



### A Manual for Youth Advisory Committee Advisors

Between 1988 and 1997, 86 endowed youth funds were created by community foundations throughout Michigan as a result of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation's Youth Challenge to the Council of Michigan Foundations. Each community foundation agreed to creating a Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) as a permanent advisory committee of the community foundation with the primary responsibility of making funding recommendations for grants from the community foundation's endowed Youth Fund.

In addition, the Kellogg Foundation supported three other main goals for the YAC:

- To assess needs, assets, and priorities for area youth,
- To promote youth volunteerism and youth leadership,
- To increase the size of the Youth Fund through fund development activities.

Best Practices are operational standards for Community Foundation Youth Advisory Committees updated in 2007 by the Michigan Community Foundations Youth Project (MCFYP) Committee.

This **YAC Advisor Best Practices Manual** is intended to provide YAC Advisors with specific guidelines they can use to work toward being the best YAC Advisor they can be. It is not expected that each YAC advisor will meet all 12 of these Best Practices, but the more YAC Advisor Best Practices a YAC Advisor meets, the greater the impact their YAC will have on the communities they serve.

This manual should be used as a supplement to **YAC Best Practices**, **YAC Best Practices Manual**, **YACer Best Practices**, **YACer Best Practices Manual**, and "Track Our YAC: A Tool for Assessing Our YAC's Progress Towards Best Practices," an assessment tool for YAC members and Advisors to identify specific areas in which the YAC can improve.

### Best Practice 1: Empowering Youth

Empowers young people to take responsibility and make decisions.

**Explanation:** Advisors should provide support and guidance by allowing the YAC members to be in control of the YAC. In this way, you are creating more engaged and active youth.

**Recommendations for YAC Advisors:**

1. Expect your YAC members to organize, plan, and run YAC meetings.

2. Facilitate a discussion that allows the YAC members to set their own guidelines and rules.
3. Encourage your YAC members to design and facilitate their own trainings of new members.
4. Have at least one YAC member serve as a full voting trustee on the community foundation board.

### Best Practice 2: Meeting Preparation

Attends and is prepared for all meetings.

**Explanation:** At least one YAC Advisor must be present at each meeting,

**Recommendations for YAC Advisors:**

1. Be on time and ready to go when the meeting starts.
2. Ensures that all meeting materials are distributed prior to or upon arrival at the YAC meeting.

3. Attend all meetings so that you are up to speed on current information, events, and YAC decisions.
4. Bring a planner or calendar to coordinate upcoming meetings and events.
5. Read all necessary materials prior to the meeting.

## Best Practice 3: Mentoring

Mentors and contributes to the personal growth of YAC members.

**Explanation:** The relationship between a YAC Advisor and YAC member should be one of mentoring and guidance. The YAC Advisor should support the personal and professional growth of YAC members.

### Recommendations for YAC Advisors:

1. Make a concerted effort to know who the YAC members are, where they are from, and their interests.
2. Know personal aspirations of YAC members and help to further their goals.
3. Be willing to write recommendations or serve as a reference for YAC members.

## Best Practice 4: New Member Orientation

Provides an annual orientation for new YAC members.

**Explanation:** Orientation is critical in providing context for new youth grant-makers. It introduces the concepts of philanthropy, endowment, foundations and grantmaking. It also provides an ideal opportunity to demonstrate one of YAC's cornerstones: youth leadership.

### Recommendations for YAC Advisors:

1. Encourage current YAC members to plan and lead the new member orientation.
2. Include a grant-making simulation in your orientation.
3. Provide a "cheat sheet" of the acronyms and phrases that new grant-makers must know.
4. Check [www.youthgrantmakers.org](http://www.youthgrantmakers.org) for sample training tools.

## Best Practice 5: Youth Philanthropy and Community Foundations

Is knowledgeable about the field of youth philanthropy and community foundations, and informs YAC members about those topics.

**Explanation:** Both you and the YAC members should have a firm grasp on community foundations and youth philanthropy. This allows them to see the bigger picture, including youth and adults engaged in philanthropic work.

### Recommendations for YAC Advisors:

1. Understand and convey the definition of philanthropy (the giving of time, talent, and treasure).
2. Be knowledgeable about foundations around the world that work to benefit society.
3. Be cognizant of foundations and nonprofits in the community and their purposes.

## Best Practice 6: Grantmaking

Understands and educates the YAC of the grantmaking process.

**Explanation:** As the foundation upon which YACs were created, grantmaking is a crucial aspect of any successful YAC. Grantmaking is a very complex process, and it is important that both you and your YAC understand it.

### Recommendations for YAC Advisors:

1. Know the importance of each step in the grantmaking

process, including request for proposals, grant review, grant decisions, and evaluation.

2. Understand the different parts of the grant application.
3. Use various types of grants in your grantmaking, including project support, start-up, matching, proactive, multi-year, and mini grants.

## Best Practice 7: Diversity and Inclusion

Creates a diverse and inclusive atmosphere in the YAC.

**Explanation:** Each YAC should encompass a variety of perspectives and backgrounds in their members, and it is important that the YAC advisor works to ensure that the YAC is a place where all voices can be heard and valued.

### Recommendations for YAC Advisors:

1. Assess the diversity of the youth community to ensure that the membership of the YAC is representative of it.

2. To expand the YAC's diversity, come up with new and creative approaches to recruitment.
3. Facilitates a dialogue within the YAC on diversity, with the goal of increasing the perspectives of YAC members.

## Best Practice 8: YAC and the Community

Connects the YAC to community opportunities and informs the community of YAC initiatives.

**Explanation:** It is important for the community to have a grasp on the work that your YAC is doing, and for the YAC to be involved in the community. Community foundations contribute through grantmaking, community leadership, and donor services. YACs should participate in these activities.

**Recommendations for YAC Advisors:**

1. Promote YAC member involvement on community boards.

2. Encourages YAC members to spearhead and participate in community service activities.
3. Seek out partnerships and engage your YAC in proactive grantmaking.
4. Attend other community board meetings and events.
5. Be knowledgeable of potential partners in the community with whom you can collaborate.

## Best Practice 9: YAC Basics

Understands the role of community service, fund development, needs assessments, and public relations in a successful YAC.

**Explanation:** As central components of the YAC structure, these are important aspects that you should understand and ensure that the YACers do, as well. Each component provides more opportunities for the YAC and its members.

**Recommendations for YAC Advisors:**

1. Follow the YAC and YACer Best Practices in their suggestions for incorporating community service, fund development, and needs assessments into your YACs activities.
2. Provide contacts and resources for your YAC's public relations efforts.

## Best Practice 10: Staff and Board Members

Serves as a liaison between the community foundation and YAC members, both current and alumni.

**Explanation:** The YAC is a part of the foundation, so it is important for the community foundation and YAC members to work together and be informed of each other's activities.

**Recommendations for YAC Advisors:**

1. Attend board meetings at the foundation, and ask your

youth to present what the YAC is doing.

2. The foundation board ultimately gives final approval on whether or not the grants you choose are funded, so make sure your YAC members know your board members and the staff at your foundation.
3. Invite staff members and board members to YAC meetings and events as a way to encourage collaboration.

## Best Practice 11: Conferences and Trainings

Encourages all members to participate in training opportunities that will strengthen their skills in philanthropy.

**Explanation:** Ongoing trainings, either created by you or by the Council of Michigan Foundations, expand YAC members' understanding of philanthropy and youth leadership. The Summer Conference, Regional Trainings, and Advisor Roundtables are designed to keep YACs connected and reinforce good grantmaking practices.

**Recommendations for YAC Advisors:**

1. Attend Summer Conference with your youth, as it is a good way to meet other YAC advisors, learn about philanthropy, and share ideas.
2. Collaborate with other YACs so that you can enhance your grantmaking and volunteering opportunities.
3. The Council of Michigan Foundations provides Regional Trainings and topic-specific training opportunities. Contact Breannah Alexander for more information.

## Best Practice 12: Evaluation

Evaluates their performance as a YAC advisor.

**Explanation:** YAC advisors should always strive to be better; annually evaluating their work allows for improvement.

**Recommendations for YAC Advisors:**

1. Have your YACers fill out anonymous evaluations about their year and your performance.
2. Perform a self-evaluation annually.



MICHIGAN Community Foundations



YOUTH Project

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