



May 10, 2021

Dear Students, Educators, and Youth Organizers,

As the current school year comes to an end, the ACLU of Southern California is once again seeking high school aged youth to apply to the Youth Liberty Squad for the 2021-2022 school year. The Youth Liberty Squad is a leadership program created in 2019 to engage youth, to inspire them and provide them with the tools to become the next generation of social justice leaders and to work with them to shape and advance our education equity work.

Under normal conditions, the Youth Liberty Squad (YLS) meets once a month on Saturdays from 9am-2pm in our Downtown LA office. ***However, due to current COVID 19 restrictions, YLS meetings will be held bi-weekly on Saturdays from 11am-1pm via Zoom. When it is feasible and safe to return to our usual in-person programming, selected YLS students will be expected to attend in-person meetings.*** These gatherings hope to bring together a diverse cohort of youth from across Los Angeles County to learn and discuss issues including student rights, school funding, racial justice, ending the school to prison pipeline, art access in schools, school-based mental health, student digital privacy, and more!

Students will also have several opportunities to work alongside ACLU SoCal attorneys and organizers to address and challenge these issues. They will have the opportunity to lead workshops, create youth-led campaigns, put together events related to ACLU's values, and develop content that helps advance our education equity work, amongst other things. Additionally, selected students of the Youth Liberty Squad will meet and build relationships with other youth and be eligible to receive community service hours & letters of recommendation, as well as a \$500 stipend upon successful completion of the YLS program (July 2021-June 2022).

- ****PLEASE NOTE**:** The \$500 stipend is limited to selected YLS students in our core cohort (these are the students who will meet bi-weekly on Saturdays and once a month in person, when feasible). Students who participate solely in our general YLS meetings (open to all CA students and held once a month via Zoom) are not eligible for the stipend but are still welcome to apply to be a part of our general YLS group.

To qualify to participate, youth must be enrolled in a high school in LA County (this can be a traditional, charter, continuation, alternative, magnet, community day, or other similar setting). **Selected students will be required to attend all bi-weekly Saturday meetings (virtually at first) from 11am-1pm. When COVID-19 restrictions are lifted and it is safe to do so, we will gradually return to our regular schedule and students will be required to attend in-person meetings once a month on Saturdays from 9am-2pm at our office located at 1313 W 8th St. Los Angeles, CA 90017.** Breakfast and lunch will be provided for all in-person meetings and we may also ask youth to attend additional planning meetings, calls, and events as deemed necessary throughout the course of the program.

- ****PLEASE NOTE**:** Selected YLS participants are expected to remain in the program for its entire length to be eligible for the \$500 stipend.

As you will see in the application, we are seeking students who have a broad range of backgrounds and experiences and who hope to challenge themselves, learn new skills, and grow with other youth activists. Specifically, we are interested in hearing how students' life experiences shape their passion to fight for social justice. There are also a few "optional" questions where youth can share any additional skills they'll bring to the program or wish to develop. We are specifically not asking for grades or G.P.A, as we'd like to ensure that any interested students do not think their academic status will determine their eligibility or acceptance.

Students who might be interested in applying to the Youth Liberty Squad, especially those who have little to no experience doing this type of work, can access the application online at www.aclusocal.org/yls. Please note, in an effort to have a diverse pool of participants, we will try and select students who represent a broad range of schools.

Applications will be reviewed as they are received and are due by June 13, 2021 at 11:59pm PST.

Selected youth will be informed no later than July 5, 2021. *The first YLS meeting is tentatively scheduled for July 17, 2021.* If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at (213) 977-5269 or irivera@aclusocal.org. Thank you for your time and I look forward to receiving applications from all!

Respectfully,



Irene R. Rivera

Senior Policy Advocate and Organizer
ACLU of Southern California