

2015 ALASKA YOUTH POLICY SUMMIT APPLICATION

February 15 - 18, 2015 - Juneau, Alaska

RETURN TO: Advocacy Coordinator – 431 N. Franklin St. Juneau, Alaska 99801
or FAX: 907-465-4410 – or EMAIL: advocacy.coordinator@alaska.gov

DEADLINE TO APPLY: 5pm - Friday, December 12, 2014

Name (exactly as it appears on your ID): _____

Mailing address: _____

Physical address (we need this!): _____

Phone contact(s): _____

Email: _____

Birthdate: _____ Female _____ Male _____

Emergency person/phone: _____

Food restrictions: _____

The Alaska Youth Policy Summit invites youth ages 18-24 years who live in Alaska and have had direct experience with Alaska's social services system – such as foster care, residential care, substance abuse and/or mental health treatment, residential psychiatric treatment (in or out of state), juvenile justice, Office of Children's Services (OCS), homeless services, etc. – to offer their perspectives to legislators and other policy-makers about issues related to Alaska's social services system

Summit activities will include overviews of state policies related to youth in transition, how to develop and tell your personal story to policy-makers, one-on-one meetings with state legislators and/or staff at the State Capitol, and a legislative reception. Youth participation helps policy-makers better understand the perspectives of young people. As a participant at the summit, you will gain valuable skills for becoming an effective advocate for issues you care about. You will also be invited to follow-up on future advocacy efforts. Please apply ONLY if you are willing to commit to all of these activities!

The 2015 Alaska Youth Policy Summit happens Sunday-Wednesday, February 15-18 in Juneau. We will provide your travel, hotel, and food paid for by a grant through the Alaska Mental Health Board and Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse. Other sponsors/supporters include Alaska Youth & Family Network, Facing Foster Care in Alaska, Alaska Youth Advocates, Alaska Native Justice Center, and Bring the Kids Home (Dept. of Health & Social Services). You will be notified by December 20th and, if accepted, you will need to let us know you're attending by December 31st. We will make your travel arrangements in the first week of January. Thank you!

*****PLEASE ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS*****

1. Are you available to attend the Alaska Youth Policy Summit February 15 - 18, 2015? Yes ___ No ___

2. The Youth Policy Summit intends to help develop the voice and advocacy skills of youth who have had experience with various Alaska social service systems and services (see above for that list). If you have had experiences with any of these, please tell us a little bit about it: *(Use additional paper if necessary)*

4. Do you currently, or have you volunteered or worked in the area of services for youth? If yes, with whom and what were/are your responsibilities. If not, do you have an interest in volunteering or working in the field of serving youth? If yes, in what and why? *(Use additional paper if necessary)*

5. Tell a brief story about some adversity that happened in your life and how you dealt with it:

6. Why do you want to attend the Alaska Youth Policy Summit?

7. Have you participated in the Alaska Youth Policy Summit before? Yes ___ No ___ When? _____

8. There are a limited number of slots for attending the summit and many youth are interested in this opportunity. Are you committed to attending and participating in all summit activities? Yes ___ No ___

9. How did you learn about the Alaska Youth Policy Summit? _____

10. Please give the name/contact info for three people who we can call to ask about you:

Reference name _____ Phone(s): _____

Email: _____

Reference name _____ Phone(s): _____

Email: _____

Reference name _____ Phone(s): _____

Email: _____

11. Please read and fill out “How to Tell Your Story to a Policy-Maker” on the next couple of pages.

How to Tell Your Story to a Policy-Maker

Your personal story is yours alone. You are the expert. Telling your story to a policy-maker helps educate them about the truth of your life and the importance of your opinion. Be truthful, be yourself, but also remember your limits and how much you are comfortable sharing in public. Remember to keep it “short and sweet” – only a few paragraphs that can be told in three minutes. [Please read the guidelines below and write your story on the last page or on a separate piece of paper:](#)

✓	<p>Introduce yourself – your name and residence, subject, and purpose. (2-4 sentences)</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include your full name and city or town. This lets policy-makers know that you are an Alaskan and whether or not you live in their district (a constituent).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce yourself. Paint a brief picture of who you are, you’re a student, or someone who has a disability, or you are a family member of someone with a disability, or a provider of services, what is your job or profession, etc.
✓	<p>Tell Your Story – the experience or challenge, the action, the result. (5-15 sentences)</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk about one or two challenges you have faced in your life. Keep this VERY short. Do not give your entire life’s story (not enough time!). Focus on one or two main challenges you have experienced. Also, DO NOT use anger or harsh language, bitterness or extreme emotions. This can have the opposite effect of making people turn against your cause.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paint a vivid picture. Spice it with direct examples, anecdotes, things that actually happened to you, as a way for the policy-maker to “see” what you’re saying. This helps paint a picture in the listener’s mind.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add personal examples that will help “show” policy-makers what your life has been like. It helps the listener get a picture of what you’re talking about.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe what has been successful. This is the most important part of your story. What has helped you stay stable? What supports/services would you recommend to the policy-maker? Policy-makers need to know what works so they know what to support.
✓	<p>Wrap it up – state your “ask” and say thank you. (3-5 sentences)</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make your “ask.” Tell what you want the policy-maker to do. This is the “ask.” Describe what action or position you want him/her to take. This can be a specific bill, a budget item, city ordinance, or other action.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address the public good. If you like, add how the action or “ask” will benefit you, or other individuals, families, communities, etc.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Say Thank You!

Sample Personal Story

Introduce yourself

My name is Rachel Williams, I'm 19 years old, and I live in Sitka, Alaska. I was in residential treatment out of state for one year. I have also gone through substance abuse treatment and have been diagnosed with alcohol-related neurodevelopmental disorder, one of the disorders in FASD (fetal alcohol spectrum disorder) spectrum.

From the time I was little, I always got into trouble. When I was in elementary school I got in trouble for talking too much and talking without raising my hand. In middle school, I had problems understanding the assignments and I was bored, so I didn't do much work. In high school, most of the teachers said I was too hyper and talked too much. My parents got mad at me too and agreed with the teachers a lot, so I stopped trusting them and stopped trusting teachers, and started trusting my friends more. My friends were drinking a lot and so I did it too and I found it helped me feel better about myself. Eventually, I just stopped going to school because it was boring and no one really cared anyway.

I started couch-surfing at friends' houses and moved into an apartment with some friends who were not a good influence, because of drugs and drinking and partying. When I was staying there I got arrested and had to go to treatment as part of my sentence.

I got sent away to residential treatment in Texas where I learned a lot of new tricks, like how to cheat systems, how to fake a pee test, how to break into a house to get money, and more. The kids in Texas were way worse than the ones I knew in Alaska. When I came back to Alaska, my case worker made me go to a therapist and that has helped me see why things are the way they are and how I can be in control better. She's nice to me and acts like she cares and she helps me see that maybe I am an okay person and that I have a lot of skills too, like I'm a good artist, a good people person, and I can multi-task pretty well. Unfortunately, my parents don't know how to deal with the "new" me, and my school doesn't seem ready either, so it's been kind of hard to stay focused on what I need to do to stay healthy. But I'm trying!

I hope that you will support community programs that give young people things like counseling and treatment and job support, so we can stay at home, near to our families, and stay out of trouble. Thank you for taking the time to hear my story.

Wrap it up

Story Practice Sheet

- Is your story short and to the point? Can it be said in 3 minutes or less?
- Does your story let listeners know what outcome or action you're asking for – the “ask”?
- Use the reverse side, or a separate piece of paper, if you need extra space.

Introduce yourself – your name and residence, subject, and who you represent. (2-4 sentences)

Tell Your Story – your experience or challenge, the action, the result, and MOST IMPORTANT, what has helped you be stable and successful. (5-15 sentences)

Wrap it up – state your “ask” (what you want the policy-maker do), say thank you. (3-5 sentences)