



Youth Justice Leadership Institute Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the [Youth Justice Leadership Institute](#)?

NYJN's Youth Justice Leadership Institute (YJLI), is a year-long leadership development program for BIPOC advocates, organizers, healers, and creatives with leadership experience to expand and elevate their advocacy efforts. While YJLI is centered in the field of youth justice, advocates working with and for youth in any capacity are welcome to apply. YJLI fellows participate in distance learning activities from their home locations, attend two in-person or virtual retreats (approximately three-and-a-half days during the work week in both September 2024 and Spring 2025), and complete an advocacy or organizing project.

2. Who is eligible to participate?

Each participant will be an advocate of color, 18 years of age or older, residing in the 50 United States, DC and PR who has demonstrated a commitment to youth and families. Participants may also be family members of system-involved youth and/or someone who has had first-hand experience with the youth legal system.

3. What mentoring will I receive during the fellowship?

NYJN will recruit and match you with a primary mentor. Your mentors will provide context and support for learning activities; offer strategic advice related to your advocacy project; connect you to current leaders in the field of youth justice; help relate your work and goals to your specific community and state systems; and give general guidance.

4. What is required of successful applicants?

The successful applicant in 2024 must:

- be excited to learn about healing justice and other related advocacy paradigms,
- be an advocate of color who may also be a family member, or an adult who has survived the youth legal system;
- be affiliated with an organization serving or advocating for those directly affected by the youth justice system or in a related field;
- have a desire to lead efforts to reform/transform the systems and conditions that impact youth;
- have demonstrated leadership abilities;
- reside in the 50 United States, DC or PR;
- be willing and able to commit to the full year of fellowship and all related activities;
- be able to devote time to an advocacy project during the course of the fellowship year; and
- have access to basic technology.

5. Applicants must be “affiliated” with an organization. What does that mean?

This means that you are connected with an organization serving or advocating for those directly affected by the youth legal system, or in a related field. This organization will serve as your “home” during the year, providing in-kind support for your involvement. Although it’s often easiest if the organization is also your employer, it does not have to be.

Examples of in-kind support may include work space, access to technology and office equipment, access to staff or volunteer development resources, and provision of information on reform efforts. To complete your application, you will need to ask a representative of the affiliating organization to fill out and submit the [Organizational Affiliation Form](#), which is part of the application packet. The signer of the form may be required to speak with YJLI staff before a final invitation to be a fellow is extended to an applicant. ***This form must be signed by the organization’s Executive Director or CEO.***

6. What is required for the advocacy project?

The advocacy project provides an opportunity for each fellow to utilize the knowledge and skills they attain through YJLI with on-the-ground action. The actual project can take many forms. It can be one in which you are currently engaged or be newly-developed; it can be on a large or small scale, oriented around process (i.e. forming a coalition) or outcome (i.e. passage of legislation), etc. Within the context of YJLI, advocacy is distinct from service provision and program offerings for individual youth or families. The program’s emphasis is on efforts that will bring positive, healing-centered transformations. All projects, however, must be finished by the close of YJLI’s year-long program. Please keep this in mind as you craft your proposal. You will be supported by staff and mentors to ensure your project is completed.

7. What does my advocacy project proposal have to include?

Your proposal should include the project title, intended goal or outcome, preliminary identification of allies and adversaries, discussion of community engagement, how the work of the project carries forward after the YJLI year, and resources needed. You are encouraged to lean into what you are most passionate about.

8. What does the YJLI cost?

The registration for the program is based on a sliding scale. We have scholarship funds available so that lack of funds will never prevent an accepted fellow from participating. Use the following annual salary guide to determine your registration amount:

Annual Income	Registration
\$0 - \$30k	\$100
\$31k - \$40k	\$150
\$41k - \$50k	\$225
\$51k +	\$330

There is no application fee. Travel costs are covered by YJLI.

9. Can I get a scholarship to help pay the tuition?

YJLI has a generous scholarship policy and will find funds to cover all accepted applicants who need support.

10. How do I apply?

To apply, please complete the following:

The application process involves four steps:

1. Submit this completed [Contact Information Form](#).
2. Review the application instructions and fill out an [2024 YJLI Application Form](#). Your responses should be entered using this online form.
3. Find two individuals who can speak to your commitment to youth justice and your leadership qualities. Ask them to complete this online [YJLI 2024 Nomination Form](#).
4. Identify the organization with which you will be affiliated, then ask your contact or supervisor to submit the [Organizational Affiliation Form](#). If your organizational affiliation is not your employer, you will also need to submit an [Employer Affirmation Form](#). The signers of these forms may be required to have a brief conversation with YJLI staff before a final invitation to be a fellow is extended to an applicant.

11. Do I have to work for a member of the National Youth Justice Network to apply?

No.

12. Can I self-nominate?

No. You must be nominated by two members of your community who are familiar with your leadership potential, commitment to youth justice system transformation, and ability to successfully complete the program year.

13. When are applications accepted?

Application materials are made available February 27th with a deadline April 29th 2024.

14. Who will be chosen?

The top 10 applicants will be selected to be YJLI fellows.

15. How will the fellows be chosen?

An applicant selection committee, drawn from NYJN members, YJLI alum, and NYJN staff, will evaluate all applications that pass an initial screening. They will consider applicants' prior experience, commitment to youth justice and/or youth, ability to meet the requirements of the YJLI curriculum, and potential for long-term success in the fellowship and youth justice movement. Finalists will also participate in a 30-minute phone interview.

16. Do I have to commit to the entire program year?

Yes.

17. Will I be paid for my participation?

No. We do not provide direct financial support or payment to fellows.

18. Will I have to travel?

You will be expected to participate in the two in-person sessions scheduled during the project year. This will entail some travel. Your travel expenses will be covered.

19. How are travel arrangements made for the in-person sessions?

Travel arrangements are made by YJLI staff, based on your preferences. You must provide your preferences in a timely way, so that airfare can be booked no later than 30 days in advance of the trip. If you do not share your travel preferences within this timeframe, your travel will only be partially subsidized.

20. When does the fellowship start?

Activities begin upon acceptance in August.

21. What is required of the fellows?

If selected, you will be required to undertake the following:

- complete all tasks assigned prior to the first in-person gathering;
- carry out your advocacy project;
- attend both in-person retreats and monthly virtual sessions;
- engage actively with and be responsive to YJLI staff;
- participate in or complete approximately 80% of all distance learning activities (i.e. teleconferences, webinars, and group check-in calls); and
- participate in all evaluation activities.

22. Will I have to take time off from my job?

You will have to arrange to be absent from work in order to attend both of the in-person or virtual sessions, a total of approximately eight-and-a-half work days. Depending on the project, your advocacy project might also entail some days out of work. You will likely have to coordinate between your schedule and monthly YJLI activities.

23. When do I need to attend in-person sessions? What other dates should I keep in mind?

Important Dates	
February 27, 2024	Applications released
April 29, 2024	Application deadline (must include application form, two nomination forms, and organizational affiliation form) at 11:59 PM
May 1, 2024	Application review

June 3, 2024-July 3, 2024	Interview Window
August 1, 2024	Selection of fellows
August 9, 2024	Deadline for acceptance of offers by prospective fellows
August 12-16, 2024	Outreach to waitlisted prospective fellows (if needed)
August 20-27, 2024	2024 Cohort Individual Welcome Calls
August 29, 2024	2024 Orientation
September 16-20, 2024	First In person retreat
Spring 2025 (dates TBD)	Second in-person retreat
August 2024-May 2025	Monthly sessions with fellows and YJLI staff Monthly contact with mentor Distance Learning teleconferences/webinars
May 2025	Graduation
July 2025 (Dates TBD)	Alumni participation at the annual forum!!

25. How can I get more information?

- Review our YJLI lookbook (INSERT LINK)
- Visit our [YJLI information page](#).
- Attend one of two informational sessions scheduled for March 15 (Instagram LIVE) and April 3rd (Zoom).

26. After visiting the website, who may I speak with if I have more questions?

The Director of Transformative Leadership, Amore Alvarenga, is happy to answer your questions. Contact them via email at amore@nyjn.org.

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