



Position: Youth Action Organizer

Employment Status: Part-time, Exempt (Grant Funded)

Reports to: Director of Youth Justice and Child Welfare

Organization Overview

The Children's Defense Fund (CDF) envisions a nation where marginalized children flourish, leaders prioritize their well-being and communities wield the power to ensure they thrive. CDF's Leave No Child Behind® mission is to ensure every child a *Healthy Start*, a *Head Start*, a *Fair Start*, a *Safe Start* and a *Moral Start* in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities.

We serve and advocate for the largest, most diverse generation in America: the 74 million children and youth under the age of 18 and 30 million young adults under the age of 25, with particular attention to those living in poverty and communities of color. CDF partners with policymakers, aligned organizations and funders in this service. The Children's Defense Fund is the only national, multi-issue advocacy organization working at the intersection of child well-being and racial justice by wielding the moral authority of programmatic proximity and community organizing to inform public policy. For more information visit www.childrensdefense.org.

The Children's Defense Fund-New York office has a unique approach to improving conditions for children, youth, and families, combining research, public education, policy development, community organizing, and advocacy. We leverage our national influence to eliminate the harmful and disproportionate impact that poverty has on children in New York and to eliminate race and gender inequities in the areas of youth justice, child welfare, education justice, economic mobility, and health justice. For more information visit <https://cdfny.org/>.

Position Summary

CDF-NY is working with New Yorkers for Children, researchers from the CUNY Graduate Center, and the Center for the Study of Social Policy on a 2-year project with Transition Age Youth (TAY) who have experienced foster care in New York City. TAY are generally recognized as young people ages 14 to 25 and include those who are in foster care, as well as those who have left as young adults or aged-out.

This is a two-year project. Youth Action Organizers will build power with young people who have encountered the child welfare system or come from over-surveilled and over-criminalized communities to advance their vision for change for Transition Age Youth at the City, State and Federal level. Youth Action Organizers are part of the organizing and advocacy arm of the

Transition Age Youth Project, which is developing a full picture of the kinds of resources Transition Age Youth want and how they would reimagine care and support.

As part of the project, we are looking for 10 Youth Action Organizers to work with us beginning in January 2022 and who will work with us on the project for up to 2 years.

Our Values

- We center youth expertise and wisdom – young people have led every major movement over the last 100 years, whether it is school desegregation, the Dreamers/DACA, or Black Lives Matter. We partner to build power with young people.
- We support young people in tangible ways that have value to them – that means compensation, mentorship, training and authentic relationships.
- We protect young people from exploitative and extractive approaches where young people are present to illustrate a story or in which they are asked to stand in and represent for all other youth with shared experiences.
- We respect and uplift intersectional identities and the complexity of the systems we seek to change – young people need the space to bring their whole selves to the work, and room to envision big, bold solutions that may not fit into neat policy strategies.

Responsibilities

- Work up to 8-10 hours per month in a team setting with other Youth Action Organizers at CDF-NY, as well as the Director of Youth Justice & Child Welfare, the Youth Justice & Child Welfare Policy Associate, and the Manager of Youth Leadership and Advocacy, as well as other external partners
- Participate in initial and ongoing training for the project
- Attend community organizing trainings, in order to gain critical political understanding and skills that aid in developing effective advocacy actions
- Work collaboratively with the project Research Team to exchange ideas about research and analysis on key policy at the local, state and federal levels
- Co-develop a collaborative social media campaign to raise awareness about the issues TAY youth are experiencing in NYC and potential solutions
- Co-plan and implement workshops and trainings that educate targeted communities about project research findings and recommendations for City, State and Federal advocacy
- Co-develop and implement outreach to key stakeholders and help form partnerships
- Co-develop materials, such as flyers, fact sheets, speeches and talking points, and web materials
- Work with the whole TAY Project Team on policy positions and recommendations that flow from the project
- Attend all Youth Action Organizing events (both in-person and virtual: Schedule will be established based on team member's availability and potentially include some evenings and weekend events)
- Prepared to make at least a 1-year minimum commitment to a 2-year project

Education and/or Experience

- There is no minimum education or employment experience required. Candidates must be at least 18 years of age to apply
- Prior experience as an organizer or advocate is not required, but successful applicants must be interested in learning about organizing efforts that advance change for Transition Age Youth

Competencies

- Must be able to interact with people from diverse backgrounds
- Must be collaborative and interested in working in teams
- Interested or experienced in advocating for their community and engaging in organizing work
- Interested or experienced in building community power by utilizing social media, photography, videos, blogs, art, poetry, or other creative forms
- Interested or experienced in changing the public narrative and engaging in ethical storytelling
- Interested in learning about or from those with direct lived experience in the child welfare system, or from those coming from over-surveilled or over-criminalized communities

Personal Characteristics

- We encourage any youth interested in this opportunity to apply regardless of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, or any other intersectional identities

Type of work environment associated with the job-indoor, office setting and in the community at public events (contingent on COVID-related safety policies)

Additional Comments

This Youth Action Organizer internship will be paid by stipend. Stipend amounts will vary by schedule, based on a rate of \$20 per hour for an estimated 8-10 hours per month for up to 2 years. Youth Action Organizers will also have transportation to in-person meetings and events covered by CDF-NY, and a child-care stipend will be available as needed. Food will also be provided at every in-person meeting.

The Children's Defense Fund is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Note: Nothing in this job description restricts management's right to assign or reassign duties and responsibilities to this job at any time. This job description is not designed to cover or contain a comprehensive listing of all activities, duties or responsibilities that are required of the employee.