



CO YLF July 8-13, 2018

Colorado State University Campus Fort Collins, CO

COLORADO YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM

Purpose and Goals

The Colorado Youth Leadership Forum (CO-YLF) is an innovative, 5-day on campus conference, for Colorado high school juniors, seniors, and young adults under 26 with disabilities, as they prepare for and experience transition to adulthood.

Students serve as delegates from their communities and are given the opportunity to cultivate their potential leadership, citizenship and social skills. Designed to foster personal growth through self-discovery, the CO-YLF provides dynamic, experiential learning opportunities to assist each individual as they identify and embrace their strengths while planning for their future.

Successful men and women with disabilities serve as role models in helping youth realize their ability, right, and obligation to pursue meaningful employment and contribute to society.

Based on a national youth forum model, first developed in California in 1992, the Colorado Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) decided to do more to inspire and prepare Colorado youth with significant disabilities to confront the barriers to employment and social participation they face as they become adults.

Although purposeful and relevant, the true value of CO-YLF is not found in a workbook or in the words of an accomplished presenter. It is found in the climate of trust, mutual respect, and absolute acceptance, which allow youth to be themselves, to be heard, and to develop and change.

Most importantly, we envision creating a forum that embraces the philosophy of independent living and teaches the delegates to understand and not be ashamed of their experiences as people with significant disabilities.

We want to create an annual, statewide training that provides powerful formative experiences to accelerate their learning. This in turn aims to:

- Make the young people aware that they have both a right and a civic responsibility to secure the highest form of employment or post-secondary education for which they are qualified.
- Encourage youth not to put unnecessary limits on their academic and career goals by exposing them to successful role models--adults with disabilities who have a variety of achievements.
- Give the student delegates skills and the knowledge of technology and other resources that can help them develop and achieve those goals.
- Motivate the delegates to become active in their communities and to realize their leadership



CO YLF July 8-13, 2018

Colorado State University Campus Fort Collins, CO

potential, especially by serving as role models for other young people with disabilities and as advocates for the education, training, and employment of all people with disabilities.

- Teach the delegates about the history of their IL predecessors with disabilities, including the long struggle for civil rights, resulting in such legislation as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Provide an opportunity for young people with disabilities to participate in an intensive forum that emphasizes leadership, independence, and personal and career goal setting.

The CO-YLF curriculum will provide eight (8) primary training components:

1. Principles of Leadership
2. Experience of Disability
3. IL Technology and Resources
4. Living on My Own
5. Reaching My Education and Career Goals
6. Leading in My Community
7. Personal Development Planning
8. Preparation for Follow-up Mentoring

Frequently Asked Questions

WHAT IS THE COLORADO YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM (CO-YLF)?

CO-YLF is an innovative, 5-day conference, designed to foster leadership skills and personal growth for students and young adults who have disabilities, as they prepare for and transition to adulthood.

CO-YLF believes leadership is a personal journey, and begins with maximizing leadership roles and responsibilities. CO-YLF provides experiential learning opportunities to assist each individual as they identify and embrace their strengths and gifts, in conjunction with planning for their future.

WHO PARTICIPATES IN CO-YLF?

Youth who have disabilities, referred to as Delegates, who demonstrate leadership potential, an interest in embracing and enhancing their lives, and who wish to interact effectively with other youth and adults are a great fit for CO-YLF.

Accommodations are available to maximize access for all. It is essential to the dynamic process of CO-YLF that there is diversity in all aspects. Everyone has something to offer, and CO-YLF encourages youth to identify and take pride in who they are as a person, and how they choose to establish themselves in the world.



CO YLF July 8-13, 2018

Colorado State University Campus Fort Collins, CO

CO-YLF is intended to serve youth who have a variety of disabilities and diversities. Therefore, Colorado youth who will have completed at least two years of high school by June, those who have recently graduated, or those who are young adults in transition, are encouraged to apply and will receive selection consideration. The YLF accepts students with varying social-economic backgrounds and ethnicity from around the state.

WHAT HAPPENS AT CO-YLF?

CO-YLF brings together up to 25 youth who have disabilities from across Colorado, for a 5-day experience that focuses on self-discovery, leadership development, career exploration, effective personal and systems advocacy, and empowers through heightened awareness of disability history and culture. Through Person Centered Planning, Delegates are assisted in developing a Personal Leadership Plan, which includes specific action items, as they return to their home communities. Delegates become a voice for their peers as they serve to inform the Colorado State Plan for Independent Living. Delegates are assigned a mentor for on-going support for one year after CO-YLF, and are offered continued connection through joining the CO-YLF Alumni Association, following graduation.

Although purposeful and relevant, the true value of CO-YLF is not found in a workbook or in the words of an accomplished presenter, it is found in the climate of trust, mutual respect, and absolute acceptance, which allow youth to be themselves, to be heard, and to be changed. CO-YLF invests in our most precious resource, the youth who will transform our tomorrows.

WHY HAVE CO-YLF?

Youth who have disabilities have both more opportunities and more challenges than at any other time in our history. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has created unprecedented opportunities for youth to fully develop as positive, contributing members of our society. However, many need encouragement to develop as leaders in their own lives, and in their communities. CO-YLF allows youth opportunities to learn from each other and from successful elders who have disabilities. CO-YLF not only benefits the Delegates, but all young people, our communities in general, and the elders who assist in producing the conference.

HOW IS THE CO-YLF FUNDED?

All costs, including housing, meals, interpreters, personal care attendants, transportation, meeting space, operational costs, etc., are paid for through the SILC, fundraising, state agencies and corporate donations in addition to a grant from the Colorado Developmental Disabilities Council.

Colorado Statewide Independent Living Council
1-303-902-5897
silcyf@coloradosilc.org



CO YLF July 8-13, 2018

Colorado State University Campus Fort Collins, CO

HOW MUCH DOES CO-YLF COST?

Participation for Delegates is free of charge. Actual costs are average \$1,500 per Delegate, which does not include in-kind goods and services donated by volunteers and supporters.

Don't take our word for it... Check out what YLF Alumni from other states have said:

"I learned that having a disability is a vital part of my life, but I can't let it control who I am. Leadership and self-advocacy are two of many things that must be used to take charge of my own life so I can be independent. I've learned to be proud of my disability and I've learned when I go home and back to school, I can finally fully explain to people what having a disability really means: 'I have a disability. I have a challenge in my life; an obstacle that will never go away, but I must embrace it and tell everyone that I'm not 'hearing impaired,' rather that I have a disability, but it doesn't have me.'"
-A. P., 2014 Alumni

"(YLF) made me feel like a different person that I never felt like before. I actually chose to be here, to have a great time with the friends I made here. I want to thank the staff for telling me that I'm a great kid. All the people here have big hearts and the kids here made me happy. The greatest lesson I learned is that we all have disabilities." -D. W., 2014 Alumni

"The only way to get what you want is to advocate for yourself, take initiative! Just because we have a disability doesn't mean that we are weak and can't be independent. We just have to work a bit harder and in the end it makes us stronger. The best way to change how others think about us is to lead by example. We can be great people unhindered by our disabilities." -M.S., 2014 Alumni

"I've learned that people can do amazing things if they set their mind to it and with someone to help start their journey. Just because you have a disability doesn't mean there's anything holding you back."
-K.M., 2015 Alumni

"No matter how big or small the obstacles are or how many obstacles you face, never give up and up you will be ultimately, and genuinely happy." -B. R., 2014 Alumni

"The greatest lesson I learned is that I am not my disability!!! I am awesome and I am not alone!" -A. C., 2014 Alumni



CO YLF July 8-13, 2018
Colorado State University Campus Fort Collins, CO
ONSITE STAFF VOLUNTEER POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

Qualifications for all CO-YLF Staff:

All staff who work directly with the delegates must have an ADA¹ defined disability or have experience working with people with disabilities.

Volunteers must be 18 years of age; preference will be given to YLF alumni from other states and adults with disabilities who have worked with an independent living center or other organizations that provide advocacy or other direct services to students and youth with disabilities.

Minimum qualifications:

- Relevant education/training and/or equivalent experience working directly with people with disabilities.
- A minimum of 1 year providing services to youth and young adults with disabilities; past experience with residential services to people with disabilities preferred.

Volunteers must be able to work in a team-oriented environment, have excellent and compassionate communication skills, and the ability to use MS Office software (or equivalent) with an accommodation if needed.

All volunteers must participate in a formal YLF staff orientation prior to working onsite, and must remain onsite 24/7, live in a campus dormitory, and eat with the delegates in the campus cafeteria for the duration of the 6-day program.

All candidates must have a current background check.

Assistant YLF Coordinator

Assists the YLF Coordinator to plan and coordinate the curriculum, and provide hands-on support to other staff. Provides on-site support to the YLF Coordinator, and acts as facility liaison, activities coordinator, and the YLF’s safety/security/first aid liaison with the campus. Acts as “Master of Ceremonies” and facilitator of each large group session and follows the script of what needs to happen

¹ An individual with a disability is defined by the ADA as:

- a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities (also known as “activities of daily living”),
- a person who has a history or record of such an impairment, or
- a person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment.



CO YLF July 8-13, 2018

Colorado State University Campus Fort Collins, CO

at large group sessions. Their primary role, along with the YLF Coordinator and session presenter, is to set the tone at the beginning and end of sessions.

Logistics Coordinator

Provides support to the YLF Coordinator; acts as curriculum & presenter liaison; handles all preliminary, on-site, and post-session YLF logistical needs. Responsible for oversight of various onsite YLF logistics. Specific duties include staffing the front desk/dorm office area, which serves as the YLF command center. Other responsibilities include handling check-in and check-out for all dormitory rooms (including issuing dorm access cards and room keys), answering telephones, securing assistive and medical support for delegates as needed, and identifying situations that need resolution. Works closely with campus and YLF support staff to assure staff and delegate ADA accommodations are handled.

Program Assistants

Provides on-site general assistance to the Admin. & Logistics Coordinator, small group Team Leaders, and to other YLF program staff. This is one of the most active positions at YLF. Must serve as role models to the student delegates. Specific duties include: helping delegates with writing; assisting with food trays and other services as needed in the dining hall; completing various errands for other volunteer staff; assisting in setting up small group rooms and the large group meeting area, including arranging tables and chairs and other equipment; serving as the “spirit squad” to motivate student delegates, including leading cheer sessions; playing pre-recorded music at the beginning of each large group session; and assisting YLF staff and delegates in moving between various program segments in a timely manner.

Team Leaders

Provides overall supervision and facilitation of student delegates in the small group setting. Jointly responsible to carry out and support the Peer Counselors with assigned tasks and duties. Specific duties include providing initial YLF orientation, facilitating small group discussion, assisting student delegates in completing their Personal Leadership Plan, and overseeing the other volunteer staff assigned to the small groups.

Peer Counselor

Assists the team leaders in completing the various YLF program objectives. Specific duties include assisting with initial YLF check-in and orientation, assisting in facilitating small group discussion, assisting Delegates to complete their workbooks and other assigned tasks, carrying out YLF and dormitory rules, conducting room checks in the evening, and serving as a role model for the student delegates. Peer counselors work under the direction of the Team Leader in the small group to which they are assigned, and under the direction of the Assistant YLF Coordinator when not working with their assigned team.



CO YLF July 8-13, 2018
Colorado State University Campus Fort Collins, CO

ONSITE VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM

(All application information will be held in strict confidence and only used by the CO-YLF recruiting staff to determine your qualifications for the position you are applying to fill.)

Please complete this application form or use whatever communication method that is needed to respond to the requested data. Contact us at silcylyf@coloradosilc.org if another type of accommodation is needed.

Print Name _____ Position Desired _____
 Mailing Address _____
 Email Address _____
 Business telephone _____ Home/Cell telephone _____
 Fax Number _____ YLF Alumni? _____ Year/Location: _____

Qualifications for Position Desired

1. Education (last grade completed or degree) _____
2. Profession and current employer _____
3. Other special skills (related experience, ASL, Spanish proficiency, familiarity with disabilities) _____
4. Mentoring/Peer Counseling and Leadership experience _____

Please briefly state why you would like to serve as a YLF volunteer staff _____

Do you consider yourself to be a person with a disability? Y / N / Prefer not to answer

- Have you had a background check completed recently? Y / N
 - When _____ By whom _____
- Do you have a Mandatory Reporter certification? Y / N
 - When _____ By whom _____
- Do you have a current FA/CPR certification? Y / N
 - When _____ By whom _____
- Have you ever worked in a residential setting with people under 18? Y / N Over 18? Y / N
 - If yes, briefly describe:



CO YLF July 8-13, 2018

Colorado State University Campus Fort Collins, CO

Please provide a personal reference (name + telephone + email) _____

Have you served as a YLF staff member before? No Yes

Year(s) _____ Location _____

If this application is accepted, I understand that false or misleading information in my application or interview may result in my immediate termination as a CO-YLF volunteer.

Signature _____ Date _____

I have attached a current resume



CO YLF July 8-13, 2018

Colorado State University Campus Fort Collins, CO

The following accommodation information, *which is optional for you to complete*, will only be used so the CO-YLF can support your ability to complete the tasks assigned to you. *You only need to complete this section if you are requesting an accommodation.*

(Please contact us at the YLF email address on the attached recruitment letter if you have any questions or concerns about providing this information.)

Do you have any serious food allergies? Y / N

Please describe: _____

Writing

- I need a scribe

Walking

- I use a mobility device
- I use a support device
- I cannot walk up or down stairs
- I cannot walk long distances

Hearing

- I use lip reading
- I use real-time captioning
- I use sign language

Reading

- I use audio tapes
- I use Braille
- I use large print
- I use low vision aids

Speaking

- I use a communications aid

Other (Please Specify)

Will you need personal care? Y/N If yes, for how many hours a day? _____

- I have my own PCA I will need a PCA



CO YLF July 8-13, 2018
Colorado State University Campus Fort Collins, CO

RELEASE FORM

FOR USE OF PHOTOGRAPHS AND QUOTATIONS

I, _____, give my permission for the
(Print first and last name)

CO-YLF to print or publish photographs and video tape of me or use quotations from me to publicize the Colorado Youth Leadership Forum.

I understand that the images may be used in print or online publications, presentations, websites, and social media. I also understand that no royalty, fee or other compensation will be paid to me for such use.

Name: _____
(Print first and last name)

Signature: _____

Date Signed: _____