericamedia.org</p>	<p>To provide a non-adversarial venue where young people can exchange advice and input with policymakers and practitioners who are making decisions that shape systems that affect them – child welfare, juvenile justice, foster care, mental health and education.</p>
<p>California Friday Night Live (FNL) Partnership/California Youth Council 2637 W. Burrel, P.O. Box 5091 Visalia, CA 93278-5091 www.fridaynightlive.org</p>	<p>Dr. Jim Kooler Director 559 733-6496 jimk@tcoe.org</p>	<p>To build partnerships for positive and healthy youth development that engage youth as active leaders and resources in their community.</p>
<p>California Project LEAN (CPL) MS 7211, P.O. Box 997413 Sacramento, CA 95899 www.californiaprojectlean.org</p>	<p>Victoria Berends Marketing Manager 916 552-9907 vberends@dhs.ca.gov</p>	<p>To increase healthy eating and physical activity to reduce the prevalence of obesity and chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, stroke, osteoporosis and diabetes.</p>

YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS THAT PARTICIPATED IN CRB SURVEY

ORGANIZATION	CONTACT	MISSION
<p>California YMCA Youth & Government 2000 Alameda, Ste. 128 San Mateo, CA 94403 http://www.calymca.org</p>	<p>John Ciabrone 650 522-9622 john@calymca.org</p>	<p>To ensure leadership, democracy, and the YMCA core values of Honesty, Caring, Respect, and Responsibility are learned by each generation.</p>
<p>California Youth Connection (CYC) 604 Mission Street San Francisco, CA 94105 http://www.calyouthconn.org</p>	<p>Jennifer Rodriguez 916 444-2560, ext. 23 Jennifer@calyouthconn.org (Sacramento Office)</p>	<p>Guided, focused and driven by current and former foster youth with the assistance of other committed community members, to promote the participation of foster youth in policy development and legislative change to improve the foster care system. California Youth Connection strives to improve social work practice and child welfare policy.</p>
<p>ILP Program Community College Foundation Royal Oaks Drive Sacramento, CA 95815 www.communitycollege.org</p>	<p>Kim Bradley ILP Program Director 916 418-5100 kbradley@communitycollege.org</p>	<p>To help individuals care for themselves, their families, and their communities.</p>
<p>Equality California (EQCA) 1127 11th St., Ste. 208 Sacramento, CA 95814 www.eqca.org</p>	<p>Alice Kessler 916 554-7681 alice@eqca.org</p>	<p>To achieve civil rights and equality for all lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) Californians.</p>
<p>4-H Youth Development Program & Statewide 4-H University of California DANR Bldg., One Hopkins Rd. Davis, CA 95616-8575 www.ca4h.org</p>	<p>Carole MacNeil State Director 530 754-8518 camacneil@ucdavis.edu</p>	<p>To engage youth in reaching their fullest potential, while advancing the field of youth development.</p>

YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS THAT PARTICIPATED IN CRB SURVEY

ORGANIZATION	CONTACT	MISSION
<p>The LegiSchool Project Center for California Studies at CSUS 6000 J Street Sacramento, CA 95819-6081 916.278.6906 www.csus.edu/legischool</p>	<p>Sarah Vogel Project Director 916 278-6906 vogels@csus.edu</p>	<p>To engage young people in matters of public policy and state government by creating opportunities for students and state leaders to meet and share ideas on issues affecting Californians and by developing free high-quality government-oriented curriculum materials for California educators to enhance and help improve the quality of state government-related curriculum in our schools. By making government relevant to students the project seeks to create a more engaged and informed citizenry.</p>
<p>Youth Leadership Institute (YLI) 246 First Street, Suite 400 San Francisco, CA 94105 www.yli.org</p>	<p>Jennifer Lyle Director of Community & Civic Engagement 415 836-9160 jlyle@yli.org</p>	<p>To build communities that invest in youth and facilitate the partnership of young people and adults toward the creation of positive social change. YLI is a Community-Based Institute that helps guide and advance the national youth development movement by providing an array of training and consulting services.</p>

**APPENDIX B – Youth Organizations Survey and Summary
Preparing Youth for Participating in State Policymaking**

Please list your organization's name, mailing address, phone number, e-mail address, and website(if any).

	Response Count
	14
answered question	14
skipped question	0

Who should we contact from your organization if we need additional information or have questions about the survey responses. Please include the name, e-mail address, and phone number.

	Response Count
	14
answered question	14
skipped question	0

In addition to state policy, what other policy level(s) does your organization seek to influence?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Federal-level	21.40%	3
Local/Community-level	92.90%	13
Other (please specify)	7.10%	1
	answered question	14
	skipped question	0

Please check the description that applies to your organization

	Response Percent	Response Count
Public	14.30%	2
Private, Non-Profit	78.60%	11
Private, Profit	0.00%	0
Public	14.30%	2
	answered question	14
	skipped question	0

Preparing Youth for Participating in State Policymaking

What is your organizations primary focus?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Education Focus	7.10%	2
Public Health Mental Health Focus	7.10%	11
Social Justice (foster care, juvenile justice) focus	28.60%	0
Youth Leadership	21.40%	
Other Please Specify	35.70%	1
	answered question	14
	skipped question	0

What is your organizations mission statement (or primary purpose)?		Response Count
		14
	answered question	14
	skipped question	0

What (are) your organizations specific target youth population(s)?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
No Target - All Youth	42.90%	6
Young Men	7.10%	1
Young Women	7.10%	1
African American Youth	21.40%	3
Latino Youth	14.30%	2
Asian/Pacific Islander Youth	14.30%	2
Youth in Foster Care	21.40%	3
Youth in the Juvenile Justice System	7.10%	1
Youth in the Mental Health System	7.10%	1
Youth in the Schools Education System	35.70%	5
Homeless Youth	7.10%	1
Other (please specify)	50.00%	7
	answered question	14
	skipped question	0

Preparing Youth for Participating in State Policymaking

What age range(s) does your organization primarily serve?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
11-14	14.30%	2
15-18	78.60%	11
19-20	35.70%	5
21+	21.40%	3
Other (please specify)	35.70%	5
	answered question	14
	skipped question	0

What geographic area(s) does your organization serve?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Statewide	92.90%	13
Northern Ca	7.10%	1
Central Ca	0.00%	0
Southern Ca	0.00%	0
Specific Areas	0.00%	0
	answered question	14
	skipped question	0

Preparing Youth for Participating in State Policymaking

What activities apply to your organization?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Advocates for youth	78.60%	11
Provides opportunity for youth involvement in policymaking	85.70%	12
Provides training for youth	71.40%	10
Provides mentoring for youth	71.40%	10
Provides learning opportunities/experiences	92.90%	13
Connects youth with community resources	78.60%	11
Provides recreational activities	21.40%	3
Promotes youth/adult partnerships	85.70%	12
Provides training for adults on working with youth	71.40%	10
Educates policymakers and stakeholders	85.70%	12
Other (please specify)	14.30%	2
	answered question	14
	skipped question	0

How long do youth typically participate in policy activities with your organization?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than three months	21.40%	3
3-6 months	21.40%	3
6 months - 1 year	21.40%	3
1-2 years	28.60%	4
Over 2 years	7.10%	1
	answered question	14
	skipped question	0

Preparing Youth for Participating in State Policymaking

In general, organizations fall along a continuum that on one end provides minimal preparation to preserve youths' own voice and, on the other end, provides formal training to ensure youth understand and are skilled in the policymaking process. What best describes the level of preparation/training your organization would provide to a young person to prepare him/her to participate in a public policy forum?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Minimal preparation (less than 3 hours)	42.90%	6
Some preparation/training (3 hours or more; up to 8 hours)	7.10%	1
More extensive preparation/training (8 hours or more)	50.00%	7
	answered question	14
	skipped question	0

Please describe your organization's training model (include specific components and length).

	Response Count
	14
answered question	14
skipped question	0

Does your organization have a written preparation outline/training program?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes (Please send a copy to L. Foster P.o. Box 942837, Sacramento, CA 942837. Thanks)	14.30%	2
No	42.90%	6
Other (please specify)	42.90%	6
	answered question	14
	skipped question	0

Preparing Youth for Participating in State Policymaking

Please check all of the following activities that apply to your organization's preparation/training process

	Response Percent	Response Count
Informal discussion with youth	100.00%	14
Interviewing for information	85.70%	12
Youth-conducted research	57.10%	8
Adult-conducted research	71.40%	10
Youth-conducted peer training	57.10%	8
Orientation to policy and legislation for youth	85.70%	12
More intensive policy/legislative training for youth	57.10%	8
Specific topic-related training (like foster care) for youth	57.10%	8
General public speaking practice	71.40%	10
Specific presentation practice	64.30%	9
Discussion panels experience	64.30%	9
Training for trainers for youth	35.70%	5
Training for trainers for adults	14.30%	2
Training for adults in working with youth	64.30%	9
Other (please specify)	14.30%	2
	answered question	14
	skipped question	0

In what areas does your organization conduct skill building activities?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Critical thinking	71.40%	10
Problem solving	78.60%	11
Public speaking	85.70%	12
Interviewing	42.90%	6
Researching	50.00%	7
Writing	57.31%	8
Other (Please specify)	21.40%	3
	answered question	14
	skipped question	0

Preparing Youth for Participating in State Policymaking

What barriers has your organization encountered when preparing youth to participate in state policy?	
Response Count	14
answered question	14
skipped question	0

What methods does your organization use to evaluate the effectiveness of its preparation/training?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Informal feedback from participants/ audience	92.90%	13
Written evaluation from youth participants	92.90%	13
Written evaluation from target audience (policymakers)	35.70%	5
Independent program evaluation	35.70%	5
Other (Please Specify)	21.40%	3
answered question		14
skipped question		0

What state level policy activity(ies) is your organization currently engaged in?	
Response Count	14
answered question	14
skipped question	0

APPENDIX C – State Policymakers Survey and Summary

What State Policymakers Need From Youth

What is your role/position in state policy?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Legislator	0.00%	0
Legislative staff	44.80%	26
Governor's staff	1.70%	1
Agency staff	8.60%	5
Department staff	25.90%	15
Fiscal/oversight agency (Finance, LAO, Little Hoover)	3.50%	2
Other (please specify)	19.00%	11
	answered question	58
	skipped question	0

How are you involved in developing or implementing policy?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Developing policy	41.40%	2
Implementing policy	35.00%	28
Both	48.30%	5
Other (please specify)	8.60%	58
	answered question	58
	skipped question	0

How many years have you been involved in state-level policymaking?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than one	1.70%	1
1-3	13.80%	8
3-5	6.90%	4
5-10	24.10%	14
Over 10	53.50%	31
	answered question	58
	skipped question	0

What State Policymakers Need From Youth

Have you previously attended or participated in a CRB seminar that included youth sharing their experiences and policy recommendations?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	44.80%	26
No	55.20%	32
answered question		58
skipped question		0

Have you previously attended or participated in a non-CRB seminar that included youth sharing their experiences and policy recommendations?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	72.40%	42
No	27.60%	16
answered question		58
skipped question		0

What statement best reflects your opinion about youth participating in state policy making forums and other policy activities on issues that affect them?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	58.80%	30
No	43.10%	22
answered question		51
skipped question		7

Please explain your response to the previous question (#6.)		Response Count
		58
answered question		58
skipped question		0

What State Policymakers Need From Youth

Would the participation of youth presenters/participants influence your attendance at a policy forum?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
I would be more likely to attend	43.10%	22
I would be less likely to attend	0.00%	0
It would not influence my attendance	41.20%	21
It depends (Please specify)	15.70%	8
	answered question	51
	skipped question	7

What format do you think is most effective when youth participate in a policy forum?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Presentations by youth only	5.90%	3
Presentations by youth with adult research and program experts	86.30%	44
Presentation by adults and written input from youth (comments, recommendations, etc.)	9.80%	5
No preference	5.90%	3
Other (please explain)	9.80%	5
	answered question	51
	skipped question	7

Do you give more weight to the input of an individual youth or to a youth who is representation a group or organization?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Individual youth	7.80%	4
Youth representing an organization	33.30%	17
Equal weight	54.90%	28
Other (please explain)	11.80%	6
	answered question	51
	skipped question	7

What State Policymakers Need From Youth

Please check all of the following that you would like to hear from youth participants at a policy forum.

	Response Percent	Response Count
Description of individual youth's story and experiences	74.50%	38
Specific details such as what youth has learned, what they wish had been different, and what helped them the most	84.30%	43
General policy suggestion(s) based on experiences of youth	74.50%	38
Specific policy action(s) based on experience with youth	74.50%	42
Other (please specify)	5.90%	3
	answered question	51
	skipped question	7

What do you think are the most important things for organizations to do to prepare youth to participate in the

	Response Count
	49
	answered question
	49
	skipped question
	9

What State Policymakers Need From Youth

Please check all of the factors you think are important when youth participate in policy forums and other activities.

	Response Percent	Response Count
Youth are familiar with the policy making process	73.50%	36
Youth share compelling, authentic story	71.40%	35
Youth are focused and policy relevant in their presentation	81.60%	40
Youth are general in their suggestions	16.30%	8
Youth identify specific recommendations	79.60%	39
Youth are passionate about specific issue(S)	42.90%	21
Youth are knowledgeable about specific issues(s)	75.50%	37
Other(please list)	10.20%	5
	answered question	49
	skipped question	9

Based on your experience, how would you describe the current level of youth participation in state policy making?

	Response Count
	45
	answered question
	45
	skipped question
	13

What State Policymakers Need From Youth

Please share your ideas about the best ways for youth to participate in state policymaking and suggestions to increase youth participation.

	Response Count
	36
answered question	36
skipped question	22

Are there any comments you would like to add?

	Response Count
	36
answered question	10
skipped question	48

APPENDIX D – Youth Survey and Summary Youth And State Policy Making

What is your age?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Age 11-14	8.60%	10
Age 15-18	70.70%	82
Age 19-20	4.30%	5
Age 21+	16.40%	19
	answered question	116
	skipped question	0

What is your gender?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Male	31.00%	36
Female	69.00%	80
	answered question	116
	skipped question	0

What is your ethnicity?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
African-American	8.60%	10
Latino/Hispanic	10.30%	12
Asian/Pacific Islander	31.00%	36
Caucasian	49.10%	57
American Indian	1.70%	2
Other (please specify)	3.50%	4
	answered question	116
	skipped question	0

Youth And State Policy Making

Where do you live?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Northern CA	23.30%	27
Bay Area	37.10%	43
Central Valley	4.30%	5
Southern CA	26.70%	31
Los Angeles Area	6.90%	8
Other (Please Specify)	1.70%	2
	answered question	116
	skipped question	0

How long have you been involved with an organization that participates in state-level policy?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 6 months	30.20%	35
6 months - 1 year	21.60%	25
1 year to 3 years	31.00%	36
over 3 years	17.20%	20
	answered question	116
	skipped question	0

Did your organization prepare you to participate in state-level policy activities before you started?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes I received specific training on how to do this	23.90%	16
Yes I received a general orientation about how to do this	40.30%	27
No	26.90%	18
Not Sure/Other (please explain)	9.00%	6
	answered question	67
	skipped question	49

Youth And State Policy Making

How much time did your organization spend on preparing you to participate in policymaking.

	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than one day	35.80%	24
One - three days	28.40%	19
Three - five days	14.90%	10
More than one week	3.00%	2
More than two weeks	10.50%	7
Other (please specify)	7.50%	5
	answered question	67
	skipped question	49

Do you think the preparation you received was enough for you to be an effective participant?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	83.30%	55
No (What did you need that you didn't get?)	18.20%	12
	answered question	66
	skipped question	50

What observations or suggestions do you have about the level or type of preparation young people need to be effective participants in policymaking?

	Response Count
	64
	answered question
	skipped question
	64
	52

Youth And State Policy Making

How have you participated/shared your views with state-level policymakers?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
In one-on-one meetings	28.30%	15
In individual presentations to a group of policymakers	22.60%	12
In presentations by youth only	49.10%	26
In presentations by youth and adult program and research experts	26.40%	14
In panel discussions	47.20%	25
Other (please specify)	18.90%	10
	answered question	53
	skipped question	63

What do you think are effective ways to share your views with policymakers? (check all that apply.)		
	Response Percent	Response Count
One-on-one meetings between policymakers and youth	64.20%	34
Presentations by youth only	50.90%	27
Presentations by youth and adult program and research experts	66.00%	35
Individual presentations to group of policymakers	45.30%	24
Panel discussions with policymakers	52.80%	28
Not Sure	9.40%	5
Other (please specify)	3.80%	2
	answered question	53
	skipped question	63

Youth And State Policy Making

Do you feel that your involvement in state-level policy discussions has been worthwhile?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	79.60%	43
No	0.00%	0
Not sure	20.40%	11
answered question		54
skipped question		62

Please explain answer to the question (#14) above.	
	Response Count
	64
answered question	64
skipped question	52

What would you like to tell state policymakers about youth being involved in state policy?	
	Response Count
	51
answered question	51
skipped question	65

Do you have anything else you would like to share with us?	
	Response Count
	23
answered question	23
skipped question	93

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