

April 4, 2022

Dear Students, Educators, and Youth Organizers,

Calling high school students interested in social justice! 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 2022-2023 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](#).

Currently, the Youth Liberty Squad (YLS) meets bi-weekly on Saturdays from 11am-1pm (via Zoom) and in-person from 11am-2pm (locations vary in Los Angeles). These gatherings bring together a diverse cohort of youth to learn and discuss issues including student rights, art access in schools, racial justice, school funding, school-based mental health, disability rights, student digital privacy, legislative bills, and more!

Students will also have several opportunities to work alongside ACLU SoCal attorneys and organizers to address and challenge these issues. Some past examples of YLS work include writing blogs about legislative bills up for action, sharing their perspective about youth mental health on panels or with the media, and engaging in student-led campaigns for arts justice in schools. YLS students will also lead workshops, plan events related to ACLU's values, and develop content that helps advance our education equity work. Additionally, selected students of the Youth Liberty Squad will meet and build relationships with other SoCal 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 2022-June 2023).

. **\*\*PLEASE NOTE\*\***: The \$500 stipend is limited to selected YLS students in our core cohort (these are the students who will meet bi-weekly via Zoom and/or in-person). Students who participate solely in our general YLS meetings (open to all CA students and held every other 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 (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 from 11am-1pm and in person from 11am-2pm).** The ACLU of Southern California is still in the process of reopening its offices and not currently allowing guests to come in, but as we reacclimate to in-person work and navigate a new hybrid workplace, **we will continue to evaluate and thus eventually return to our regular schedule where students will be required to attend in-**

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\*deceased

**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 online application, YLS is an inclusive program, and 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 is also space for youth to 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-app](http://www.aclusocal.org/yls-app). 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 and backgrounds.

**Applications will be reviewed as they are received and are due by June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 11:59pm PST.** Selected youth will be informed no later than July 1, 2022. *The first YLS meeting is tentatively scheduled to be in-person on July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2022.* If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at (213) 977-5269 or [irivera@aclusocal.org](mailto: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