

INDIANA YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD BYLAWS

VISION

To enable Indiana's foster youth to advocate for themselves and communicate effectively by increasing awareness of rights, responsibilities, and resources to ensure successful transitions.

MISSION

Advocate for youth involved with Indiana's foster care system by facilitating positive change, encouraging self advocacy, encompassing diversity and fulfilling leadership roles throughout the state.

WHO WE ARE

MEMBERSHIP

This is who we are and how you may become one of our members and friends.

The Indiana Youth Advisory Board (YAB) is comprised of 18 youth members. To the greatest extent possible, one youth from each of the 18 regions will be selected to participate on the State Youth Advisory Board. Board members shall be expected to attend all regular business meetings of the Youth Advisory Board. Members may maintain their seat until they no longer meet eligibility criteria as long as they continue to attend and contribute to board activities. Those missing three (3) consecutive meetings will be automatically removed from the board. At such time an alternate will be invited to join the board. Alternates will be from the same Department of Children Services (DCS) region whenever possible.

Eligible youth interested in joining the Indiana Youth Advisory Board must submit an application to the YAB representative, as specified on the application, who will in turn present the application to the board for consideration. Current YAB members have the responsibility to recommend one applicant and one alternate from each of the 18 Department of Children Services Regions. Recommendations will be presented to the County Director of the applicant's home county for concurrence. If the state has overriding concerns about a youth selection, they can deny approval of membership. If this procedure is to change it will be up to the Youth Advisory Board to recommend such changes to the Department of Children Services for approval.

Prospective members must meet the following criteria to obtain and/or hold membership:

- Youth ages 16-21 who are in foster care for a period of 6 months as a CHINS or adjudicated a delinquent with a case plan establishing the need for independent living services.
- Youth ages 16-21 who were formerly in foster care for a minimum of 6 months as a CHINS or adjudicated a delinquent between the ages of 16-18 that were returned to their own homes and remain a CHINS or adjudicated a delinquent with a case plan establishing the need for independent living services.
- Youth ages 16-21 who were formerly in foster care for a minimum of 6 months as a CHINS or adjudicated a delinquent between the ages of 16-18 who have been adopted or placed in a guardianship from foster care and were receiving independent living services prior to the dismissal of their case.
- Youth age 18 to 21 who were formerly in foster care for a minimum of 6 months as a CHINS or adjudicated a delinquent between the ages of 16-18 under the supervision of the DCS and had a case plan establishing the need for independent living services.
- Youth who are 18-21 who would otherwise meet the eligibility criteria above and who were in the custody of another state or were a “ward of another state” will be eligible if through the Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children there is a verification of wardship and all eligibility criteria from the state of jurisdiction.
- Youth may remain on the board up until the age of 23 as long as they are receiving ETV or Chaffee funds and/or services.

VOTING MEMBERS

Members of the Youth Advisory Board have full voting rights after serving a probationary period consisting of two (2) meetings. During the probationary period, new members will be mentored by the Board Secretary or other member(s) appointed by the President. The mentor is responsible for acquainting new members with the function of the board. During the two (2) meeting probation period, new members should direct all questions and comments during the meeting through their appointed mentor.

Members no longer meeting membership criteria due to age or status may be appointed to continue participation on the board as an Alumni Member. Alumni member status will be granted through a secret ballot vote by Youth Advisory Board Members. Alumni members will not have voting rights.

All voting will be conducted by secret ballot. If a tie occurs, the board will have a three (3) minute discussion period and will take another secret ballot vote that will include one collective vote cast by the adult facilitators.

OFFICERS- APPOINTMENTS, DUTIES, AND TERMS

The officers of the youth advisory board consist of the President, Vice President, and the Secretary positions. Voting will take place in October of each year. Each Youth Advisory Board term will be for a duration of one (1) year and not to exceed two (2) consecutive terms. Nominated individuals must be available to serve the full term. The voting members of the State Youth Advisory Board will nominate officers. Prior to the elections nominees will be allowed to give a nomination speech not to exceed five (5) minutes. Nominee questions by voting members will be done for an additional three (3) to five (5) minutes. Officers will make their speeches and members will vote on the same day. Majority wins for each office. The order of elections will be Secretary, Vice President, and President.

If there is a need for a tie breaker the nominees who are tied will be asked to leave the room and the officers already elected and the other voting members of the board will discuss each nominee and take another secret ballot vote. If a tie still exists another secret ballot vote will be taken including one collective vote from the adult facilitators.

The following duties have been established for each position:

President

- shall preside at all meetings of the board
- maintain order and keep everyone on task (focused)
- shall appoint standing or special committees as necessary to carry board business
- shall supervise the efficient and responsible operation of the board
- shall be the board liaison to other boards and organizations
- shall call for votes when necessary
- shall mentor or appoint mentors for new members on probationary status
- expected to conduct oneself in a consecutive manner

Vice President

- shall assist the President
- shall preside at board meetings in the absence of the President
- shall assume specific leadership responsibilities as determined by the President
- shall mentor new members on probationary status as assigned by the President
- expected to conduct oneself in a professional manner

Secretary

- shall take attendance
- shall keep records of minutes of the board
- shall provide notes and summaries of each meeting
- shall assume specific leadership responsibilities as determined by the President
- shall mentor new members on probationary status as assigned by the President
- expected to conduct oneself in a professional manner

Executive Members

- Shall be nominated by an existing officer
- Shall be unanimously voted upon by all existing officers
- Must be approved by the DCS representative
- Shall be able to head committees as appointed by officers
- Shall function as a supportive resource to the officers
- Task shall be defined and appointed by officers

General Members

- All voting members not currently servicing in the role of an officer or an executive member

ADDING AND REMOVAL OF OFFICERS

ADDING OF OFFICERS

When a vacancy occurs before the expiration of the term, the appointment will be made for the remainder of the term. Vacancies on the board during a term shall be filled by offering the open position to a board member who currently holds a lower level office position as follows: if the President's office becomes available then the Vice President will take the spot and the Secretary will take the Vice President's position and a new member will be voted in to take over Secretary. An election will then be held to fill the lower level position with current board members who have been nominated. Members on the board are free to nominate other board members. The elected members will then be selected through the appropriate appointment process.

If all officer positions become available at the same time then the campaign and voting process will occur and nominations will be made.

REMOVAL OF OFFICERS:

Officers may be removed from office or placed on probationary status if they do not adhere to all guidelines set forth by the board. Removal may be related to, but not limited by the following reasons: attendance, participation at events, fulfillment of duties, respect, or failing to live up to what they said they would do when making their campaign speech. Officers missing more than two (2) consecutive meetings and marked as no - call, no - show will automatically be considered for removal from office. Officers must be given the opportunity to explain in person or in writing the reason for their actions or inactions prior to the board voting by secret ballot to remove an officer from their position. Officers hold higher positions; therefore, they are held by higher standards to follow through with everything. Some circumstances are understandable and will be considered by the board on a case-by-case basis as determined by the YAB.

ADDING AND REMOVAL OF EXECUTIVE AND GENERAL MEMBERS

ADDING OF MEMBERS:

A membership committee will be established to assist in the recruitment and selection of Youth Advisory Board Members in accordance with the membership policy previously set forth. The board will vote upon all recommendations for membership prior to submission to the DCS for review.

REMOVAL OF GENERAL AND EXECUTIVE MEMBERS:

General and executive Members of the board missing three (3) consecutive meetings without reasonable cause and marked as a no - call, no - show person will automatically be removed from the Board.

If a general or executive member does not adhere to all guidelines set forth by the board, i.e.: attendance, participation at events, respect, then a member in good standing may motion for a discussion period to consider the continued membership or terms of a probationary status of the person in question. An executive or general member in question must be given an opportunity to explain their actions or inactions either in person or in writing prior to the board taking a vote to remove a member. All decisions to remove a general or executive member will be made by a ballot vote. Dismissed individuals will receive notification from the DCS representative in a reasonable time prior to the next meeting.

GENERAL RULES

- Attendance or nonattendance for all board activities must be reported to the President by the predetermined or stated date. Those members unable to attend must give a reason as to their absence. The President must communicate with one of the adult facilitators by the stated deadline regarding attendees for each activity.
- All meetings shall be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order.
 - a. The presence of a majority of voting members shall constitute a quorum. A quorum is necessary to transact official business at any meeting.
- All board meetings require casual business attire.
- Youth Advisory Board members may initiate or carry out activities addressing community concerns that the board as a whole deems relevant or of importance and the availability of members to carry out the activity.
- All members must conduct oneself in a professional manner
- Goals for future meetings, outings, or just ideas must be discussed in a meeting where everyone is able to vote in favor.
- Only one person is permitted to talk at a time during board discussions.
- A motion must be made in order to amend the bylaws including any deletions, additions, or changes. A discussion period determined by the President will be held

prior to a motion to vote. Amendments will be voted upon by ballot with ties being determined as specified in the voting policy.

- All Indiana Youth Advisory Board speaking engagements should have prior authorization from the DCS representative before conducting such business.