

THE YOUTHSCAN PROJECT

A statewide initiative to elevate youth voice on the biggest needs facing Colorado



AT A GLANCE

Youth know the issues in their schools and communities three years before adults. This project seeks to tap into this insightful perspective on a meaningful scale to help inform decision-making across our great state. The immediate and rapidly changing needs related to COVID-19 make it even more critical that we're able to respond to emerging needs more quickly.

The YouthScan Project takes high school students through a self-guided curriculum to conduct a Community Needs Assessment. Over ten sessions, students will use research, surveys, and interviews to select what they see as the top issue(s) facing youth in their community. They will also create two awareness projects (one visual and one literary) that increase awareness about their chosen causes. The program is 100% self-guided and requires no support from teachers or schools.

Our team will compile all the data and funnel that information up to decision-makers across philanthropy, government, and education. *The wider community gets real-time info on emerging needs facing youth.* The information will help target programs, funds, and initiatives to where they will make the biggest impact.

Young people already have this knowledge. The YouthScan Project simply taps into their insight at a meaningful scale to elevate youth voice across Colorado.



HOW IT WORKS

The vision is for schools and districts across Colorado to engage their students in The YouthScan Project so the perspectives of young people everywhere can be captured in this effort. This project-based learning opportunity is free, easy, and impactful.

Implementation: The program is ten sessions that each require approximately one hour of time. It's independently-driven and flexible. The YouthScan Project can be implemented in a variety of ways, including:

- During 2-week quarantine periods, or any period of remote learning
- As an in-class or homework assignment
- During class periods with substitute teachers
- As a weekly club activity
- Students can sign up to participate independently of school

Format: A user-friendly portfolio with simple step-by-step instructions for each session. Students can submit their portfolio at the end of the ten sessions for an optional grade.

Academics: The YouthScan Project hits on 28 Colorado Academic Standards across five subject areas: Reading, Writing, & Communicating, Comprehensive Health, Social Studies, Mathematics, and Computer Science.

Launch with your Students: All teachers need to do is send a list of emails of participating students to info@youthroots.org. We will give each student access to their own copy of the curriculum via Google Sheets and instructions on getting started. (The curriculum is also available as a fillable PDF.) Once students submit, you can review their work and give an optional grade. It's that easy!

Final Product: A continually updating dashboard that captures new data in real time to inform the public about the biggest issues facing young people in Colorado. Users will be able to interact with the dashboard to view findings by age, demographic, and location. Questions the data might help answer include:

- Where in the state are youth mental health services needed most?
- How do the needs facing youth in rural Colorado differ than those in urban areas?
- How do the biggest needs in the San Luis Valley differ by race?

SESSION OVERVIEW

1. INTRODUCTION
2. RESEARCH
3. SURVEY
4. INTERVIEW PREP
5. INTERVIEWS

6. DATA ANALYSIS
7. SELECT ISSUES
8. VISUAL PROJECT
9. LITERARY PROJECT
10. SHARE RESULTS

EVERYBODY BENEFITS

Teachers and Schools:

- Access to free curriculum
- Partial solution to remote learning challenges
- Engage students in Project-Based Learning with tangible impact

Students:

- Opportunity to engage in meaningful community impact
- Connect to community
- Share your perspective with decision-makers

Community:

- Real-time and targeted data on the biggest issues facing youth
- Enables faster response time
- Unites communities

BEHIND THE PROJECT

The YouthScan Project is an initiative of YouthRoots, an award-winning leadership nonprofit that has been conducting youth-led needs assessments for over a decade.

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