

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Elevating Youth Engagement (EYE) Training Curriculum

RESULTS, AUDIENCE AND COMPONENTS

WHAT DOES THE EYE CURRICULUM HELP PARTICIPANTS DO?

Developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation's [Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative®](#) in partnership with [Cetera Inc.](#), the curriculum offers child welfare agencies and youth-serving organizations clear, actionable instruction for building effective, authentic partnerships with young people who have experienced foster care.

For young leaders, the curriculum teaches the skills and develops the confidence they need to advocate for themselves and their peers — and to become informed, empowered participants in shaping the policies and services that affect their lives. For adult supporters, the curriculum provides a tested guide to sharing decision making with young leaders in a way that acknowledges their strengths and ingenuity, supports their professional and personal development and respects their understanding of how child welfare policies and practices affect their lives.

Since 2001, the Jim Casey Initiative has worked to ensure that young people ages 14 to 26 in the United States who have spent at least one day in foster care after their 14th birthday have the relationships, resources and opportunities to achieve well-being and success. This is done in partnership with 16 network sites and young people across the country.

WHAT ARE THE LESSONS IN THE EYE CURRICULUM BASED ON?

Codesigned and tested by young people with foster care experience, the curriculum draws on more than two decades of authentic youth engagement practice across the Jim Casey Initiative's national network. The Jim Casey Initiative uses a framework grounded in adolescent brain science and deep experience partnering with young adults and providing youth leadership training. The *EYE* curriculum puts this model into action. It aims to reflect what young people say they need to thrive and bring vital insights to improving child welfare systems.

The lessons reinforce a Jim Casey Initiative key principle and assumption that including young people who have experienced foster care in systems-change and advocacy efforts is necessary. Their ideas and perspectives lead to policy and practice improvements that ensure a better future for young people who are in foster care and transitioning from foster care into adulthood. Since 2001, the Jim Casey Initiative, its network sites and its young leaders have helped influence more than 390 policy and practice changes that benefit young people. Young leaders participated in the work leading to 87% of the wins in 2024.

WHAT ARE THE TOPICS COVERED?

Topics covered in the curriculum include:

- The definition of authentic youth engagement;
- assessing and expanding how to engage young people;
- shared decision making and how to use coaching to support young people's goals;
- the skills needed for young people to advocate for themselves and others, and education around how child welfare policies and practices are shaped;
- tools to support wellness when young leaders are sharing their stories, especially when these involve traumatic experiences;
- how values influence identity, decisions and collaboration;
- the effects of foster care on young people's brain development and the positive benefits of giving agency and authority to young people who may have had little say in past decisions affecting their lives;
- supporting young people before, during and after leadership opportunities — including compensation; and
- developing tailored youth engagement strategies and action plans.

WHO IS EYE DESIGNED FOR?

Elevating Youth Engagement is designed for the following audiences:

- Jim Casey Initiative sites and Jim Casey Initiative network site partners;
- youth and young adults who have experienced foster care;
- child welfare leaders and staff; and
- professionals, community leaders, mentors and advocates within organizations and other groups that influence or affect outcomes for youth who have experienced foster care.

Any organization or individual aiming to engage young people authentically and meaningfully as partners is welcome and encouraged to use the *EYE* curriculum.

IS THERE AN EVALUATION COMPONENT TO ASSESS CURRENT YOUTH ENGAGEMENT EFFORTS?

The curriculum does not include a standardized evaluation tool, but organizations are welcome to develop their own to measure progress and impact.

HOW IS THE EYE CURRICULUM STRUCTURED?

The curriculum contains eight training modules (PowerPoint decks) and is divided into three tracks — one for adult supporters, one for young leaders and a co-learning track for combined youth-adult sessions.

The tracks come with facilitator guides and participant handouts.

DELIVERY AND FACILITATION

WHO SHOULD FACILITATE?

Facilitators should be comfortable and experienced speaking in front of groups, and be willing and able to:

- describe and promote youth-adult partnerships as an essential strategy to improve older youth outcomes;
- use disaggregated data and provide local examples of youth-adult partnerships; and
- speak to all learning results of the training.

SHOULD I FACILITATE THIS WITH A YOUNG PERSON?

Yes! Young adults and adult system partners should co-facilitate. Co-facilitation is an opportunity to model the philosophies and practices taught during the training in real time. Co-facilitation is also an excellent opportunity for young people to develop leadership skills and, if comfortable, give real-life examples to participants throughout the training.

HOW SHOULD YOUNG PEOPLE WHO CO-FACILITATE BE COMPENSATED?

Follow your organization's equitable compensation policy, if you have one. If funds are limited, consider gift cards, travel reimbursement or other creative support, so young people are never asked to volunteer their expertise for free.

HOW LONG IS EACH SESSION?

Each training module can take up to two hours to deliver. To maximize knowledge retention, facilitators are encouraged to offer modules one or two at a time in a session with a break in between. Some modules contain two parts and will need 60 to 90 minutes per part. If it's not feasible to deliver both parts of the training on the same day, it is recommended to deliver part two no more than a week after delivering part one.

DO I HAVE TO DELIVER ALL THE SESSIONS OR IN A CERTAIN ORDER?

Each session is designed to stand alone. The three tracks can be delivered as a comprehensive series or divided into smaller presentations by topic or audience. Facilitators are encouraged to use the materials in the way that best suits their needs and community.

HOW MANY PARTICIPANTS CAN ONE FACILITATOR COMFORTABLY MANAGE?

Fewer than 30 participants per facilitator — especially when virtually delivering the training — is suggested. However, facilitators should consider the needs and resources of their organization/community and adjust to what feels manageable for quality interaction.

CAN I DELIVER THE EYE CURRICULUM VIRTUALLY?

Yes. Each training module can be delivered either virtually or in-person. The facilitator guides include tips for effective virtual delivery.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

IS THERE A NEEDS ASSESSMENT TO DETERMINE WHICH MODULES TO DELIVER?

No formal assessment is provided to determine which modules to use and in what order. However, upon reviewing the facilitator guides, facilitators are encouraged to gauge their audience's needs and choose the modules and order accordingly.

WHAT'S INCLUDED IN THE FACILITATOR GUIDES?

Everything you need to facilitate the session! Each facilitator guide includes tips for facilitating the session, a list of materials needed and additional resources, any necessary prework, talking points for every slide and information about the flow of the session, including estimated times for activities and discussions, and when to introduce handouts.

IS THERE ANY PREREADING I CAN DO AS A FACILITATOR?

Yes — *A Framework for Effectively Partnering with Young People*, published by the Casey Foundation, is recommended reading. The brief breaks down the authentic youth engagement approach that is the foundation of many *EYE* curriculum lessons. There are also additional resources listed in the guide for each module.

PERMISSIONS AND ADAPTATION

MAY I INSERT LOCAL DATA OR SUBSTITUTE COMMUNITY-SPECIFIC EXAMPLES?

Absolutely! For each training module, sample talking points are provided as a guide, but facilitators can and should bring the content alive and deepen relevance by preparing anecdotal examples related to local data and policies. Participants also benefit from hearing about successes and failures related to youth engagement and partnership, as they learn from the experiences of others.

Sample discussion questions are provided in several modules to encourage audience engagement. Facilitators are welcome to include additional discussion questions relevant to the material throughout the training. Please note that adding discussion questions may increase the length of the training.

CAN I SHARE THE EYE CURRICULUM MATERIALS WITH OTHERS OR POST THEM ON MY WEBSITE?

Yes. Permission to copy, disseminate or otherwise use information from the Casey Foundation's *EYE* curriculum is granted with appropriate acknowledgment. For more information, visit www.aecf.org/copyright.

CAN I ADD MY OWN BRANDING TO THE SLIDES?

No. The curriculum materials are copyrighted by the Casey Foundation and must retain existing branding.

CAN I CHARGE A FEE TO DELIVER THIS CURRICULUM?

The *EYE* curriculum was developed as a free public resource to advance authentic youth–adult engagement and partnership. Please offer the lessons to participants at no cost.

WHO DO I CONTACT WITH QUESTIONS OR TO REQUEST TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE?

A limited amount of technical assistance is available for those who want to deliver the *Elevating Youth Engagement* training curriculum modules. Please contact webmail@aecf.org.