



NATIONAL FOSTER YOUTH INSTITUTE

MEDIA ADVISORY
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NFYI AWARDED \$1 MILLION GRANT FOR YOUTH SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION

NFYI joins cohort of 61 California community-based and Tribal organizations awarded \$52 million for youth substance use prevention and education partnerships.

LOS ANGELES (JANUARY 4, 2022) The National Foster Youth Institute is honored to receive a \$1 million dollar grant from Elevate Youth California supporting our efforts to address youth substance use prevention and promote healing by mobilizing current and former foster youth to partner with decision makers to design policy, programs, and reform systems that criminalize substance use disorder. Our work emphasizes a healing-centered leadership development model, facilitating youth activism, mentorship, and peer-to-peer coaching.

The grant covers a three-year period, providing funding that will allow NFYI to both expand our advocacy-forward internship program for former foster youth and strengthen our relationships with local, state, and federal elected officials in order to create systemic change that addresses the harmful impact of the War on Drugs on foster youth.

“We are excited to partner with Elevate Youth California to create real change lead by former foster youth in communities across California. This is healing and youth substance use intervention for the community, by the community,” said **Rebecca Louve Yao**, Executive Director of NFYI.

Elevate Youth California, a project of The Center at Sierra Health Foundation under contract with the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS), is funded by Proposition 64 revenue, which legalized adult non-medical use of cannabis in California. Awarded partner projects will work with youth ages 12 to 26 and provide youth social justice, peer support and mentoring in low-income communities of color, including Tribal communities and LGBTQ communities.

“Elevate Youth California prioritizes youth leadership and invests in healing and community growth,” said **Chet P. Hewitt**, President and CEO of Sierra Health Foundation and The Center. “Our new partners will work directly with youth to improve the environment of communities impacted by the War on Drugs, which has led to inequity in our health systems and the criminalization of youth in low-income communities and communities of color. California’s youth are talented, capable and ready for this investment.”



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NFYI joins a cohort of 61 community-based and Tribal organizations throughout California awarded a total of \$52 million for youth substance use prevention activities in this round of funding. A full list of organizations that received awards is posted on the [Elevate Youth California website](#).

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About NFYI: Launched in 2012, **National Foster Youth Institute** was created to organize foster youth and families, foster care alumni, and allies in Congress and across the country to mobilize around transforming the child welfare system. NFYI annually engages over 250 current and former foster youth across the US.

To learn more about NFYI, please visit our website: www.nfyi.org, or find us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/NFYInstitute, Instagram: [@NFYInstitute](https://www.instagram.com/NFYInstitute), or Twitter: [@NFYInstitute](https://twitter.com/NFYInstitute)

About Elevate Youth California: Elevate Youth California is a statewide program supporting community leaders who are addressing substance use disorder by investing in the youth leadership development and activism of youth of color and LGBTQ+ youth ages 12 to 26. Through Elevate Youth California, The Center at Sierra Health Foundation has awarded a total of \$56.2 million in funding to support racially and culturally responsive, trauma-informed, population-based and place-based approaches to youth substance use prevention. Learn more at elevateyouthca.org.