

WHAT ARE CULTURALLY-BASED YOUTH LEADERSHIP ACCELERATORS (CYLAS)?

INTRODUCTION:

The Immigrant paradox, or Latino paradox, also known as the “epidemiologic paradox,” refers to the epidemiological finding that Hispanic and Latino Americans tend to have health outcomes that paradoxically are comparable to, or in some cases better than, those of their U.S. white counterparts, even though Hispanics have lower average income and education.

-- John Ruiz, Ph.D., assistant professor at the University of North Texas 2011

Often it is not about teaching youth something new, but about connecting youth to something ancient – their roots. In 2015 Iowa 4-H began carrying this message by convening its first Culturally-based Youth Leadership Accelerator (CYLA), Maize.

CYLAs are not themselves a program but launching pads for underrepresented and underserved youth into local 4-H programs. They are designed to use cultural strengths and culturally-based narratives to:

- Introduce and/or strengthen the relationship between youth of color and local programs,
- Introduce volunteers, staff and faculty to Culturally-based Leadership Development work, and
- Connect underrepresented youth to post-secondary education and resources available to them.

Local programs are then responsible for the continued cultivation of these youth leaders by developing new programs and/or integrating them into their existing delivery modes.

CONTEXT:

Students of color represent 20% of the student population and most live in urban communities. This represents a dynamic shift both in setting and demographics. Iowa lacks infrastructure needed to sustain positive cultural roots for youth of color. The first CYLA, Maize, in 2015 attempted to address this situation. CYLAs use cultural strengths and culturally-based narratives to introduce, enhance and maintain 4-H youth programs which serve as conduits for connecting youth of color to the postsecondary disciplines that can resonate within these narratives.

The first Maize Retreat served nearly 100 Latino and Native American youth from across the state at the ISU campus and 4-H Center. Both Accelerators will be themed around the priority topic area of healthy living supported by other 4-Priorities including STEM, Citizenship/Leadership, and Communications and the Arts as secondary.



HOW DO CYLA'S WORK:

1. Local programs/counties will enroll interested youth as 4-H members.
2. State 4-H Youth Program Specialists will provide recruitment support. Programs/counties should recruit and send one volunteer chaperone for every ten youth.
3. Two three-day retreats are planned for mid April and late September. The first day is on the ISU campus, subsequent days are at the 4-H facility in Madrid, IA. The first retreat focuses on Latino and Native American Cultures (Maize). The second on African American and African immigrant/refugee topics. The retreats are open to all youth grades 8-12.
4. Once back home, local programs are then responsible for the continued cultivation of these youth leaders by developing new programs and/or integrating them to their existing delivery modes, which can assist the county in the fulfillment of their [Civil Rights Compliance](#).



WHAT IS THE STATE 4-H OFFICE PROVIDING TO COUNTIES AND THEIR PARTNERS:

1. Two high quality Culturally-based leadership retreats at no cost for 4-H Members (actual cost: \$350+ per youth).
2. Program Specialist to support recruitment & registration of participants, and the development and/or expansion of local programs for those youth (e.g.: Professional Development, support in resource development, coordination support, assistance in volunteer recruitment, etc.)
4. Small formula seed grants for new club start up (as funding allows).
5. Support mitigating transportation cost to and from Iowa State University for the retreats.
6. Reduced prices for CYLA Youth to State Conference.
7. Continued program and leadership opportunities for CYLA participants.
8. Bridge community partnerships & deepen the 4-H experience for youth involved in local programs by supporting community assets.

What will Counties and their Partners need to do to be part of this effort?

1. With support by the State Youth Program Specialist, recruit and register groups of underserved and underrepresented youth to participate in CYLA retreats.
2. Arrange transportation to and from Iowa State University on the retreat dates.
3. Continued cultivation of the CYLA youth leaders by developing new programs and/or integrating them to their existing delivery modes at the County level.