

Youth Advisory Council: Frequently Asked Questions

I do not represent a school or community in Ontario? Can I still be involved?

YES! Although CODA is currently focusing on Ontario, we plan to expand the Youth Advisory Council into all provinces and territories in 2010. Your participation starting now will not only ease our expansion throughout Canada, but it will also allow students within your reach to begin their participation as a YAC member and work toward a drug-free school and community.

Kids have so many things they are involved in today. What kind of time commitment is required to be involved in the Youth Advisory Council?

Participation as a Youth Advisory Council member is not an overwhelming experience. YAC representatives will make personal and group goals as well as design activities during that inaugural Annual Youth Advisory Council Conference in November. The extent of their work for the Youth Advisory Council is dependent on these goals. The Council on Drug Abuse is not asking for YAC student representatives to approach their membership as a fulltime job. Instead, CODA encourages students to partake in one national campaign and engage in a few other awareness activities throughout the year. Some ideas include:

- Bring in their regional CODA Educator twin to give a drug-awareness presentation
- Hang awareness posters around school
- Engage the student body in awareness activities (Chalk-Art Campaign)

The Council on Drug Abuse will provide support and resources to Youth Advisory Council members. As a school, we ask you to support the in-school activities your School Youth Advisory Council chooses to pursue.

How long is the Annual YAC Conference for? When is it? Will all members be subsidized?

The inaugural Annual Youth Advisory Conference will be a one day event during the third week of November in celebration of National Addiction Awareness Week. Although the date is not finalized, CODA plans on bringing YAC members into Toronto on Sunday November 15, 2009 in preparation for the conference on Monday November 16. CODA's goal is to be able to fully subsidize 250 students to attend this conference (including travel, food, hotel, attendance, etc.).

Will there be CODA Educators in rural communities to assist YAC student members?

The Council on Drug Abuse will have trained CODA Educators in each and every administrative region across Canada. If there is not a CODA Educator in your

community, there will be one nearby to support your Regional and School Youth Advisory Council. Currently, 412 pharmacists, teachers, public health nurses, and addiction professionals are enrolled in the Coda Certified Education (CCE) program. These individuals are located in communities from across Canada and will be in close correspondence with School YAC Ambassadors and Regional Youth Advisory Councils.

What are your expectations of schools and staff?

At the Council on Drug Abuse, we do not expect schools to financially support CODA or its School Youth Advisory Council in any way. Instead, we ask you to support the development of Youth Advisory Council in your school as well as the activities your student representatives choose to pursue.

The Council on Drug Abuse would appreciate a school teacher to volunteer and assist CODA in a few minor details throughout the year. The teacher will help your School YAC Ambassador recruit 3-6 students to partake in your Youth Advisory Council as well as refer dynamic candidates to take over your graduating School YAC Ambassador's position.

What are the borders for the administration regions?

A comprehensive map of the administrative region borders can be found on the CODA website. To see what administrative region you belong to, locate your town/community on the map and refer to the included key.

What will be done with aboriginal populations? How will they be represented and supported?

CODA invites students of all cultures and locations in Canada to become involved in the Youth Advisory Council. The Council on Drug Abuse will be able to give equal support to all members, regardless of their values and cultures. The next step in the development of the CODA Certified Education (CCE) program is to include advanced specialities, including cross-cultural training and aboriginal addiction issues. Thus, your local CODA Educator will be able to provide expert support to your particular School Youth Advisory Council.

What is the application process like? How do you choose YAC members?

The application to become a YAC Ambassador/Member consists of:

- 8-12 Questions
- 1 Reference Letter
- Parental/Guardian Consent Form

The Council on Drug Abuse asks students to fill out an application found on our website, www.drugabuse.ca. The length of the application differs depending on which position a student wants to become involved in. To become a *YAC Member*, students will have to

answer eight (8) questions about a student's personal skills, involvement in his/her community, interest in partaking in the Youth Advisory Council, and current drug abuse trends in his/her school community. Students interested in becoming their school *YAC Ambassador* will have to complete the same application and an additional four (12 total) questions regarding his/her leadership experience, fundraising knowledge, and specific goals that he/she would like to accomplish during his/her term in the Youth Advisory Council.

The Council on Drug Abuse will accept applications from students entering grades 9-12. We will look closely at an applicant's skills, experience and reference letter when choosing the *School YAC Ambassador*. Furthermore, *YAC Members* will be chosen based on their skills and perceived interest in the program.

Please do not hesitate to contact CODA if you have further questions about the Youth Advisory Council. Please email YAC@drugabuse.ca or call (416) 763-1491 x 230 for more details and information.