



OHIO Youth Advisory Board 2020 Strategic Focus Areas

The Overcoming Hurdles in Ohio (OHIO) Youth Advisory Board exists to be the knowledgeable statewide voice that influences policies and practices that effect all youth who have or will experience out of home care.

I. YOUTH VOICE IN STATEWIDE POLICY

The OHIO YAB has a long-standing commitment when it comes to:

- *Seeking to ensure that youth voice is included in all stages of statewide discussions of policy and practice.*
- *Promoting the establishment and ongoing development of local and county youth advisory boards.*

The OHIO YAB continues to advocate for:

1. **The establishment of a Statewide Foster Care Ombudsman's Office**
2. **Normalcy barriers and safety issues to be addressed, especially in group homes and residential placements**
3. **Sibling connections to be maintained and prioritized**

The OHIO YAB has helped pass the Mandated Reporter Bill, advocated for the Sibling Connections Bill, facilitated Family First Act focus groups, and shared insights on Bridges.

During the last fiscal year, OHIO YAB created a Toolkit for regional and local youth advisory boards. They were asked to pilot it in their areas, and report back.

II. OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO YOUTH PARTICIPATION

The OHIO YAB is currently working with our allies to address transportation barriers regarding youth leadership activities.

1.) TRANSPORTATION PILOT:

From July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020, the OHIO YAB will be working to create a transportation pilot, likely in Cleveland, that maps out a hub approach to ensure youth transportation statewide OHIO YAB meetings. The three largest foster care populations in Ohio are in Columbus, Cleveland and Cincinnati. It would be ideal to expand this pilot throughout NE Ohio, including Stark, Summit and Mahoning Counties.

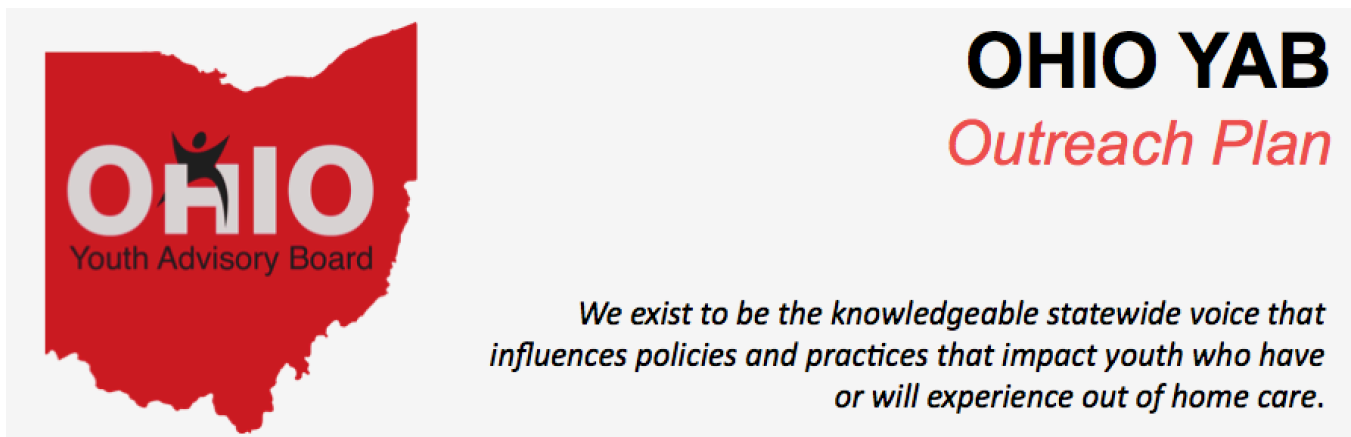
OHIO Youth Advisory Board 2020 Strategic Focus Areas

The Overcoming Hurdles in Ohio (OHIO) Youth Advisory Board exists to be the knowledgeable statewide voice that influences policies and practices that effect all youth who have or will experience out of home care.

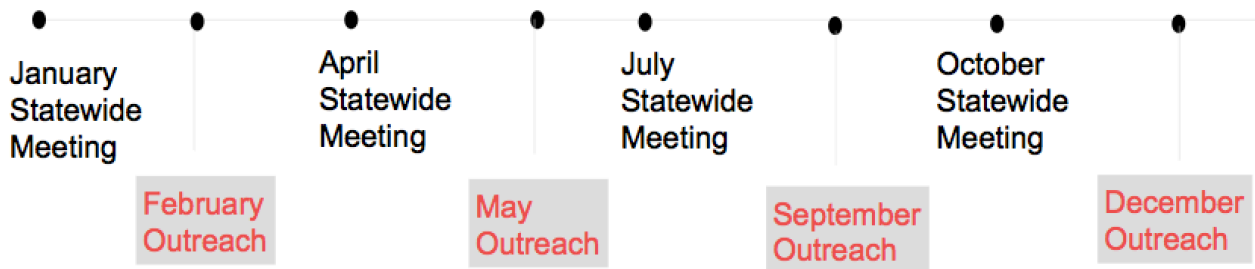
2.) COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY:

OHIO YAB Officers mapped out a plan to promote youth leadership opportunities on a quarterly basis, in February, May, September and December. These four dates were purposefully scheduled in order to provide sufficient advance notice for OHIO YAB statewide quarterly meetings.

OHIO YAB promotional materials will be sent four times a year to (a.) county directors, (b.) Independent Living workers and (c.) Bridges Liaisons, and (d.) Franklin County private agencies that serve teens in foster care.



The graphic features a red outline of the state of Ohio on the left, containing the text "OHIO Youth Advisory Board" and a stylized human figure. To the right, the title "OHIO YAB Outreach Plan" is displayed in black and red. Below the title is the same mission statement as above: "We exist to be the knowledgeable statewide voice that influences policies and practices that impact youth who have or will experience out of home care."



3.) REVISITING THE ROLE OF CASE AIDES:

The state of Ohio previously utilized case aides to assist in transporting foster youth. Case aid positions were previously cut due to lack of funding -- but Governor DeWine has been incredibly generous when it comes to restoring funding to counties. Officers view this as a great opportunity to highlight this resource and circle back to it.

OHIO Youth Advisory Board 2020 Strategic Focus Areas

The Overcoming Hurdles in Ohio (OHIO) Youth Advisory Board exists to be the knowledgeable statewide voice that influences policies and practices that effect all youth who have or will experience out of home care.

III. TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

The OHIO YAB continues to partner with local, statewide and national housing experts, in order to:

- Raise awareness of the “Foster Care to Homelessness” pipeline
- Promote the establishment of additional transitional housing resources for former foster youth.

National advocacy by the OHIO YAB has led to FYI housing vouchers and the Fostering Stable Housing Opportunities Act. Ohio youth leaders continue to assist by providing technical assistance regarding FYI vouchers.

Ohio foster youth leaders have also assisted in designing Scholar House 3, in the hopes that this model will ultimately be replicated throughout the state.

IV. EDUCATION

The OHIO YAB continues to assist behind the scenes regarding the transition of Ohio Reach, for the purpose of (a.) improving post-secondary outcomes for foster care youth and alumni, and (b.) making sure youth voice is included in the implementation of Ohio Reach.

V. INDEPENDENT LIVING

The OHIO YAB believes that:

1. Independent Living Departments should be mandated in every county
2. Foster parents and caseworkers that serve teens should be mandated to attend training on resources to assist in the transition to young adulthood
3. Statewide, regional and local conferences for youth should include youth voice in planning details, including schedule, workshops, and keynote

The OHIO YAB would like to resubmit their previous request for a statewide independent living curriculum that (a.) includes hands-on activities, (b.) begins with a pilot, (c.) includes youth feedback throughout the process, including youth evaluation forms, (d.) allows public and private agencies to customize the order in which the material is provided according to the immediate needs of their youth.