



May 23, 2020

Dear Educators, Youth Organizers & Youth Advocates,

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 (YLS) for the 2020-2021 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 advance our education equity work.

Under normal conditions, the Youth Liberty Squad meets once a month on Saturdays from 9am-2pm in our Downtown LA office. ***Due to COVID 19 restrictions, virtual meetings will be held starting in July until further notice. These meetings will be 1.5 hours long and occur every other weekend.*** These gatherings will bring together a diverse cohort of youth from across Los Angeles where they will 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, put together events related to ACLU's values, and create 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 from across Los Angeles 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 2020-June 2021).

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-12:30pm. 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. Please note that all selected YLS participants are expected to remain in the program for its entire length to be eligible for the \$500 stipend.** 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.

We are excited to receive applications from youth from all backgrounds and hope that with your support, we can build a cohort based on diversity, inclusivity, and belonging. As you will see in the application, we only ask one "short response" question to allow our team to get to know each applicant's interests and background. There is also an "optional" question where youth can share any additional skills they'll bring to the program or wish to develop. We are specifically not asking for their 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.

If you work with youth who may be interested in applying to the Youth Liberty Squad, please direct them to apply online at www.aclusocal.org/youthlibertysquad. Please note, in an effort to recruit a diverse pool of participants, we may not be able to select more than 2 students from the same school.

Applications will be reviewed as they are received and are due by June 21, 2020. Selected youth will be informed no later than July 5, 2020. *Their first meeting is tentatively scheduled for July 18, 2020.* 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 your youth!

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Irene R. Rivera".

Irene R. Rivera

Education Policy Advocate and Organizer
ACLU of Southern California