

ND4Y Admin group response to NIH Request for Information (RFI): Promoting Youth Participatory Action Research Approaches in Prevention Research

Submitted July 16, 2026

Topic 1: Health issues or conditions that may benefit from YPAR approaches or stronger youth engagement.

Utilize focus groups to assess the needs of youth within the project, facilitating the mapping of research topics that are consistent with their reality. This allows health leaders to stay up-to-date with youth priorities and collaborate with participants to find solutions. Ideally, youth themselves should lead these groups, which facilitates leadership development and recognizes them as key agents within the space.

Topic 2: Developmental or practical considerations for involving youth in YPAR.

Given constant violations of human rights that young people face, providing them with spaces for listening, recognition, and participation becomes imperative.

YPAR projects should foster horizontal power dynamics where youth work alongside their mentors as peers rather than lesser experts. An effective environment is one that allows both parties to share ideas and perspectives. This ensures young researchers feel recognized as active contributors to the process, rather than as individuals restricted to instruction-based learning.

Topic 3: Resources or infrastructure needed to successfully conduct YPAR.

Ensure fair compensation for young researchers that recognizes the value of their participation and the importance of the time and expertise they bring to the process. Furthermore, fair compensation makes it possible for many young people to participate and to continue for the length of the project without having to make hard decisions about complex socioeconomic situations.

Topic 4: Challenges to starting or sustaining YPAR, including obtaining research funding.

N/A

Topic 5: Ways the following groups can promote greater use of YPAR prevention research:

- a. Researchers
- b. Academic institutions
- c. Schools (including students, teachers, administrators, and school-based health centers)
- d. Youth-serving organizations
- e. Public health agencies
- f. Research funders (including NIH)
- g. Other organizations or agencies

N/A

Topic 6. Lessons learned from past or current YPAR projects that can inform future efforts.

Several very practical lessons came out of the YPAR evaluation of the New Deal for Youth (ND4Y) program that we represent. Although this project was not related to medical research, NIH may find our report instructive. It can be downloaded at <https://newdealforyouth.org/our-strategies/#evaluation> Leaders must consider the following for any YPAR projects that require youth travel. (1) Beyond airfare and hotel, travel costs include ground transportation to/from both airports, meals, and checked bag fees. (2) When young researchers are minors, budgets may need to include travel for adults to accompany them. (3) When engaging young people with children of their own, they will need support for childcare at home and/or to bring their child or children with them. (4) Travel for disability support companions or other accommodations must be built into the budget. (5) We recommend working with airlines that have friendly rebooking policies as well as strong policies for disability and body type accommodations.

Topic 7: Strategies to share YPAR findings and use results to influence policy or practice in schools, communities, or other settings.

Once findings are documented, the dissemination process should focus on the communities directly experiencing the researched issues. Spaces and forums must be created where the youth researchers themselves can educate and orient their peers, ensuring they remain active throughout the final stages of the project.

We also propose actively sharing research findings with legislators, policy advisors, and social advocacy organizations that work on legislation and other public policy.

Combining the youth's lived experiences with the rigorous methodological backing of their scientific mentors makes these research projects highly credible justifications for laws that address the real needs of youth.

Note: This comment was prepared by young Changemakers who are members of the New Deal for Youth's administrative advocacy strategy group. For more information, contact us via Noel Tieszen, National Collaborative for Transformative Youth Policy, at 771-212-9633 or ntieszen@typcollaborative.org.

