Police & Youth Engagement Project:
Supporting the Role of Law Enforcement in Juvenile Justice Reform

YOUTH PARTICIPANT: OVERVIEW

Objective:

Youth and young adults from across the country are being brought together to share their thoughts and experiences with law enforcement leaders. Participants will take part in a two-day long national training institute for law enforcement leaders. This training and conversation, is scheduled to take place in Charlotte, North Carolina on July 18-20, 2017.

This effort is funded by the U. S. Department of Justice’s Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). It is being led by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), in partnership with the Coalition for Juvenile Justice (CJJ). OJJDP is a federal office that envisions a nation where our children are healthy, educated, and free from violence. If they come into contact with the juvenile justice system, the contact should be rare, fair, and beneficial to them. The IACP is dedicated to advancing the law enforcement profession through advocacy, outreach, education and programs by developing and implementing state-of-the-art policies, practices, training/education and technical assistance programs. CJJ is a membership organization that envisions a nation where fewer children are at risk of delinquency; and if they are at risk or involved with the justice system, they and their families receive every possible opportunity to live safe, healthy, and fulfilling lives.

This project grew in part from the 2015 Task Force for 21st Century Policing, which provides a number of recommendations for increasing positive police / youth engagement. The Attorney General’s National Task Force on Children Exposed to Violence (CEV) Final Report asserts that police play a critical role in responding to CEV, not only ensuring public safety, but also serving as a “gateway for connecting children and families to trauma-informed services and trauma-specific treatment.” The 2015 report from the International Association of Chiefs of Police’s National Policy Summit on Community-Police Relations provides several recommendations for law enforcement to positively engage youth, including training officers on the differences between youth and adults and tactics to effectively de-escalate situations that include police-youth interaction.

Such law enforcement trainings are important. Law enforcement has a significant role in the outcomes for youth and young adults, whether it be a decision to make an arrest, divert, cite, give a warning, intervene, and/or to positively engage with young people to foster positive youth development, or aid a child towards recovery in the wake of overwhelming, violent and traumatic events that occur in and around youth every day in neighborhoods, schools, and homes.

Structure and Composition:
Fifteen (15) to thirty (30) youth and young adults from around the country and in the Charlotte, North Carolina metro area who are between the ages 16-23 who have a range of positive, negative, or mixed experiences with law enforcement will be selected. Examples of such experiences include (but are not limited to):

- A youth or young adult who was diverted by a law enforcement officer into a community service program instead of arrest and formal processing in juvenile court;
- A youth or young adult arrested by law enforcement and processed through the juvenile court to a diversion program;
- A youth or young adult identified by law enforcement as being exposed/witness to violence after a violent incident at home, school and community, engaged on scene by law enforcement and provided referral to services;
- A youth or young adult who was mentored (inspired to change) by a law enforcement officer;
- A youth or young adult who was identified as a victim and assisted by a law enforcement officer (either positively or negatively).

The project aims to include young people from each region of the country (Midwest, Northeast, South, West, etc.) who live in urban, suburban, tribal and rural communities. Diversity is important to the project’s success, and as a result, the group will include young people with a range of racial and ethnic backgrounds, and economic statuses.

**General Responsibilities of Youth Participants:**
Youth Participant will participate in planning and preparatory calls, including a one-hour orientation call in June. Members will actively participate in a two-day session that is scheduled to take place in Charlotte, North Carolina on July 18-20, 2017. During the first day, members will learn about the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDPA), as well as the juvenile justice system’s formal structure and procedures, and strategies for effectively communicating and problem-solving.

On the second day, youth, young adults, and police executives from across the country will actively participate in a roundtable discussion that will involve a conversation focused on finding ways to improve police and youth relationships. Participants will also identify actions that they can take back to their own communities.

**Benefits for Youth Participants:**
Youth Participants will receive stipends for work completed during the institute. Youth Participants will receive training to help them build important leadership skills and knowledge around efforts to improve police-youth relations. They will have an opportunity to help address a pressing national issue by sharing their experiences with law enforcement and helping create a training curriculum that will be used to educate police leaders about effective strategies for engaging young people.

**Costs for Youth Participants:**
There are no costs for Youth Participants. Expenses for travel, lodging, and meals will be provided. Youth Participants will receive a stipend for the Institute event and preparation and follow-up activities, as agreed and arranged in advance. Please note that some expenses, such as luggage fees and taxis to and from the airport/train station will be reimbursed after the event.
Qualifications for Youth Participants
At a minimum, the ideal candidate should have the following experiences, skills, and qualities:

- 16-23 years old at the time of the event;
- Youth under 18 will be considered if they live within the Charlotte, North Carolina metropolitan area, and must be accompanied by their parent or guardian when traveling to the event.
- Previous experience with law enforcement in the community;
- Willingness and ability to actively listen and work in a diverse group;
- Passionate about and committed to improving youth relations with law enforcement and/or juvenile justice reform;
- Creative problem-solving and critical thinking skills;
- Public speaking skills or a willingness to learn public speaking skills;

In addition, the ideal candidate may have some or all of the following experiences, skills, and qualities:

- Ability to share personal experiences strategically to achieve a goal (e.g., promoting a positive policy change, training professionals and volunteers, empowering other young people, and advocating for oneself);
- Previous or current experience in juvenile justice reform such as organizing, policy advocacy and development, training, program development that demonstrated system-wide impact, etc.;
- Previous or current experience working with police or city leadership (e.g., community forums, workgroups, town halls, etc.);
- Preference will be given to candidates who have had positive or negative experiences with law enforcement; are currently or previously involved in the juvenile justice system; at-risk of or previously-involved in gang activity; girls who are at risk of involvement or involved in the juvenile justice system; young people who live in communities with high levels of handgun violence; or are exposed to or witnesses to family, school, and/or community violence.

Selection Process for Youth Participants:
To apply, candidates must submit the following materials:

1. Application form including all short answers
2. Resume or 1-page summary of your work and volunteer experiences, including jobs, volunteer positions, extracurricular activities and relevant courses of study
3. At least one (1) letter of recommendation from a primary reference who would be available for a phone interview during the week of May 8. Up to two (2) additional references or letters of recommendation will be considered. References or letters of recommendation from the candidate’s immediate family members will not be considered.

Candidates may submit their application materials to Naomi Smoot, Coalition for Juvenile Justice Executive Director, via an online survey (available here). Candidates may also submit applications by email to smoot@juvjustice.org, by fax to 202-887-0738, or by mail to 1319 F Street NW, Suite 402, Washington, DC 20004. Please note due to the volume of responses anticipated, we are unable to acknowledge each application received.
Applications are due **Friday, April 14 at 11:59pm EDT (10:59pm CDT, 9:59pm MDT, 8:59pm PDT)**. Incomplete applications will not be considered. Candidates may be selected for an interview during the review process. If a candidate is selected for an interview, the candidate will be contacted directly. Candidates who are interviewed will be notified of final decisions by May 18, 2017.

**Questions:**

If you have questions about serving as a Youth Advisor, you may contact Naomi Smoot by email at [smoot@juvjustice.org](mailto:smoot@juvjustice.org), or by phone at (202) 467-0864 ext. 113.