



CPA's 2nd Annual Youth Summit
“Empowering Youth Advocacy for Prevention”
Wednesday, April 30, 2025
Pennsylvania State Capitol, Harrisburg, PA

The 2nd Annual CPA Youth Summit empowers young people by equipping them with the skills to advocate for funding and enhanced access to programs to prevent substance use and its progression. Led by the [Commonwealth Prevention Alliance \(CPA\)](#), the Youth Summit plays a key role in building a healthier future for Pennsylvania's youth. The summit promotes active participation by prioritizing youth coalition development and fostering statewide collaborations, reinforcing CPA's commitment to comprehensive youth empowerment and community building.

The summit will equip youth advocates with the knowledge, skills, and platform to effect positive change within their communities through comprehensive online training, face-to-face interactions with legislators and staff, a press conference, possible media interviews, and CPA Collegiate Action Network members mentorship. This summit will contribute to a healthier and more resilient future for the youth of Pennsylvania.

About CPA

The Commonwealth Prevention Alliance (CPA) is the foremost voice of prevention in Pennsylvania. It engages with inspiring organizations that share a common goal: *to reduce substance misuse and risk-related behaviors among Pennsylvanians*. CPA's mission is to nurture, train, and support professionals doing this essential work—understanding that prevention organizations need leaders with integrity, vision, and the ability to get things done.

Empowering Youth Advocacy for Prevention

The CPA Youth Summit is committed to empowering young individuals and coalitions by providing them with the tools to advocate for increased funding and improved access to youth-focused programs, supporting their prevention efforts, and promoting positive mental health initiatives and strategies. The summit promotes active participation by prioritizing youth coalition development and fostering statewide collaborations, reinforcing our commitment to comprehensive youth empowerment and community building.

- Wednesday, April 30 (see agenda and time frames below)
- A \$1,000 stipend will be provided to participating coalitions to help offset associated expenses.
- The summit will be held at the main rotunda, inside the capitol building in Harrisburg, PA
- Up to 10 coalitions/groups will be selected to participate and up to 100 youth

April 30th Agenda

- 9:00 - 9:45: Arrive at the Capitol for check-in
- 9:00 - 9:45: Legislative visits if scheduled
- 9:45 - 11:30: Youth Advocacy Training
- 12:00 - 12:30: Press Conference in Main Rotunda
- 12:30 - 1:00: Lunch provided by CPA
- 1:00 - 1:30: Capitol Tour 1 (max 40 people - 30 minutes)
- 1:30 - 2:00: Capitol Tour 2 (max 40 people - 30 minutes)
- 1:00 - 2:00: Legislative visits if scheduled
- 2:00 - 2:15: Depart the Capitol

Youth Advocacy Training: Empowering the Next Generation of Change-Makers

This dynamic training will equip youth participants with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to become powerful advocates for substance use prevention and other critical issues in their communities. Through interactive activities, real-world scenarios, and practical advocacy strategies, participants will learn how to craft compelling messages, engage with policymakers, and leverage social media for impact. Designed for both new and experienced youth advocates, this session will provide hands-on practice in developing advocacy plans, navigating legislative processes, and using storytelling to drive change. By the end of the training, participants will be prepared to take bold action and make their voices heard at the local, state, and national levels.

Summit Objectives

- **Provide comprehensive advocacy training:** Selected adult leaders will receive online advocacy training before the summit, designed to equip them with a deep understanding of substance misuse prevention strategies and the importance of positive mental health.
- **Foster coalition building:** The summit will unite youth representatives from up to 10 PA community youth coalitions, creating a supportive and collaborative environment for sharing experiences and best practices. Participants will forge meaningful connections and receive guidance from CPA Collegiate Action Network mentors, building a solid network of youth opioid prevention advocates across Pennsylvania.
- **Facilitate meetings with PA legislators and Staff:** One of the main highlights of the summit is the opportunity for youth representatives to meet with Pennsylvania legislators or staff. These meetings will allow participants to directly express their concerns, share personal stories, and advocate for youth-focused initiatives related to opioid prevention, substance misuse prevention, and positive mental health. Participants will amplify their voices and contribute to policy discussions by engaging with lawmakers.
- **Conduct a press conference:** The summit will include a press conference where youth representatives can address the media and share their perspectives. This platform will raise public awareness, garner support for their cause, and build the participants' confidence and public speaking skills.

- **Engage in local media interviews:** To extend the reach of their message, youth advocates may also participate in local media interviews. Together, they will share personal stories, experiences, and aspirations, shedding light on the urgent need for comprehensive youth-focused initiatives. Through these interviews, they will garner public support, motivate further action, and demonstrate the strength of their advocacy.

Participating Coalition Expectations

Participating Summit Coalitions will commit to the following:

- **Active Coalition Engagement:** Actively participate in all summit activities, including training sessions, meetings with legislators and/or staff, press conferences, and media interviews.
- **Training:** Ensure that their participants participate in the comprehensive online training provided before and at the summit, equipping them with a solid understanding of the opioid crisis, substance misuse prevention strategies, and the importance of positive mental health.
- **Advocacy Commitment:** Passionately advocate for youth-focused initiatives related to opioid prevention, substance misuse prevention, and positive mental health during meetings with legislators and media interactions, ensuring their voices are heard.
- **Collaborative Spirit:** Foster collaboration and facilitate the exchange of experiences and best practices among coalition members and their participants, building a network of youth advocates across PA.
- **Respectful and Professional Conduct:** Guide participants to uphold the values of the summit and conduct themselves with respect and professionalism when engaging with legislators, media, and advocates.
- **Media Representation:** Prepare participants to speak confidently during interviews and press conferences, encouraging them to share personal stories and advocate effectively for the cause.
- **Long-term Commitment:** Emphasize that the summit is a starting point, and youth coalitions are encouraged to continue their advocacy efforts beyond the event, striving for lasting change in their communities.

Schedule

Participating coalition members should expect to spend a few hours per month between February and April 2025 preparing for the Summit. This time will include scheduled training provided by CPA. Some summit participants and their advisors may also be invited to participate in CPA's Annual Prevention Conference in June.

Important Dates

- **January**
Coalition Applications Available (January 30th)
- **February**
Coalition Applications Due (February 21st)
- **March**
Virtual Coalition Training (Dates TBD)

- **April**
Virtual Coalition Training (Dates TBD)
- **May**
Prevention Week (May 11-17)
- **June**
CPA Annual Conference (June 1-13)

Benefits of Participation for Youth

- **Empowerment:** Participation empowers youth to become active agents of change in their communities by advocating for critical issues like opioid prevention, substance misuse prevention, and positive mental health.
- **Leadership Development:** It provides opportunities for leadership development, allowing young participants to develop public speaking, advocacy, and networking skills.
- **Education:** Participants gain in-depth knowledge about the opioid crisis, substance misuse prevention strategies, and the importance of positive mental health through comprehensive online training.
- **Civic Engagement:** The summit encourages civic engagement as youth engage in face-to-face interactions with legislators, helping them understand the workings of government and how they can make a difference.
- **Networking:** Participants build a strong network of like-minded peers and mentors from diverse backgrounds, fostering lifelong connections and support systems.
- **Advocacy Experience:** It offers invaluable advocacy experience by facilitating meetings with lawmakers and media interactions, helping youth learn how to communicate their concerns and ideas effectively.
- **Media Skills:** Youth have the chance to develop media skills, including speaking confidently in front of cameras and articulating their message to the public.
- **Financial Support:** Through CPA, financial barriers to participation are reduced.
- **Positive Representation:** Participants represent their local youth coalitions and the broader youth population of Pennsylvania, positively showcasing the potential and commitment of young advocates.
- **Long-lasting Impact:** The summit serves as a launchpad for continued advocacy efforts, inspiring youth to carry their passion for positive change forward in their communities.
- **Public Awareness:** It raises public awareness about the critical issues of opioid prevention, substance misuse prevention, and positive mental health, making the community more informed and engaged.
- **Personal Growth:** Youth gain personal growth through increased self-confidence, improved public speaking abilities, and a deeper understanding of complex societal issues.
- **Inspiration:** It inspires youth to become leaders, change-makers, and advocates for a better future, motivating them to pursue careers and activities that contribute positively to society.
- **Community Impact:** Ultimately, participation allows youth to be part of a collective effort to create a healthier and more resilient future for the youth of Pennsylvania, making a meaningful impact on their communities.