

YOUTH COMMISSION STAFF E-NEWS

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Greetings!

Welcome to the third issue of the **Youth Commission Staff E-News** brought to you by the Collaborative Governance Initiative at the Institute for Local Government, with the generous support of the Surdna Foundation.

We hope that this tri-annual e-newsletter will provide useful information to help strengthen your city or county youth commission or council. Each issue will feature **new resources, program ideas, strategies, success stories** and more.

You can forward this newsletter to youth commissioners, council members, or others with the "Forward email" link below. Also, archived issues of the newsletter will **soon** be available on our website at www.ca-ilg.org/youthengagement.

Youth Commissions Take on Climate Change

Climate change, or global warming, is increasingly an issue of concern for Californians. A majority of people in our state believe that climate change resulting from human behavior is a real threat to the state and that local governments need to do more to address this threat. Young people are more likely than older Americans to face the negative consequences of climate change, and many youth are interested in opportunities to play an active role in addressing this issue before it is too late. Read [here](#) to learn about how youth commissions in California are addressing climate change.

Regional Meetings Advance Youth Public Engagement



Youth Dialogues give teens an opportunity to hear varied perspectives, find common ground, and gain confidence to voice their opinions. Recent examples in Los Angeles and Santa Barbara highlight the potential of youth-led dialogues to create positive change in communities and to involve more numerous and diverse young people in public planning and decision-making. [Read more.](#)

Teens Help Plan the Future of Their Communities

There is a growing trend in cities and counties across the state towards involving more than "the usual suspects" in determining how their community should develop through facilitated deliberative "visioning" or planning processes. Teens

are typically not represented at all or are under-represented compared to older residents in local planning public engagement processes. But this is changing as local leaders see the value in getting a youth perspective, and in developing the civic participation and leadership skills of the future leaders of their community. Learn how cities and counties in California are engaging youth in their communities by clicking [here](#).

Youth Development Network Offers Youth and Adult Leadership and Skills Trainings in Sacramento... and in Your Community

The Youth Development Network supports organizations and communities in creating life changing experiences for youth success through training, networking and policy work. YDN is offering youth development trainings in Sacramento over the next few months, and one can be scheduled in your community. Click [here](#) to read more.

Safely Harnessing the Power of Social Networking Technology

Today's teens are increasingly relying on online social networking websites such as Facebook and MySpace to communicate and interact with their peers. These sites allow users to create an online profile page where they can post pictures, music, and blogs. Many youth commissions are using these online social networking websites to communicate and interact with peers to promote more youth involvement in activities. Click [here](#) to read more.

Five Elements of Successful Youth Commissions

In studying Youth Commissions and Youth Advisory Councils all over California, the Collaborative Governance Initiative has identified five elements that successful youth commissions and advisory councils share in common:

- **Motivated adult staff** with time to support youth leadership, development, and empowerment and to connect youth to local decision makers.
- **Diverse members** who represent all the different geographic neighborhoods, ethnicities, genders, and socio-economic backgrounds in the community. This makes the youth commission more credible to decision makers and gives people valuable experience working with youth from different backgrounds, an important skill notable to colleges and employers.
- **An appropriate budget** for training and skills development, projects and activities, to pay staff, and, where possible and appropriate, to give youth members stipends.
- **Youth ownership**: the budget, project selection, and meeting agenda should be "owned" by the youth members. The best results happen when youth decide themselves what to do and they carry it out with the support- not direction- of staff.
- **Access to decision makers**: youth commissioners need access to information and decision makers in order to be able to give useful input. Staff and officials working on youth related issues may wish to attend youth commission meetings, and youth commissioners should be invited to participate in council or commission meetings.

Over 100 Sacramento area youth commissioners and advisory council members were presented with this list of essential elements at a Teen Leadership Summit on April 25th. They discussed key elements that they considered essential to their success as youth commissioners:

- Talk to others to get outside opinions

- Involve local youth who are passionate about helping their community
- Have enough members - 15 might be a good number?
- Public support- from organizations and individuals in the community
- Good outreach - a way to let people know what is going on

A Youth Constitutional Convention for California

The Endowment for California Leadership is planning to convene hundreds of diverse youth ages 16-20 from around the state in a Youth Constitutional Convention to be held late in 2010 or early in 2011. Thousands more youth would participate via the internet in the planned four or five day convention. The goal of this two million dollar project is to give young Californians an opportunity to form and express their own judgments about the nature and form of government they wish to build and lead in the coming decades. [Read more.](#)

First Youth Member Added to CGI Advisory Panel

In an effort to better serve youth commissioners and to offer new opportunities for youth leadership development, The Institute for Local Government's Collaborative Governance Initiative is adding a youth member to our advisory committee. Rebecca Shimizu, a high school student and president of the City of Elk Grove Youth Commission, has volunteered for this position. We look forward to adding a youth perspective to our planning process as we develop new strategies to support successful youth commissions that make a difference in California's cities and counties.

CGI Develops Briefing Papers for Youth Commissions



The Collaborative Governance Initiative is creating a series of "Briefing Papers" for Youth Commissions and Youth Advisory Councils. These concise two-page documents will provide teens with background information about a timely topic and concrete ideas for how youth commissions and advisory councils can take action to address these issues in their communities. They are made available to California youth commissions and councils for free. [Read more](#) to access this resource and to learn how you can submit ideas for future briefing papers.

New Reports on Youth Public Engagement

Click [read more](#) to learn about three reports on youth public engagement by the Youth Development Network and Mobilize.org. The Youth Development Network reports explore the benefits of youth civic engagement through service learning. The Mobilize.org report provides a detailed analysis of over 160 youth leadership development organizations in California and offers key findings and recommendations for funders and others interested in effectively promoting youth development.

Youth Engagement Resources at the Institute for Local Government

The Collaborative Governance Initiative program at the Institute for Local Government (ILG) offers many resources for youth commissions and others interested in youth engagement. These resources are available on our Web site. **We are pleased to inform you that ILG will be launching a new Web site by the end of August. The new site will have a more attractive look and be more user-friendly. Our resources are available on our current site, but be sure to check back to see our newly revised Web site.**

Our youth engagement resources include:

- [Youth Commissions & Engagement Page](#) offers up-to-date stories, information and resources on youth engagement.
- [Directory of California Youth Commissions](#) now includes over 100 listings. Please review your city or county listing and provide us with any contact updates.
- [Youth Commission Case Stories](#) offers insights from and information on youth commissions and councils in California.

These resources and more are available on our Web site at www.ca-ilg.org.

We would like your youth commission stories and your input on how else the Institute for Local Government can support you in strengthening the voice of California's youth in shaping local, planning, policy and decision-making. Please complete our [CGI Public Engagement Case Story Form](#) or e-mail Carmen Pereira with your input at cpereira@ca-ilg.org.

We want the **Youth Commission Staff E-News** to be useful to you! If you have an item for the next e-newsletter, please send it to us. If there are resources you would like us to highlight, please let us know. If there are topics you want to see covered, please tell us. **We want to help you support your youth commission or council.**

Please forward any ideas or resources to Carmen Pereira, ILG Program Assistant, at cpereira@ca-ilg.org.

If you are not the current youth commission or council staff member, we would appreciate it if you would provide the contact information for or forward this email to the current staff member.

Again, if you think this e-newsletter would be useful to youth commissioners or others, please forward it to them using the "Forward email" link below.

Best wishes,

Terry Amsler, Program Director
Collaborative Governance Initiative
Institute for Local Government
tamsler@ca-ilg.org

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