

“As a Youth Leader ... I keep students on track and make sure they complete the right steps on time. Because I am also a student, we are in class together, in lunch together and walking the same hallways. I use all of those times to remind students about what they need to be doing for college.” - Youth Leader, Franklin K. Lane Campus Student Success Center

What is Youth Leadership for College Access?

Youth Leadership for College Access positions young people to engage their peers in the post-secondary planning process. Youth Leaders do this by: facilitating workshops; planning events; supporting other students in their search, application, and financial aid process; and working to promote an overall college-going culture within their institution. With comprehensive training and support, Youth Leaders develop a range of skills and content knowledge that they then use, not only to improve their own educational and social outcomes, but as a strategy to make college access possible for a wider circle of students.

Key ingredients to develop a high quality college access youth leadership program include:

<p>Clearly-Defined Role Youth Leaders need a clear and consistent job description, carefully articulated responsibilities, required work hours, and well-defined and achievable goals.</p>	<p>Youth to Youth Connection Youth Leaders need consistent opportunities to connect to other students in their institution . They need both time within the schedule and physical space where they can make critical connections to other young people.</p>
<p>A Youth Leader Needs...</p>	
<p>Training and Support Youth Leaders need to be trained in the relevant information about the college process and careful and consistent adult supervision. They need a place to go with questions and challenges and a strong peer support community.</p>	<p>Compensation Youth Leaders need to believe that their contribution is valuable - this value can be demonstrated through pay or academic credit.</p>

CARA Support

CARA works with a range of schools and community-based organizations to help them to develop and maintain Youth Leadership for College Access programs. Our supports include:

Training – CARA runs a multi-week Summer Youth Leadership Training Institute on all aspects of the college process. The trainings are based at NYC college campuses to give the Youth Leaders the chance to explore different colleges.

Coaching – CARA offers site-based support to adult staff at schools and community-based organizations to support their integration of youth leadership into existing college access work.

Community – CARA brings Youth Leaders from across the city together several times over the academic year and establishes an on-going community for learning and support among both Youth Leaders and adult staff.

“CARA’s Youth Leadership for College Access has given us a platform to rethink the way we implement college readiness programming by integrating student leadership into college-related activities – from planning college fairs and scavenger hunts at college campuses to working one-on-one with students. As a result, students at our school are talking with each other about college; they are inquiring about financial aid packages; and they are, indeed, making better decisions about their post-secondary plans.”

-Junior Manon, Sr. Advocate Counselor / Career Specialist, NYC Mission Society Learning to Work Program at Harlem Renaissance HS