

## **Youth Advisory Board Allocation FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **1.) Where is the Youth Advisory Board allocation found in rule?**

Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) 5101:9-6-39.

### **2.) What is the purpose of this funding?**

These dollars are to support the cost of maintaining the state and county Youth Advisory Boards (YAB) and the cost of board members in carrying out their roles, such as:

- Personal development;
- Support and development of new YAB;
- Peer exchange; and
- Opportunities to educate federal, state, and county leaders about the issues that are important to youth.

### **3.) How much funding does each Youth Advisory Board receive?**

Each county that has an active YAB receives \$5,000. Thirteen counties qualified in State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2016: Allen, Athens, Cuyahoga, Franklin, Greene, Guernsey, Hamilton, Lorain, Lucas, Mahoning, Montgomery, Stark, and Union County. The NE Board includes youth from Ashtabula, Geauga and Lake Counties receives \$10,000. The statewide board receives \$10,000.

### **4.) When are the funding allocations made available?**

Allocations should be available to each qualifying county in early- to mid-July of each SFY. The allocation amount will be included in the county's sub-grant agreement letter sent to all counties at the beginning of each SFY. Budgets and appropriate financial codes will be loaded by the Bureau of County Finance and Technical Assistance in CFIS and made available to county fiscal staff.

### **5.) If I don't receive the funds until August, can I use dollars retroactively for something I did in July?**

Yes. Funds may be applied to any eligible expense that is incurred between July 1st and June 30th of a SFY.

### **6.) What is the role of youth in determining use of funds?**

The PCSA is ultimately accountable for the appropriateness of any expenditure and is the final authorization for any YAB disbursement. However, decision-making regarding YAB funding should not be made independent of the YAB.

The purpose of these funds is best met when decision-making is shared. Ideally, the use of YAB dollars is youth-directed or in partnership with the YAB. This funding is to encourage youth voice and to support youth empowerment opportunities.

YAB have the double benefit of helping youth develop leadership skills and providing adult supporters insight to the foster care experience. Flexibility has been attached to the use of these funds to facilitate youth-guided decision-making.

### 7.) How can the funds be used?

These funds are intended to be as flexible as possible in supporting county and state YAB. In general, any expense directly supporting the activities of a YAB is allowable, unless specifically prohibited in OAC 5101:9-6-39. Examples of expenses that are considered to support YAB include, but are not limited to:

- Leadership training and development
- Training materials and costs
- Cost of supplies and training
- Transportation to/from YAB meetings and conferences for youth and county staff/youth leaders
- Costs to host YAB conferences and meetings (excluding food)
- YAB conference attendance including registration fees, lodging and meals; and
- Youth stipends to compensate for time spent on training and assisting other youth, and supporting the YAB.

### 8.) Must youth currently be in agency custody to be eligible for stipends or activities associated with these dollars?

No. Many YAB work closely with foster care alumna and youth over 18 who have emancipated from foster care. These youth and young adults can play a valuable role by modeling leadership qualities, giving voice to transitional experiences, and offering a positive mentor for youth in foster care. Eligibility is determined by the individual's history in foster care and role with the YAB rather than age.

### 9.) How can the funds NOT be used?

These funds can NOT be spent on the purchase of:

- Food for meetings.
- Food when hosting a conference
- Lobbying activities
- YAB apparel, "give-aways" or trinkets.

### 10.) How can youth eat when at a conference if food is a prohibited expense?

An individual can be reimbursed the cost of his/her travel expenses while at conferences and other YAB-related activities. Funds can NOT be used to supply food as a component of an event. For example, the conference host may not use YAB dollars to cater a conference lunch, but youth/PCSA staff may purchase his/her own lunch and receive reimbursement of this expense with YAB funds, in accordance with established PCSA travel rates and guidelines.

### 11.) During what time period can the money be spent?

Allocations received in one SFY must be obligated by the end of that SFY (June 30). All outstanding obligations must be fully paid within 90 days (September 30). Any costs that have not been paid by September 30 must be paid for using local funds. Unliquidated YAB dollars do not carry from one SFY to another.

### 12.) What happens to any unspent portion of the funding?

Any funds that remain unobligated after June 30 and unliquidated after September 30 will automatically be recovered by ODJFS. For the purpose of these YAB funds, "obligated" means "committed" and liquidated means "paid."

### 13.) How does a county submit for reimbursement of expenses?

Reimbursement will follow the normal county administrative claiming process. A county receiving this allocation should code all expenses on the JFS 02820, Monthly Financial Statement Children's Services Fund, to Project Code 200 and Account Code 518001.

### 14.) Can funds be spent in the current SFY for activities that will take place in the next SFY? (e.g., prepaying for NILA flight, hotel and conference registration)

Yes.

### 15.) How do these obligation/liquidation deadlines work? I want our youth to attend a national conference that takes place in September. Can I use the YAB dollars?

Yes, as long as you incur and liquidate the cost within the eligible time period. The confusion around this question usually occurs when the desire is to bridge fiscal years by using one year's YAB allocation to cover costs for an event that is happening in the next fiscal year.

YAB guidelines allow you to use funds for activities that occur within the next fiscal year as long as the dollars are obligated and liquidated within the designated timeframes of June 30 (obligated) and September 30 (liquidated). For the purpose of these YAB funds, "obligated" means "committed" and liquidated means "paid."

- If you purchase airline tickets and pay the conference registration fee before June 30, you have both obligated and liquidated the dollars by the close of the SFY.
- If you put a hold on the hotel rooms with a credit card or purchase order before June 30, you have obligated the dollars within the SFY.
- The conference takes place in September, which is before the end of the liquidation period. As long as YAB funds are disbursed before September 30 --to make payment to the hotel or to reimburse the cost to an individual-- YAB dollars will be liquidated within an allowable time frame.
- The same would be true for meals and other travel expenses as long as a travel request has been submitted and approved (obligated) by the agency before June 30 and reimbursement is paid (liquidated) before September 30.

Please note: you would not be able to bridge the expenditure across fiscal years if, for example, the conference was held in October since this is past the liquidation deadline of September 30.

### 16.) How much can my agency pay youth and foster care alumna to compensate for time spent on training other youth, assisting other youth and supporting the YAB?

The use and amount of funds for this purpose are county-discretionary. For audit and practical purposes, it is advised that each PCSA/YAB establish rates and/or formulas that are consistently applied. Some YAB have used this process as a learning opportunity for youth.

For example, in one county, adult supporters worked with YAB officers to jointly determine the amount appropriate to allocate to each budget area. The statewide YAB established rates for half-day events (less than 4 hours, including drive-time) and full day events (more than 4 hours, including drive-time). Whatever the approach utilized, it is important that the rates be consistent and based on justifiable rationale.

17.) Can T-shirts, polo shirts, or bags that carry the YAB logo be considered "supplies" and therefore reimbursable?

No, these items are considered YAB apparel. Purchase of any item promoting the YAB with the YAB name or logo is prohibited. County agencies can use local funds to support these purchases if they so choose.

18.) What about the "My Vision Is \_\_\_\_\_" T-shirts, where youth write their vision on the shirt as a workshop activity designed to encourage goal-setting?

Yes, this is allowable if the T-shirt is needed to complete a function of the workshop; it is considered a supply and is not considered YAB apparel.

19.) What about plain bags for conferences, without logos, just so youth have something to store conference supplies in?

Yes, this is allowable, as long as the plain bags are needed to support the conference and the youth in carrying out his/her YAB role.

20.) Can the funds be used on retroactive expenses?

Yes, if the expense is allowable and occurred during the same SFY. A county may make a coding adjustment to charge YAB funds for any expenditure originally coded to non-YAB funds if the expense was for an allowable YAB expense and was expensed during the same SFY.

### **How can I tell if the expenditure is appropriate and allowable?**

Your expense must meet three criteria:

**A.) It must support the funding purpose.** Can you answer "yes" to the question: "Does this expense support either the cost of maintaining the state and county Youth Advisory Boards (YAB) or the cost of board members in carrying out their roles through:

- Personal development,
- Support and development of a new YAB,
- Peer exchange, or
- Education of federal, state, and county leaders about the issues that are important to youth?"

**AND**

**B.) It must not be a prohibited expense.** Can you answer "no" to both of these questions?

- "Is this expense for food for meetings?"
- "Is this expense for promotional materials?"

**AND**

**C.) It must be obligated before June 30 and paid before September 30.**

**Still confused? Contact Colleen Tucker at [colleen.tucker@jfs.ohio.gov](mailto:colleen.tucker@jfs.ohio.gov)**