

2012 YOUTH POLICY SUMMIT APPLICATION

February 12-15, 2012 - 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: 5pm - Thursday, December 15

Name: _____

Mailing address: _____

Phone contact(s): _____

Email: _____ **Birthdate:** _____

Parent/Guardian: _____

Parent/Guardian contact info: _____

The Youth Policy Summit invites youth ages 18-24 to offer their perspectives to legislators and other policy-makers about issues related to 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.

Summit activities will include team-building and shared experience exercises, overviews of state policies related to youth in transition, how to develop and tell your own personal story, how to tell your story to policy-makers, one-on-one meetings with state legislators at the State Capitol, a legislative reception, and a presentation at the Bring the Kids Home meeting. 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 with an advocacy project in your own community. Please apply ONLY if you are willing to commit to all of these activities.

The 2012 Youth Policy Summit happens Sunday-Wednesday, February 12-15 in Juneau, with an optional additional day (Feb. 16) to attend the statewide Bring The Kids Home (BTKH) meeting.

18 youth will be selected to attend – with travel, hotel, and food expenses paid for by a grant from the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority. Other sponsors/supporters include Facing Foster Care in Alaska, Covenant House, Juneau Youth Services, ACCESS-Alaska, Alaska Mental Health Board, Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, and Bring the Kids Home (Dept. of Health & Social Services).

-----QUESTIONS-----

1. Are you available to attend the Youth Policy Summit February 12-15, 2012? Yes ____ No ____
2. Are you available to stay an extra day Feb. 16 (optional) for the BTKH meeting? Yes ____ No ____
3. 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. 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 Youth Policy Summit?

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

8. There are only 18 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 Youth Policy Summit? _____

10. Please give the name/contact info for at least two 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

- Make sure your story short and to the point.
- Make sure it's "real" and comes from your heart.
- Be sure to tell what action you're asking for. What do you want the policy-maker to support?

✓	<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 gives people an important frame of reference and also lets them know if you are a constituent.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce yourself, the “main character” Paint a brief picture of who you are, what you do for a living, if you're a student, someone who has experienced treatment, or whatever relates to the issue you are discussing.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State your purpose. Explain why you are telling your story.
✓	<p>Tell Your Story – the experience or challenge, the action, the result. (5-15 sentences)</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the challenge or experience you have faced. Stay focused on one issue.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build the tension. Your experience or challenge should build to a point of tension that makes the listener want to know the outcome.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paint a vivid picture with descriptive language that helps listeners connect emotionally. Be careful not to turn off listeners with anger, harsh language, bitterness, or extreme emotions.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add relevant details that will help make your point or make it “real.” Cut out details that don't add important elements.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the action, experience or opportunity that answers “What happened next?” This should illustrate what was needed (or harmful) that affected the outcome. It should also lead to your ending request for action.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conclude your story. The conclusion may be positive, sad, etc., but it should inspire a will to act. Remember that concepts like hope and recovery are powerful motivators.
✓	<p>Wrap it up – state your “ask” and say thank you. (3-5 sentences)</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make your “ask.” State your message. Describe what action or position you want the official(s) to take. This should be specific and refer to pending legislation, a vote, or a decision.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address the public good. This is optional. If you like, add how the action or “ask” will benefit other individuals, families, the community, or state.
	<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 was in residential treatment out of state for one year. I have also gone through substance abuse treatment and treatment for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

Tell your story

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. My teachers put me in the corner a lot, or got mad at me in front of everyone. In middle school I got sent to the principal's office for talking to my friends in class, or goofing off in class. I had problems understanding the assignments and I was bored, so I didn't do much work. In high school it seemed like most of the teachers didn't like me or didn't want me in their class because they 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. In high school, my friends were drinking a lot and so I did it too 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 eventually 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.

After treatment didn't work and I couldn't keep up in school, I got sent away to residential treatment in Texas. That is where I learned a lot of new tricks. The other kids at residential treatment were way more sneaky than my friends in Alaska. In Texas I learned how to cheat systems, how to fake a pee test, how to break into a house to get money, and more. But when I was in Texas I started taking medication and the counselors there taught me how to manage myself a little better. When I came back to Alaska, my case worker made me go to a therapist and that has really 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. She helps me see that maybe I am an okay person and that I have a lot of skills, like I'm a good writer and a good artist. I've also learned that being hyper and talkative is good for being a multi-tasker (I get a lot of things done at my job) and I'm good with people. Unfortunately, my parents really 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!

Wrap it up

I hope that you will support programs that keep young people in Alaska and give them the support they need for their families, school and overall health. Sending us out of state for treatment is not a good idea because we can't be near our families to work on our problems together, and because the things you learn from your peers at residential treatment are not very healthy. Thank you for taking the time to hear my story.

Story Practice Sheet

- Is your story short and to the point? Is it only 1-3 minutes and only one page?
- Is it “real”? Does your story come from your heart and inspire others?
- 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 purpose (2-4 sentences)

Tell Your Story – the experience or challenge, the action, the result (5-15 sentences)

Wrap it up – state your “ask” and say thank you (3-5 sentences)