

## YES! Virtual Summit 2020 Post-Event Summary

Programmed by VOICES, in partnership with the Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana, and funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Seattle Foundation

After a statewide application and selection process, Youth Fellows from diverse backgrounds were chosen to serve as 2020 Youth Summit Leadership Fellows. Each Youth Fellow has direct experience with state systems and services, as well as a deep conviction and desire to prompt positive change so that all Hoosier youth and families can thrive.

Over the course of nine weeks, VOICES engaged Youth Fellows in content and conversation focused on personal, collective, and systemic change. Research-based practices—rooted in Dr. Ginwright’s Healing-Centered Engagement and Dr. Andrade’s Critical Hope theories—enabled VOICES to cultivate the leadership of Youth Fellows such that they were prepared, passionate, and collaborative in crafting, honing, and presenting their asks to state legislators, systems-leaders, and practitioners.



Issue-Based Groups	Youth Fellows’ Ask “We want policy makers to...”
Department of Child Services, Foster Care, & Juvenile Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Create a hotline for foster youth, run by a provider, with two primary purposes: 1) to provide DCS with more support and accountability; 2) to help foster youth gain services they are eligible for like collaborative care and extended living.</li> <li>*Enact legislation that includes a new sentence to the foster youth bill of rights stating that: foster youth are required to be able to call the hotline within 24 hours of expressing their desire to do so.</li> </ul>
Educational & Economic Inequity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Require a financial literacy class for all high school students</li> <li>*Provide stipends for independent youth</li> <li>*Increase mental health resources for high schools</li> <li>*Implement the Domestic Workers Bill of Rights and the Fairness for Farm Workers Act</li> </ul>
Housing & Homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Create a program to help more marginalized groups access stable housing.</li> <li>*Make a process to enable you to hear from more individuals experiencing housing instability.</li> <li>*Invest more funding towards homelessness prevention.</li> <li>*Assign more legislative assistants to support people advocating to address housing instability.</li> </ul>
Mental Health & Addiction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Increase the number of, and access to, mental health counselors and resources for all Indiana youth.</li> </ul>

### Survey Responses & Analysis (86 respondents total)

Question	Average	Median
On a scale of 1-10 (1=Extremely Unlikely, 10=Extremely Likely) how likely are you to recommend that someone attend a YES Youth Summit?	9.38	10
How prepared do you feel youth were to lead today's summit. (1=Extremely Unprepared, 10=Extremely Prepared)	9.41	10
Please rate the degree of impact that this will have on your work moving forward. (1=Not At All, 10=Significantly)	8.76	9.5

Glows (themes shared by a vast majority of respondents)	Grows
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Youth provided well-researched, compelling presentations.</li> <li>*The summit provided personal and professional renewal for practitioners and policymakers. Many commented that this reenergized their “why” for doing their work will impact their approach to work moving forward.</li> <li>*The courage, conviction, and confidence of Youth Fellows prompted a widespread desire to keep the momentum for change going, and many attendees noted their commitment to supporting the systems improvement youth requested.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*A few respondents noted that tech challenges delayed breakout sessions.</li> <li>*One respondent felt that the youth weren’t prepared enough to respond to alternatives to their ideas.</li> <li>*One respondent felt that youth could improve by having more concrete plans on how to make their asks happen.</li> <li>*One respondent suggested that if youth were prepared with a mentor in the field, it could help them have “an even more realistic view.”</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*A vast majority of respondents were eager to have an easier way to stay connected and share contact information to keep the process required to make change going.</li> </ul>	

### Summit Reach by the Numbers

- 441 registrants
- 16 Youth Fellows representing diverse backgrounds and identities from across Indiana
- 4 VOICES Moderators
- 12 Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana committee members
- 2 Tech leads from partnering organization

**475 total** registered to join

*\*60% attendance day-of, with multiple regrets requesting to see the recording of the summit*

### Summit Impact by the Comments

I can't say enough how impressed I was with the Youth Fellows. WOW! Exciting to know these are out future leaders!

I loved the enthusiasm that the youth bring to the table. What they're experiencing first hand is what we often only see in data form. Listening to their input is invaluable for any youth-serving organization.

As practitioners working with youth, we sometimes get blinded by deadlines and things going wrong; it's good to hear directly from youth how our work impacts them.

Hearing from youth helped me to know where I need to focus my attention going forward. It was very enlightening and demonstrated how resilient and engaged young people are.

The young people provided innovative yet realistic ideas about how best to meet their needs when they are involved in various "systems." This is information that anyone working with/for youth should be part of.

## Post-Summit Group Photo of Youth Fellows, VOICES, and Commission Leaders



### VOICES' Mission, Vision, and Theory of Change

For over a decade, VOICES has leveraged their expertise in juvenile justice, social work, and education to meet the needs of over 2,000 youth and families from 36 different zip codes across Marion County—all of whom are from low-income backgrounds and a vast majority of whom are individuals of color. Through research-based practices and healing-centered engagement ([Ginwright 2018](#)) VOICES heals, educates, and trains youth and families, who have not yet been able to achieve economic self-sufficiency and holistic wellness, so that they can lead lives of choice and thrive. VOICES uses high-touch, intensive, and long-term relationship-building with their participants and peer-to-peer structures so that participants feel a collective sense of belonging and ownership over outcomes. Through this program, and the expansion of their Power & Promise program, VOICES is increasingly working with youth, practitioners, and systems-leaders from across the state of Indiana to prompt positive change so that all Hoosier youth and families can thrive.

Rooted in the belief that personal, collective, and systems change are all necessary to address systemic racism and generational poverty, VOICES primes their participants to contribute to the movement for positive change in Indianapolis. VOICES has built local, state, and national partners such that VOICES youth regularly: 1) advocate for policy- and systems- change to center on the experiences of Black and brown youth and families and all people who experience poverty; 2) train educators, probation officers, and other service-providing professionals to understand and disrupt systemic racism; and 3) garner the internships and job placements they need to achieve economic stability and lead self-determined lives. With a deep belief in the power of the arts and creative expression to accelerate social change, VOICES has launched creative industries (e.g. a print-and-design micro-business), leads programs (e.g. hosting the national Youth Poet Laureate artist-activist program), and convenes a network of creative entrepreneurs to share resources and expertise and prompt innovation.