



FY23 End of Year Report Regional & Statewide Youth Advisory Boards

In FY23, Be Strong Families (BSF) partnered with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services in ensuring compliance with the Youth Advisory Board Act (20 ILCS 527/) by:

- Supporting the convening and maintenance of:
 - a Statewide Youth Advisory Board; and
 - regional youth advisory boards in the Cook and Northern regions of the state.
- Supporting each regional youth advisory board in working with the Department or its designee to determine how to best provide services to current and former youth in foster care living within their regions.
- Supporting the Statewide Youth Advisory Board in advising the Department and the General Assembly with respect to all matters involving or affecting current and former youth in foster care.

Through this program BSF partnered directly with the Statewide Youth Advisory Board members and DCFS to ensure the board met the responsibilities of the Youth Advisory Board act by:

1. Providing the Department and the General Assembly with the perspective of youth under the care of the Department:
2. Identifying, analyzing, and recommending solutions to any issues concerning adoption and guardianship and youth in foster care.
3. Reviewing and advising the Department on proposed or pending legislation, primarily as it concerns current and former youth in foster care; and
4. Reviewing and making recommendations on Department foster care and child welfare service delivery policies, guidelines, procedures, and training.

The Regional Youth Advisory boards and the Youth Advisory Affinity Groups each are scheduled to meet monthly, and the Statewide Youth Advisory Board meets five times throughout the year. The information below provides an overview of FY23 meetings convened:

Northern Regional Youth Advisory Board (RYAB) meetings: All 12 monthly meetings were convened.

- Regional Youth Advisory Board meetings (RYAB): July – June
- Interactive Leadership Meetings (ILM): July – June

Cook Regional Youth Advisory Board (RYAB) meetings: All 12 monthly meetings were convened.

- Regional Youth Advisory Board meetings (RYAB): July – June
- Interactive Leadership Meetings (ILM): July – June

Central Regional Youth Advisory Board (RYAB) meetings: All 12 monthly meetings were convened.

- Regional Youth Advisory Board meetings (RYAB): July – June
- Interactive Leadership Meetings (ILM): July – June

Southern Regional Youth Advisory Board (RYAB) meetings: All 12 monthly meetings were convened.

- Regional Youth Advisory Board meetings (RYAB): July – June
- Interactive Leadership Meetings (ILM): July – June

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Statewide Youth Advisory Board (SYAB) meetings: All 5 SYAB meetings were convened.

- SYAB Meetings – August, September, November, February, May

Youth Advisory Affinity Group (YAAG) meetings: All scheduled meetings were convened; however, youth participants attended 52 out of 72.

Table A. Regional Youth Advisory Board Meeting Details

The Regional Youth Advisory Board is comprised of youth in care and former youth in care between the ages of 14 and 21. Youth come together to educate, advocate for, and empower all youth in care. Regional YAB meetings occur monthly across the state of Illinois. These meetings have uniformed agendas which includes welcome and introductions, an ice breaker, DCFS updates, youth issues and concerns, and youth leadership development trainings.

In FY23, a total of 98% of the convened meetings had youth participants in attendance. The chart below provides information on the number of youth attendees, the regions where the meetings took place, and the workshop topics covered each month. The RYAB meetings are also an opportunity for youth to focus on their identified initiatives and work to advance these efforts. This year, the board worked on permanency, contact with caseworker, and contact with siblings.

Date	Location	# of Attendees	Youth Leadership Development Module
7/12/2022	Southern	26	Module 1: Being an Effective Agent of Change Understand the power of youth voice to affect change in the child welfare system, compare the difference between complaining and making change, develop a basic understanding of the skills needed to be a change agent.
7/13/2022	Central	4	
7/21/2022	Cook	10	
8/9/2022	Southern	8	Module 2: Everyone is a Leader Defined the concepts of leadership and leadership style. Speak about the difference between influence, power, authority, and leadership. Identify leadership style and how to collaborate with other styles.
8/10/2022	Central	8	
8/16/2022	Northern	5	
8/18/2022	Cook	12	
9/13/2022	Southern	21	Module 3: What and How are You Representing This workshop is designed to assist youth participants with understanding and developing a sense of themselves as leaders representing something larger than themselves and using their personal qualities to do so.
9/14/2022	Central	3	
9/15/2022	Cook	13	
9/20/2022	Northern	10	
10/11/2022	Southern	14	Module 4: Using Your Story to Advocate for Transformative Change The objectives of this training were to: Gain experience on how to use their personal stories to advocate for change in a safe and effective way
10/13/2022	Central	2	

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10/18/2022	Northern	11	
10/20/2022	Cook	6	
11/8/2022	Southern	6	Module 5: Turning Challenges into Opportunities The objectives of this training were to: Learn how to positively reframe difficult/ negative situations, and to identify ways to manage emotional triggers to remain effective as an advocate,
11/9/2022	Central	4	
11/15/2022	Northern	5	
11/17/2022	Cook	5	
12/13/2022	Southern	18	Regional YAB's held their holiday celebrations. Standing agenda items were facilitated in advance of holiday celebrations.
12/14/2022	Central	7	
12/15/2022	Cook	6	
12/20/2022	Northern	10	
1/10/2023	Southern	19	Module 6: Facilitation Skills 101 Part 1 Participants learn basic facilitation skills for effectively guiding conversations that surface youth voice and develop strategic advocacy plans.
1/11/2023	Central	3	
1/17/2023	Northern	11	
1/19/2023	Cook	5	
2/8/2023	Central	6	Module 7: Facilitation Skills 101 Part 2 Participants learn basic facilitation skills for effectively guiding conversations that surface youth voice and develop strategic advocacy plans.
2/14/2023	Southern	14	
2/16/2023	Cook	2	
2/21/2023	Northern	7	
3/8/2023	Central	4	Module 8: Strategic Goal Setting This module teaches youth a technique for setting and implementing goals in an advocacy- oriented change plan
3/14/2023	Southern	16	
3/16/2023	Cook	17	
3/21/2023	Northern	7	
4/11/2023	Southern	8	Module 9: Youth Choice Module: Financial Literacy Facilitator: Economic Awareness Council
4/12/2023	Central	11	
4/18/2023	Northern	7	
4/20/2023	Cook	9	
5/9/2023	Southern	12	Module 10: Youth Choice Module: Mental Health Facilitator: National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)
5/10/2023	Central	4	
5/16/2023	Northern	12	
5/18/2023	Cook	8	
6/13/2023	Southern	27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard items convened • Outreach Event: Bowling
6/14/2023	Central	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard items convened • Outreach Event: Jupiter's Arcade
6/15/2023	Cook	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard items convened • Outreach Event: Bowling

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6/20/2023	Northern	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard items convened • Outreach Event: Top Golf
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Table B. Meeting Summary

The table below includes details of meetings that were convened separately from the monthly RYAB and YAAG meetings. In instances where “n/a” is marked, it indicates that the presence of youth and young adults was not required, and those meetings were attended solely by adult partners.

Date	Meeting	# of Youth Attendees	Objective(s)
7/7/2022	Retreat Planning Call	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st Retreat Planning Meeting
8/1/2022	Retreat Planning Call	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Retreat Planning Call
8/5-7/2022	August Statewide Youth Advisory	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Etiquette Training • Looking Back & Moving Forward • SYAB Structure and Function • YAB Rules & Responsibilities Documentation Workshop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1st Reading of Bylaws ○ Collaborative relationships • Public speaking
8/10/2022	Cook/Northern ILM	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prep for RYAB’s
8/18/2022	Office of Education and Transition	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight Programs and Services for Youth in Care Transition Services (OETS) Webinar
8/18/2022	Monitoring All Staff Meeting	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YAB Outreach
8/24/2022	Intern Orientation	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intern Program Overview • Intern Rules and Responsibilities
8/23/2022	Debrief and SYAB planning Call	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debrief Retreat • 1st SYAB Planning Call
8/30/2022	2nd SYAB Planning Call	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September SYAB Youth Planning Call

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9/5/2022	Child Welfare Advisory Council (CWAC)	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing vouchers • Youth Village LifeSet • Youth Resources • Older Youth Survey • YAB Outreach
9/7/2022	SYAB Planning	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final SYAB Planning Call
9/9-11/2022	September SYAB Weekend	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Experience of Care Survey Review • 2nd Reading of Bylaws • Youth Advisory Affinity Group (YAAAG) session - Appendix K Revisions • Youth Experience of Care Survey Feedback • Parliamentary Procedure Training • Policy Work- Regional Reports and Moving Forward • Peer-to-peer SOGIE Presentation • Public Speaking
9/16/2022	Director's Meeting Prep Call	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare Director's Meeting Presentation
9/20/2022	Director's Meeting Prep Call	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice Director's Meeting PowerPoint Presentation
9/21/2022	Director's Meeting	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly Meeting with Director • SYAB & YAAG updates • Foster Youth Voice Month Request • SYAB Youth Led Panel • Next Steps for SYAB
10/3/2022	CWAC	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amy Dworsky from Chapin Hall to present the findings from the youth experiences survey. • Updates on Youth Care, Youth Housing and Cash Assistance, Youth Advisory, YV Lifeset and

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			TPSN along with any other areas from the Committee
10/6/2022	Intern Meeting	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard Check – in • Discussed what is working and areas for improvement • RYAB prep
10/13/2022	Cook ILM	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prep for regional meeting
10/19/2022	Foster Youth Voice panel	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth led panel to address the following topics: • Permanency • Importance of youth voice • Lack of foster homes
10/25/2022	Final SYAB Planning Call	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult partner meeting • Prep call for statewide meeting
11/4/2022	November Statewide Youth Advisory...	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth housing assistance program • Division X Project • Youth Advisory Affinity Group (YAAG) session • Priority Initiatives work • Ethical leadership training
11/11/2022	Directors Prep	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare Director’s Meeting Presentation • Youth led
11/15/2022	Directors Prep	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare Director’s Meeting Presentation • Youth led
11/18/2022	Directors Prep	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare Director’s Meeting Presentation • Youth led

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11/23/2022	Directors Prep	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare Director's Meeting Presentation • Youth led
12/1/2022	Directors Prep	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare Director's Meeting Presentation
12/5/2022	CWAC	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational training updates - Economic Awareness Council • Onward program update • Committee/Programs updates • New every other month meeting schedule
1/12/2023	Feb. SYAB Planning Call	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult Partner Prep call for statewide meeting • Discussion re: agenda items
1/12/2023	Director's Prep	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation for Q3 Director's Meeting and Presentation
1/25/2023	Feb. SYAB Planning Call	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth/Adult Partner Call • Prep call for statewide meeting • Review and revise agenda
2/3/2023	February Statewide Youth Advisory...	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loyola policy and legislation clinic • Policy priority workshop • Moving YAB forward • SOGIE report
2/9/2023	SYAB Debrief	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statewide Youth Advisory Board debrief meeting • What went well and lessons learned
2/9/2023	Director's Prep	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation for Q3 Director's Meeting and Presentation • Role assignment
2/15/2023	Director's Prep	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation for Q3 Director's Meeting

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation Review
3/1/2023	Director's Prep	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation for Q3 Director's Meeting and Presentation • PowerPoint updates
3/8/2023	Stakeholder's Collaborative Meeting	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth leaders prepared video recorded PowerPoint presentations that were sent to be reviewed at the stakeholders meeting. • Shared information related to YAB and YAAG
3/9/2023	Director's Prep	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation for Q3 Director's Meeting and Presentation • Final PowerPoint edits
3/9/2023	Cook/Northern ILM	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare agenda • Co-facilitation discussion for RYAB
3/12/2023	Loyola Meeting	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loyola small workgroup • Priority work: Contact with Case Worker discussion
3/15/2023	Director's Final prep	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final presentation review and practice session
3/15/2023	Director's Meeting	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly meeting with Director Smith
4/4/2023	Loyola Meeting	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth working with Loyola on priority concern #2: Case Worker communication
4/14/2023	Foster Success Planning Call	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dual purpose event planning call with YAB team members.
4/14/2023	Foster Success Planning Call	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dual purpose event planning call with YAB leaders.
4/21/2023	Intern Meeting	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project edits and facilitation prep

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5/4/2023	Foster Success Planning Call	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dual purpose event planning call with Foster Parent Support Specialist.
5/19/2023	May SYAB Weekend	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster Change, Foster Success! • Public Speaking • FY23 Year End
6/12/2023	Director's Prep	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q4 Director's Meeting prep with YAB leaders.
6/26/2023	Director's Prep	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q4 Director's Meeting prep with YAB leaders.
6/28/2023	Q4 Director's Meeting	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster Change, Foster Success Overview • Presentation of Intern Project • Presentation of YAAG Ambassador Projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o LGBTQI+ o African American o Latino

Table C. Youth Advisory Affinity Group (YAAG) Meeting Details

The purpose of the YAAG's is to organize and provide space, support, education, coaching and advocacy for Illinois youth in care that identify as or allies with the following communities: African American, Asian American, Latino, or LGBTQI+. YAAG meetings are statewide meetings and are held virtually using the online platform zoom.

In FY23, 71% of meetings convened had enthusiastic youth participants in attendance. The chart below highlights the engagement of young individuals in these meetings, providing valuable insights into the number of attendees and the overarching meeting objectives. While there is room for improvement in attendance rates among established groups, it is worth noting that the Asian American and Native American communities represent the smallest racial groups within the Illinois Child Welfare system.

Date	Meeting	Time	# of Youth Attendees	Meeting Objective
7/5/2022	Latino Ambassador	4:30 - 5:30pm	3	Define Latino Ambassador Project Latino Youth Welcome Packet Outline

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7/6/2022	African American Ambassador	4:30 - 5:30pm	1	Discuss and Brainstorm Possible Project Ideas
7/8/2022	LGBTQI+ Ambassador	4:30 - 5:30pm	5	PowerPoint Presentation Outline
7/27/2022	African American YAAG	5:00 - 6:00pm	6	Workshop Topic: Advocating for Youth in Care
7/28/2022	LGBTQI+ YAAG	5:00 - 6:30pm	23	Workshop Topic: Advocating for Youth in Care
8/2/2022	Latino Ambassador	4:30 - 5:30pm	5	Latino Youth Welcome Packet Creation, Role Assignment
8/3/2022	African American Ambassador	4:30 - 5:30pm	2	Brainstorming session
8/4/2022	LGBTQI+ Ambassador	4:30 - 5:30pm	4	Project Discussion: PowerPoint Draft Outline
8/23/2022	Latino YAAG	5:00 - 6:30pm	4	Policy and Procedure Discussion, Reviewing Burgos Consent Decree
8/24/2022	African American YAAG	5:00 - 6:00pm	1	Policy and Procedure Discussion, Examining Policies and Procedures
8/25/2022	LGBTQI+ YAAG	5:00 - 6:30pm	22	Youth Led Session: "Emptying Out the Negative"
9/1/2022	LGBTQI+ Ambassador	4:30 - 5:30pm	2	New Ambassadors Onboarding, PowerPoint Draft Outline, Staff Feedback
9/6/2022	Latino Ambassador	4:30 - 5:30pm	3	Project Discussion: Welcome Packet Outline
9/7/2022	African American Ambassador	4:30 - 5:30pm	5	Identify Project Topic, Role Assignment
9/22/2022	LGBTQI+ YAAG	5:00 - 6:30pm	7	Advocacy Training: Appendix K Discussion
9/26/2022	Asian American YAAG	5:00 - 6:00pm	1	Welcome Session: Overview of Policies and Services, Discuss Concerns

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9/28/2022	African American YAAG	5:00 - 6:00pm	4	Advocacy Training facilitated by Shriver Poverty Law Center
10/4/2022	Latino Ambassador	4:30-5:30pm	1	Youth worked on finding documentation for their project
10/5/2022	African American Ambassador	4:30-5:30pm	3	Discussion on pending research and research that has already been done
10/6/2022	LGBTQI+ Ambassador	4:30-5:30pm	4	Youth worked on their presentation and added more to the outline. Suggestions for the next LGBTQI+ YAAG meeting were provided
10/25/22	Latino	5:00-6:30pm	2	Advocacy training - how to use our power/energy, worked on the "Pie exercise" to see where we put our energy
10/26/22	African American	5:00-6:00pm	2	Advocacy training - how to use our power/energy, worked on the "Pie exercise" to see where we put our energy
10/27/22	LGBTQI+	5:00-6:30pm	2	LGBTQI+ History Month education, advocacy efforts on a federal level
11/1/2022	Latino Ambassador	4:30-5:30pm	1	Latino Ambassador Project, prepped to work hand-on during SYAB
11/2/2022	African American Ambassador	4:30-5:30pm	1	African American Ambassador Project, refocused direction, prepped for SYAB
11/3/2022	LGBTQI+ Ambassador	4:30-5:30pm	1	LGBTQI+ Ambassador Project, worked on the pronoun section of the presentation
11/10/22	November YAAG	5:00-6:30pm	10	Intersectionality discussion, recognizing privilege, importance of YAAG
12/1/2022	December YAAG	5:00-6:30pm	5	Guest Speaker Keren Prescott discussing advocacy work and self-value
1/3/2023	Latino Ambassador	4:30pm-5:30pm	1	Ambassador Project, created PDF version of the welcome packet, prep for January Latino YAAG meeting presentation

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1/4/2023	African American Ambassador	4:30pm-5:30pm	1	Ambassador project, finalized survey arrangement and questions, prep for January's YAAG meeting presentation
1/5/2023	LGBTQI+ Ambassador	4:30pm-5:30pm	1	Ambassador project, update presentation, prep for January Latino YAAG meeting presentation
1/24/2023	Latino	5:00pm-6:30pm	2	2023 goals setting for youth and Latino YAAG group, Latino Advisory Council presented about council, Ambassador project presented for feedback
1/25/2023	African American	5:00pm-6:00pm	1	Chris Towers, DCFS presented - Topic of discussion was on MLK Jr., Ambassador project presented for feedback
1/26/2023	LGBTQI+	5:00pm-6:30pm	7	Discussions around "No name calling week," 2023 goals for youth and the LGBTQI+ YAAG group, Safe space guidelines were created, Ambassador project was presented for feedback
2/1/2023	LGBTQI+ Ambassador	4:30pm-5:30pm	2	PowerPoint updates re: cohesive, roles and slides reassigned
2/8/2023	African American Ambassador	4:30pm-5:30pm	1	Survey edits made, discussed January YAAG meeting feedback and how to move forward
2/22/2023	African American	5:00pm-6:00pm	1	Black history discussion, watched a TEDtalk - Black History is American History
2/23/2023	LGBTQI+	5:00pm-6:30pm	1	Focused on Queer Black change makers and movements lead by queer leaders, Watched a video about queer Black people during the Harlem Renaissance
2/28/2023	Latino	5:00pm-6:30pm	1	Discussed what it means to be Afro-Latino, Watched parts of the Blacktinidad episode
3/1/2023	African American Ambassador	4:30pm-5:30pm	1	Project discussion, worked on the survey write up, Discussed flyer ideas, and data collection
3/2/2023	LGBTQI+ Ambassador	4:30pm-5:30pm	1	YAAG meeting prep, Project discussion re: adding a video and additional affirming care resources to the presentation

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3/22/2023	African American	5:00pm-6:00pm	1	Focused on Women’s history month and the roles of Black women in history, Highlighted and uplifted Black women #blackgirlmagic
3/23/2023	LGBTQI+	5:00pm-6:30pm	11	Discussed Trans visibility day, Bi health month, and women’s
4/26/2023	African American	5:00pm-6:00pm	3	Advocacy (Health), Facilitator: YouthCare of Illinois
4/27/2023	LGBTQI+	5:00pm-6:30pm	11	Facilitator: Uniting Pride Champaign, Presentation on programs, teen projects, and resources
5/4/2023	LGBTQI+ Ambassador	4:30pm-5:30pm	3	Ambassador Meeting: Finalize Project
5/25/2023	Combined Session	5:00pm-6:30pm	6	Celebration of Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage month, Watched documentary highlighting Ada Tong, DCFS Asian Chief
6/20/2023	Latino Ambassador	4:30pm-5:30pm	1	Ambassador Meeting: Finalize Project and Practice Facilitation Session
6/21/2023	LGBTQI+ Ambassador	4:30pm-5:30pm	1	Ambassador Project- Edited all PowerPoint and did a run through of the presentation
6/22/2023	LGBTQI+	5:00pm-6:30pm	9	Pride Celebration, NAMI presentation: Mental Health and its Importance in LGBTQI+ Community
6/27/2023	Latino	5:00pm-6:30pm	1	Tell Your Story - how to tell your story as a Latino person.
6/28/2023	African American	5:00pm-6:00pm	1	Juneteenth Celebration – knowledge of the Juneteenth holiday, End of year celebratory Jeopardy session

FY23 Statewide Youth Advisory Board Accomplishments:

The Statewide Youth Advisory Board (SYAB) and the Youth Advisory Affinity Group (YAAG) have achieved significant accomplishments and highlights in FY23. Here are some of the noteworthy achievements:

1. Partnering with Florida's Youth Board: The SYAB collaborated with the Selfless Love Foundation from Florida to be a part of Foster Youth Voice Month, a campaign aimed at amplifying the voices of youth in care. Proclamation Signed by Governor Pritzker on October 14th, the official proclamation from Governor Pritzker was signed, officially declaring October as Foster Youth Voice Month in Illinois.
2. Youth Voice Panel: In celebration of Foster Youth Voice Month, SYAB organized a Foster Youth Voice Panel on October 19th via Zoom. This panel provided an opportunity for youth in care to

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share their experiences and perspectives with child welfare staff, foster parents, and other youth.

3. Convening the Asian American Youth Advisory Affinity Group: The first official Asian American Youth Advisory Affinity Group was established, providing a platform for Asian American youth to address their unique needs and concerns in the child welfare system.
4. Successful Dual-Purpose Event: SYAB collaborated with the Statewide Foster Parent Advisory Council (SWFCAC) to host a dual-purpose event, celebrating foster parents during National Foster Parent Appreciation month, and addressing the needs of youth in care. Foster Change Foster Success Event (dual purpose event). The Youth Advisory Board successfully hosted the first Foster Change Foster Success event, aiming to tackle the lack of foster homes, break stigmas surrounding older youth placements, and address permanency concerns.
5. YAAG Ambassadors Projects: The first-ever YAAG Ambassadors completed three projects focused on tools to positively impact the child welfare system.

Officer Slates:

This chart represents the total number of positions filled and the number of vacancies within each region by quarter.

Quarter	Cook County Officers	Northern Region Officers	Central Region Officers	Southern Region Officers
Q1	4/5 (Vacant: Secretary)	1/5 (Vacant: President, Vice President, Secretary, Executive Team Leader)	4/5 (Vacant: Executive Team Leader)	1/5 (Vacant: President, Secretary, Sergeant at Arms, Executive Team Leader)
Q2	3/5 (Vacant: Vice President, Secretary)	3/5 (Vacant: Secretary, Executive Team Leader)	1/5 (Filled: Sergeant at Arms)	1/5 (Vacant: President, Secretary, Sergeant at Arms, Executive Team Leader)
Q3	3/5 (Vacant: Vice President, Secretary)	3/5 (Vacant: Secretary, Executive Team Leader)	3/5 (Vacant: Executive Team Leader, Sergeant at Arms)	3/5 (Vacant: Executive Team Leader, Sergeant at Arms)
Q4	3/5 (Vacant: Vice President, Secretary)	3/5 (Vacant: Secretary, Executive Team Leader)	4/5 (Vacant: Executive Team Leader)	4/5 (Vacant: President, Secretary, Sergeant at Arms, Executive Team Leader)

At the beginning of FY23, several officer positions were vacant across different regions. In Cook County, four out of five officer positions were filled, with the Secretary position being the only vacancy. The Northern and Southern regions had only one officer position filled, while Central Region had four vacancies, with only the Executive Team Leader position filled. During the second quarter, there were some changes in officer slates due to youth obtaining full-time jobs and relocating to new regions. Cook

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County, Northern Region, and Southern Region each saw some officer positions being filled, but vacancies remained in Vice President, Secretary, and Executive Team Leader positions.

By the start of the third quarter, the officer vacancies remained largely the same, with slight progress in some regions. Cook County, Northern Region, Central Region, and Southern Region each had three officer positions filled, but key roles like Vice President, Secretary, and Executive Team Leader were still vacant in different regions.

In the fourth quarter, there was further progress in filling officer positions. Cook County ended with three positions filled, but vacancies in Vice President and Secretary positions persisted. The Northern Region also had three officer positions filled, with vacancies in Secretary and Executive Team Leader positions. Central Region had four positions filled, but the vacancy for Executive Team Leader remained. The Southern Region continued to have vacancies in all positions, except for Vice President.

Throughout the year, adult partners worked diligently on recruitment efforts, aiming to increase youth participation and fill regional officer vacancies. Additional youth expressed interest in filling officer positions, and more candidates ran for officer positions in different regions in FY24.

Overall, there were significant efforts made to address officer vacancies, and some regions saw improvements by the end of FY23. The adult partners will continue to work on publicizing the Youth Advisory Board (YAB) and expand recruitment efforts to ensure that the new fiscal year, FY24, starts with adequate officer slates.

Program Interns:

The Youth Advisory Board Program Interns are individuals who are gainfully employed or enrolled in college or a trade school, aimed at encouraging and supporting the active participation of youth in care. These interns assist board officers and members in developing essential skills like leadership, advocacy, and conflict resolution.

In September 2022, the Southern Regional Youth Advisory Board identified and approved two Program Interns: Aaliyah Tutwiler, a student at Southern Illinois Carbondale, and Orion Partington, a student at Southern Illinois Edwardsville, who also works part-time at Sam's Club.

In quarter 3, Aaliyah informed the Youth Advisory Board that she could no longer serve in the Intern capacity. Orion continued to assist board officers and members, focusing on leadership and advocacy. At the end of FY23, Orion successfully completed his internship. As part of his final project, he presented a position paper advocating for better incentives for Foster Parents. This paper was later presented to the Director and his designees.

Youth Advisory Affinity Group Ambassadors:

The Youth Advisory Affinity Group has Ambassadors who collaborate with equity, diversity, and inclusion professionals and DCFS staff to improve services, programs, policies, and the experiences of youth in care. In Quarter 1, there were 3 Latino, 7 African American, and 7 LGBTQI+ ambassadors. Each group of ambassadors worked on projects related to their respective communities, focusing on education, support, and resources.

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During quarter two, the number of ambassadors decreased due to transitions to different placements and changes in extracurricular activities. By the end of the quarter, there were 2 Latino, 4 African American, and 7 LGBTQI+ ambassadors. The ambassadors continued to work on their projects, aiming to complete them by the end of their one-year commitment in March 2023.

By the end of Q4, the Youth Advisory Affinity Groups had 3 LGBTQI+ ambassadors, 2 African American ambassadors, and 1 Latino ambassador. The ambassadors successfully completed their one-year commitments by presenting their final projects to the DCFS Director, aiming to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in the child welfare system.

Statewide Youth Advisory Board:

In FY23, The Statewide Youth Advisory Board held a total of 5 meetings, as required by Public Act 098-0806. SYAB has been actively engaged and has participated in various activities and initiatives as they work towards fulfilling the board's initiatives. Below are some key takeaways from the Statewide Youth Advisory Board Meeting:

1. In-person Retreat:
 - a. The SYAB held its first in-person retreat in August 2022 after two years of meeting remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During the retreat, participants learned about the SYAB's mission, accomplishments, and goals for the future.
 - b. Professional Etiquette Coaching: The board members received coaching on professional etiquette, including making first and lasting impressions, proper introductions, and standard courtesies for professional settings.
 - c. Foster Youth Voice (FYV) Month: The SYAB was invited to participate in FYV month by the Selfless Love Foundation. Youth leaders wrote a collective piece detailing how SYAB has made a difference in Illinois' child welfare system.
 - d. Team Building and Trust-Building Activities: The retreat included team-building exercises, such as a trust walk and an escape room, as well as other fun activities like hayrides, bonfires, and outdoor sports.
2. Meetings and Workshops: The SYAB held regular meetings with standing agenda items like welcome and introductions, updates from the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), and discussions on various topics like ethics, LGBTQI+ support, housing assistance, and more.
3. Collaboration with Loyola University of Chicago Legislation Clinic: SYAB collaborated with Loyola University to address concerns around contact with caseworkers and made progress on identifying next steps.
4. Permanency and Placement Concerns: SYAB worked on addressing permanency concerns by providing feedback on the DCFS Matching Placement Tool and developing a youth preference placement tool.
5. Foster Change, Foster Success Event: In partnership with foster parents and older youth, the SYAB hosted an event to connect foster families and older youth in care, addressing permanency concerns and promoting meaningful conversations and rapport-building.
6. Speaking Skills: Youth leaders had the opportunity to practice and improve their public speaking skills through presentations and self-critique exercises.

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Quarterly Director's Meeting:

As outlined in Public Act 098-0806, Statewide Youth Advisory Board leaderships have met with Director Smith regularly to convey the concerns of our youth in care and to provide updates on projects and initiatives. Key highlights from FY23 Director's Meetings are as follows:

1. FY23 Q1: Youth discussed their partnership with the Selfless Love Foundation and October being declared Foster Youth Voice Month.
2. FY23 Q2: Postponed Director's Meeting: Due to scheduling conflicts and the holiday season, the meeting with the director was postponed and rescheduled for January 18, 2023. This meeting was cancelled due to scheduling conflicts.
3. FY23 Q3: Included discussions on accomplishments, SYAB and YAAG meeting updates, feedback, recommendations, and next steps. Some of the recommendations included hiring an LGBTQI+ clinical coordinator, ongoing foster parent recruitment, additional support for foster parents, and creating a computerized matching tool system to minimize placement disruptions.
4. FY23 Q4: The SYAB met with the Director of DCFS to present their annual projects. The meeting included an overview of the successful Foster Change Foster Success event, which aimed to break stigmas surrounding teens and young adults in care and encourage more foster homes to take in older youth.
 1. SYAB Intern Project: The SYAB Intern presented a position paper addressing the lack of foster homes and suggested additional incentives for foster parents to ease the financial strain of taking placements.
 2. YAAG End-of-Year Projects: The various YAAG groups presented their end-of-year projects, including an informative presentation about the LGBTQI+ community in care, a survey on challenges faced by the African American community in care regarding post-secondary education, and a welcome packet for newly entering Latino youth in care.

Recruitment Efforts:

The Statewide Youth Advisory board adult partners have worked relentlessly to beef up recruitment efforts as a means to increase youth participation in YAB and YAAG. Below are some of the efforts taken:

1. Informing Agency Staff: The YAB and YAAG staff attended the DCFS Monitoring All Staff meeting and the Office of Education and Transition Services webinar to present the purpose and work of the Youth Advisory Board and Affinity Group. The goal was to inform agencies and DCFS staff about the YAB and encourage them to identify youth to participate regularly in the meetings.
2. Call to Action for Recruitment: At the CWAC (Child Welfare Advisory Council) meeting, a call to action for recruitment was made, requesting agency staff to invite at least 5 youth to participate in the monthly YAB meetings.
3. The YAB and YAAG staff continue to conduct recruitment efforts through phone calls, emails, and social media to reach out to youth, caseworkers, contracted agencies, agency monitors, and foster parents.

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4. Collaborating with Foster Parent Support Specialist: The YAB and YAAG staff attended the Statewide Foster Parent Support Specialist meeting to share information about their groups and seek support from the Foster Parent Support Specialists in encouraging youth participation.
5. In-Person Outreach Efforts: In the Central and Southern Regions, in-person outreach efforts directly with youth have been deployed to increase awareness and attendance of the YAB and YAAG meetings.

Metrics and Outcomes

- 1) Convene 48 Regional Youth Advisory Boards (48/48=100%)
- 2) Convene 5 Statewide Youth Advisory Meetings / Retreats (4 SYAB, 1 Retreat = 100%)
- 3) Convene a quarterly meeting between the Director's office and the Executive Board (3/4 = 75%)
 - SYAB members met with Director Smith the following: Q1 - September 2022, Q2 - December 2022 cancelled, Q3 - March 2023, Q4 - June 2023

Outcomes:

- 1) 100% of youth issues and concerns identified during Cook, Southern, Central, and Northern regional meetings and SYAB meetings will be submitted to DCFS Advocacy staff within 24 hours of the meetings adjournment.

100% youth issues have been submitted within the required time frames.

- 2) 100% of active DCFS policy transmittals that directly impact youth from the Office of Child and Family Policy will be shared and reviewed by RYAB members at regional meetings. Regional boards will suggest revisions or make recommendations when pertinent.

100% of Active DCFS policy transmittals relevant to youth were shared with youth; however, no formal recommendations were made.

- 3) The Statewide Youth Advisory Board demonstrates capacity to advocate for the needs of youth in care measured by reports, testimony, representation at meetings and events.

SYAB have advocated for youth at the following events: Director's meeting (September, March, June), Youth Voice Panel (October), Stakeholders Meeting (March), Foster Change, Foster Success (May)

- 4) The Cook, Central, Southern and Northern Regional Youth Advisory Boards demonstrates capacity to advocate for the needs of youth in care measured by reports, testimony, representation at meetings and events.

SYAB have advocated for youth at the following events: Director's meeting (September, March, June), Youth Voice Panel and proclamation (October), Stakeholders Meeting (March), Foster Change, Foster Success (May).

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- 5) The Statewide Youth Advisory Board will have substantial links to divisions of DCFS and advisory councils associated with DCFS and advocates for youth in care as measured through a report on representation, meetings, reports, communications, and workshops that occur.

Divisions of DCFS actively linked with SYAB activities include:

- o Office of Education and Transition Services
- o Diversity, Equity, Inclusion – Monthly via YAAG
- o Advocacy Office
- o Director’s Office
- o TRPMI Monitoring

- 6) The Cook, Central, Southern and Northern Regional Youth Advisory Boards will have substantial links to divisions of DCFS and advisory councils associated with DCFS and advocates for youth in care as measured through a report on representation, meetings, reports, communications, and workshops that occur.

Divisions of DCFS actively linked with YAB activities include:

- Office of Education and Transition Services
- Advocacy
- NIU Education Advisors
- Quality Enhancement

- 7) BSF will prepare evaluation summary reports on Leadership Development workshops at Cook, Central, Southern, and Northern RYAB meetings and submit them on a quarterly basis.

Evaluation summaries are provided as an attachment:

- Module 1: [Intro] Being an Effective Change Agent Purpose
- Module 2: Everyone is a Leader: Leadership Style Purpose
- Module 3: What and How Are You Representing?
- Module 4: Using Your Story to Advocate for Change Purpose
- Module 5: Turning Challenges into Opportunities Purpose
- Module 6: Facilitation Skills 101 (Part 1)
- Module 7: Facilitation Skills 101 (Part 2)
- Module 8: Strategic Goal Setting Purpose
- Modules 9-11: Youth Choice Presentations Purpose

- 8) SYAB Youth trained in public speaking will demonstrate an increase in public speaking skills and confidence presenting in front of an audience as measured by retrospective analysis.

Retro analysis provided in zip file.

- 9) BSF will prepare a year-end report on the FY23 Active Membership stipend / incentive program:

- o Northern: 13 youth have reached tier 1; 4 youth have reached tier 2.
- o Cook: 8 youth have reached tier 1; 1 youth have reached tier 2.
- o Central: 5 youth have reached tier 1.
- o Southern: 22 youth have reached tier 1, 9 youth have reached tier 2, 2 youth have reached tier 3.

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- 10) Youth Advisory Board officers will have attended at least two of the following internal advisory councils / sub-committees:

Due to scheduling and time of advisory council meetings, youth have only participated in the Child Welfare Advisory Council (CWAC) Emerging Adults Sub-Committee.

- 11) The YAAG demonstrates capacity to advocate for various DEI concerns of youth in care measured by meeting reports and youth recommendations.

YAAG ambassadors have successfully completed 3 projects advocating for the needs of youth in specific groups:

Latino YAAG Project: Welcome Packet

Purpose: A comprehensive list of resources and information for new Latino youth entering care. This group of youth wanted to ensure incoming youth feel welcomed and are getting their needs met.

Audience: Youth

African American Project: African American Youth in Care Education Youth to Youth Survey

Purpose: To better determine what resources are needed to help support African American youth in care and their educational needs. This group believes African American youth in care face significantly more challenges to becoming successful adults, than peers of other races; with one major barrier being educational attainment. The survey will help determine whether this is true or not. This project will be ongoing.

Audience: Youth

LGBTQI+ YAAG Project: Educational PowerPoint

Purpose: Information about the LGBTQI+ community through the lens as a youth in care. This group felt as though “the people who they interact with should know more about their community and if they did, if people got to know more about the LGBTQI+ community, they would humanize the LGBTQI+ community and treat them with respect.”

Audience: Adults/Care Team/ Foster Parent Training

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Regional Demographics:

Table 1 – Age

	under 14	14-15	16-18	19-21	Total
Q1	1	33	71	12	117
Q2	1	21	53	18	93
Q3	2	33	61	14	110
Q3	1	47	77	16	141
Total	5	134	262	60	461

Table 2 – Race

	White	Black	Hispanic	Biracial/Other	Total
Q1	50	47	13	7	117
Q2	43	38	4	8	93
Q3	52	41	7	10	110
Q4	58	56	12	15	141
Total	203	182	36	39	461

Table 3 – Gender

	Females	Male	Transgender	Total
Q1	70	33	14	117
Q2	67	19	7	93
Q3	79	25	6	110
Q4	99	32	10	141
Total	315	109	37	461

Table 4 – Placement Types

	FH	ILO/TLP	I/GH	Other/Unknown	Total
Q1	6	3	97	11	117
Q2	7	0	82	4	93
Q3	4	6	91	9	110
Q4	7	16	112	6	141
Total	24	25	382	30	461

Table 5 – Adult Participants

	Not Including	Including Coordinators/managers	Totals

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	coordinator/ managers		
Q1	50	17	67
Q2	39	25	61
Q3	54	19	73
Q4	73	18	91
Total	216	79	292

Statewide Youth Advisory Board Demographics:

Table 6 – Age

	under 14	14-15	16-18	19-21	Total
Q1	0	0	17	5	22
Q2	0	0	8	4	12
Q3	0	0	3	4	7
Q4	0	2	9	1	12
Total	0	2	37	14	53

Table 7 – Race

	White	Black	Hispanic	Biracial/Other	Total
Q1	6	8	4	4	22
Q2	4	6	1	1	12
Q3	2	3	1	1	7
Q4	6	5	0	1	12
Total	18	17	6	7	53

Table 8 – Gender

	Females	Male	Transgender	Total
Q1	7	11	4	22
Q2	7	3	2	12
Q3	2	4	1	7
Q4	5	5	2	12
Total	21	23	9	53

Table 9 – Placement Type

	White	Black	Hispanic	Biracial/Other	Total
Q1	6	8	4	4	22
Q2	4	6	1	1	12

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Q3	2	3	1	1	7
Q4	6	5	0	1	12
Total	18	17	6	7	53

Table 10 – Adult Participants

	Not Including coordinator/managers	Including Coordinators/managers	Totals
Q1	12	5	17
Q2	5	2	7
Q3	4	3	7
Q4	4	3	7
Total	25	13	38

Youth Advisory Affinity Group:

Table 11 – Age

	under 14	14-15	16-18	19-21	Total
Q1	5	9	29	6	49
Q2	0	4	14	4	22
Q3	3	2	14	0	19
Q4	1	8	17	4	30
Total	9	23	74	14	120

Table 12 – Race

	White	Black	Hispanic	Biracial/Other	Asian	Total
Q1	20	25	2	2	0	49
Q2	6	9	2	4	1	22
Q3	7	8	3	1	0	19
Q4	13	13	3	1	0	30
Total	46	55	10	8	1	120

Table 13 – Gender

	Females	Male	Transgender	Unknown	Total
Q1	21	19	9	0	49
Q2	11	7	4	0	22
Q3	9	5	4	1	19

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Q4	12	8	9	1	30
Total	53	39	26	2	120

Table 14 – Placement Type

	FH	ILO/TLP	I/GH	Other/Unknown	Total
Q1	3	0	32	0	49
Q2	2	2	14	4	22
Q3	4	0	14	1	19
Q4	3	0	27	0	30
Total	12	2	87	5	120

Table 15 – Adult Participation

	Not Including coordinator/managers	Including Coordinators/managers	Totals
Q1	28	14	42
Q2	14	13	27
Q3	21	10	31
Q4	19	17	36
Total	82	54	136