

Listen to our graduates

"Attending YLF gave me my focus of making a change by becoming a special education teacher."

– Brett Cunningham, Class of 2005

"At YLF, I learned that the solution to a situation isn't always obvious. It also helped me learn to live outside of the house I grew up in."

– Joey Keller, Class of 2008

"This experience made me relate more to people who have struggles in their lives like myself. YLF also taught me how I can overcome any obstacle that is in my way."

– Ashley Snyder, Class of 2008

How Can I Participate in YLF?

For a delegate application form or more information about becoming a staff member, volunteer or sponsor, visit the council's website at www.okddc.ok.gov or contact:

Oklahoma Developmental Disabilities Council
2401 N.W. 23rd St., Suite 74
Oklahoma City, OK 73107
Voice/TDD (405) 521-4984
Toll-free (800) 836-4470
Fax (405) 521-4910
E-mail YLF@okddc.ok.gov
www.okddc.org

"YLF GAVE ME MY VOICE."

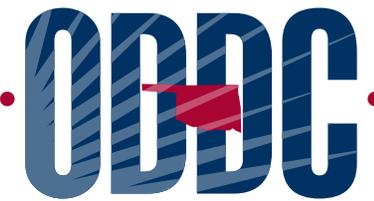


For Students with Disabilities



www.okddc.ok.gov

OKLAHOMA DEVELOPMENTAL



DISABILITIES COUNCIL

What Is the Youth Leadership Forum?

The Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) is a unique program designed to provide leadership training to high school juniors and seniors with disabilities. Student delegates from across Oklahoma come together for a week-long event on a college campus to improve leadership skills, meet government officials, explore career options and create a personal leadership plan.



Why Is YLF only for Students with Disabilities?

If they're to succeed as members of their communities, it is critical for students with disabilities to graduate from high school with pride in themselves, their abilities and their disabilities. YLF offers students with

common challenges and experiences the opportunity to learn from each other in a framework of history and an atmosphere of encouragement.

Delegates have access to important resources including assistive technology and community support systems. The key to YLF is leadership by example. Successful adults with disabilities serve as mentors and staff, helping the students realize their abilities, rights and responsibilities to pursue meaningful employment and contribute to society.

How Are YLF Delegates Selected?

Eligible applicants are rising high school juniors and seniors with disabilities who have demonstrated their leadership potential in their communities.

Delegates are selected through an application process that includes an essay and letters of recommendation.

The delegates are representative of Oklahoma in terms of geography, gender, economic status, ethnicity and types of disabilities.

What Happens At YLF?

YLF presents an intense educational and motivational schedule of events held on a college campus. Delegates work in small groups to develop their personal leadership plans and identify the resources needed to achieve their goals. Social and recreational activities are



included as part of the goal to teach students about leading a well-rounded life.

National and state speakers address topics such as

disability rights laws, innovations in technology and resources at all levels. Delegates meet leaders and professionals in Oklahoma and spend a day at the state capitol interacting with government officials.

Delegates receive valuable resources, such as scholarship information for postsecondary schools, books on important topics for high school students and access to an alumni website.

After YLF, alumni agree to follow through with the goals outlined in their personal leadership plans.

Follow-up activities for all YLF alumni, such as advocacy training, are established to continue networking activities.

Is There a Cost for Delegates to Attend?

No. All costs, including transportation, are paid by the Oklahoma Developmental Disabilities Council.

The Oklahoma Youth Leadership Forum enables youth with disabilities to grow personally, socially and academically, and to fulfill their potential in their work and lives. No student should be denied this opportunity.