



NATIONAL FOSTER YOUTH INSTITUTE

Arkansas Child Welfare Systems & Youth Leadership Intern

Pay: \$17/hour

Duration: ASAP through November 2026

Time Commitment: Part-time (up to 20 hours per week)

Location: Arkansas (required)

Supervisor: The intern will report to the Arkansas Lead Research Consultant and collaborate closely with NFYI's national staff throughout the project

Eligibility: Must have lived experience in the Arkansas foster care system

Overview

NFYI is seeking a part-time intern with lived experience in Arkansas foster care to support a six-month environmental scan focused on creating a picture of the child welfare and advocacy landscape in the state. This role is designed to ensure that lived experience voice, perspective, and leadership are embedded in our research and assessment.

The intern will work alongside an Arkansas-based consultant and NFYI national staff to gather qualitative input, elevate lived-experience insights, and help shape recommendations for future youth-led organizing and systems change in the state.

By the end of this internship, the intern will have helped:

- Build relationships with youth leaders across Arkansas.
- Document themes from interviews and listening sessions.
- Identify key organizations and community stakeholders.
- Contribute to recommendations that will shape future youth-led organizing efforts in Arkansas.
- Produce research and policy materials that inform NFYI's long-term strategy.

About Us

Founded in 2012, NFYI empowers current and former foster youth, their families, and communities to use their lived experiences to bring about systemic policy changes in the child welfare system nationwide.

We believe that meaningful reform begins with those who have experienced the system firsthand. By connecting current and former foster youth with elected representatives and policymakers, we amplify their voices to drive impactful change.



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Our local chapter model engages current and former foster youth leaders who organize around the issues that matter most — from housing and education to employment and healthcare. With support from NFYI staff, they identify their community’s most urgent issues and bring together other foster youth, families, community leaders, organizations, and local partners to mobilize a powerful coalition for change.

Key Responsibilities

The intern will:

- Support outreach to current and former foster youth across Arkansas
- Assist with planning and conducting interviews, focus groups, or listening sessions with youth and community stakeholders
- Help gather qualitative insights about youth experiences, needs, and priorities
- Contribute to stakeholder mapping and identification of potential youth leaders and advisors
- Assist with literature review, note-taking, and synthesis of findings
- Provide feedback on draft findings to ensure youth perspectives are accurately reflected
- Participate in team meetings and briefings related to the environmental scan
- Other supports as needed

Learning & Leadership Opportunities

- Exposure to policy and systems-change work at the state and national level
- Mentorship from NFYI staff and project consultant
- Skill-building in research, facilitation, storytelling, movement building and civic engagement
- Opportunity to shape the foundation of a long-term, youth-led chapter in Arkansas
- Opportunity to connect with local, state and federal child welfare decision makers, community partners and other foster youth
- Create policy briefs, power maps and environmental scans of Arkansas child welfare landscape

Qualifications

- Lived experience in the Arkansas foster care system (required)
- Currently residing in Arkansas (required)
- Access to laptop, cell phone and reliable internet
- Interest in child welfare reform, youth leadership, policy, or community change



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- Strong writing and communication skills and a willingness to seek out varied perspectives
- Strong organizational and time management skills
- Ability to work collaboratively and meet basic project deadlines
- Ability to work independently in a virtual environment
- Ability to maintain confidentiality
- Familiarity with policy and research practices
- Detail-oriented and dependable
- Comfortable communicating with individuals from diverse backgrounds

To Apply

Please submit a resume and cover letter by July 10, 2026 via [the form at this link](#).