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Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of a Youth Action Board is to empower Youth and Young Adults (YYA) by giving them a platform for a variety of skills such as:

1. **Advocacy and Representation:** To represent the interests, concerns, and needs of young people in various decision-making forums. This could involve advocating for policies and programs that benefit youth that have experience with housing instability.
2. **Leadership Development:** To develop leadership skills among YYA by providing them with opportunities to manage projects, collaborate with others, and make important decisions in care for themselves and others with similar experiences.
3. **Community Engagement:** To encourage youth to take an active role in their communities.
4. **Social Change:** To address and work toward resolving social issues (representation for housing issues) through youth empowerment.
5. **Collaboration and Networking:** To build partnerships between youth and organizations created to assist them in order to enhance the collective impact of their resources.
6. **Resource Access:** To help young people access resources, knowledge, and networks that can support their growth and community engagement.

Goals of the Youth Action Board:

We want to encourage youth to make their voices and opinions known in a safe space amongst other people like them. Things that are important when it comes to being on a board like this include:

1. Empowering Youth Voices:

- To amplify the voices of youth in shaping community policies and decisions that impact them directly.

2. Creating and Leading Initiatives:

- To design and implement youth-led projects or campaigns that address community needs or social issues.

3. Building Leadership Skills:

- To provide youth members with skills such as public speaking, project management, conflict resolution, and teamwork.

4. Developing Advocacy Strategies:

- To create effective strategies for raising awareness about key issues affecting youth and advocating for positive change.

5. Strengthening Peer Support:

- To provide a space for young people to support each other, share experiences, and build connections through peer-led activities and discussions.

6. Promoting Youth Mental Health and Well-being:

- To create initiatives or awareness campaigns that focus on improving mental health and well-being among young people.

7. Fostering Sustainability:

- To engage youth in environmental issues and promote sustainable practices through projects and awareness campaigns.

Responsibilities of YAB members

In the Youth Action Board, a member has a range of responsibilities to ensure the board works effectively and achieves its goals. Here are some key responsibilities that a member will have:

1. Active Participation in Meetings

- Attend regular meetings and actively contribute to discussions, decision-making, and planning.
- Share ideas, suggestions, and feedback on board activities, projects, and goals.
- Respectfully listen to others and work collaboratively to make decisions.

2. Engaging in Projects and Initiatives

- Take part in specific projects, and initiatives that align with the board's goals.
- Help in the planning, organizing, and execution of events, programs, or awareness conversations.
- Follow through on assigned tasks and responsibilities for project completion.

3. Advocating for Youth and Young Adult Issues

- Represent the interests and concerns of youth and young adults, especially in matters that affect the community.
- Be a voice for underrepresented or marginalized youth groups who have experience with housing instability.
- Participate in advocacy efforts to influence policy or raise awareness about important issues.

4. Collaboration and Teamwork

- Work closely with other board members, organizations, and community partners to achieve the common goal of assisting with and ending youth homelessness.
- Be open to different perspectives and engage in constructive discussions to solve problems with housing issues and other issues that prevent YYA from having stable home lives.
- Help foster a positive, inclusive, and supportive environment within the board.

5. Leadership and Responsibility

- Demonstrate initiative by proposing new ideas or projects that can benefit the community.

6. Communication and Outreach

- Communicate regularly with other board members, community partners, and staff about board activities and initiatives.

7. Attending Trainings and Skill Development

- Participate in any training sessions, workshops, or opportunities for personal and professional growth provided by the board.
- Build skills in areas such as leadership, project management, public speaking, advocacy, and teamwork.

8. Maintaining Commitment and Accountability

- Honor the commitment to the board, attending meetings regularly and following through on assigned tasks and projects.
- Be accountable for the roles and responsibilities entrusted to you, like being present and staying engaged.
- Help ensure that the board remains on track and works toward its goals.

Meeting Schedule and Agenda Topics

A meeting schedule and agenda topics are crucial for keeping the YAB organized and ensuring productive and focused discussions. A consistent meeting schedule will help members stay committed and organized. Here is how we plan to structure this board space

1. Meeting Schedule

A consistent meeting schedule helps members stay committed and organized. The frequency of meetings can vary depending on the needs and availability of members, but it's essential to keep meetings regular and consistent to maintain momentum.

- **Frequency:**
 - Monthly meetings
 - Special meetings may be scheduled as needed for events or important initiatives.

- **Time and Location:**
 - Meetings will be held at The Spark 30 N Roosevelt the last Wednesday of the month unless otherwise specified

- **Duration:**
 - Meetings typically last 1 hour from 4pm-5pm unless otherwise specified

- **Reminder:**
 - Send reminders 1 week and 1 day in advance (sent via text) so that members can prepare and attend.

2. Agenda Topics

The agenda serves as a generic map for how meetings will go so that we have a structure we try to stick to for efficiency

Introduction (5-10 minutes)

- **Welcome and Introductions:** Briefly welcome all members, especially if new members are attending and answer a check in question
- **Review of Agenda:** Confirm the agenda for the meeting and adjust if necessary.

Rules and agreements (5 minutes)

- **Go over Rules and agreements:** Talk about Rules and agreements to make sure everyone in the space is comfortable and understands how to properly conduct themselves during the meeting.

Main Discussion Topics (30 minutes)

- **New Projects or Ideas:** Discuss potential new projects or ideas for community engagement, advocacy, or other board goals. Members propose initiatives they feel passionate about.
- **Community Issues:** Identify and discuss current issues of YYA experiencing housing instability in the community that the board could address or advocate for.
- **Advocacy Conversations:** Share stories on the topic and communicate ways help and assistance can be given to people in similar situations
- **Event Planning:** Organize details for any upcoming events.

Closing (5-10 minutes)

- **Member Feedback:** Allow members to share any additional thoughts, concerns, or feedback on board activities
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- **Next Meeting Date:** Confirm the date, time, and location of the next meeting.
- **Closing:** Close the meeting formally.

Best Practices for Effective Meetings:

- **Preparation:** Distribute the agenda in advance (at least 24-48 hours before the meeting) so members can prepare.
- **Stay on Topic:** Stick to the agenda to ensure that important matters are covered. Assign a timekeeper if necessary.
- **Encourage Participation:** Make sure every member has a chance to contribute and voice their opinions.
- **Follow-Up:** After the meeting, share notes and reminders about follow-up information to keep members updated and in the loop.

Rules and Expectations

1. Be respectful of our time together

- We only have an hour together, let's make sure we stay on track and use that time wisely

2. Be curious, not judgmental

- There are many people with many different experiences, if we want to inquire about something someone says, we must make sure we say things respectfully and judgement free

3. Be Present

- Know that your voice is what makes this space! Be here and use that voice to advocate where you feel is necessary

4. Participants respect the privacy of the group

- Do not repeat other's personal information that is shared in YAB. If a person decides to share their story, they are trusting the people in the room to have that information to aid their advocacy, not to be gossip

Job Description

Qualifications

- **Age:** Must be between 12- 24 years old
- **Personal Experience:** Lived experience with housing instability and currently experiencing housing instability
- **Passion for Social Change:** A strong commitment to advocating for and improving the lives of homeless YYA.
- **Teamwork and Collaboration:** Ability to work well in a team, collaborate with others, and contribute to collective goals.
- **Commitment to Confidentiality:** Respect for the privacy and confidentiality of homeless youth and board members.

Benefits

- **Leadership Development:** Gain valuable leadership and advocacy skills.
- **Networking Opportunities:** Build relationships with community partners, organizations, other YYA with lived experience, and youth advocates (such as case managers wanting to assist with housing stability).
- **Impactful Work:** Play a key role in creating meaningful change for homeless YYA in your community.
- **Support and Training:** Receive resources to support your growth as an advocate.