



Missouri Youth Leadership Academy Executive Summary

Overview

Investing in the lives of youth through leadership training opportunities can foster strong personal growth and prepare these individuals to be leaders in their communities. These opportunities can also expose youth to career opportunities, thereby developing potential pathways for future employment.

Problem

Several youth programs exist in Missouri, however, there is a clear need for a statewide youth leadership program that is adoptable and adaptable to all youth and that is focused on sharing our better management vision language within our umbrella of service. By promoting and teaching the practices of the State of Missouri, such a program would invest in the future of our youth and help to develop a potential pathway for future state team members.

Solution

The Missouri Youth Leadership Academy (MYLA) is a 14-week program that fosters confidence, connection, and contribution. This program builds upon previous Missouri youth leadership efforts and bridges the gap by providing an adoptable and adaptable curriculum and fostering inter-Department collaboration. The MYLA Program Guide includes program goals, facilitator tips, schedule and curriculum, list of guest speakers from each State Department, and other training resources. Curriculum content includes leadership skills, values, mental health, financial literacy, community engagement, career development, communication and collaboration, and the natural environment.

MYLA would be initially implemented through the ROYALS (Regional Older Youth Adolescent Life Skills) program in the Department of Social Services Children's Division, thereby reaching foster youth throughout the state. Implementation of MYLA would require no additional FTE and no organizational change. MYLA could be expanded within and beyond the foster care system to groups such as youth of incarcerated parents and other youth in the custody of the State of Missouri.

Next Steps/Recommended Implementation Schedule

- August 2022 – January 2023: Program owners identify case managers and ROYALS youth cohorts and begin planning the academy schedule and guest speaker list for the first MYLA session to begin in February 2023.
- February 2023 – November 2023: Program owners support case managers, deliver curriculum, and finalize schedule and guest speaker list.

To measure program success, program owners would conduct a pre-and post-survey of MYLA youth participants, conduct focus groups with participants, facilitators, and partners, and develop a system to track long-term outcomes for health, well-being, and development of MYLA participants.