

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **What is the Center for Youth Voice/Youth Choice?**

The Center for Youth Voice/Youth Choice was founded in Fall of 2020 through a [grant from the Administration on Community Living](#). The Center for Youth Voice/Youth Choice (“the Center”) will support states to promote alternatives to guardianship so that fewer youth with intellectual or developmental disabilities (IDD) have legal guardians. The Center will also give youth with IDD opportunities to lead efforts in their States to promote alternatives to guardianship. Two key efforts are: establishing State Teams to be part of a Community of Practice and training Youth Ambassadors in those states to be leaders. The grant will last five years.

### **What is the Community of Practice?**

The Center for Youth Voice/Youth Choice will establish and facilitate a Community of Practice in partnership with at least 11 states. In this first year we will select 3 states to participate, with additional states added each year. The Community of Practice will be a learning community made up of State Teams that supports state-level systems change, innovation, and identification of best practices. The Community of Practice will inform the work of the State Teams, and support the development of a framework for change and learning resources for national adoption.

### **What is a State Team?**

A State Team is a group of organizations and leaders who are working to promote guardianship alternatives in their state. State Teams should include a broad range of stakeholders and members should be racially and culturally diverse. We believe that many State Teams already exist in one form or another. If you already have a coalition that has been working on guardianship alternatives issues (for example a coalition working on a Supported Decision-Making bill), that group can be your State Team. Each team should have one lead or “backbone” organization, which will be responsible for moving the initiative forward. Finally, and importantly, State Teams should be co-led by a youth with IDD aged 14-25. It is okay if you do not yet know who this youth would be when you apply, as long as you are committed to co-leadership with a youth from your state.

### **How will the Community of Practice work?**

The Community of Practice will consist of both cross-state learning opportunities and individualized technical assistance for each State Team. In order to make the experience concrete, each State Team will develop and implement an action plan with support from the Center for Youth Voice/Youth Choice. Through these activities, the State Teams will consult directly with leading national experts on guardianship alternatives and Supported Decision-

Making. The Community of Practice is intended to share and build on existing state-level initiatives. The Community of Practice aims to break down silos, amplify work already being done, and provide targeted assistance to states as they strategize about how to have a greater impact. In more detail:

- The Community of Practice will meet quarterly for shared learning opportunities and discussion. This means all of the State Teams will come together for a facilitated conversation and sharing around their guardianship alternatives work. Subject matter experts from the Center will participate in these meetings to share ideas, facilitate discussion, and identify themes where there is a need for training, research, and conversation.
- Each State Team will develop and implement a custom action plan with support from the Center. Action plans will address outreach, goals and objectives, policy and practice change, coalition-building, sharing of knowledge, and sustainability.
- State Teams will also receive individualized, phone or video-based support monthly for the first 12 months and at least every other month for 12 additional months as they implement the state assessment, develop goals, and develop and implement an action plan.

### **How are youth involved in the Community of Practice and State Teams?**

In addition to having a youth with IDD co-lead the State Team, the State Team is also an important link to the Center's Youth Ambassador work. Over the next five years, the Center will provide a group of 44 Youth Ambassadors training, mentoring, and leadership development on guardianship alternatives. The Youth Ambassadors will be from the states that have State Teams and will work with their State Team to implement the action plan. For this reason, the application asks for ideas for how your state would recruit and support Youth Ambassadors.

### **How are the State Teams Selected?**

Our first step in establishing the Community of Practice is to select the first group of two to three State Teams who will begin work in early 2021.

To apply to participate, please fill out our online application here

[https://umassboston.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_9A1neVdcoQ7oKBn](https://umassboston.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9A1neVdcoQ7oKBn)

We urge you to keep your answers brief as there will also be an interview process for finalists. A selection committee made up of Center for Youth Voice/Youth Choice partners and affiliates

will review applications and conduct informal video interviews with some of the applicants. We hope to announce the selection of the first group of State Teams in late February, 2021.

**Why are we being asked to provide a plain language summary of our state's efforts around alternative to guardianship?**

To ensure that a range of stakeholders, including youth advisors with IDD, can participate in the application review phase, we ask that you include a short, accessible summary in your application.

If you have any questions about the application process or need any accommodations, please contact Cathy Costanzo, [ccostanzo@cpr-ma.org](mailto:ccostanzo@cpr-ma.org); 413-531-9583

Please submit applications by **February 1, 2021**.