

Overall Program Goal: FHFOA will successfully coordinate and monitor the implementation of the LAYLF for youth with disabilities and ensure a high quality experience through adherence to the AYLF standards.

Goal 1: FHFOA will maximize and closely monitor LAYLF budget and expenditures.

Objective: LAYLF Coordinator will be required to have 100% of expenses pre-approved by FHFOA ED and Financial Manager.

Goal 2: FHFOA will recruit and support a YLF Coordinator who will develop and implement LAYLF in accordance with the AYLF Required Principles.

Objective: The YLF coordinator, hired no later than 12/2022, and will work, 40 hours per pay period for the duration of the state fiscal year.

Goal 3: LAYLF Coordinator will recruit a diverse group of delegates, staff, and guest speakers to attend and support the LAYLF experience.

Objective: 100% of delegates and guest speakers at YLF will be persons with disabilities and at least 50% of staff will be persons with disabilities, adhering to AYLF Required Principles.

Goal 4: Through LAYLF, youth delegates will become empowered members of their communities and gain an understanding of self and legislative advocacy.

Objective: Youth delegates will actively participate in a 3-day forum about employment, independent living, interpersonal relationship skills, and other activities related to advocacy and self-determination.

Goal 5: Through LAYLF, youth delegates will have the opportunity to learn and take pride in disability history and culture.

Objective: Delegates will actively participate in at least 4 sessions which will introduce disability history and culture.

Goal 6: A pre- and post-assessment will be administered to LAYLF delegates.

Objective: 100% of LAYLF delegates will complete a pre- and post-assessment about their engagement with and/or knowledge of skills and concepts presented at the forum.

Goal 7: An LAYLF alumni network will be developed and supported.

Objective: At least 2 annual LAYLF alumni events will be conducted to nurture the growing network of alumni statewide.

Goal 8: FHFOA will work to ensure the sustainability of LAYLF through statewide outreach with prospective community partners for LAYLF.

Objective: FHFOA will secure at least 2 funding sources in addition to LADDC by conducting no less than 6 outreach activities about LAYLF

Advertisement/Outreach

(Goal 3, 8)

In order to begin both sustainability efforts and cross-community partnerships, the LAYLF coordinate has conducted outreach with Families Helping Families Centers for staff and delegate recruitment; LSU's LEND program for staff recruitment; with UL LIFE, for staff recruitment and research partnerships; LSU Student Government for general outreach; League of Women's Voters for general outreach; the Partners in Policymaking program for general outreach and staff recruitment; Acadiana Queer Collective for general outreach and delegate recruitment. Additionally, social media pages were created for broader outreach.

Delegate and Staff Recruitment

(Goal 2, 3)

LAYLF received a total of 25 delegate applications and 23 staff applications. Zoom interviews were conducted with both the delegate applicants and staff applicants to determine final selections. Multiple employees with disabilities from Families Helping Families of Acadiana were present during interviews, so discussion could occur afterwards. Accommodations were made as needed during Zoom interviews. Preferences for staff included: individuals with professional experience in the disability, special education, and/or medical field; individuals with disabilities; individuals of diverse backgrounds (racial, ethnic, religious, gender, etc.); individuals who expressed support of self-determination and empowerment of people with disabilities. All selected staff members will be required to pass a background check before camp.

Preferences for delegates included: individuals who expressed excitement and/or interest (verbal or nonverbal) about LAYLF; individuals of diverse backgrounds (racial, ethnic, religious, gender, etc.)

Staff Training

Because the safety of our delegates is our number one priority, we have a comprehensive staff selection and training process in place. All potential staff must provide references and submit to a background check. Interviews are conducted in order for applicants to learn more about YLF staff expectations and the coordinator can determine if they are a good fit for the program.

Staff training will begin with Zoom meetings scheduled in May and June. One full day of in-person training will be conducted on-site the day prior to delegate arrival (July 13th). Training topics will include: YLF principles, delegate accommodations, first aid, mandated reporter training, sexual abuse identification/awareness, and active shooter response. Mandated reporter training was added because in the state of Louisiana staff and volunteers at youth camps are considered mandated reporters. (Goal 2, 3)

Collaboration with MedCamp LA

As part of our research into residential camps in Louisiana with a focus on campers with disabilities, we made contact with the staff at MedCamp of Louisiana. The staff at there has been incredibly gracious and supportive of our endeavor. We had extensive communication with the Executive Director, Caleb Seney and the Camp Director, Kacie Whipple. We were provided with total access to their forms and processes in order to ensure we have the most thorough, safe, and effective procedures in place. They are interested in establishing an ongoing relationship so both programs can become mutual referral sources for the campers and their families. (Goal 8)

Camp Location

(Goal 8)

LAYLF will be hosted on UL Lafayette's campus. We have secured permission from UL LIFE to utilize their space for various sessions throughout camp, and we will be utilizing UL's food service for the majority of camp meals.

Due to safety reasons, we have a no-pop-in policy. This means that no individual, outside of our background-checked volunteer staff, will be able to "pop-in" or visit campers or staff during camp. We have implemented this policy for the safety of our delegates.

Schedule of Activities

(Goal 4, 5, 7)

Our schedule of activities includes one day of full staff training and three days of camp. Each camp day falls under one of three categories: empowerment and self-advocacy, legislation and history, or relationships and community resources. The schedule was developed with the LaDDC LAYLF Ad-Hoc Committee (now dissolved), and further refined by the employees with disabilities at Families Helping Families of Acadiana with the intention of maximizing impact and engagement.

Research Collaboration with UL Lafayette

Because of the association between LAYLF and the UL LIFE program, Dr. Donna Wadsworth (professor of Special Education at UL Lafayette) was contacted regarding a potential research partnership. In an effort to conduct due diligence and to protect LAYLF participants, Dr. Wadsworth had us submit a summary of the proposed data collection method to in an effort to determine if we needed university IRB approval. It was determined that we do not require IRB approval.

In collaboration with Dr. Wadsworth and in keeping with national YLF trends, a 20 question, fixed choice pre-and post-survey was created. All surveys will be de-identified. The survey is written in plain language at approximately a 3rd grade level to increase accessibility for all delegates. Questions probe delegates understanding of the concepts presented at LAYLF. The post-survey has two additional questions with multiple choice options regarding the sessions they **liked** the most and the ones they **learned** the most from.

The results from the pre- and post- survey will allow for an analysis of the effectiveness of the program, lend to the creation of improvement and sustainability plans, and serve as a report for current and potential funders. (Goal 6)

American Camp Association

Through our own research and conversations with MedCamp of Louisiana we have become familiar with the American Camp Association (ACA). ACA sets the highest standards and best practices for residential camps across the country. In our conversations with the Executive Director of MedCamp of Louisiana it was highly recommended that we pursue accreditation through ACA. In addition, we had phone conference and meeting with MedCamp of LA's Camp director who is a site visitor for ACA. She offered her support through the accreditation process which involves extensive document review and site visits. Camp staff benefits from ACA's approach to preparation by offering high-quality, year-round, trainings and meetings.

It is our belief that part of our sustainability plan should include accreditation through ACA. By achieving accreditation, this will add an extra layer of accountability and ensure we are providing the highest quality camp experience for delegates and staff. (Goal 8)

Why Give LAYLF More Funding?

Great question! Since we have not had our first Youth Leadership Forum yet, it probably *does* seem odd that we're asking for more funding. However, our team has been researching YLFs for 5+ years, and this year we have learned even more about how to run a YLF, how to sustain a YLF, and how to expand a YLF over time.

In a nutshell, additional funding would help us reach goals of long-term sustainability and expansion. Since YLF disappeared for 15+ years due to lack of funding, it is important to achieve goals of sustainability and expansion as soon as possible. PiP is funded at approximately \$90,000; we are asking you to invest in our youths with disabilities, too, through funding YLF at \$45,000.

Expansion:

During our application period, we received 26 applications... when our funding could only support 12 total delegates. Currently, **Louisiana has one of the smallest YLFs in the country.** This information demonstrates that we could be making a bigger impact through expansion of the program... but program expansion also requires budget expansion.

Sustainability:

As previously mentioned, YLF disappeared for over 15 years due to lack of funding. Lack of volunteer staff was also cited by former LAYLF delegates/staff as a detriment to the program.

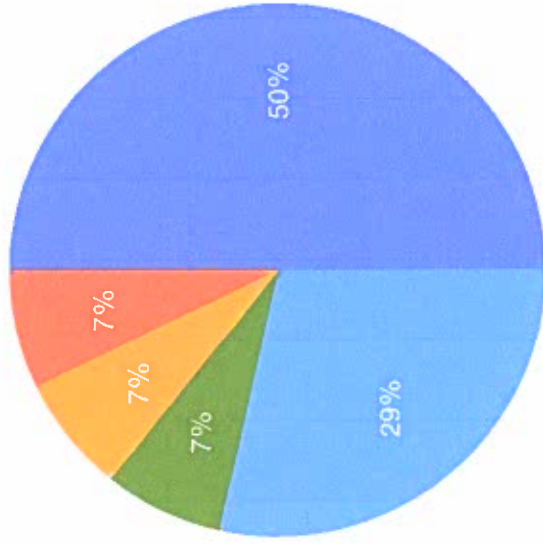
In order to prevent staff turnover and staff burnout, we would like to pay our staff in future years (this year, we didn't have the budget.)

Plans for Additional Funding:

- **Paid staff members**
- **Acceptance of more delegates**
- **Expansion of the duration of YLF**
- **Achieving American Camp Association accreditation. (This would increase the quality of our service through training, add an extra layer of accountability, and put YLF on their map of high-quality camps, which would assist in outreach.)**

Ethnic Diversity of Staff Members (14 Total)

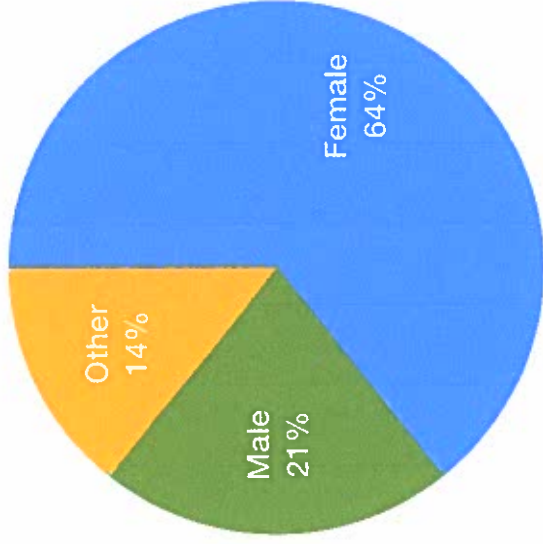
White	7
African American	4
American Indian	1
Hispanic	1
Two or More Ethnicities Listed	1
Asian/Pacific Islander	0



- White
- African American
- Two or More Ethnicities Listed
- American Indian
- Asian/Pacific Islander

GENDER DIVERSITY OF STAFF

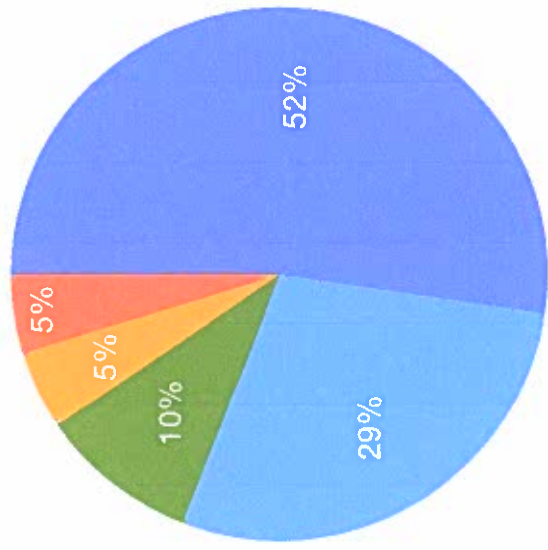
Female	9
Male	3
Other	2



- Female
- Male
- Other

ETHNIC DIVERSITY OF DELEGATE APPLICANTS

White	11
African American	6
Two or More Races	2
American Indian	1
Asian/Pacific Islander	1



- White
- Two or More Races
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- African American
- American Indian

THINGS TO NOTE:

- According to the Louisiana Census, our delegate applicant pool is reflective of the diversity of the state, with the exception of having representation from the Hispanic community.
- Our official slate of delegates have not been selected yet, because we are wrapping up interviews this month. A team of people with disabilities from Families Helping Families of Acadiana's Office will be selecting the final slate of delegates (12 total will be accepted.)