

Youth for Justice Program Training Manual



Ohio Center for Law-Related Education
Partnering with Teachers to Bring Citizenship to Life

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*Partnering with Teachers to
Bring Citizenship to Life*

Ohio Center for Law-Related Education

The Ohio Center for Law-Related Education is a non-profit, nonpartisan organization whose mission is to improve society by developing citizens empowered with an understanding of our democratic system.

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YOUTH FOR JUSTICE: PROJECT AND SUMMIT

INTRODUCTION

Coordinated by the Ohio Center for Law-Related Education, Youth for Justice (YFJ) is a student-led program designed to encourage and empower youth to be actively engaged citizens who work together to make a positive difference in their community. The YFJ program model asks students in grades five – nine to identify an injustice, intolerance or problem relevant to them and to their local community or school. Students then develop a plan of action and work together to remedy the injustice through coordinated effort to enhance awareness and/or make a positive impact in the community.

The program empowers students to create meaningful change through service-based learning. Students advocate for solutions they had a role in developing, while practicing valuable 21st century skills, such as research, civic literacy, communication, and collaboration.

OVERVIEW

While correlating with state social studies and language arts standards, **Youth for Justice is also a valuable example of project-based service learning.** It challenges students to experience the intricacies of community service and develop an appreciation for the value of active citizenship. Students frequently comment, “This was a lot of work, but it was worth it!”

Students are required to work through the following four phases: Selecting a topic, researching solutions, implementation and presenting results

Students should be allowed a great deal of freedom in order that their work reflects issues pertinent to themselves and their peers, as well as their community. However, advisors will, oversee the students’ project and the implementation of solutions.

Presentation Quick Facts:

- Teams make an average of 2 – 4 presentations prior to the Virtual Summit
 - Ex. include school assembly, school open house, to local officials or community leaders
- **For Virtual Summit presentation (video preferred)** – plan to present interesting facts learned during the research, implementation plan, and obstacles encountered.

PROGRAM AT A GLANCE:

When guiding the student teams, advisors are encouraged to consider:

Youth for Justice is Student Driven

- May take issues more seriously if they choose them
- Ownership is a powerful incentive
- Will work harder for a program in which they are invested
- More likely to continue their investment

Young people may choose different issues than adults

- Challenge students to develop and defend choices based on mutually accepted set of criteria
- Adults should guide students towards issues, but leave selection to the young people

Agenda gives students more time to talk

- Public speaking is important aspect of program
- Give students the confidence and knowledge to speak in public
- Utilize experts and other resources in community
- Experience speaking with policy makers, community leaders & others

1. The goal of the Youth for Justice Program and Summit is to encourage and empower youth to be actively engaged citizens who work together to make a positive difference in their community.
2. The YFJ program model asks youth in grades five to nine to identify an injustice, intolerance or problem relevant to them and to their community. Students then develop a plan of action and work together to remedy the injustice through a coordinated effort to enhance awareness and/or make a positive impact in the community.
3. Youth will:
 - Identify an injustice, intolerant behavior/attitude or community problem that affects them and/or their fellow citizens.
 - Research the problem – gather information via interviews, surveys, observations, first-hand experiences and examining what has been done
 - Analyze the information to come to a better understanding of the problem.
 - Develop a plan of action to address the injustice based on their research and analysis.
 - Implement the ‘best’ solution and work to enact change (*optional*)
 - Most teams implement 50 – 75% of their recommendations.
4. The Youth For Justice “Virtual Summit” will provide the forum for youth to share their problems and action plans with other youth, as well as with adults familiar with the issues.
5. Teams may include any number of students, however please plan for a representative group of 2 to 8 students attending the Summit.

Phase 1: Selecting a Topic

PROCESS

Participants select an injustice, intolerance or problem relevant to their school or community. The goal is for students to determine: What issue is of most concern to you and your peers? Students describe how their chosen problem affects their school and/or community, its seriousness, and those individuals or groups that are most affected.

Advisors have the freedom to direct students as they deem appropriate. Teams are urged to involve community resource people throughout the project.

Selecting a topic typically includes:

- A. Student “brainstorming” sessions to generate ideas and select a topic
- B. Collection of research facts about the topic
- C. Documentation of findings and problem statement

GENERATING IDEAS

The following are *examples* of methods to generate ideas and collect facts:

- * Look through a local newspaper with students to identify issues they are concerned about and that are *relevant to their school and/or community*;
- * Conduct fact-finding sessions with local experts modeling legislative committee hearings where stated problems, statistics, and solutions are presented to students. This method engages students and experts in questions, answers, and opinions about specific topics in an effort to better understand the complexity of the issues and to get a better handle on possible solutions to the problems presented;
- * Assign students homework requiring them to think about and write down what they feel is the biggest problem in their neighborhood. It may be effective to invite students’ parents to write down (in their own handwriting) what they feel are the biggest problems, too. Both parents’ and students’ statements can then be tallied and the top vote-getter is the selected topic.

TOPIC IDEAS

It is very important that the students choose an issue or problem that is a concern to them and their peers, and their goal should be to make an improvement (in relations, policy, etc.) in their school or community.

The following are topics that past Summit participants have selected:

Conflicts in School
Violence Within Our Schools
Anti-Social Behavior of Drop-outs
Avoiding School Confrontational Violence
Gang Fights
Bullying

Youth Violence
Theft and Violence
Violence on the Increase
Avoiding Violence

Interpersonal Factors
Teenage Pregnancy Prevention
Child Abuse and Neglect
Peer Pressure
Lack of Positive Role Models
Discrimination
Sexual Harassment
Racism
Respect
Obesity
Peer Motivation
Self Esteem
Healthy Eating

Drugs and Alcohol
Alcohol and Crime
Alcohol, Crime, and Drug Use
Teen Smoking and Drinking

Social Issues
Going Green
Distracted Driving
Clothing Drives
Poverty
Literacy

Violence in the Media
Violence in the Media Increases Teenage Crime
Violence in Video Games
Influence of Television and Media Violence

Gang & Gun Violence
Gangs and Guns
In-School and Out-of-School Shootings
Guns in School
Accidental Shootings/Gun Safety

GOVERNMENT RESOURCES

Before selecting topics, you may find it helpful to research and gather information on the issues of injustice, violence, at-risk behavior, intolerance and/or prevention programs. You may come across new perspectives on issues as well as unique ideas for intervention strategies. Many government agencies have toll-free telephone numbers and websites. They also may offer free publications and statistics.

Consider elected officials, agencies, and staff from all branches and levels of government who might have an interest in the issues your team identifies. Don't forget staffers and aides who work either directly for elected officials or for legislative task forces or research offices. Here's a partial list to get you started:

<p>Local Board of Elections City Council Members City or County Clerk Mayor's Office Youth Coordinating Board Corrections Department Police Departments Juvenile Justice Agencies City or County Attorney Public Defender's Office</p>	<p>State Secretary of State Attorney General Governor's Office Office of Lieutenant Governor Members of the Legislature and their staffs Legislative Research Office Public Health Agencies Office of Criminal Justice Services Ohio Commission on Dispute Resolution & Conflict Management See www.state.oh.gov</p>
<p>Federal Members of Congress and their staffs (www.house.gov or www.senate.gov) Key Congressional Committees: House Education and Labor House Judiciary Senate Judiciary Congressional Black Caucus Senate Children's Caucus U.S. Commission on Civil Rights U.S. Department of Education U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Center for Disease Control National Center for Health Statistics U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Indian Affairs U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance Federal Bureau of Investigation Uniform Crime Reporting Program National Criminal Justice Reference Service Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention U.S. Department of the Treasury Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census</p>	

DIRECTORIES AND PUBLICATIONS

Almost every legislative body publishes some sort of directory that will help you identify committee chairs, committee staff, statutory officers, etc. There are publications that range from schedules of committee hearings to task force reports to newsletters published during the session. The most valuable resources can be drafts of bills themselves. Examples of federal sources include U.S. Government Printing Office, *The Congressional Record*, etc.

The Ohio Center for Law-Related Education will provide participating YFJ teams with office addresses and contact information of the state representatives and senators from their respective districts so that teams can make legislators aware of their efforts and try to involve legislators in the project. In addition, the Center will invite all state legislators to the spring Youth Summit and inform them if a school or organization from their district will be represented at the Summit.

Many other local and national agencies can assist you with specific information on issues related to the Youth for Justice goals and mission. You may also refer to the next section of this manual about community resource people.



Phase 2:
Information Gathering –
Size & Scope of Problem, Researching Solutions

PROCESS

Students gather information about their topic of concern and then make recommendations toward a proactive goal or solution. They are urged to answer the following question: **Considering this problem and its causes, what are our solutions going to achieve, alleviate, or eliminate?**

Students identify solutions or strategies to help address the chosen problem. These solutions can be based on existing programs or they can generate new ideas. For each solution, students must clearly state who would be responsible for taking action. That is, to whom will these solutions eventually be presented as recommendations – elected officials, students, school board, community leaders, or others?

Solutions can be two-fold:

- 1) Those that are directed towards other individuals and entities (local, state, federal policy makers)
- 2) Those that can be implemented by youth locally

Student teams will present research findings and solutions to elected officials, agency personnel, and community leaders while in Columbus for the Summit.

IDENTIFYING COMMUNITY RESOURCE PEOPLE

Once your topic has been determined, start thinking about gathering information from those in your community, e.g., surveying peers, community members, etc. Who are potential community experts to utilize when collecting facts on the identified problems and solutions?

Community people can provide a unique opportunity for young people to interact with adult leaders and experts. With some research and the suggestions in this manual, you can identify individuals who have the knowledge for which you are looking. If anyone within your school has access to resource people, ask them to personally extend the invitation.

Whom Do You Contact?

When selecting community resource people, it is important to keep in mind issues of accessibility and balanced viewpoint. If possible, select resource people who have experience in working with young people or who have a compelling presentation style. In addition, it is important to inform resource people in advance of the goals and objectives of your students' projects and the nature of your audience. The following pages list possible organizations and websites for various agencies that can assist in researching the team's topic.*

*Please note that the Ohio Center for Law-Related Education does not endorse or support any of these organizations, but they are listed only as resources for research. Some websites may have changed since the printing of this manual.

ORGANIZATIONS AND WEBSITES

Organization	Website
Active Parenting	www.activeparenting.com
Al-Anon/Alateen	www.al-anon.alateen.org
Alliance for Children & Families	www.alliance1.org
American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance	www.aahperd.org
American Bar Association	www.abanet.org
American Civil Liberties Union	www.aclu.org
American Counseling Association	www.counseling.org
American Humane Association	www.americanhumane.org
American Humanics	www.humanics.org
American Society for Deaf Children	www.deafchildren.org
American Sudden Infant Death Syndrome Institute	www.sids.org
Association of Jewish Family and Children's Agencies	www.ajfca.org
Boys Town	www.boystown.org
Center for the Child Care Workforce	www.ccw.org
Child Find Of America, Inc	www.childfindofamerica.org
Child Welfare Information Gateway	www.childwelfare.gov
Childhelp	www.childhelp.org
Children of Alcoholics Foundation	www.coaf.org
Children of the Night	www.childrenofthenight.org
Children's Hospice International	www.chionline.org
Cocaine Addiction Treatment	www.800cocaine.com
Covenant House Nineline	http://ninline.org
Crisis Prevention Institute	www.crisisprevention.com
DARE	www.dare.com
Families Anonymous	www.familiesanonymous.org
Family Resource Center	www.f-r-c.org
Feeding America	www.feedingamerica.org
Fellowship of Christian Athletes	www.fca.org
Focus on the Family	www.focusonthefamily.com
GED Hotline	www.mygedhotline.com
Literacy Center Education Network	www.literacycenter.net
Make-A-Wish Foundation	www.wish.org
Mothers Against Drunk Driving	www.madd.org
National Adoption Center	www.adopt.org
National Alcohol and Substance Abuse Information Center	www.addictioncareoptions.com
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People	www.naacp.org
National Black Child Development Institute	www.nbcdi.org
National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine	http://nccam.nih.gov

National Center for Missing & Exploited Children	www.missingkids.com
National Center for Research in Vocational Education	http://vocserve.berkeley.edu
National Child Safety Council	www.nationalchildsafetycouncil.org
National Child Support Enforcement Agency	www.ncsea.org
National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement	www.nrcoi.org
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence	www.ncadd.org
National Council on Child Abuse & Family Violence	www.nccafv.org
National Runaway Switchboard	www.1800runaway.org
National Stepfamily Resource Center	www.stepfamilies.info
National Urban League	www.nul.org
Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center	www.peatc.org
Parents Without Partners	www.parentswithoutpartners.org
Search Institute	www.search-institute.org
Service Corps of Retired Executives	www.score.org
Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration	www.samhsa.gov
Teenline	www.teenlineonline.org
The Nurturing Network	www.nurturingnetwork.org
ToughLove America	www.toughlove.com
United Way	www.liveunited.org
Youth 4 Change	www.youth4change.org

ADDITIONAL POSSIBLE CONTACTS:

Alcohol & Drug Abuse Councils
 Bar Association – State and County
 Board of Supervisors
 Chamber of Commerce
 City Attorney
 City & County Government
 City Council Members
 Community Activists
 County Board of Education
 County Department of Health
 County Department of Parks & Recreation
 County District Attorney’s Office
 County Public Defender’s Office
 County Juvenile Probation Office

Department of Disabilities
 Domestic Violence Agencies and Shelters
 Media – Local/Public Newspaper, TV,
 Radio
 Mental Health Center
 News Station
 Police Department
 School Resource Officer
 State General Assembly
 State Child Protective Agency
 State Department of Youth Services or
 Juvenile Justice
 Universities, Colleges, Law Schools

PHASE 3: Implementation

OVERVIEW

The key to real impact for the project is the implementation phase. Teams are strongly encouraged to develop a plan for implementation, documenting the steps taken, deciding what they will do next, and at what time.

This phase helps students to put their words and ideas into action. After identifying the problem and coming up with solutions, teams are expected to state what they plan to do or have already done. The following are guides to help with this step.

1. Select one of the solutions for the team to take action.
2. Write out the basic steps you will take to implement this solution.
3. Describe how you will measure the success of the project. Be specific.

Repeat this process for each solution the team has come up with for their topic. Determine which solution(s) will work best and benefit the most people. Be prepared to explain why the team chose the solution(s).

DEVELOP A PLAN

After you have created solutions, you will create an implementation plan. The following pages provide a sample way to go about this process. Feel free to use this sample as needed and adapt it to fit your needs with your group.

Youth For Justice Plan

1. TASK CHART

- A. What activities and tasks must you complete to do this action? Include descriptions of meetings, research, acquiring materials, making arrangements, getting permissions, finding locations, etc.
- B. Who is responsible for each of these activities and tasks? Be as specific as possible.

2. TIMELINE:

In what order and by what date should each of these tasks be completed? Who will be in charge of each task? Write the person's name and due date.

TASK	PERSON	DUE DATE
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		

3. LIST OF SUPPORTERS:

- A. Who is likely to support your project? Look to government, business, non-profit and media organizations, and community members.
- B. For each supporter answer the following questions:
1. What can our project do for the supporter?
 2. What can the supporter do for our project?
- C. What steps can you take to gain their support?

4. LIST OF OBSTACLES

A. What are the major obstacles to successful action? Who is likely to oppose your efforts? Are there existing laws or policies that might make it difficult to enact your solution(s)?

B. How can you overcome these obstacles?

5. EVALUATION OF PLAN

How will you measure the success of the project? Be specific. Document success.

6. BUDGET

What resources (people, money, skills, materials) will be needed to successfully complete the project? Where and how will you obtain these resources? List supplies, materials, or financial assistance needed. Next to each item, identify ways to meet these needs.

Supplies/Materials	Ways to meet these needs

MOVING FORWARD

Now that you have a plan, it is time to put it into action.

1. SET PRIORITIES

You may want to start by prioritizing your solutions. Which one(s) do you want to implement first? Your plan should tell you which solutions will take more or less work.

For some solutions, only one or two students may be needed to implement. In that case, you can implement more than one solution at a time. However, the whole team may be required for other solutions. For example, if the team wanted to implement a new peer mediation program, some members would be busy gaining support from the school board, while others would be gaining support from the school staff, and still others would need to raise money for training mediators. This solution would require everyone's help.

2. WORK THROUGH AS MANY SOLUTIONS AS YOU CAN

Remember, time is limited. You may not be able to implement all or even most of your solutions. Do as much as you can. Perhaps your work will be continued by the next year's Youth for Justice team.

Even if none or few of the solutions have been implemented by the spring Summit, prepare an implementation plan and bring it to the Summit.

3. PUT PLAN INTO ACTION

Every solution requires implementation by the Youth for Justice team. Some of your solutions may be directed toward other groups (parents, teachers, principals, community leaders, etc.). Decide how you are going to get them to heed your suggestions. Remember this is your project. You have to convince these groups to join in on your ideas. Identify and follow through on ways to gain support. Working through the exercises for 'LIST OF SUPPORTERS' will help you. Whether it is through presentations in front of groups or one-on-one meetings, you have to get the word out.

4. DOCUMENTATION

At this point, you have done a great deal of work. You have developed a plan, anticipated both supporters and obstacles, and have begun implementing your solutions. However, be sure to document each step of your plan as it is carried out. Documentation provides a number of benefits:

- A. Keeps track of your work
- B. Keeps you focused
- C. Provides data for oral and written presentations

DOCUMENTATION

As you put your plan into action, don't forget to document your work. Your teams documentation can take many forms:

A. Written "diary" of steps with dates, activities and results.

Example:

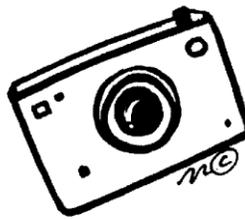
Feb. 19, 2015 Presented research and recommendations to PTA. We asked each parents to talk to their children about drug and alcohol abuse as soon as they got home that night. We passed around a "Pledge to Talk to Your Child" form. Twenty parents signed the pledge.

Mar. 3, 2015 Put up posters in all school halls. The posters warn kids about the dangers of substance abuse. Each one is different and includes the number for a national teen hot-line.

B. Take pictures or video of team implementing project, e.g., making presentations, group discussions, working a hotline, performing a skit.

C. Keep any materials produced by the team (flyers, posters, newsletters). You will want to use these in your display and presentation at the Summit.

D. Save and share with OCLRE any news clippings about your Youth for Justice team activities.



PHASE 4: PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS AND SOLUTIONS

Students should now prepare to discuss and present their research, solutions, and implementation plan. They should be able to explain the connection to the Ohio Youth for Justice goals, the importance of their problem among youth in their school or community, and who will be responsible for implementation of their solutions.

Youth for Justice is designed to encourage and empower youth to be actively engaged citizens who work together to make a positive difference in their community.

The following are the forms of presentations teams should be prepared to make or submit:



Important note: One of the primary program goals is to empower youth. Therefore, make every effort to let the *students* decide what they think should be done and by whom. Students should come up with their own ideas, no matter how naive adults may perceive them.

YFJ FINAL REPORT

Each team will hand in a Final Report that will contain:

- Advisor Summary
- Student Reflections
- Materials the team developed as part of its project, *ex. photos, posters, artwork, surveys*
- Any News clippings about your team project
- Mailing List of local individuals you would like to receive a copy of the YFJ Brochure

Final reports may be submitted via email on the day of the Virtual Summit, or forwarded with the student reflection reports at a later date (but not later than **two weeks** after the Summit.)

- ❖ Submit final reports electronically to jreitz@ocltre.org or by mail to:

OCFRE
Attn: YFJ
1700 Lake Shore Drive
Columbus, OH 43204

GUIDESHEET FOR FINAL REPORT – Advisor Summary

Please include all information listed below in your typed one-page report.

SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION NAME:

GRADE LEVEL(S):

ADVISOR(S) NAME:

STUDENT NAMES:

1. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Describe, *in specific terms*, the problem you have selected. Based on your research, list at least three facts about this problem.

You should also answer the following questions:

- How does the problem affect your school/community?
- How serious is the problem?
- What individuals or groups are most affected by the problem?

2. POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

What possible solutions to the problem did your team identify? Who would need to be involved to implement your recommendations? What person(s), organizations, or agencies could you contact for help or information? To whom are recommendations directed? Provide one or two statements about each recommendation.

3. ACTION STEPS

What steps have you taken to contribute to solving this problem and/or implementing your recommendations? Have they been (or do you believe they will be) successful? Why or why not? List and describe as many as possible.

4. RESULTS

What were the results of the team's endeavors? How did this project solve the issue or problem on which the students concentrated? How is the school, neighborhood, community, etc better because of the students' project?

GUIDESHEET FOR FINAL REPORT – Student Reflection

Directions: Each team member should submit a typed reflection paper.

Do not let this form limit the creativity of how students choose to reflect on their project. If preferred, the reflection may be in a form other than writing – video, drawing, recorded interview of student, etc.

SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION NAME: _____

STUDENT NAME: _____

1. TOPIC

What was the topic your group chose?

Why was the chosen topic important to you?

2. WORKING ON THE PROJECT

Describe the project you completed:

Specifically, what went well?

What did not go well?

What obstacles did you/your team encounter?

Did you learn anything new? Please describe.

How did your group work together in the project?

What did you learn about yourself from this experience?

3. RESULTS

How did your project solve the issue or problem you focused on?

Do you believe your team was successful in solving your topic? Why or why not?

VERBAL PRESENTATION

Teams should present to legislators, judges, school board members, state agency personnel, community leaders, and other Ohio YFJ teams. Presentations should be as creative as possible and should include:

- a. Introduction of team members, school and city;
- b. Problem statement and research findings; and
- c. Solutions and planned action steps.

LOCAL PRESENTATIONS

Teams are urged to make appointments with local decision-makers or others to whom they want to make recommendations. For example, if students propose a new policy for the school or district, they can arrange to make their case before the local school board or administration.

Students can learn a great deal about how decisions are made and influenced through this process. Adults can be reminded of the important voice young people can provide.

In past years, teams have made presentations at school assemblies, before student groups, PTA and PTO committees, and local officials. Its local Bar Association honored one team with the Liberty Bell Award. Another team had legislation introduced on the House floor, and was the first youth group to win the Youngstown mayor's Task Force for Crime Prevention Award. Additionally, state and federal lawmakers will receive letters and copies of the Summit report and attend the Summit to hear student input.

SUMMIT DISPLAY

Each team should construct a background display from three or four sheets of poster board, foam-core board, or the equivalent. Each of the panels should be no larger than 32” wide by 40” high. The display should be developed so it can be placed on a standard six-foot table.

You may organize your information in any fashion the team chooses, and presentations should use a variety of creative forms (music, charts, posters, scrapbooks). The Center and project evaluators understand that different teams have different means, so the emphasis is not on “flair,” but rather creativity.

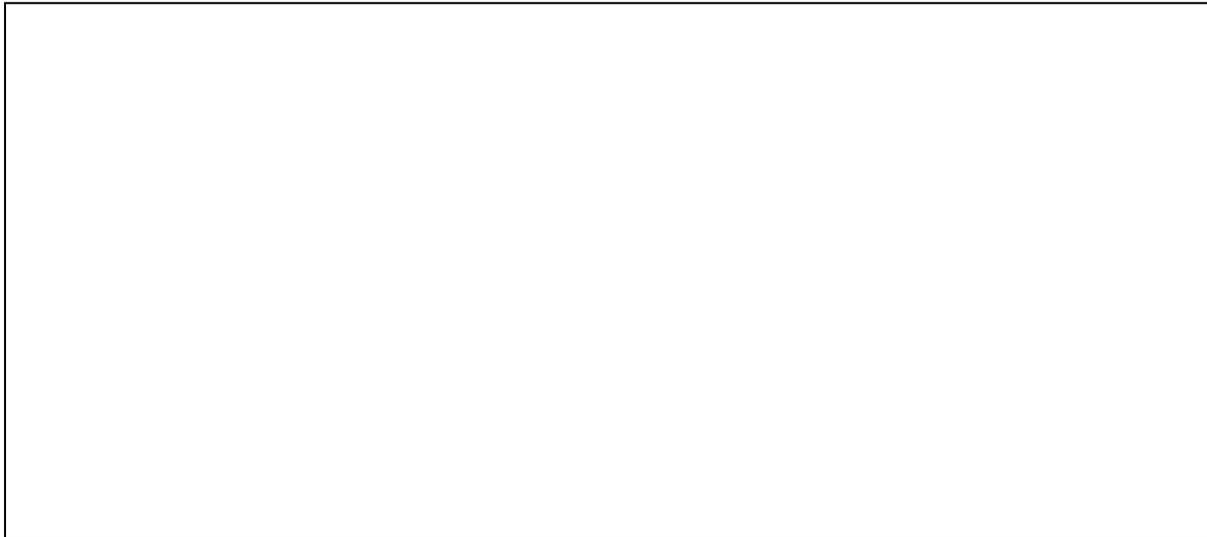
The following is a sample way to create your display.

SUMMIT PRESENTATION

How to share the problem and solution

- 1.
- 2.
- 3
- 4.

DISPLAY



Display should fit on a standard card table

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions about the program or Virtual Summit, please contact:
Kate Strickland kstrickland@ocle.org or Ryan Suskey rsuskey@ocle.org

- 614 485-3510

MENTOR CONTACTS

For additional information and/or mentoring support from veteran YFJ teachers, please contact the following educators:

Teddy Mwonyonyi, Cleveland

- teddy.n.mwonyonyi@cmsdnet.net

Joan Paskert, Greater Cleveland

- joanpaskert@yahoo.com

Amita Snyder, Troy

- meattruk@hotmail.com