Applications DUE by Sunday, November 29th at midnight!

Introducing the 2027 Florida Youth Leadership Academy (FYLA):

FYLA's mission is to inspire young leaders through building healthy relationships, exploring leadership development, and actively engaging them within their communities.

Apply now if you are interested in working with a mentee to develop their leadership capabilities relating to communication, personal development, public speaking, and interviewing while also building connections with their peers and other adults.

Please send your completed application in an email to **Cal Walton** at:
Cal.Walton@myflfamilies.com

Application responses will be provided by early January 2026.
Thank you for taking the time to apply!

Florida Youth Leadership Academy (FYLA)
2027 Mentor Application

MENTOR APPLICATION DUE BY SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2026

Application responses will be provided by early January 2027.

Send completed application to Cal.Walton@myflfamilies.com

Before applying to be a mentor for FYLA, please read the information below.

Part 1: FYLA Information

Mission:

To inspire young leaders through building healthy relationships, exploring leadership development, and actively engaging within their communities.

Background:

The Florida Youth Leadership Academy (FYLA) kicked off its first class in December 2007 in Orlando, Florida. What initiated as a professional development project under the direction of Florida's Department of Children and Families' Child Welfare Leadership Program and Connected by 25, grew into a statewide mentorship and leadership program for youth involved in the child welfare system.

Specifics:

FYLA is for youth involved with Florida's child welfare system who meet the eligibility criteria. The FYLA group travels three to four times throughout the program year to engage in several educational and leadership activities, including touring the State Capitol, Supreme Court, and college campuses across Florida. Throughout the program year, we encourage mentees and mentors to meet regularly in their local areas to focus on specific learning objectives, including networking, public speaking, resume-building, and interviewing skills as well as meeting with child welfare leadership in their local areas. As a mentor, you will assist your mentee in achieving their individualized goals that are set at the beginning of the year. Throughout the program year, mentees will have the opportunity to complete a student portfolio. Typically, each FYLA class concludes with a graduation ceremony during the annual Children and Families Summit.

Part 2: Mentor Expectations

Mentor Eligibility:

1. Currently (at the submission of application) employed with DCF, a Community-Based Care (CBC) Lead Agency, or their subcontracted providers, or Guardian ad Litem.
2. Applicants must have a minimum of 3 years of child welfare experience or at least two years of experience mentoring youth.
3. Applicants must have the ability to demonstrate strong characteristics of a leader.

**Mentors will be matched with mentees based on their skillsets and qualities. The Office of Child and Family Wellbeing (OCFW) will do its best to find a mentee for each eligible mentor but is unable to guarantee a match.*

The Department expects each mentor to be actively engaged in all activities. This includes limiting time spent on your cell phone. Mentors should not miss a trip unless due to exigent circumstances. If you are unable to attend, please communicate at least two weeks in advance and coordinate transportation arrangements for your mentee.

Group Trips:

The following dates are mandatory trips for the FYLA Class of 2026. Mentors must commit to attending all the trips and encourage their mentees to attend all the trips as well:

- 1st trip – Camping Trip, Ocala National Park – February 18-21, 2027
- 2nd trip – College Tour, Tallahassee – April 15-19, 2027
- 3rd trip – College Tours, Leadership Activity, Service Project, Miami/Ft. Lauderdale – July 8-11, 2027
- 4th trip – Children and Families Summit, FYLA Graduation, Orlando – TBD, 2027

Please make arrangements to attend as all trips are <u>mandatory</u> unless approved by the FYLA coordinator.

Off-Months:

Mentors and mentees will be responsible for meeting face-to-face during the off months when we're not meeting for the group trips. Mentees and mentors will be responsible for completing the activities for that particular off-month theme. The themes of the off months will be discussed as a group at the kickoff trip.

Part 3: Mentor Contract

By choosing to participate in the Florida Youth Leadership Academy, I agree to the following:

Expectations:

1. Be present.
2. Be Flexible and provide the necessary support and advice to help your mentee succeed.
3. Commitment to participate as a mentor for a minimum of 9 months.
4. Keep any information that your mentee tells you confidential unless they may cause harm to themself or others or if others are causing harm to them.
5. Follow all rules and guidelines as outlined by the program coordinators, mentor training, program procedures, and this contract.

Participation:

1. Attend the mentor training/orientation on **Thursday, January 21st and Friday, January 22nd** *(dates are subject to change)*
2. Participate in the mandatory monthly virtual mentor calls, which will last approximately 30 minutes. Calls are designed to discuss the upcoming group trip as well as share any concerns, questions, or comments that you may have.

Communication:

1. Notify your mentee's caregiver, school, case manager, and any other pertinent contacts of all scheduled trips and face-to-face visits at least 2 weeks in advance.
2. Be present for all scheduled trips. If you and your mentee will be late, please contact the program coordinators as soon as possible.
3. Contact your mentee at least 2 weeks in advance if you know you will not be able to make a trip.
4. Inform the program coordinators of any difficulties or areas of concern that may arise with your mentee.
5. Notify the program coordinators if you have any changes in address, phone number, or employment status.

Matching Process:

The matching process is one of the most important components of the mentor and mentee relationship. We are committed to ensuring that the process is done carefully and that all matches are thoughtful and in the best interest of the overall experience for the mentor and the mentee. Your feedback below provides us the opportunity to make sure that we can match you with the best-fitting mentee. Our goal is that you and your mentee can establish trusting relationships that will extend beyond the FYLA experience. We seek to match mentees and mentors that have shared interests and that geographically are close enough, so that they can develop a positive relationship.

Part 4: Application

General Information:

First and Last Name:	
City and County of Residence:	
Date of Birth: (month/date)	
Gender:	
T-Shirt Size: **(ladies cut size)**	
Employer:	
Length of Child Welfare Experience:	
Supervisor's Name:	
Work Address:	
Work Phone:	
Cell Phone:	
Work Email:	
Emergency Contact Name and Relationship:	
Emergency Contact Number:	

Mentor Questions:

1. Describe your experience with mentoring at-risk youth?

2. Why do you want to be a 2026 FYLA mentor?

3. What is your definition of leadership and how will you encourage and foster leadership in your mentee?

4. How would you describe yourself (personal characteristics, values, or qualities)? Also, what are your hobbies or interests (i.e., swimming, certain sports, reading, hiking, animals, gardening, music, cooking, library, movies, shopping, etc.)?

5. What areas do you find challenging in working with youth with complex dynamics?

6. Please list your ideal mentee match (i.e., gender, age, qualities, interests, personality type, etc.):

7. What Circuit(s) would you be available to be a mentor?
_____ **Please consider the travel time you will incur depending on your circuit availability and know that there is the possibility that your mentee may move circuits. More information about this will be available at orientation.*

8. Do you require any special accommodations to participate with FYLA?

_____
_____
_____

9. Do you have any dietary restrictions?

_____
_____
_____

10. Please list any allergies you have, and the type of reaction associated with each allergy (food, insects, seasonal, medications):

_____
_____
_____

I agree to follow all the above stipulations of this program as well as any other conditions as instructed by the program coordinators at this time or in the future. I also attest that the above information is accurate and truthful.

_____
Name

_____
Signature

_____
Date

Part 5: References:

This section acknowledges that the agency leadership agrees to applicants' participation including all trips and activities related to the program

Direct Supervisory Approval*:

_____
Name

_____
Phone

_____
Email

Approved? ____ Yes; ___ No

Agency Leadership Approval*:

(Above your direct supervisor)

_____
Name

_____
Phone

_____
Email

Approved? ____ Yes; ___ No

Part 6: Background Verification Form

_____

Your Name

_____

Agency

The individual above is applying and, if chosen, agrees to be a mentor with the Department of Children and Families Florida Youth Leadership Academy (FYLA).

We are asking for verification that the above-named individual has been background screened by Level II Chapter 435, F.S.

___ Yes, the above-named individual has been background screened by Level II Chapter 435, F.S. and certified that there was no disqualifying information found.

___ No, the above-named individual has NOT been background screened by Level II Chapter 435, F.S.

_____	_____
Supervisor Name	*Agency Head / Designee Name*
_____	_____
Supervisor Signature	*Agency Head / Designee Signature*
_____	_____
Phone Number	*Phone Number*
_____	_____
Date	*Date*