



ADMINISTRATION FOR  
**CHILDREN & FAMILIES**

Office of Refugee Resettlement | 330 C Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20201  
[www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr)

## National Youth Leadership Council for Refugees and Newcomers (NYLC)

Dear Colleague Letter 23-18

February 24, 2023

Revised March 22, 2023

Revised March 30, 2023

Dear Colleague:

The Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) is pleased to announce the creation of the *National Youth Leadership Council for Refugees and Newcomers (NYLC)* - a federal initiative of the Office of Refugee Resettlement. This letter provides details about the initiative in its pilot year and is a reference for the new allowable activities identified in the updated [Youth Mentoring Policy Letter \(PL 22-09\)](#)<sup>1</sup>.

### Background

ORR has long desired to incorporate the lived experience of clients into its decision-making process. In 2020 and 2021, several Executive Orders<sup>2</sup> encouraged the federal government to solicit direct feedback from clients, so that their voices were represented at the highest levels of government. The ORR NYLC creates the opportunity for refugee and newcomer youth to share their resettlement experience directly with ORR. Through facilitated discussions, youth will be able to share insights with ORR about the successes and challenges that they face in their resettlement communities. This feedback loop will better inform ORR on how to support, enhance, or create integration programming for youth.

ORR's work in this area is also aligned with the [ACF Strategic Plan](#), which emphasizes equity, economic mobility, and seamless service delivery.

### Youth Eligibility Requirements

During the pilot year, NYLC eligibility will be limited to youth ages 18 – 24 who are currently enrolled in the RSS Youth Mentoring (YM) Program, enroll in YM to apply, or youth currently receiving services from the Unaccompanied Refugee Minors Program (URM). The first cohort of the NYLC will include two youth who reside in states affiliated with each of the [HHS/ACF Regional offices](#) for a total of 20 youth.

### NYLC Program Details

#### *Application and Selection*

ORR will conduct the NYLC application and selection process in the Spring 2023, with the pilot cohort running through the end of September 2023.

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<sup>1</sup> Updated PL 22-09 will be posted to ORR's web site in the near future.

<sup>2</sup> Executive Order (EO) 13985, [Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government](#); EO 14012, [Restoring Faith in Our Legal Immigration Systems and Strengthening Integration and Inclusion Efforts for New Americans](#); and EO 14058, [Transforming Federal Customer Experience and Service Delivery To Rebuild Trust in Government](#)

ORR will accept applications for the inaugural NYLC cohort **from February 24, 2023, through April 14, 2023**. Candidates must submit their applications directly through the [ORR website](#). An ORR selection committee will select cohort participants by **April 28, 2023**, and the NYLC will begin in May.

#### *Program Format*

Selected youth will provide direct feedback to ORR through monthly virtual guided listening sessions and round table discussions. Participants will discuss a variety of topics, such as community support and resilience, civic engagement, leadership, professional development, mental health, addressing systemic racism, prejudice and discrimination, and other topics identified by the youth.

#### **Benefits of Involvement**

Youth who participate in the NYLC will have opportunities to:

- Engage in facilitated discussions on critical topics with peers around the country;
- Voice their concerns and interests as well as those of their community and peers;
- Explore education and leadership advancement; and
- Participate virtually in World Refugee Day events, which may include virtual panel discussions with a wider United States Government audience, including federal agencies, other than ORR, and White House officials.

#### **State Refugee Coordinator Office Involvement**

During the NYLC pilot year, ORR encourages states to promote the NYLC opportunity to youth who are currently enrolled in the RSS Youth Mentoring (YM) Program, enroll in YM to apply, or youth currently receiving services from the Unaccompanied Refugee Minors Program (URM).

Additionally, ORR strongly encourages states to include NYLC youth in consultations or meetings to report out on their work with the NYLC, facilitate listening sessions with the youth and community members related to NYLC topic areas, and/or invite the youth to participate in other leadership and professional development opportunities.

States that have participating youth are authorized to secure equipment (laptops and Wi-Fi), as necessary, through their RSS Youth Mentoring Program funds, as per revised [PL 22-09](#), and can charge the administrative costs to coordinate participation in the NYLC to their Cash and Medical Assistance (CMA) grant under the Planning and Coordination line item. For URM youth, states can utilize their CMA grant to secure equipment (laptops and Wi-Fi) and charge administrative costs to coordinate participation in the NYLC.

Questions about the ORR NYLC should be directed to [ORRNYLC@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:ORRNYLC@acf.hhs.gov).

Sincerely,

Robin Dunn Marcos  
Director  
Office of Refugee Resettlement