

APPLICATION FOR
HYBRID/VIRTUAL YOUTH HEALTH LEADERSHIP

Youth Health Leadership (YHL) is a signature program of Childhood Obesity Prevention Education (COPE), formerly funded by the Florida Blue Foundation. The purpose of YHL is to engage youth in promoting and improving health and wellness through education and action in Tallahassee/Leon County and surrounding counties. Those selected for YHL will participate in interactive educational sessions about improving health for themselves and others. Upon completion, YHL members will use the knowledge and skills learned to help improve health of their peers, families and the broader community. YHL is a unique opportunity for youth to increase knowledge about health and wellness, develop public speaking skills, and enhance leadership abilities while helping to improve the health of Tallahassee/Leon County and the surrounding area.

We now have successfully completed fourteen cohorts of YHL. Since 2013, 138 youth have completed all requirements and led several youth-led health campaigns or collaborative projects with community agencies, including:

- established the YHL Facebook Page
- developed a partnership with CHAMPIONS which provides fitness activities for elementary and middle school students
- promoted physical activity through development of a unique flyer
- identified mental health as a key issue for COPE to explore
- implemented a program to promote universal health with underserved youth
- implemented a program to promote health with homeless families
- implemented a health program at the Frenchtown Heritage Market
- implemented a health program at the Walker-Ford Community Center
- collaborated with the Youth Empowerment & Entrepreneurship Program
- collaborated with Capital City Youth Services to implement a COVID-19 prevention program for homeless youth
- collaborated with Elder Care Services to develop an activity booklet for elders for connecting during COVID-19
- collaborated with the Earth Day Festival to promote environmental health and sustainability through serving as a vendor and providing an interactive exhibit on "People for the Planet"
- collaborated with Pineview Elementary School to develop and implement Health Fun Day and to conduct a food drive for the school's pantry
- collaborated with Elder Care Services (ECS) to assist in enhancing the ECS Community Garden, including organizing a cleanup day, developing a sign for the garden and nutrition cards for consumers receiving food items, and raising $360 through GoFundMe.
- collaborated with Family Promise of the Big Bend to provide a program for youth and their families entitled P.E.A.K. (Physical Wellness, Emotional Health, Awareness of Nutrition & Knowledge for a Balanced Life)
- collaborated with the Earth Day Festival to promote healthy lifestyles for children and parents with the exhibit, "Eat Smart, Play Hard, Stay Healthy." The exhibit included three interactive stations focused on healthy eating, food access, and physical activity.

We are now recruiting YHL Cohort 15 members who, once selected, will have the opportunity to complete requirements in 2027. **YHL activities in 2027 will be Hybrid (in person Induction and Recognition Ceremonies, training sessions via Zoom, and selected in person work sessions).** We have found the Zoom sessions to be convenient in terms of distance and cost effectiveness. Plus, the Hybrid model helps to prevent the spread of any infectious diseases, including COVID and flu.

New recruits will be selected through a competitive process. To be considered for YHL, the enclosed application should be completed and returned via email or fax to Dr. Penny Ralston **no later than 5:00 pm on Tuesday, January 19, 2027.** A review committee comprised of YHL alumni, parents, and advisors will interview qualified candidates and make selections on a competitive basis. Care will be taken to balance selected candidates based on school, classification, and other relevant criteria.

Criteria for selection for YHL include:

- Be high school age (between the ages of 14 and 18)
- Be an active member of a community organization (e.g. school, civic, fraternal, voluntary, faith-based)
- Have an interest in health
- Have an interest in being a youth health leader
- Commitment to attend YHL events in spring 2027

As a part of the process, youth being considered for YHL will be asked to participate in interviews via Zoom during the week of **February 1, 2027**. A parent/guardian will be asked to attend the interviews as well. Selected youth and their parents will be notified of the interviews via email a few days in advance. The YHL Induction Ceremony will then be held on **Tuesday, February 16, 2027**. More details about the time and location of the event will be provided once youth are selected. The proposed YHL Cohort 2027 Calendar of activities is listed below.

We are requesting that the family of each selected YHL member provide **$100.00** to help defray expenses for Cohort 15. Checks should be made payable to Florida State University Center on Better Health & Life. Funds need to be received prior to the Induction Ceremony. Scholarships are available for families needing assistance with the fee.

For more information about YHL, please go to https://bhlcenter.fsu.edu/youth-health-leadership. For more information about the YHL application process, please contact Penny Ralston, Ph.D., Professor, Dean Emeritus & Director, FSU Center on Better Health & Life, (850) 645-8110 (Work), (850) 841-0407 (Cell), (850) 644-1053 (Fax), pralston@fsu.edu.

YHL Cohort 15 2027 Calendar

Application Open	**November/December 2026**
Application Deadline	**January 19, 2027**
Review of Applications	**January 25- 29, 2027**
Interviews	**Week of February 1, 2027**
Notification for Selections	**Week of February 8, 2027**
Induction Ceremony	**February 16, 2027**
Phase I: Virtual Sessions	**February 18, February 23, February 25, March 2, 2027**
Phase II: Application Rotation	**March 8-19, 2027**
Phase III: Collaborative Project	**March 23, March 25, March 30,**
Planning & Implementation	**April 1 (event possibly on April 3 or April 10, 2027)**
Recognition Ceremony	**April 13, April 20 or April 20, 2027**

APPLICATION FOR
YOUTH HEALTH LEADERSHIP

Directions: Please complete the following application and submit by 5:00 pm on Tuesday, January 19, 2027. (No applications will be accepted after this date.) Applications should be submitted to Dr. Penny Ralston (pralston@fsu.edu) (850) 644-1053 fax. Please attach additional pages if you need more space.

Background

Name: _____Telephone Number: (___)_____

Email Address: _____

Local Address: _____

School you currently attend: _____

What grade are you in? _____ How old are you? _____

Career Goals

What job/employment would you like to have in the future?

_____

_____

Extracurricular Activities

What activities are you involved in with your organization? Include any leadership activities such as serving on committees or holding offices.

_____

_____

List other extracurricular activities:

_____

_____

List your interests and hobbies:

_____

_____

Interest in YHL

Briefly describe your specific interest in becoming a part of YHL:

_____

_____

YOUTH HEALTH LEADERSHIP PARENTAL AND ADVISOR PERMISSION FORM

Parent/Guardian

I approve my child's involvement in Youth Health Leadership. I understand that I will be invited and encouraged to attend all YHL educational sessions and other events.

Name:_____

Relationship to applicant: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: (___)_____

E-mail: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please scan/email completed application to Dr. Penny Ralston, pralston@fsu.edu.

Approval of Your Application from an Organization Representative

This section should be completed by an organization representative (e.g. teacher, advisor, or adult leader) before your application is submitted.

Organization Representative

Name: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: (___)_____

E-mail: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Do you support this applicant's participation in Youth Health Leadership? Yes / No