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# YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROJECT, Inc. 2025

Stephanie Barksdale, Executive Director

John Gentile, President

Norma Sproul, Vice President

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# MEMORANDUM

TO: Directors of Special Education and Pupil Services, High School Special Education Department Heads/Supervisors, Transition Coordinators, School Psychologists, School Counselors, Private Special Education Facilities, BRS Counselors, BESB Counselors, DDS Case Managers, Centers for Independent Living, Parent Groups, Parents

FROM: Stephanie Barksdale, Executive Director

Connecticut Youth Leadership Project, Inc.

SUBECT: Enclosed Application Form for the Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) – 2025 for High School Students with disAbilities

DATE: December 2024

Enclosed is the application form for the Twenty-sixth Annual, Youth Leadership Forum for Students with disAbilities. The 2025 YLF is scheduled for July 28 – July 31, 2025 at the University of Connecticut, Storrs campus.

This Forum will bring together approximately forty high school students with disAbilities from throughout Connecticut for a four-day training focusing on enhancing community leadership skills as well as personal development skills. The Forum will provide a concentrated educational and motivational experience for the students selected through a formal, competitive process.

These student delegates will explore personal leadership skills; participate in team building activities; define career goals; develop and practice self-advocacy and independent living skills; and create a very specific action plan that describes what they will accomplish. Students who are accepted to YLF will be required to participate in follow-up sessions after the Forum to implement their Individual LifeCourse Action Plan.

I am requesting that you make available copies of this application to any current **sophomore** or **junior** with a disAbility.\*

It is the goal of the YLF Planning Committee to select students from all regions of Connecticut, representing a wide range of disAbilities and ethnic backgrounds. All students should be referred to the school’s BRS Level Up Counselor to register for Level Up pre-employment transition services prior to submitting the application in order to access agency funding for the Forum.

Thank you for your assistance in promoting this important Forum for young adults with disAbilities in Connecticut – you may download additional copies of the application by logging on to our website – [www.ctylp.org](http://www.ctylp.org)

If you have any questions about the program, please feel free to contact, Stephanie Barksdale at 860-689-6868 or [execdir@ctylp.org](mailto:execdir@ctylp.org)

\*Students in non-graded/transition-only programs must be returning to high school for at least 1 year.

\*All students must be age 16 before July 28, 2025

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# MEMORANDUM

TO: High School Sophomores and Juniors with disAbilities\*

FROM: Stephanie Barksdale, Executive Director

Connecticut Youth Leadership Project, Inc.

SUBECT: An Invitation for you to Apply for The Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) – 2025 for Students with disAbilities

DATE: December 2025

Enclosed is an application for our annual Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) for Students with disAbilities.

2025 will be the 26th year we are offering this innovative leadership program. The four-day Forum will include many exciting educational and motivational activities to assist you in strengthening your leadership and personal planning skills and create an individualized action plan for your future. The Forum will take place July 28 -July 31, 2025 at the University of Connecticut, Storrs campus.

We are inviting you to apply, and are asking for your help in recruiting other students to apply for the Forum. Completed application packets must be sent electronically by February 21, 2025 to Stephanie Barksdale [execdir@ctylp.org](mailto:execdir@ctylp.org) If you need to print and mail it, please have a postmark date of February 21, 2025 and send to:

Stephanie Barksdale

Executive Director

152 Taylor Rd.

New Milford, CT 06776

Through a competitive process, approximately 40 students will be selected to attend the forum. **If you are accepted to YLF you will be required to participate in follow-up sessions after the Forum to implement your Individualized LifeCourse Action Plan.**

It is the goal of the YLF Planning Committee to select students from all regions of Connecticut, representing a wide range of disAbilities and ethnic backgrounds.

The Youth Leadership Forum is sponsored through the cooperative effort of the public and private sector in Connecticut. There is no cost for you to attend the Forum. However, each student should be referred to the school’s ADS/BRS Level Up Counselor to register for Level Up pre-employment transition services prior to submitting an application in order to access agency funding for the Forum.

All information in your application is strictly confidential and will only be shared with members of the YLF Selection Committee. Applications may also be downloaded by accessing our website at [www.ctylp.org](http://www.ctylp.org)

If you have any questions about the program, please feel free to contact Stephanie Barksdale at 860-689-6868 or [execdir@ctylp.org](mailto:execdir@ctylp.org)

## APPLICATION DEADLINE: February 21, 2025

\*Students in non-graded/transition-only programs must be returning to high school for at least 1 year.

\*All students must be age 16 prior to July 28, 2025

***Connecticut Youth Leadership Forum - 2025***

**APPLICATION FORM**

**Deadline for Postmark on Mailed Application: February 21, 2025**

**- Applicants must complete ALL information on pages 1 through 4 of this application.**

**- Please type or print with black ink.**

**- You can send the application Electronically or Mail to the address on the last page (pg. 4)**

**- Please see page 5 for additional application instructions.**

# Personal Information:

YLF staff use gender information to enhance the experiences of all delegates by promoting inclusive, diverse, and supportive living and working environments. To help us gather this information, please choose as many of the options below as you would like:

Male  Female  Non-Binary  Prefer not to say

What else would you like us to know?

Please type your comments here: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

     

Student’s Last Name First Middle

           

Mailing Address City State Zip Code

(     )      -            /     /

Home Telephone Number (with area code) Birthdate (MM/DD/YY)

Email Address

**Ethnicity/disAbility Information:**

**Race:** Please check **all** that apply:

AMERICAN INDIAN OR ALASKAN NATIVE

ASIAN/ PACIFIC ISLANDER

BLACK/AFRICAN-AMERICAN (NOT of - Hispanic Origin)

HISPANIC

WHITE (NOT of - Hispanic Origin):

**disAbility:** Please check **all** that apply:

ADD/ADHD

BLIND  VISUAL disAbility

I read with large print

I read with Braille

I require audio output

DEAF  HEARING IMPAIRED

I use sign language

I use live captioning

I use lip reading

I use an assistive listening device

I use an FM system

I use a loop system

DEVELOPMENTAL disAbility

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

Intellectual disAbility (ID)

Other:

LEARNING disAbility

MENTAL HEALTH disAbility

NEUROMUSCULAR disAbility

ORTHOPEDIC disAbility

I use a wheelchair  I use a walker

OTHER (DESCRIBE)

**School and Community Involvement:**

Name of High School

                 

School Mailing Address City State Zip Code

      (     )      -

HS contact to help arrange interview HS contact telephone number (with area code)

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HS contact email address

Grade level on February 21, 2025 Date Graduation Expected

Please list the school classes in which you are currently enrolled:

Briefly list your involvement with your school and community. This may include any offices you held, club memberships, after school activities or work experiences. List the length of involvement, the grade level you were in at the time of participation, and the name of an adult contact with whom you worked.

**School Activities:**

# Activity Adult Contact Dates Grade Level

**Community Activities:**

# Activity Adult Contact Dates

**Work Experience (Paid or Non-paid):**

# Jobs Held Adult Contact Dates

**State Agency Involvement**

Adult Contact Dates

**ADS/BRS Level-Up Services \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**DDS Services \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**BESB Services \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Other State Services \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**References**

Please list two references. One reference **MUST** be a high school representative and one **MUST** be a community representative from outside your school.

List the name, position/title, email address and telephone number of your two references.

1.      

Name Position/Title

     

Organization Email Address Telephone Number (with area code)

2.      

Name Position/Title

Organization Email Address Telephone Number (with area code)

**Required Essay:**

Your answers to the following questions will be used to assess your potential to benefit from and contribute to this leadership Forum. Your total response to all four of these topics should not exceed four (4) typewritten, double-spaced pages. **(Responses must be double-spaced and either typewritten or printed in black ink). Remember to attach this essay when electronically submitting your application.**

1. **Leadership**– Describe what the term “leadership” means to you.

1. **Positive Influences** - In terms of leadership, tell us about two people who have positively influenced your life - (Family, teachers, counselors, friends, public officials or celebrities are appropriate examples).
2. **Experiences as a person with a disAbility** - Describe two important experiences you have had as a young person with a disAbility - (Please be specific about your examples as they relate to your disAbility).
3. **Future Plans** – Describe your plans for after high school graduation.

Thank you for completing this application - Applications must be emailed/mailed no later than

February 21, 2025.

Email completed application to Stephanie Barksdale - [execdir@ctylp.org](mailto:execdir@ctylp.org)

**If you wish to print and mail this application,** sendwith a postmark of no later than February 21, 2025 to:

Stephanie Barksdale

Executive Director

152 Taylor Rd.

New Milford, CT 06776



**Authorization for Release and Disclosure of Information**

**I authorize the Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS) for the purpose of my Connecticut Youth Leadership Forum application and receipt for vocation rehabilitation services (Level Up)** **to share information within ADS programs with the below external partner.**

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I authorize: (Name and Address of Organization that will release the information) Date:

Bureau Of Rehabilitation (BRS) to/from CT Youth Leadership Project Inc.

55 Farmington Avenue, 12th Floor 23 Rose Lane

Hartford, CT 06105-3725 Danbury, CT 06811

To release the information below To release the information below

* This information is being requested or released by Aging and Disability Services for the purpose associated with my eligibility for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services and CT Youth Leadership Forum.

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The type of information covered is:

**Level Up enrollment from, confirmation of Level Up enrollment, Authorization to attend YLF and YLF reporting back on the experience to BRS**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Name of Individual | Date of Birth | **Specify Date, Event, or Condition: Until Federally Required Post Exit Data Collection is Completed** |
| Signed (individual) | If minor, signature of parent, guardian or conservator | Relationship to Individual |

* I understand that the information I authorize a person, ADS, vendor, contractor, or other state agency to receive may be disclosed in accordance with the terms of this document and other applicable laws and regulations.
* This authorization may be revoked by me at any time by notifying ADS in writing, except to the extent that action has been taken in reliance on it before that point. Unless expressly revoked earlier, this authorization expires as noted (box to the right):

Note to Recipient of Information: the confidentially of this record is required under chapter 899 of the CT general statutes. This material shall not be transmitted to anyone without authorization as provided in the aforementioned statutes.

## Keep This Page, Do Not Mail It With Your Application

How Student Delegates will be Selected and Applications Instructions for Students

1. To be eligible for the Youth Leadership Forum - 2025, the student must:
2. Have a disAbility, as defined by the Americans with Disability Act (ADA);
3. Be in 10th or 11th grade as of February 21, 2025, or if students are in non-graded/transition only programs they must be returning to high school for at least 1 year;
4. Have demonstrated leadership potential in the school and community;
5. Have **Medical Insurance**; and
6. Reside in Connecticut.
7. All students should have been in touch with their school’s BRS Level Up Counselor to register for Level Up pre-employment transition services PRIOR to submitting the application. YLF will receive reimbursement for students who are receiving Level Up services from ADS/BRS-BESB
8. Student applicants must email their completed application no later than February 21, 2025 to:

Stephanie Barksdale - [execdir@ctylp.org](mailto:execdir@ctylp.org)

**If you wish to print and mail this application,** sendwith a postmark of no later than

February 21,2025 to: Stephanie Barksdale

Executive Director

152 Taylor Rd.

New Milford, CT 06776

1. Semi-finalists will be selected and contacted by telephone to arrange a personal interview. The interview will be conducted by a panel coordinated by the Youth Leadership Project, Board of Directors. Interviews will take place in Spring 2025.
2. All applicants will be notified by letter whether they have been selected to attend the Forum. Letters will be mailed by late April - Approximately 40 students will be selected to attend.
3. After being selected, students will be asked to complete a confirmation form and provide additional information to the Planning Committee.
4. All appropriate expenses will be paid by the Youth Leadership Forum, including lodging, food, materials and interpreters for students who are deaf and personal care assistants for students with physical disAbilities.
5. Students needing any additional special support or attention please let us know at any time during the application process. ie: showering, dressing etc.

If you have any questions, contact:

Stephanie Barksdale, 860-689-6868, [execdir@ctylp.org](mailto:execdir@ctylp.org)