

Update: Youth Advisory Council Formed  
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Since its beginning over a year ago, the True Up Initiative has used the voices of foster youth and alumni to shape its efforts to change the face of foster care in Kentucky. What started with youth focus groups, has now developed into a diverse Youth Advisory Council. During the past month, current and former foster youth rallied together for the cause, were interviewed, and joined the True Up Youth Advisory Council. While this group of leaders comes from a variety of backgrounds, they stand united in working to make positive changes for current and former foster youth. They also form a supportive network of youth who have been through the foster care system and understand the common challenges and opportunities that impact the lives of current and former foster youth.

To this end, True Up Youth Advisory Council members are currently actively engaged in advocacy trainings led by the experienced staff at Kentucky Youth Alliance. Through these trainings, council members as well as other youth have developed the common goals of advancing the causes of current and former foster youth through providing more support to college students, gaining preparation for the real world, developing mentoring opportunities, maintaining stability in foster care placements, and increasing the window of time youth have to come back into care after they turn 18. They are now learning how to most effectively champion their causes to policymakers and have their first advocacy opportunity with the Jefferson County Legislature on December 6, 2011. This will be their first of many opportunities to advocate for current and former foster youth. The energy and experiences of the Youth Advisory Council members will form an integral part of the True Up Initiative's work to empower current and former foster youth and change the face of foster care in Kentucky.