

How to Recruit and Train External Consultants



Role of the External Consultant

In a Youth-Centered Permanency Roundtable (YCPRT), the role of an External (Permanency) Consultant is to provide expert guidance and support to the roundtable process, focusing on identifying and addressing systemic barriers to permanency for youth in foster care. This role is filled by an individual from outside the agency who is willing to participate and provide insight or a unique perspective into the process. The External Consultant assists in developing a comprehensive Permanency Action Plan that prioritizes the youth's needs and desires, fostering engagement and empowerment.

During YCPRTs, the External Consultant ensures the youth's voice is heard and that necessary supports are engaged, ultimately contributing to a more successful permanency process.

Guidelines for External Consultants

External Consultants cannot be working or assigned to the youth in a service capacity and serve as their External Consultant. An example of what this means is that a Guardian at Litem can serve as an External Consultant for YCPRT but not for the youth they are assigned to directly serve. The External Consultant continues to participate in ongoing YCPRTs for the youth they are assigned until the process is complete.

Strategies to Recruit External Consultants

The best approaches for recruiting external consultants include engaging with the youth, involving the YCPRT Team and identifying providers and partners.

Start with the Youth

- Ask the youth what type of career/profession they are interested in and identify a professional in that area.
- Explore where the youth is already connected—such as through extracurricular activities or community involvement—and use those relationships to identify caring adults who could serve as external consultants.

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Involve the YCPRT Team

- Survey *current* external consultants for feedback and how to gain interest and engagement.
- Ask *current* external consultants if they know someone who may be interested in the role.
- Place informational flyers in youth-based spaces.
- Ask YCPRT team members to recruit at least one external consultant from their personal and professional contacts and have them attend an exploratory information session.

Identify Providers and Partners

- Conduct natural networking with current providers.
- Engage community advocates (e.g., parents, families, professionals, and members) who have highlighted the performance of PCSAs or who have demonstrated PCSA abilities.
- Recruit individuals who have strong opinions about how the county is serving the youth in their care and seem interested in getting involved.
- Consider individuals who have a direct/linear connection to child welfare.
- Reach out to partner agencies with whom you've previously collaborated.

Partners or Agencies That Can Support Your Recruiting Efforts

Behavioral health

Board of Developmental Disabilities

Career centers

Churches

Civic clubs

Community-based school organizations

Community foundations

Court staff

Comprehensive Case Management and
Employment Program (CCMEP)

Educational service centers

Educators and school personnel

Family and Children First Council

Foster care licensing agencies

Kinnect

Library

Recreation centers

Retired Seniors Volunteer Program (RSVP)

Youth housing/homelessness
organizations

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Where to Search for External Consultants

Individuals with Lived Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family members who have successfully reunified • Foster care alumni
Community System Partners (statewide, regional or local)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boys/Girls Clubs staff • Citizen Review Panel members • Coaches • Clergy • Family Practice Attorneys • Kinnect • Kiwanis Club members • Local counseling/community mental health partners • Local Fathers programs staff • Peer mentoring agencies staff or volunteers • Wendy's Wonderful Kids
Current and Retired Child Welfare Professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency foster parents (serving a different youth) • JFS/Child Support Enforcement Agency staff • Probation staff (serving a different youth) • Retired foster parents • Retired social workers
Government System Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ADAMH Board members • BDD staff • BRIDGES staff • Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program (CCMEP) staff • DCY program staff • Education Service Centers • FCFC members • GALs/CASAs (serving a different youth) • Health Dept local and state staff • Help Me Grow staff • OhioRISE representatives • Regional Training Centers local staff • Supervisors from other local government agency divisions • Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (Ohio Means Jobs) youth worker
School and Education Settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board of Education members • Community-based school support staff (external) • School-based counselors/social workers/resource officers • Social Work Professor from local college • Teachers/retired teachers • Urban Planning and Public Affairs (UPP) professor

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How to Invite External Consultants

- Invite them to an information session about YCPRT.
- Call them to introduce the program and follow-up with an email inviting them.
- Email an introductory letter and follow up with a phone call or email inviting them

External Consultant Training Considerations

- Ask current external consultants what they wish they had known before starting and share these insights with new recruits.
- Inquire about what motivates current external consultants to continue participating and share their responses with new recruits.
- Require external consultants to attend a YCPRT overview training before working with their first youth. Kinnect offers a one-hour overview that recruits can schedule.
- Inform that external consultant that this role requires strong commitment to the youth.
- Provide consistent reminders that these meetings focus solely on permanency, and that external consultants help keep the team focused on advocating for it.
- Reinforce that active participation is expected at each roundtable until permanency goals for the youth are met.
- Offer a list of example questions to encourage curiosity, along with tips for being interactive and engaging during meetings.
- Remind them that they are encouraged to speak up and expected to volunteer for tasks.
- Ensure external consultants are familiar with child welfare terminology.
- Provide trigger warnings and examples of potential scenarios they may encounter.
- Always have a pool of external consultants available.
- Be realistic how much time one person can commit to the process, especially if they are serving more than one youth.

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Appreciating and Retaining External Consultants

1. Follow up after each YCPRT meeting to express appreciation.
For example, send a thank-you card emphasizing the positive impact of their participation, and designate a specific person to send these cards.
2. Survey external consultants after roundtables to learn about their experience with the process and be responsive to their feedback.

Need Help? Contact Us!

The YCPRT Team at Kinnect and implementing sites are available to answer questions and provide support as you put these practices into action.

Contact YCPRT



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