

Developed by:



SUMMER SOCIAL JUSTICE CAMP

Organizing Toolkit

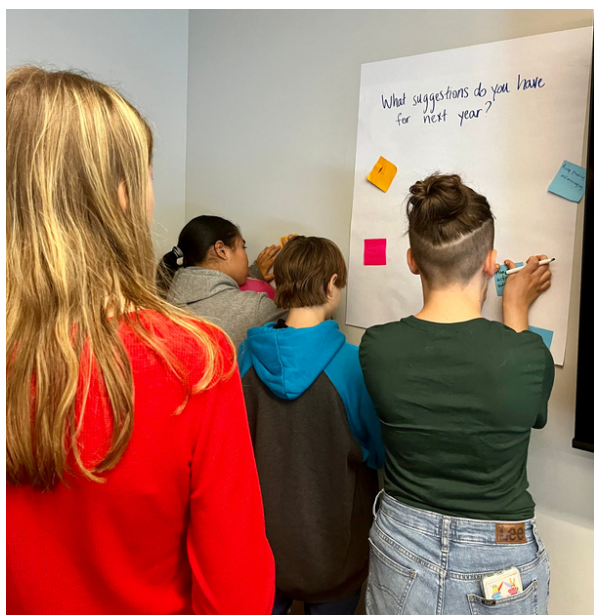


Created: September 2023

Introduction

In Summer 2023, the Education Justice Coalition of Vermont (EdJ) hosted its first Summer Social Justice Camp for middle and high school students in Chittenden County. It was a two week camp held on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays 11am-4pm. There were three youth facilitators going into 10th and 11th grade who planned and led the camp with the support of EdJ staff.

When youth applied, they were asked what they'd be interested in learning about and discussing. This helped the planning team decide on a different topic for each day of the camp. There were guest speakers, art, poetry, community building activities, discussions about youth organizing, and more. Young people's time is valuable, so campers were given a small stipend for each day they attended camp. [You can read more about the camp here.](#)



The goal of the camp was to not only create an incredible learning experience for youth in Chittenden County, but to also provide a framework so youth across the state have access to a camp like this. EdJ's goal is to reach youth and impact changes in schools throughout all of Vermont. **We created this toolkit to inspire folks in other areas of the state to start something similar to this.** We led this as a camp, but this could also be adapted into an afterschool program, in-school club, etc.

What makes it a Summer Social Justice Camp?

- It's led by youth for youth!
- We cover social justice topics that youth are interested in
- We not only learn about issues, but talk about what we can do to change them.

What do I need?

SPACE

- Outright Vermont generously offered their space to EdJ. There was a large space for everyone to gather, and three smaller breakout areas. We had a television available for displaying slides and showing videos.
- Reach out to schools, community centers, and mission-aligned organizations to see if they'd be willing to offer a space free of charge or at a discounted rate.

MONEY

Here's our budget:

Item	Price	Unit	Total
Space	\$0	1	\$0
Stipends for participants	\$150	18 participants at \$25 for each day of camp	\$2,700
Food	\$300	6	\$1,800
Supplies	\$150	1	\$150
Stipends for youth facilitators	\$800	3	\$2,400
Honorariums for guest speakers	\$100	3	\$300
Adult Helpers	\$100	6	\$600
			\$7,950

APPLICATION

Here's the full application we used.

Some questions to consider:

- Accessibility:
 - Do folks need help getting to and from camp?
 - What are their dietary restrictions?
 - Are there accommodations that would be helpful for facilitators and guest speakers to know?
- Which topics are you interested in learning about and discussing?
- What activities are you interested in doing?



Why offering stipends is important.

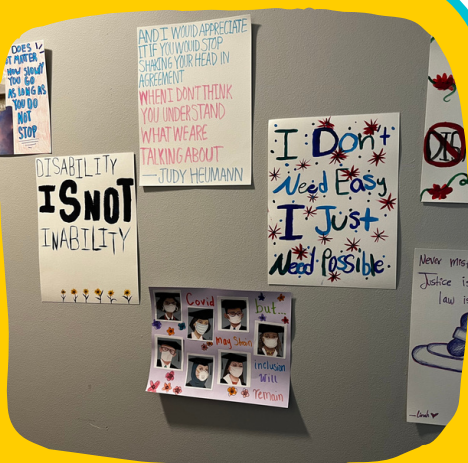
Offering stipends shows that we value young people's time. It makes the camp more accessible. Some campers may be missing out on jobs in order to attend the camp.

FOOD

- See if restaurants may be interested in donating food for one day of camp.
- Don't just get pizza! When you do have to pay for food, support BIPOC-owned businesses.
- Remember to bring snacks and drinks too!

PAPERWORK

Liability and media waiver



Youth Facilitators



TIPS FOR ADULT ALLIES

- ✔ Adult allies should follow the lead of the youth facilitators. Ask the youth for direction. Suggest tasks you can do to help. Don't assume.
- ✔ Understand that youth have a lot going on. You can take on a task and ask for the facilitator's approval on it.
- ✔ Be willing to learn from the youth.
- ✔ Let the youth know that you're available to help. Facilitating is exhausting!

PITCH THE IDEA

"It seems like there are many youth in the community who want to make change. Would you be interested in helping me set up an opportunity for youth to come together to share about what they've been doing, learn and discuss issues in their community, and collaborate to make change? You would be paid for your time. It would happen during the summer and be led by youth!"

HOW EDJ CAN HELP

- We may be able to connect you to potential youth facilitators in your area.
- We can help train your youth facilitators
- We can set up a meeting with our youth facilitators



The camp was a week away and the youth didn't have much time to work on the curriculum, so I put together ideas for the curriculum. After each day of camp, the youth facilitators and I finalized the plan for the next day using the outline and list of ideas that I put together." -adult ally

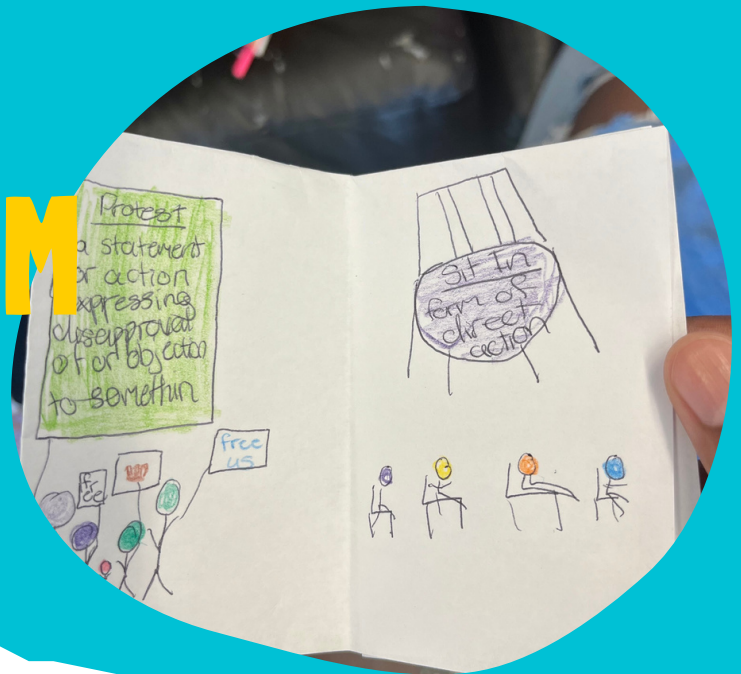


"The youth were more attuned to accessibility needs than I was. They recognized that having too many transitions was difficult for some of the campers and adjusted accordingly." -adult ally



"We got a lot of help from the adults, but it was mostly us leading it." -youth facilitator

CURRICULUM



Seek input from the youth

Once you have a list of ideas, narrow it down into main topics.

Our main topics were:

- Identity and Belonging
- LGBTQIA+ Rights and Feminism
- Gun Violence
- Antiracism
- Disability Rights and Lawmaking
- Youth Action

Guest speakers

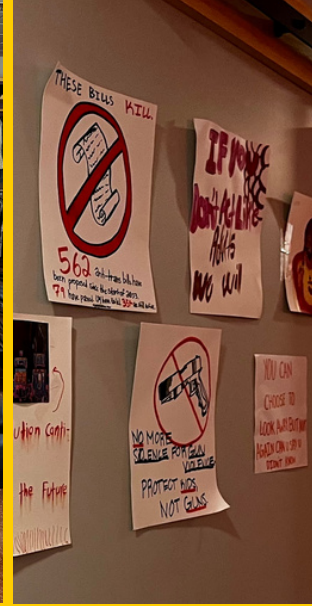
- We gave guest speakers about an hour to share and invited them to eat lunch with us.
- We asked guest speakers to make their presentations interactive.
- Speaker suggestions: local organizations, youth leaders, college and universities students and professors, and local lawmakers.

Provide options

- There can be different ways to engage in camp. Options could be to listen to a presentation to go deeper on a topic, play games, or make art.
- Ex: On the day we went over LGBTQIA+ rights, campers were given the option to learn about the history of pride flags, make protest signs, or play games.

Daily Activities

- **Connection activities:** We began each day with an activity to get to know one another better.
- **Agreements:** We co-created agreements on the first day and then reviewed them at the beginning of each day updating them throughout camp as needed.
- **Discussion circles:** Each day, each youth facilitator led a restorative justice circle with a small group. The groups stayed the same throughout camp, so campers built deep relationships with a small group of peers. We would save more difficult discussion questions for these groups.
- **Options:** Providing options can help keep participants engaged.
- **Creativity:** We incorporated art, theater, poetry, and other creative outlets into the curriculum.
- **Youth Organizing:** Each day, we did an activity and/or had a short discussion about youth organizing. Campers had the opportunity to think about how they would address the issues they were learning about.



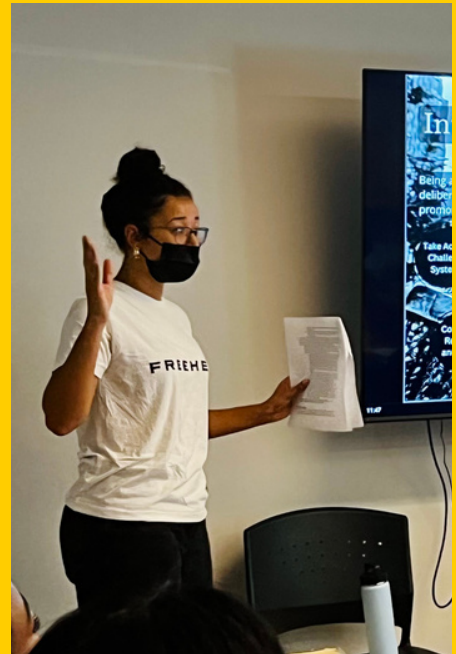
What's next?

Here are ways youth can get involved with youth organizing through EdJ:

Youth Organizer Training Program: EdJ partners with Outright Vermont to provide trainings for youth organizers throughout the school year. Youth who are accepted to the program can attend five day-long trainings throughout the school year to learn the ins and outs of youth organizing, receive support for their campaigns, and help guide the coalition's work.

Youth Leadership Institute: The Youth Leadership Institute (YLI) is an annual convening presented by the New England Youth Organizing Network (NEYON) that brings together youth and adult allies who are fighting for equitable public education throughout New England.

Education for Social Justice Conference: Each spring, we host a conference for students, educators, community members, and other folks who want to improve schools in Vermont. Youth can help plan the conference, present a workshop, or participate as an attendee.



Youth Organizers in VT Instagram Group: This is a private Instagram group where members can ask questions, share events, and connect with other youth organizers throughout the state.

Get Started! ✨

How to Adapt

This toolkit was written for a camp. It can be used for an afterschool program, in-school club, or another format where youth can lead the way. Here are some ideas for how to adapt the format:

- Topics can be spread out over a few days or a week with different days having an art component, guest speaker, discussion, etc.
- Provide snacks instead of a meal if it's a short amount of time.
- Look into collaborating with other clubs or going on field trips. If your school has a GSA and one of your topics is something related to gender and sexuality, you could see if the GSA might be interested in sharing some of what they learned with your group.
- Use your space wisely. For example, if you are talking about representation and your program is at school, students can do an activity where they go around to different classrooms and take note of what's represented on the school walls.



Ways EdJ Can Support

- We can share your camp with our network and on our social media.
- We can connect you with possible youth facilitators and guest speakers.
- We can provide suggestions for the curriculum design.
- We can help you find grants. We were able to get some funding from [VT Humanities](#) and [C.Y.C.L.E.](#)

Contact Kayla Loving kayla.edjvt@gmail.com for questions and support! We don't want you to do this all on your own. EdJ is more than happy to help you along the way by creating graphics and advertising on social media, making connections, training and supporting youth facilitators, and more!

