



# Attention Parent/Guardian of High School Juniors & Seniors with Disabilities!!

We invite your youth to apply to the CA YLF!

## What is YLF?

- YLF is an exciting and free five-day leadership development program **for selected students with disabilities** that provides information on everything from assistive technology to resources that can help your daughter or son transition to independent living, college, and/or employment. There is no cost to you for your child to attend.
- At YLF, students create a “Personal Leadership Plan” to help reach their future education, independent living, and career goals. Youth meet and interact with state and national leaders with disabilities, including celebrities, politicians, entertainers, and other adult role models with disabilities. Participants also make lifelong friendships with other students from all over the state, and connections with mentors with disabilities who can support them. The forum takes place **July 27-31, 2015**, in Sacramento, California. Student delegates and staff stay in the dorms at California State University, Sacramento. If your child has never experienced a university campus before, this is a great opportunity to do so.
- YLF is often the first time some participants have been away from their parent/guardian as caregiver. YLF has highly skilled, trained staff on-site who work closely with the parent/guardian in advance and during the week of the forum to ensure the student’s accessibility needs are met and they learn the basics of managing their own personal care assistant or direct support staff; critical skills for future independent living.



**CALIFORNIA YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM  
FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

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**Who can attend?**

- This amazing opportunity is only available to: High school students in the 11th or 12th grade (during the 2014-2015 school year) with a disability. This applies to graduating seniors. Some age and grade exceptions may be made (including high school sophomores and students in the adult transition or 18-22 programs). Students must have a disability; this includes a wide variety of disabilities such as learning, visual, mobility, mental health, developmental, intellectual, hearing and autism. Students who have demonstrated leadership potential in school and in the community. Students that live in California.

**How are students selected?**

- Once applications are submitted, they are reviewed by the Student Selection Committee and finalists are contacted to arrange a personal interview.
- Local interviews take place in person during March and April of 2015. The Student Selection committee makes final selections by early May.

All applicants will be notified through mail. Approximately 50 students are chosen to attend each year.

**What happens if your son or daughter is selected to attend YLF?**

- Students are asked to fill out a confirmation form and provide additional information, including information about reasonable accommodation needs.
- The YLF staff send more detailed information about the Forum's schedule and activities in May, June, and early July.
- All appropriate expenses are paid by the Youth Leadership Forum. This includes travel, lodging, food, and accommodations such as sign language interpreters, personal care attendants, direct support staff, and document translation (alternate formats).



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### What happens after attending YLF?

- Alumni, or graduates of YLF, are strongly encouraged to share what they have learned at YLF with not only their parent or guardian but also with their high school by giving presentations, encouraging other students to apply for future YLFs, and talking to friends about their YLF experience.
- At YLF's comprehensive Resource Fair, students learn about a variety of services, organizations, and groups that are a great asset to the success of your youth. Information about the resources made available during the week will be provided to the parent/guardian after YLF so you can partner with your child in accessing those resources after the Forum.
- All alumni of the YLF program are eligible to join the YLF Alumni Alliance (YLFAA), a group devoted to furthering the leadership skills of future leaders with disabilities across California. There are over 1,000 YLF alumni who have gone on to illustrious careers in a variety of fields, including business, government, and education, among others.
- Overall, YLF prepares students with disabilities in California to be stronger leaders and to give back to their communities.

### How can your child apply?

1. Visit [www.dor.ca.gov/YLF](http://www.dor.ca.gov/YLF) to download the application.
2. E-mail the application, essay, and letter of recommendation to [YLF@dor.ca.gov](mailto:YLF@dor.ca.gov).

Complete applications must include:

- Completed application
- Attached Essay
- Attached One or two letters of Recommendation

Incomplete applications may not be accepted.

Applications must be submitted electronically. If your daughter or son needs additional assistance in submitting their application, please have them contact us at [ylf@dor.ca.gov](mailto:ylf@dor.ca.gov) (email) or at (855) 894-3436 (voice). For relay services please call 711

If you are assisting a student with the application, please be sure they are clear on what YLF is and why **they** want to participate.



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**What's the deadline to apply?**

Completed application packet must be e-mailed by **February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015**, and the signature page must be post-marked by **February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015**.

**Who do you contact for further information or questions?**

(855) 894-3436 (voice) • For relay services please call 711 • [y lf@dor.ca.gov](mailto:y lf@dor.ca.gov) (email)

**Here is what a few YLF Alumni have to say  
about their experience at YLF:**

“YLF was the first time I was ever exposed to positive role models with disabilities, which completely gave me a new perspective of my life.”

“I have gotten so much information, enlightenment if not more. I am grateful to have this experience because I know it is super competitive. I am honored. My parents and family are proud. I am grateful to the staff that helped me. I have soaked it up like a sponge, and I will squeeze it all out when I get home!”

“I came to YLF and I was like, what am I getting myself into? I was not aware of this community and how closer we all are. YLF is a family, we are a family. I had no idea that there are so many different ways and different programs to be involved in. I am inspired to take charge and try to get things fixed and done right in my community. I will not let my music stay inside me, I will let it out!”

“The lessons I have learned at YLF, and continue to learn through the [alumni network] have allowed me to develop and succeed, not just as a person, but as a person with a disability.”

“I attended YLF in 1995. It was a life-changing experience. What I learned at YLF made me expect more of myself and challenge society to see disability as a natural part of life. This resulted in launching my career in public policy and advocacy, and it would not have happened if not for the California Youth Leadership Forum.”