

Program Overview:

In FY21, Be Strong Families (BSF) partnered with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services in ensuring compliance with the Youth Advisory Board Act (20 ILCS 527/) by:

- Supporting the convening and maintenance of:
 - a Statewide Youth Advisory Board; and
 - regional youth advisory boards in the Cook and Northern regions of the state.
- Supporting each regional youth advisory board in working with the Department or its designee to determine how to best provide services to current and former youth in foster care living within their regions.
- Supporting the Statewide Youth Advisory Board in advising the Department and the General Assembly with respect to all matters involving or affecting current and former youth in foster care.

Through this program BSF partners directly with the Statewide Youth Advisory Board members and DCFS to ensure the board meets the responsibilities of the Youth Advisory Board act by:

- 1) Providing the Department and the General Assembly with the perspective of youth under the care of the Department:
- 2) Identifying, analyzing, and recommending solutions to any issues concerning adoption and guardianship and youth in foster care.
- 3) Reviewing and advising the Department on proposed or pending legislation, primarily as it concerns current and former youth in foster care; and
- 4) Reviewing and making recommendations on Department foster care and child welfare service delivery policies, guidelines, procedures, and training.

Cook, Northern, Central, and Southern Regional Youth Advisory Board Meeting Activities:

Below is an overview of Regional Youth Advisory Board activities in FY20 by quarter, followed by details on each monthly RYAB meeting.

Q1 included the following meetings:

- Northern Regional Youth Advisory Board (RYAB) meetings:
 - RYAB meetings – July, August, September
 - ILM Meetings – July, August, September
- Cook Regional Youth Advisory Board (RYAB) meetings:
 - RYAB Meetings – July, August, September
 - ILM Meetings – July, August, September
- Statewide Youth Advisory Board (SYAB) meetings:
 - SYAB Meeting – September

Q2 included the following meetings:

- Northern Regional Youth Advisory Board (RYAB) meetings:
 - RYAB meetings – October, November, December
 - ILM Meetings – October, November, December
- Cook Regional Youth Advisory Board (RYAB) meetings:
 - RYAB Meetings – October, November, December
 - ILM Meetings – October, November, December
- Statewide Youth Advisory Board (SYAB) meetings:
 - SYAB Meeting: November

Q3 included the following meetings:

- Northern Regional Youth Advisory Board (RYAB) meetings:
 - RYAB meetings – January, February, March
 - ILM Meetings – January, February, March
- Cook Regional Youth Advisory Board (RYAB) meetings:
 - RYAB Meetings – January, February, March
 - ILM Meetings – January, February, March
- Statewide Youth Advisory Board (SYAB) meetings:
 - SYAB Meeting: February

Q4 included the following meetings:

- Northern Regional Youth Advisory Board (RYAB) meetings:
 - RYAB meetings – April, May, June
 - ILM Meetings – April, May, June
- Cook Regional Youth Advisory Board (RYAB) meetings:
 - RYAB Meetings – April, May, June
 - ILM Meetings – April, May, June
- Central Regional Youth Advisory Board (RYAB) meetings:
 - RYAB Meetings – April, May, June
 - ILM Meetings – April, May, June
- Southern Regional Youth Advisory Board (RYAB) meetings:
 - RYAB Meetings – April, May, June
 - ILM Meetings – April, May, June
- Statewide Youth Advisory Board (SYAB) meetings:
 - SYAB Meeting: May

The following section outlines meetings that occurred during each month of the quarter:

Table A. July – June FY20 Meeting Summary

Date	Meeting	Time	Objective
6/30/20	Central ILM	3:30 - 4:15pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prep for July RYAB Meeting
6/30/20	Southern ILM	4:30-5:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prep for July RYAB Meeting
7/2/20	Youth Webinar	4:00-5:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Vitality
7/9/20	YAB/DCFS	10:00 – 11:30am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment Plan
7/9/20	Youth Webinar	4:00-5:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Vitality
7/13/20	CWAC	10:00 – 12:00am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older Youth Services Delivery
7/16/20	Youth Webinar	4:00-5:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YouthCare
7/17/20	Policy and Procedure Jam Session	11:00 – 1:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed revisions to Procedures 302.388
7/23/20	Youth Webinar	4:00-5:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviewing 101
7/24/20	Central ILM	10:00-10:45am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prep for August RYAB Meeting • Agenda Role Assignment • Regional Updates
7/28/20	Southern ILM	1:00 – 1:30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prep for August RYAB Meeting • Youth Choice Discussion ideas • Regional Updates
8/6/20	Youth Webinar	4:00-5:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtaining a driver’s license
8/13/20	Youth Webinar	4:00-5:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social and emotional competence
8/14/20	Commission Budget Meeting	1:30 – 3:30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advises the Governor and General Assembly on policies that impact older youth and young adults • Hear directly from older youth about their experience in care.
8/20/20	Youth Webinar	4:00-5:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tassel turn-Elearning challenges youth experienced and tips to overcome such challenges
8/25/20	Southern ILM	3:15 – 3:45pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prep for September RYAB Meeting • Regional Updates
8/25/20	Town Hall: Race and Foster Care	5:00 – 6:30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss your experiences of race and racism, especially as they relate to being in foster care
9/1/20	Central ILM	11:15-12:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prep for August RYAB Meeting • Regional Updates • SYAB Updates
9/3/20	Youth Webinar	4:00-5:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Village Lifeset

9/4 – 9/5	SYAB	Weekend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build community and teamwork among SYAB Officers • Develop leadership capacities and Public Speaking skills for SYAB officers
9/10/20	Youth Webinar	4:00-5:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster Progress-Career Exploration
9/14/20	Children Family Service Advisory Council	10:00 – 12:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older Youth Service Delivery
9/14/20	Cook ILM	3:00 – 4:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prep for September RYAB Meeting • Regional Updates • Director’s Meeting prep • Agenda Role Assignment • Rule 384 Update
9/15/20	Northern ILM	5:00 – 6:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prep for September RYAB Meeting • Director’s Update • Agenda Role Assignment
9/17/20	Youth Webinar	4:00-5:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Luv Institute-Basic Resume Writing
9/24/20	Youth Webinar	4:00-5:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCFS post-secondary opportunities
10/1/20	Youth Webinar	4:00-5:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restraints
10/6/20	Central/Southern ILM	11:00-12:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socratic dialogue around what it means to be successful • RYAB prep
10/8/20	Youth Webinar	4:00-5:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth teams App
10/09/2020	Cook & Northern ILM	1:00pm-2:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YLD review • Youth Choice Modules • Offer Roles and Responsibilities
10/15/20	Youth Webinar	4:00-5:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YAB Talk
10/20/2020	SOGIE	10:00am-12:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of department LGBTQ services • Discuss plans to identify youth and parents that identify as LGBTQ • Internal workgroups report out, data collection specialized services.
10/21/20	Loyola Meeting	3-4:45pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brainstorming SYAB FY21 policy initiatives
10/22/20	Youth Webinar	4:00-5:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WoW Talk

11/2/2020	CWAC	10am- 12pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Older Youth Service Module - Co Chairs Meeting Workgroup report outs Feedback on YV life set program Next steps to improve implemented YV pilot
11/3/20	Central/Southern ILM	11am-12pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Socratic dialogue around what it means to be happy RYAB prep
11/5/20	Youth Webinar	4:00-5:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial Literacy-Go Ladder Up
11/6 – 11/7	SYAB	Weekend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ethics FY21 Priorities Public Speaking
11/12/20	Youth Webinar	4:00-5:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial Literacy-Bank on it, Wintrust Bank
11/13/20	Prevent Child Abuse Panel Prep	10:45am-12:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NIU’s prevent child abuse panel prep
11/18/20	Prevent Child Abuse Panel	1:00-2:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elevator speech Overview of YAB Q and A
11/19/20	Youth Webinar	4:00-5:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial Literacy-Wintrust Bank
12/1/20	Central/Southern ILM	11:00-12:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy Review of 22/28, Research skills discussion/practice
12/3/20	Youth Webinar	4:00-5:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protective/Promotive Factors - Knowledge
12/7/20	CWAC	10:00-12:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving Older Youth Services
12/8/20	YouthCare Advisory Committee	3:00-4:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Insurance Transition
12/9/20	Director’s Meeting	3:00 – 4:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governor’s Executive Order 2020.22 Action Transmittal 2020.05 Procedure 302 Services Delivered by the Department Appendix M. Transition Planning for Adolescents
12/10/20	Youth Webinar	4:00-5:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YAB Recruitment
12/14/20	Northern/Cook ILM	3:00-4:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RYAB Prep Review/Discuss pending policies up for review
12/15/20	SOGIE	10:30 – 12:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small Work Group Report Outs

12/17/20	SYAB:Loyola	2:30 – 4:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussed SYAB Policy Priorities Reviewed Policy One-pager
12/17/20	Youth Webinar	4:00-5:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mindfulness
1/8/21	Central/Southern ILM	11:00 am-12:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prep for RYAB Meetings Socratic discussion based on the question “how do you make change in your life?”
1/14/21	Youth Webinar	4:00pm-5:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Looking back on 2020. Moving forward with 2021
1/14/21	ICFSAC	3:00pm-5:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Covid response Juvenile sex registry
1/18/21	Foster Progress	11:00am-12:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Day of Service
1/19/21	SOGIE	10:00am-12:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collection on LGBTQ youth
1/21/21	1st SYAB Planning Call	1:00pm-2:30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feb SYAB Planning
1/28/21	Youth webinar	4:00pm-5:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social/emotional learning in the classroom
1/28/21	2nd SYAB Planning Call	5:00pm-6:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feb SYAB Youth/Adult Planning
1/28/21	Monthly intern meeting	12:00pm-1:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intros/ Q&A Come up with end of year project
2/1/21	CWAC	10:00am-12:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposal of specially trained CW for youth 18-21 – aging out Working with YAB and their initiatives
2/2/21	Central/Southern ILM	11:00am-12:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prep for RYAB meetings Socratic discussion based on the question “do you think human ethics are natural or learned?”
2/2/21	Northern/Cook ILM	5:00pm-5:30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prep for RYAB meetings
2/3/21	Foster Parent Support Specialist	10:00am-11:00am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YAB Overview
2/3/21	Intern Project meeting	2:00pm-2:30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intern-lead meeting about how to tackle the project they chose
2/3/21	Final SYAB panning call	12:00pm-12:45pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalize agenda
2/5/21	Adoption Advisory Council Meeting	9:00am-11:30am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reestablish AAC/YAB collaboration

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
2/5 – 2/6	SYAB	Weekend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Voices Impacting Systems • Day2Day Toolkit • Rule 384 • GAL Discussion
2/11/21	Youth Webinar	4:00pm-5:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision Making
2/16/21	SOGIE	10:00am – 12:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collection on LGBTQ youth
2/19/21	LGBTQ Council Planning Call	12:30pm-1:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss YAB interest in regard to collaborating and supporting new DCFS council
2/25/21	Youth Webinar	4:00pm-5:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy relationships
2/25/21	Officer & Intern Meeting	5:15pm-6:45pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work assignments and committees • Focus groups • Director’s meeting planning
3/2/21	Central/Southern ILM	11:00am-12:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prep for RYAB meeting • Socratic discussion based on the question “what does it mean to lead the good life?”
3/4/21	Monthly Intern Meeting	5:00pm-7:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project overview and planning • Policy change comments, issues, and concerns
3/9/21	Director’s Meeting Prep	11:00am-12:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss youth initiatives they want to present to director
3/9/21	Foster Parent Support Specialist Meeting	1:00pm-2:30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YAB Plug
3/11/21	IL Child & Family Services Advisory Council	3:00pm-5:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCFS budget • Covid response • Juvenile sex registry recommendations • Relative home licensure
3/11/21	Youth Webinar	4:00pm-5:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hosted guests from Foster Progress that presented on educational attainment and how to transition to 2- and 4-year post-secondary institutions

3/12/21	Heartland /ICOY	3:00pm-4:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Day to Day Toolkit handoff
3/16/21	SOGIE	10:00am-12:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collection on LGBTQ youth
3/17/21	Director's Meeting Prep	2:45pm-3:15pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan and practice PowerPoint/presentation responsibilities
3/19/21	Foster Parent Advisory Council		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educational Advocacy Committee reviews
3/24/21	SYAB Director's Meeting	3:00pm-4:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action Transmittal 2021.04 Strengthen higher education preparation LGBTQ Rights Recruitment
3/25/21	Youth Webinar	4:00pm-5:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Body Image and Social Media
3/30/21	ILM	11am-12pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> April RYAB Prep YLD Mod 10 Prep Morality: Intrinsic or Learned?
4/7/21	Monthly Intern Meeting	1pm-1:30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update on intern project
4/8/21	Webinar	4pm-5pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Topic: All things Travel
4/8/21	Northern/Cook ILM call	5:30pm-6pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prep for YAB meeting
4/12/21	Equity Training	4pm-6pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Differentiating between Equality, Equity, and Justice and How it Relates to the YAB
4/16/21	Statewide Foster Parent Advisory Council	9am-11:30am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New online FP training - Engagement with Incarcerated Parents Regional updates SPIDER website training
4/21/21	SYAB Prep Meeting	4pm-5pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prep for May SYAB meeting
4/22/21	Webinar	4pm-5pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Topic: Building Credit
4/23/21	Adoption Advisory Council	9am-10:45am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional updates Reading of bylaws
4/27/21	Casa Panel	1pm-1:45pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prep
4/28/21	Intern Meeting	2pm-3pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalizing intern project
5/3/21	Child Welfare Advisory Council	10am-12pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-Entry Alternative Contract data and suggestions

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot programming
5/6/21	Central/Southern ILM	12pm-1pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SYAB Agenda • YLD Mod 11 Prep • Success and improvement in FY21
5/11/21	Testimonial	2pm-3pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testify on S.B 755
5/12/21	Casa Panel	12pm-1pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YAB overview • Youth experience as youth in care and YAB member
5/13/21	Webinar	4pm-5pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic: Mental Health First Aid Kit
5/14/21	Northern/Cook ILM call	12pm-12:30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prep for YAB meeting
5/14/21	IL Child and Family Services Council	3pm-5pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Juvenile sex registry recommendations • Interviews for new council recommendations • Barriers and solutions for gaining YAB members
5/17/21	SOGIE	10pm-12pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOGIE updates, set goals, and determine where SOGIE is in the process of the timeline • SOGIE Questions • Training Needs
5/27/21	Children’s Summer Institute (Panel)	1:20pm-2:20pm	<p>Addressing the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are some of the broader societal issues you would want to see addressed to support families and children in care, or at risk of entering care? • What is it that you would want lawyers and social workers and other service providers to know when working with children, youth, and families in care?
5/27/21	Webinar	4pm-5pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic: Anti-violence Activism
6/3/21	Central and Southern ILM	3pm-3:30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officer clothing • Election preparation • Career exploration



**FY21 Year End Report
Regional & Statewide Youth Advisory Boards**

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6/4/21	Adoption Advisory Council	9am-10:45am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional updates Reading of bylaws Potential collaboration with AAC and SWFCAC on director recommendation surrounding IL adoption photo listing
6/7/21	Child Welfare Advisory Council	10am-12pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DEI TPSN/ Re-Entry Alternative Contract Updates Recommendation streamline
6/10/21	Webinar	4pm-5pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Topic: Setting Boundaries with your Partner
6/10/21	Northern/Cook ILM call	5:30pm-6:30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prep for YAB meeting Officer election prep
6/23/21	Q4 Director's Meeting	3pm-4pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting Educational Attainment and Outcomes Previous Recommendations and Progress DEI Survey and Results

Table B. July-June FY20 RYAB Meeting Details

Date	Meeting	Time	# of Attendees	DCFS Updates	Youth Leadership Development Curriculum (YLD)
7/8/20	Central RYAB	5:00 - 6:30pm	6	N/A – there was no DCFS liaison in attendance.	Curriculum Overview: Introduce youth involved in a child welfare Youth Advisory Board to the Be Strong Families Youth Leadership Development: Preparing Youth to Become Effective Advocates for Change Learning
7/14/20	Southern RYAB	5:00 – 6:30pm	0		
7/16/20	Cook RYAB	5:00 – 6:30pm	6	DCFS, Office of Education and Transition Services liaison provided the DCFS update. Updated included: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Youth in College payment included to \$ 1,285. 2. TPSN increase payment of 234 a month 3. Emancipation Funding increase payment 1325 	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the definition of youth leadership development and how it relates to and differs from positive youth development • Become familiar with the modules of the curriculum and the process of integrating it into Youth Advisory Board activities • Discuss the processes of co-training and selecting outside presenters and presentations as elements of youth leadership development
7/21/20	Northern RYAB	5:00 – 6:30pm	5		
8/11/20	Southern RYAB	5:00 – 6:30pm	2	N/A – there was no DCFS liaison in attendance.	Module 1: Being an Effective Change Agent Purpose.
8/12/20	Central RYAB	5:00 – 6:30pm	1		
8/18/20	Northern RYAB	5:00 – 6:30pm	6	Information Transmittal 2020 K–12 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E- Learning will be offered for this school year Informational 2020.08 Youth Teams & Confidentiality	Learning objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the opportunity and power of youth voice to affect change in the child welfare system. • Understand the energy
8/20/20	Cook RYAB	5:00 – 6:30pm	9		

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth will be able to use Microsoft Teams to contact DCFS <p>Action Transmittal 2020.9 Covid 19 Caseworker</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires caseworkers to make in-person contact with youth. 	<p>of complaining about problems and injustice vs identifying and mobilizing for solutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn and understand the process and the dynamics of change. Develop a basic understanding of the skills necessary to be a change agent.
9/8/20	Southern RYAB	5:00 – 6:30pm	2	<p>Policy Guide 2020.12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amendment to rule 384 Behavior Treatment in Residential Child Care Facilities Appendix A - Matrix of Behavior Treatment Techniques. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permits UKERU (alternative to restraints) as an approved behavior treatment technique. 	<p>Module 2: Everyone is a Leader: Leadership Style</p> <p>Learning objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define the concepts of leadership and leadership style Differentiate influence, power, authority vis a vis leadership Identify and understand your leadership style and its strengths Gain an understanding of how different leadership styles collaborate in solidarity
9/9/20	Central RYAB	5:00 – 6:30pm	4		
9/15/20	Northern RYAB	5:00 – 6:30pm	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2020.17 IT new form CFS 407-7 Homeschooling Approval Form (required if a youth caregiver is consider homeschooling a youth in care) Policy Guide 2020.12 Rules 384 to implement UKERU Appendix A - Matrix of Behavior Treatment Techniques. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permits UKERU (alternative to restraints) as an approved behavior treatment technique. 	
10/13/20	Southern RYAB	5-6:30	12	<p>Policy Announcement – Case Plan forms & guides: revision of service planning in permanency & intact family services</p> <p>The information on the IRS \$1, 200.00 incentive program is as follow:</p> <p>1-800-919-9835</p>	<p>Module 4: Using Your Story to Advocate for Change</p> <p>Purpose: Through this module youth will gain an understanding of how to share their story strategically and purposefully in a way that is safe and effective.</p>
10/14/20	Central RYAB	5-6:30	10		
10/15/20	Northern RYAB	5-6:30	5		
10/20/20	Cook RYAB	5-6:30	6		

				<p>IRS.gov/eip</p> <p>Youth Teams (Participation Opportunity)</p> <p>NIU Stem Program https://stemfest.niu.edu/stemfest/index.shtml</p>	<p>Learning objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect personal stories to advocacy roles • Identify details that may be appropriate and impactful for specific situations • Gain experience keeping personal boundaries while self-disclosing • Develop an issue related elevator speech including their personal story
11/10/20	Southern RYAB	5-6:30	19	No DCFS Updates	<p>Module 5: Turning Challenges into Opportunities</p> <p>Purpose: This module will assist youth with maintaining a positive stance with relation to adversity, struggle, and advocacy and developing strategic thinking and analytical skills. Learning objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn how to positively reframe difficult / negative situation • Identify ways to manage emotional triggers to remain effective as an advocate • Understand how challenges and problems are actually opportunities to affect positive change • Learn how to find strategic opportunities or levers in challenging situations
11/11/20	Central RYAB	5-6:30	7		
11/17/20	Northern RYAB	5-6:30	0		
11/19/20	Cook RYAB	5-6:30	10	<p>The Department has recently sent another policy transmittal regarding COVID -19; adjustments were made based on the current situation here in Illinois with the rapid spread of COVID-19. Youth should be prepared for additional restrictions and limitations related to contact with people.</p>	<p>Learning objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn how to positively reframe difficult / negative situation • Identify ways to manage emotional triggers to remain effective as an advocate • Understand how challenges and problems are actually opportunities to affect positive change • Learn how to find strategic opportunities or levers in challenging situations
12/8/20	Southern RYAB	5-6:30	19	<p>Upcoming Workforce Opportunities:</p> <p>DCFS subcontracts with Kaleidoscope</p>	<p>Module 3: How and What are you representing?</p> <p>Purpose: is designed to assist youth participants with understanding and developing a sense of</p>
12/9/20	Central RYAB	5-6:30	15		
12/15/20	Northern RYAB	5-6:30	14		

12/17/20	Cook RYAB	5-6:30	13	<p>to provide services to young people in care. Kaleidoscope is currently accepting applications for their internships program. Youth who are in college and has a GPA of 2.0 are eligible and encouraged to apply.</p> <p>LUV Institute is having a virtual career development program that forces on preparing youth for the workforce. Youth between the ages of 16-20 are encouraged to participate in the 10-week paid program which starts January 16th.</p> <p>If interested, please contact case worker or YAB staff.</p>	<p>themselves as leaders representing something larger than themselves and using their personal qualities to do so.</p> <p>Learning objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand what it means to represent or to be a representative • Be inspired by current examples of youth leadership • Get in touch with how personal qualities and choices can contribute to leadership • Understand how personal qualities move the collective work forward.
1/12/21	Southern	5pm-6:30pm	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy review Procedures 315. Appendix H. • Requirements for Reunification and After Care Services • Comprehensive Visitation Guidance for Congregate Care Settings. • Child Welfare Staffing Needs During COVID • DCFS scholarship. • Revisions to the National Youth in Transition Database. • Director’s Letter 	<p>Module 6: Facilitation 101 Part 1</p> <p>Purpose: In this module, participants learn basic facilitation skills for effectively guiding conversations that surface youth voice and develop strategic advocacy plans.</p> <p>Learning Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather an overall understand of basic facilitation skills such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Communication o Building rapport o Reading your audience o Identifying and building synergy o Active listening • Preparing materials in advance • Learn how to use questions to ensure your audience is understanding
1/13/21	Central	5pm-6:30pm	6		
1/19/21	Northern	5pm-6:30pm	8		
1/21/21	Cook	5pm-6:30pm	14		



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					the information being presented. • Understand the basics of facilitating for diversity, equity, and inclusion - including drawing out quiet participants and encouraging the more talkative ones to share conversation space.
2/8/21	Southern	5pm-6:30pm	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scholarship deadline – March 31st 	Mod 6 – Facilitation 101 part 1 (Repeated due to lack of youth presences in January)
2/9/21	Central	5pm-6:30pm	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action transmittal 2021.02 Expansion of DCFS Employment/Job Training/Apprenticeship Incentive Program to support eligible youth through the COVID-19 pandemic procedure 302 Appendix F Action transmittal 2021.04 Procedures 302 Services Delivered by the Department Appendix M, Transition Planning for Adolescents Action transmittal 2021.03 	Module 7 – Facilitation 101 part 2 Purpose: In this module, participants learn basic facilitation skills for effectively guiding conversations that surface youth voice and develop strategic advocacy plans. Learning Objectives: • Practice facilitation skills learned in Module 7, Part 1. • Review and reinforce content from Module 7, Part 1 as necessary.
2/16/21	Northern	5pm-6:30pm	6		
2/18/21	Cook	5pm-6:30pm	13		
3/8/21	Southern	5pm-6:30pm	7		
3/9/21	Central	5pm-6:30pm	10		Module 8: Strategic Goal Setting
3/16/21	Northern	5pm-6:30pm	11		

3/18/21	Cook	5pm-6:30pm	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DCFS Scholarship Application Deadline is March 31st 	<p>Purpose: This module will teach youth a technique for setting and implementing goals in an advocacy-oriented change plan.</p> <p>Learning Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn the differences between long-, mid-, and short-term goals Learn and practice the process of making SMART goals Together develop 3 SMART goals for YAB child welfare recommendations
4/13/21	Southern RYAB	5pm-6:30pm	18	<p>Review of Action Transmittals: 2021.02, 2021.03, 2021.04</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expansion of DCFS employment and job training incentive program Expansion of DCFS educational training voucher program Older youth re-entry program <p>Announce DCFS scholarships will be chosen this month.</p>	<p>Module 10 – Youth Choice – Financial Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presenter: Toiria Baker from Economic Awareness Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budgeting Wants vs Needs Building Emergency Savings Loans <p>Opening bank accounts</p>
4/14/21	Central RYAB	5pm-6:30pm	2		
4/15/21	Cook RYAB	5pm-6:30pm	17		
4/20/21	Northern RYAB	5pm-6:30pm	11		
5/11/21	Southern RYAB	5pm-6:30pm	8	No updates	<p>Module 11 – Youth Choice – Youth Adult Partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presenter: Julie Rogers Bascom from the Nat’l Youth Leadership Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do youth bring to the table?
5/12/21	Central RYAB	5pm-6:30pm	3		
5/18/21	Northern RYAB	5pm-6:30pm	17		
5/20/21	Cook RYAB	5pm-6:30pm	18		



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					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do adults bring to the table? • The importance of youth adult partnerships • Open-ended vs closed-ended questions • “Yes, but/Yes, and” communication activity
6/8/21	Southern RYAB	5pm-6:30pm	14	No Updates	<p>Module 12 – Youth Choice – How to Use Superpowers to See Yourself as a Leader</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presenter: Zahra from Nat’l Youth Leadership Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is leadership? • What are traits that define leadership? • What is your personal superpower, and how can it be used in your leadership role? <p>DEI Poll: Should the YAB create a standing committee for diversity, equity, and Inclusion?</p>
6/9/21	Central RYAB	5pm-6:30pm	5		
6/15/21	Northern RYAB	5pm-6:30pm	14		
6/17/21	Cook RYAB	5pm-6:30pm	28		

FY21 Statewide Youth Advisory Board Events

The following section provides an overview of SYAB meetings / events by quarter followed by detailed information on each of the statewide meetings that occurred in FY21.

Q1 included the following meetings:

- Statewide Meeting – September

Q2 included the following meetings:

- Statewide Meeting – November

Q3 included the following meetings:

- Statewide Meeting – February

Q4 included the following meetings:

- Statewide Meeting – May

The first quarter Statewide Youth Advisory Board meeting was held virtually via Zoom video conferencing on September 4th - 5th. The meeting welcomed a total of 9 youth participants. Friday's meeting was held from 5:00-8:00PM. The meeting began with welcome and introductions at which time youth and adult partners greeted one another, reviewed the meeting agenda, recited the group statement collectively, and acknowledged birthdays. The Program Manager reviewed the ground rules for the virtual meeting and discussed ways to engage/ participate via zoom. Program Manager gave an overview of the Statewide Youth Advisory Board's structure, function, history, and responsibilities. Youth had the opportunity to review the board's mission and legislative mandate, learn and practice parliamentary procedure, and talk about SYAB and its many accomplishments.

Next, youth were reintroduced to the concept of Bylaws. Youth had an opportunity to review the bylaws and discuss any questions. Following this section, youth read through the SYAB code of conduct and reviewed the discipline grid. The majority of Friday was spent on getting youth better acquainted with SYAB and their responsibilities. Saturday's SYAB meeting was held from 11:00-4:30pm. The meeting began with an ice breaker. Program Manager facilitated "Youth Leadership Development: Preparing Youth to Become Advocates for Transformative Change - Module 2: Everyone is a Leader: Leadership Styles". The objectives of this training are below:

- Define the concepts of leadership and leadership style
- Differentiate influence, power, authority, leadership
- Identify and understand your leadership style and its strengths
- Gain an understanding of how different leadership styles collaborate in solidarity

Next, BSF led a training on public speaking and discussed what makes a good speaker and why public speaking is important for SYAB. The concept of elevator speeches was reintroduced, and youth had a chance to write their personal elevator speeches remembering not to share information that may trigger them. Loyola Law assisted youth with identifying possible FY21 policy initiatives. Possible FY21 initiatives include the following: - Placement: ILO restrictions and limitations, youth having a say in

where they are placed - Communication challenges with Caseworkers, GAL, siblings, and etc. - Youth Lack information: how the system operates, how to get in contact with key people, how to acquire information about programming aimed at youth transitioning from care. - Cross cultural education and training for foster parents

Saturday closed out with some discussion around SYAB logo update, youth recruitment, and 1st quarter Director's prep.

November's Statewide Youth Advisory Board Meeting:

The Second quarter Statewide Youth Advisory Board (SYAB) Meeting was held virtually using Zoom video Conferencing. The Q2 meeting took place November 6-7th, welcoming a total of 10 youth participants. Friday's meeting began with our Central Intern leading Welcome and Introductions at which time youth and adult partners greeted one another, reviewed the meeting agenda, recited the group statement collectively, and acknowledged birthdays followed by the Central President reviewing ground rules and discussing ways to engage using Zoom. Participants engaged in a quick team building activity that allowed youth and adult partners an opportunity to become more familiar with one another.

Next, as a standing agenda item for every November SYAB meetings, youth participants experienced a basic training on Ethics. Participants defined ethics as the moral principles that governs a person's behavior or the conducting of an activity. After defining Ethics, a discussion of Ethical Leadership was had; allowing youth to identify principles of ethical leaders as the following: respect, honesty, justice, etc. Within breakout rooms, youth and adult partners discussed ethical leaders further and reviewed scenarios to determine whether each was ethical or unethical. There were not any DFCS updates. Luis Carrion informed the youth of an opportunity through YouthCare. YouthCare is forming an Advisory Committee and would like to have youth participation. Three young people agreed to partake in this participate committee. Friday ended with a board discussion that focused on moving FY21 forward. Those who participated in the Q1 Director's meeting shared their experiences and provided updates on next steps. Next, youth were asked to think about Youth Leadership Development topics for the youth choice modules. Topics that were suggested included the following: How to speak-up, being a role model, and career explorations. Lastly, time was allowed for those interested to stay after the meeting for a 15 minute debrief about the November election.

Saturday's SYAB meeting began with an ice breaker. BSF led a Public Speaking training. This training was a review from September's SYAB meeting with additional emphases on the importance of such trainings and public speaking being an essential skill. Youth identified key components of being a great speaker some of which included: connecting with your audience, not sharing too much, reading the audience, knowing the audience, and making eye contact. There was time allowed for youth to practice the skills they learned and receive positive feedback and constructive criticism from their peers as well as adult partners. Next, the Program Manager facilitated "Youth Leadership Development: Preparing Youth to Become Advocates for Transformative Change - Module 5 "Turning Challenges into Opportunities". The objectives of this training are below. Purpose: This module will assist youth with maintaining a positive stance with relation to adversity, struggle, and advocacy and developing strategic thinking and analytical skills. Learning objectives:

- Learn how to positively reframe difficult / negative situation
- Identify ways to manage emotional triggers to remain effective as an advocate
- Understand how challenges and problems are opportunities to affect positive change

- Learn how to find strategic opportunities or levers in challenging situations

Next, Loyola recapped Fy20 policy priorities and presented an overview of new initiatives discussed over the last couple months. Youth ultimately voted on the priorities they wanted to move forward with for FY21. Votes were tallied and it was decided that SYAB would continue working on homelessness and use of restraints as the top two priorities. Additional efforts will focus on strengthening college preparations, growing job training opportunities, and improving support for pregnant and parenting teens. Saturday's meeting closed with brags (one thing they enjoyed about the meeting) and snags (and area that could be improved).

February's Statewide Youth Advisory Board meeting:

The third quarter Statewide Youth Advisory Board Meeting was held on February 5th-6th. This meeting welcomed ten youth participants. Friday's meeting began with the Cook Intern leading Welcome and Introductions. Youth and adult partners greeted one another, reviewed the meeting agenda, recited the group statement collectively, and acknowledged birthdays.

Next, Tracey King, DCFS Deputy Chief of Staff, spoke on behalf of the department. Ms. King introduced herself as she has been identified as the liaison for the department and SYAB. Ms. King encouraged the board to put the department to task, really inform the department on how to best assist youth in care and think about how the department can support the YAB agenda.

On Friday, a segment titled, "Youth Voices Impacting Systems" was led by Lynsey Sloan, Associate Vice President of Statewide Foster Care for Children's Home & Aid. The goal of this segment was to get input from the youth about preventing youth and families from entering the child welfare system and how to help youth exit care quickly. Information shared will impact service delivery systems and support all Children and Home Aid populations.

Following, the Program Manager facilitated "Youth Leadership Development: Preparing Youth to Become Advocates for Transformative Change - Module 7 "Facilitation Skills 101 (Part 2)". The objective of this training is to teach basic facilitation skills for effectively guiding conversations that brings forth youth voice and develop strategic advocacy plans and allow youth to practice facilitation skills. Before concluding Friday's meeting, updates were given related to SYAB. Updates included an announcement and preview of the new SYAB Facebook page, external meetings, and events. Luis Carrion, DCFS OETS monitor, also provided DCFS updates at this time. Updates included the following: DCFS Scholarship deadline is March 31st, services have been Extended for youth who are near transition age, and Director Smith's letter regarding recruitment for YAB.

Saturday's SYAB meeting began with a presentation from Heartland. Heartland previewed the Day2Day toolkit and allowed the young people to browse the website for program and resource updates. Heartland provided an update on the toolkit explaining how the Day2Day will be handed off to ICOY. Heartland gathered input from the youth as to how they would like to be involved in developing a sustainability plan to ensure the toolkit remains youth driven and assisting with handing the toolkit off to ICOY. Next, Loyola led a training on how a bill becomes a law in Illinois. In addition, Loyola debriefed use of restraints to help inform the group working on revising DCFS Rule 384 and discussed how youth get information about their guardian ad Litem.

May's Statewide Youth Advisory Board Meeting:

Youth Advisory Board Meeting was held on May 7-8th via zoom and welcomed a total of seven youth participants. The standing agenda items, welcome and introductions was facilitated, birthdays were acknowledged, and the weekend agenda was reviewed. Next, Luis Carrion, Office of Education and Transition Services provided the DCFS updates which consisted of the following reminders:

- Expansion of services for youth approaching age 21.
- Apprenticeship with the department
- Increased funding for Education and Training Voucher

Closing out Friday, Jess Vann, Founder and Director of the non-for-profit Creative Spaces led a 2-hour workshop titled, Leadership through a DEIB (diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging) and Anti-Racist Lens. This workshop explored how to be an effective communicator, becoming an active listener, evoke empathy, understanding bias, learning equitable and inclusive leadership techniques. Through this workshop, youth identified key terminology, behaviors, and skills that will assist them in being effective leaders.

Saturday began with Loyola University Legislative and Policy Clinic. Loyola updated and recapped the boards legislative agenda for FY21 and discussed process that has been made thus far. Additionally, Loyola reviewed how identified bills have moved through the legislative process. Closing out this portion of the agenda, SYAB and Loyola discussed next year's partnership goals.

Next, the regional Interns presented their end of year projects to the board. The Interns worked collectively to research the measures different colleges take to make youth in care feel more welcomed and accepted, and support that is offered to youth in care. The project entitled "Evaluating Meaningful College Level Intervention", determine effective interventions at the college level to increase enrollment and retention of current and former youth in care and Identify factors that contribute to Illinois youth in care pursuing higher education.

To build off the research done by the Interns and to further examine one of the boards identified initiatives, Doctor Shanta Robinson, Assistant Professor with the University of Chicago was invited to discuss equity within education. Dr. Robinson led a session entitled "More Money, More Problem" which examined high school education within Illinois, resources, and the search for equity within the school systems. This concluded the May SYAB weekend.

Other Program Initiatives / Highlights

Promoting Civic Engagement / Policy Advocacy

SYAB members participated and were represented at the following councils throughout the year.

- Child Welfare Advisory Council
Youth Attendance / Participation in (July, September, November, May, June)
 - October, December, and February were attended by YAB staff as youth were unavailable.

- January and March meetings were cancelled.
- IL Adoption Advisory Council
Youth Attendance / Participation (February, April, June)
- This board meets sporadically
- Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council
Youth Attendance / Participation (March, April)
- This council is not meeting on a consistent basis.
- Illinois Children and Family Service Advisory Board
Youth Attendance / Participation (January, March, May)
- This council meets quarterly
- Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Expression (SOGIE):
Youth Attendance / Participation (October, November, December)
- Staff attended in May as youth were unavailable

FY21 YAB Intern Program:

BSF / DCFS is continuing the YAB internship program in FY21. During Q1, two regional Intern applications were received – one for Central and one for Cook; both applicants were approved. Publicizing the intern program continued with a greater effort made to identify individuals in Southern and Northern.

In the beginning of quarter two, the YAB team had successfully recruited and approved four Interns for each of the Regional Youth Advisory Boards across the state. Each of the slated Interns are young adults enrolled in a higher learning institution.

Quarter three, an additional intern was brought on for the Cook region in January, thus Cook currently has two identified and approved Interns. Northern, Central, and Southern regional boards each have one identified youth serving in the Intern capacity.

Closing out FY21, Northern, Cook, Central, and Southern regional boards each have one identified youth serving in the Intern capacity. Despite the multiple attempts to reach out to the second identified Cook intern via email, phone, and through her Caseworker, regrettably we did lose her as an intern in the Cook region this quarter. The interns successfully completed and presented their end of year intern project to the Director, which was titled “Evaluating Meaningful College Level Interventions”.

Director’s Meeting:

The Q1 Director’s meeting was convened on September 30th via WebEx video conferencing with five youth representatives, BSF staff, Director Smith, and DCFS designees all in attendance. The focus of this meeting was to discuss the issues and concerns impacting the youth in care. Board leaders discussed the importance of youth voice and the lack of youth presence at YAB meetings across the state of Illinois, ways to better broadcast YAB, and recruitment efforts that would assist with increasing the effectiveness of YAB.

The second quarter Director’s meeting was convened on December 9th via WebEx video conferencing with four youth representatives, BSF staff, Director Smith, and DCFS designees were all in attendance. The focus of this meeting was to discuss the issues and concerns impacting the youth in care. Board leaders discussed Executive Order 2020.22 Section 4 and Action Transmittal (Action Transmittal 2020.05 Procedure 302, Services Delivered by the Department Appendix M. Transition Planning for Adolescents). Further discussion ensued about the lack of knowledge youth (in care and former youth in care) around

new services as a result of the pandemic. Board leaders offered recommendations on how to best communicate the executive order and action transmittal with youth in care and how to communicate with former youth in care regarding services that are available to them.

Quarter three Director's meeting was convened on March 24th via WebEx video conferencing with two youth representatives, BSF staff, Director Smith, and DCFS designees all in attendance. Board leaders offered recommendations on how to strengthen Action Transmittal 2021.04, Higher education preparation, LGBTQ rights, and recruitment.

The fourth quarter Director's meeting was convened on June 23rd via WebEx video conferencing with a total of three youth representatives (two Interns and one officer), BSF staff, Director Smith, and DCFS designees all in attendance. Board leaders presented the Interns FY21 Research Project: Promoting Educational Attainment, progress, and outcomes from previous and new recommendations, and discussed the DEI Survey Results.

Barriers:

The most notable barrier impacting service delivery this fiscal year was COVID-19. All YAB services pivoted online causing a decline in youth participation due to zoom fatigue. Though large numbers are not the end goal, there is enormous value in having a variety of voices coming together to advocate. It is important to have youth at these meetings to amplify the voices of young people and to ensure youth are always at the forefront. This fiscal year, BSF has been grappling with ways to address the challenges surrounding youth participation. In the second quarter, the YAB team made improvements with our recruitment efforts. The YAB team worked on continuing to attract youth from a range of placements- specially targeting youth in foster homes and college. The YAB team worked to leverage BSF's internal database of foster parents; however, the program would benefit from more support from DCFS with targeting youth in these specific demographics. This year each regional board was lacking full officer slates. The BSF team was hoping that each officer slate would show improvements by year end, as the lack of full officer slates reduces the effectiveness of YAB advocacy presence at advisory councils and other child welfare stakeholder meetings. Moving into third quarter, the YAB team continued to encounter difficulties recruiting youth placed in foster homes. Without access to a list of youth in the various foster placements, or contact information for these individuals, it has proven to be difficult to make progress with this demographic. The most efficient way to reach the youth and fully explain the board with the engaging energy and accurate information would be direct contact with the youth. Additionally, some congregate care facilities lack technology which makes attending meetings difficult or less effective. For example, some group homes have multiple youth sharing a device. Without conference calling audio, it can be extremely difficult to clearly hear what is being shared. Also, when multiple participants share a single device, it is impossible to see an individual's face. This makes it difficult to know who sharing and impedes name/face recognition. Attempting to remember new attendees' names and voices without seeing their face is extremely tough. This makes it hard to create an authentic relationship which we believe is an integral factor that drives the success of the program.

Going into fourth quarter, the barriers remained somewhat consistent with the rest of the fiscal year due to covid. Previously cited barriers included lack of connection through zoom, difficulty hearing/sharing due to lack of technological access/support and difficulty recruiting. With covid restrictions being lifted, the BSF team remains confident that the challenges that were presented this year, will be eliminated by the time we enter the new fiscal year. In fact, with elections being around the

corner for FY22, we anticipate welcoming new officers into RYAB and expect to see more youth participation.

Recruitment

In Q1, the strategies below were deemed necessary for reaching the identified population, diversify membership, and to increase attendance:

Congregate Care:

- Identify and connect with agency monitors throughout Illinois.
- Request and share Director's letter requesting support for youth to participate in YAB.
- Work with monitors and agency staff to identify at least 2 youth that can serve as representatives and assist with sharing information from the YAB with their agency peers.

Youth in College, Vocational or Employed:

- Pinpoint recipients of YIC, YIS, Tuition and fee waiver, and youth receiving ETV.
- Share info about YAB and encourage participation and develop relationships with agency contacts.
- Engage workforce development programs through marketing and outreach and follow up calls.

Traditional Foster Care:

- Identify and attend Lead Foster Parent Support Specialist meetings to present about YAB's mission and accomplishments.
- Monthly flyers will be shared with agencies, FPSS, FP Facebook groups, etc. encouraging them to send youth.
- Identify barriers to youth participation using YAB survey.
- Attend provider meetings to address possible barriers when appropriate and share YAB info.
- Build relationships with key contacts and community stakeholders
- Convene meetings via zoom: Utilize YAB PowerPoint to share info about YAB for all audience.
- BSF YAB staff will utilize the last 20 minutes of each virtual Foster Parent Café to publicize and promote YAB.
- YAB commercial on all virtual Foster Parent events – to promote and highlight YAB.

In Q2 and Q3, the YAB team had made significant strides in the recruitment department. The Q1 recruitment strategies were retained while making well over 150 recruitment specific phone calls and emails to different agencies, foster parents, caseworkers, and young people. Moving forward, program managers planned to continue to contact current YAB participants and gauge interest in open officer positions.

Closing out Q4, The YAB team has continued to conduct recruitment efforts through phone calls, emails, and social media to youth, caseworkers, contracted agencies, agency monitors, foster parents and more. During Q4 the YAB team continued to make efforts to reach youth, agencies, and foster parents through a targeted campaign of phone calls, emails, flyers, and BSF cross-promotion. One strategic change in outreach has been increasing the number of direct emails sent to individuals in lieu of phone calls. Although time-consuming, it is our belief that these tailored and direct invitations to YAB events will increase youth engagement by creating a more personal connection with emailed recipients. This quarter the YAB also held a talent show for youth in care. The talent showed included gift card prizes of \$100/\$75/\$50 for the top 3 talents presented and additional \$10 gift cards for all participants. The talent show was an effort to reach youth that may have not known/attended YAB events in the past. The team sought to create a fun and rewarding atmosphere to generate interest about the YAB.

Additionally, the Central and Southern Program Manager, Stephen Bora, underwent a statewide road trip this quarter targeting agencies within the Central and Southern Regions. The goal of the trip was to create relationships and dialogue between youth, agencies and YAB staff. YAB info cards and flyers for upcoming meetings were given directly to four agencies. It is the YAB staff's hope that these trips will demonstrate the YAB team's willingness and effort to create meaningful relationships. As Illinois' covid numbers stabilize the YAB team is excited about continuing to get creative regarding in-person recruiting events.

Highlights/accomplishments:

In 1st quarter, SYAB has been operating with consistently low numbers, for both officers and members. Despite the challenges SYAB has faced over the last couple months, the officers have continued to show up, participate, and ensure the mandate of SYAB is moving forward. Another noteworthy highlight for 1st quarter, is the approved interns. As mentioned above, YAB has approved interns for the Cook and Central regional boards. There is much excitement around the Intern program, and it is very likely that we will be able to approve interns for the Northern and Southern regional boards at the beginning of Q2.

In the 2nd quarter of FY21, most regions saw an increase in participation for regional meetings. The YAB program has also fulfilled one of its objectives for FY21 by ensuring interns in each region. In addition, one of the interns participated in the Preventing Child Abuse panel hosted by Northern Illinois University. During the segment, Gabriel Foley explained YAB's purpose and mission as well as the benefits of participation for youth in care. This breakout segment, led by Gabriel, had over 100 participants (largely from the social services sector) which led to the DCFS communication's team to inquire about Gabriel providing content for an upcoming issue of the foster parent newsletter. Gabriel and program manager wrote and submitted a new article on behalf of YAB.

Q3 YAB recruitment efforts have seen remarkable progress from the first two quarters. Foster Parents and Foster Parent Support Specialist are committed to spreading the word about YAB. BSF staff connected with foster parents via social media support groups, who were interested in sending their youth once they meet the YAB age requirement. The cook board has promising youth who seem like good candidates for officer/ leadership roles. Additionally, the youth webinars continued in Q3 attracting a wide range of youth participants. Furthermore, officers and interns have risen to their positions and become a very active presence on the board. Although anecdotal, watching quieter officers/interns find their voice and become more active in their advocacy has been a joy to witness. Moreover, there are stances the YAB has advocated to DCFS and policy partners alike that are currently in bill form being debated in Illinois' General assembly - SB 63 and SB 190. Though these bills were not drafted by SYAB, it is still worth mentioning as SYAB has advocated for similar positions as the ones currently being considered by the general assembly.

In Q4, the Youth Advisory Board had a range of accomplishments and highlights that occurred. For example, we had a regional officer testify before the Illinois State Senate regarding the Senate Bill 755, otherwise known as the GAL Bill. The YAB prides itself on the legislative change it helps create and testifying before a legislative body is an excellent example of working towards positive change. On April 12th, our regional officers participated in an equity training led by Dr. Shantá Robinson, assistant professor at the University of Chicago's Crown Family School of Social Work, Policy, and Practice. Dr. Robinson led YAB officers on a training outlining the difference between equity and equality and the

ways in which it applies to the work of YAB. We are aware DCFS has made diversity, equity, and inclusion a priority and we are pleased to provide the necessary education for our young people to be leaders in DEI work as it relates to youth in care. On May 5th we had an officer and intern present to CASA on YAB's mission, work, and the impact it has made in their lives. Our officer is 18 years old, and the intern is 21 years old, and this opportunity served as a great example of our intern leading and guiding younger officers as role models. Our younger officer stepped up in a significant way by helping lead this hour-long presentation.

Additionally, the YAB Interns spoke on a panel with one of the co-founders of Foster Care Alumni of America – Illinois chapter, to students in the Loyola's Children's Summer Institute class. This class is an interdisciplinary class that meets every day, all day, over one-week, and explores children's "best interest." This year, the class investigated the child welfare system. This group also had an opportunity to hear from a GAL, an attorney representing parents, a group of parents who have had children in foster care, and a juvenile court judge. The Interns participating on the panel addressing issues and concerns faced by current youth in care gave an insightful perspective for the students and future lawyers, social workers, psychologists, and child development specialists. Lastly, our new Northern/Cook Region Program Coordinator, Crystal Rekart is fully acclimated in her position and is making significant progress leveraging her previous personal and professional connections in the child welfare system and it is having a positive impact engaging foster parents within her network.

Program Metrics:

1) Convene 48 Regional Youth Advisory Boards

In FY21 through June, BSF convened 48 Regional Youth Advisory Board Meetings in Cook, Northern, Central, Southern.

(48/48) = 100%

2) Convene 5 Statewide Youth Advisory Meetings / Retreats (4 SYAB, 1 Retreat)

Due to the uncertainty of COVID, the annual retreat was not convened.

BSF convened 4 SYAB Meetings: September 2020, November 2020, February 2021, and May 2021.

July – June: (4/5) – 80%

3) Convene a quarterly meeting between the Director's office and the Executive Board.

SYAB members met with Director Smith the following:

Q1 – September 30, 2020

Q2- December 12, 2020

Q3 – March 24, 2021

Q4 – June 23, 2021

(4/4) = 100%

Program Outcomes:

- 1) 100% of youth issues and concerns identified during Cook, Southern, Central, and Northern regional meetings and SYAB meetings will be submitted to DCFS Advocacy staff within 24 hours of the meetings adjournment.**

With YAB meetings being held virtually, there has been a significant decrease in youth issues and concerns being submitted. One youth issue was submitted in December from a youth in Central region.

100%

- 2) 100% of active DCFS policy transmittals that directly impact youth from the Office of Child and Family Policy will be shared and reviewed by RYAB members at regional meetings. Regional boards will suggest revisions or make recommendations when pertinent.**

Through June, 100% of Active DCFS policy transmittals relevant to youth were shared with Youth and posted to the YAB Facebook page. Recommendations were made on the following proposed procedures:

- ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE # 22 – **December**
- Proposed_Procedures_315.120-315.125_and_315.130 – **March**

- 3) The Statewide Youth Advisory Board demonstrates capacity to advocate for the needs of youth in care measured by reports, testimony, representation at meetings and events.**

SYAB have advocated for youth at the following events:

- Commission Budget Meeting - 8/20
Youth Budget Commission with Children's Home and Aid – The group is composed of 14 older youth and young adult advocacy leaders in the state, and has two separate but related charges: the production of a Fiscal Scan of the state budget (see attached), which examines how the state spends its money as it relates to this age group, and advises the Governor and General Assembly on policies that impact older youth and young adults. SYAB shared their experience and boards legislative agenda.
- Town Hall Meeting; Race and Foster Care - 8/20
Discuss your experiences of race and racism, especially as they relate to being in foster care.
- YouthCare Council - 12/20
Youth voice re; new youth insurance
- Prevent Child Abuse Awareness panel – 1/20
Youth Advisory Board member co-presented with adult-partner regarding what the YAB is and the impact it has made in their own life.
- YAB Youth Voice “Youth Voices Impacting Systems” – 2/21
Associate Vice President of Statewide Foster Care for Children's Home & Aid. Youth provided input around preventing youth and families from entering the child welfare system and how

to help youth exit care quickly. Information shared will impact service delivery systems and support all Children and Home Aid populations.

- GAL Bill drafted by Loyola based on concerns shared by SYAB members 3/21
- Youth Testify on S.B 755 – 5/21
Demonstrating the YAB’s commitment to being agents of positive change, a YAB officer provided testimony before the Illinois senate in support of S.B. 755.
- Voices of Youth Casa Panel – 5/21
Youth Advisory Board members co-presented with adult-partner regarding what the YAB is and the impact it has made in their own life.
- The Children’s Summer Institute Panel – 5/21
Youth participated on a panel for intensive course offered by Loyola University Chicago and the Erikson Institute to students in law, social work, psychology, and child development). It provides an opportunity for participants to engage in an interdisciplinary examination of issues affecting the best interest and well-being of children and families in the child welfare system.

SYAB members are represented and are participating in the following councils:

- SOGIE
- Child Welfare Advisory Council
- IL Children and Family Service Advisory Board Council
- Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council
- Adoption Advisory Board

SYAB members also met with Director Marc Smith to provide recommendations and prospective of youth in care at the identified meetings below:

- Q1 – September 30, 2020
- Q2- December 12, 2020
- Q3 – March 24, 2021
- Q4 – June 23, 2021

4) The Cook, Central, Southern and Northern Regional Youth Advisory Boards demonstrates capacity to advocate for the needs of youth in care measured by reports, testimony, representation at meetings and events.

See question 3 response.

5) The Statewide Youth Advisory Board will have substantial links to divisions of DCFS and advisory councils associated with DCFS and advocates for youth in care as measured through a report on representation, meetings, reports, communications, and workshops that occur.

Divisions of DCFS actively linked with SYAB activities include:

- Office of Education and Transition Services: September, November, February, and May
- Director’s Office (Deputy Chief of Staff) – February

- 6) **The Cook, Central, Southern and Northern Regional Youth Advisory Boards will have substantial links to divisions of DCFS and advisory councils associated with DCFS and advocates for youth in care as measured through a report on representation, meetings, reports, communications, and workshops that occur.**

Divisions of DCFS actively linked with Cook YAB activities include:

- Office of Education and Transition Services: Monthly
- Therapeutic Residential Performance Management Initiative: June

Divisions of DCFS actively linked with Northern YAB activities include:

- Office of Education and Transition Services: Monthly
- Therapeutic Residential Performance Management Initiative: March, May, June

Divisions of DCFS actively linked with Central YAB activities include:

- Quality Enhancement: February, March, April, May
- Office of Education and Transition Services: September – June

Divisions of DCFS actively linked with Southern YAB activities include:

- Office of Education and Transition Services: September – June
- Therapeutic Residential Performance Management Initiative: December, February, April
- Traditional Monitoring: January, February, March, May, June
- Advocacy Office: June

- 7) **BSF will prepare evaluation summary reports on Leadership Development workshops at Cook, Central, Southern, and Northern RYAB meetings and submit them on a quarterly basis**

YLD Overview

- Module 1: [Intro] Being an Effective Change Agent Purpose
- Module 2: Everyone is a Leader: Leadership Style Purpose
- Module 3: What and How Are You Representing?
- Module 4: Using Your Story to Advocate for Change Purpose
- Module 5: Turning Challenges into Opportunities Purpose
- Module 6: Facilitation Skills 101 (Part 1)
- Module 7: Facilitation Skills 101 (Part 2)
- Module 8: Strategic Goal Setting Purpose
- Modules 9-11: Youth Choice Presentations Purpose

- 8) **SYAB Youth trained in public speaking will demonstrate an increase in public speaking skills and confidence presenting in front of an audience as measured by retrospective analysis.**

Retro analysis/ post survey completed at the May SYAB meeting.

- 9) **BSF will prepare a year-end report on the FY20 Active Membership stipend / incentive program**



FY21 Year End Report Regional & Statewide Youth Advisory Boards

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- Cook: 13 youth have reached tier 1, 4 youth have reached tier 2, 1 youth have reached tier 3.
- Northern: 11 youth have reached tier 1, 7 youth have reached tier 2, 2 youth have reached tier 3.
- Central: 8 youth have reached tier 1, 0 youth have reached tier 2, 0 youth have reached tier 3.
- Southern: 15 youth have reached tier 1, 0 youth have reached tier 2, 0 youth have reached tier 3.

10) Youth Advisory Board officers will have attended at least two of the following internal advisory councils / sub-committees:

- IL Children and Family Services Advisory Council (January, March, May)
- Statewide Foster Parent Advisory Council (March, April)
- IL Adoption Advisory Council (February, April, June)
- Child Welfare Advisory Council (CWAC) Emerging Adults Sub-Committee (July, September, November, May, June)
- Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Expression (October, November, December)