7 STEPS TO RECRUITING CYL PARTICIPANTS

CYL is a year-round youth engagement program that uses intensive summer sessions to begin the professional development and involvement cycle you'll have with your participant(s).
Please don't call it "camp" in any of your marketing materials

1. IDENTIFY a CYL champion in each of your locations.

Ideally this is someone who has had some contact with the program in the past.
It could be a past participant or a staff member.

a. If you have sent participants to CYL in the past, talk to them for more recruitment tips – what would they suggest you say/do to attract more young people to CYL?
b. An On Co-op representative can come and talk with you/your team about CYL, host a webinar, and/or introduce you to a CYL graduate so that you can better understand the program and develop champions.

2. DETERMINE why you want to send a young person to CYL.

This will focus your recruitment strategy, and link CYL to your organizational goals or objectives.
It could include any of the following:

a. You know someone who already has leadership skills that could be further developed.
b. You want to move beyond "involving youth" to actually "engaging" them in your organization. For example, to increase membership growth, to learn about their perspectives, to groom as potential staff, interns or volunteers, or to sit on a committee or task force.
c. To support and promote the themes that CYL teaches (leadership, communication, self-awareness, personal balance, co-op knowledge and understanding, and concern for community).
d. To reward a young person for good grades, community involvement, or participation in a sport or club.
e. To develop the co-op principles and philosophies in the next generation.
f. Reminder that credit unions can apply to the Ontario Credit Union Charitable Foundation to send even more members to CYL. For co-ops, check with your federation or regional network to see if there are youth engagement funds available.

3. IDENTIFY who you want to send to CYL.

Participants require a co-operative or credit union sponsor to attend CYL. This "links" them to the movement.

a. The target age for CYL is between 14 and 18 years old.
b. Do you want to approach…
    i. Young members directly?
    ii. Young people within your community?
    iii. Parents/grandparents who are members?
    iv. Staff, board or volunteers about sending their own children?

4. DETERMINE how you will promote CYL to your target audience(s).

We've got lots of material. You don't need to completely reinvent the wheel!

a. Use the marketing resources and tools available at our Becoming a Sponsor page.
They include a sample notice for your newsletter, plus posters, brochures, photos, videos, CYL logos and other tips you can download. Borrow from what On Co-op has already created: any of our CYL information, whether in print or electronic format, can be used by you to promote CYL and recruit participants.
b. Educate your staff, managers and board. Arrange for your CYL champion or CYL graduate to talk with staff in your other locations. If you have a staff newsletter, bulletin board or intranet, place information there.
c. Mention CYL in any of your community outreach initiatives.

d. Put up posters, signs and displays in your locations. Perhaps a CYL grad could be in your location at a peak time to assist your staff.
e. Include CYL material in your youth and general member print and electronic newsletters no later than March/April, and preferably January/February. Place notices on your website (on the main page and/or your youth or community development pages). Include a link to the CYL pages www.ontario.coop/cyl (and verify that it works) so that visitors can learn more.
f. Note - Have your staff start conversations with the target group you want to attract. Posters and webpages can create some awareness, but you will have to promote CYL by talking to people! Personal interactions will increase the number of potential CYL candidates you will attract.

5. SELECT your CYL young person(s).

Depending on the number of participants you are sending, the time you wish to spend on the selection process and your recruitment goals, you may want to consider any or all of the following:

a. Have each candidate submit a short essay on why he/she wishes to go to CYL.
b. Have the candidate meet with your CYL champion or someone else from your organization.
c. Draw names from all those who apply. (Note – CYL is a three-year program. On Co-op recommends that participants attend all three years sequentially if possible, which is sometimes difficult if you choose candidates using a lottery system.)
d. When accepting candidates, have a discussion with them about how your organization can use their new skills through the year. The participant should, at the very least, talk to your board, staff or membership about his/her CYL experiences, and send you a photo, thank you letter or testimonial you can use to promote CYL.
e. Be sure your participant has information on your organization (mission/philosophy, size, locations, products/services, etc) to share with others at CYL. This also helps your participant learn more about you!

6. Have them APPLY to CYL.

a. Once you have qualified your young person(s) to attend CYL, they still must apply to CYL online. (It is important to note that *qualification* by your organization does NOT guarantee *acceptance* by On Co-op/CYL.)
b. CYL strongly recommends that your organization require the participant to contribute a portion of the CYL program fee – we recommend $100-200. (This amount is between you and the participant.) It ensures commitment from the participant and his/her family and reinforces the value of the CYL program.
c. Acknowledgement of the completed application will be sent to your organization and the participant. Note that incomplete applications do not "reserve" a spot in CYL and sessions may otherwise fill up while we are waiting for the completed application.
d. Prior to the start of the CYL summer sessions, On Co-op will invoice your organization for the full CYL program fee for each of your participants.

7. CONTINUE the relationship after CYL.

Congratulations! You have helped to develop a new set of skills in a young person, and you are starting to develop a relationship.

a. Request the On Co-op /CYL Youth Engagement Toolkit. Email us at youth@ontario.coop. It's free.
b. Put a summary of your participant's CYL experiences in a newsletter, on your website, blog or Facebook page, or on a poster in your locations.
c. Integrate the CYL participant into your organization all year 'round. Have them speak at a gathering, assist at meetings, sit on a youth panel, volunteer during fundraisers, etc. You have the opportunity to strengthen your relationship with this young person, and truly assist in the development of the next generation of leaders.
d. Be sure to include CYL in your budget for next year. If you're able, consider sending a staff or board member as a Facilitator for their own professional development, or perhaps becoming a weekly/corporate sponsor.
e. Throughout the year, add to your list of who could be approached to attend CYL next year.