



Position: Youth Action Researcher

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, where the first year is dedicated to developing research questions and conducting community-driven research with other Transition Age Youth and allies in New York City, and creating a pilot program for direct cash transfer payments to eligible youth. The second year will focus on conducting more research with Transition Age Youth across the City about their

lives, including those who may be part of the direct cash transfer pilot, and those who are not, to develop a full picture of the kinds of resources Transition Age Youth want in their lives and how they would redesign or reimagine care and support.

As part of the project, we are looking for 8 Youth Action Researchers to work with us beginning in January 2022 and who will work with us on the project for 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 50 hours per month (between 8 and 12 hours per week) with the Participatory Action Research Team at CDF-NY and with external project partners
- Participate in initial and ongoing training for the project
- Work with the Research Team to understand and analyze public data about Transition Age Youth and child welfare
- Develop research questions to guide inquiries with other foster care system impacted young people through community outreach and meetings, focus groups, surveys, interviews and other methods in NYC
- Collaborate on designing and leading meetings with adult ally stakeholders
- Recruit youth for community outreach and meetings, focus groups, surveys, and interviews
- Organize and assist with collaborative knowledge-building with peers across NYC
- Co-create and execute a research project about the experiences of Transition Age Youth
- Co-create and examine direct cash transfer pilot project for other Transition Age Youth
- Find creative ways to share publicly what we are learning from data
- Work with other young people on the team who are leading movement-building and advocacy
- Prepared to make 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 a researcher is not required, but successful applicants must be interested in learning about research methods that engage the community in creating collaborative knowledge about the child welfare system

Competencies

- Must have experienced the foster care system
- Must be able to interact with people from diverse backgrounds
- Must be collaborative and interested in working in teams

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

Additional Comments

This Youth Action Research internship will be paid by stipend. Stipend amounts will vary by schedule, based on a rate of \$20 per hour for up to \$1000 per month for up to 2 years. Research Assistants will also receive a computer to work on the project.

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.