

YOUR CASE, YOUR RIGHTS: YOUR GUIDE TO EXERCISING SELF-ADVOCACY



Surveys and Focus Group Process Overview

PROCESS OVERVIEW

The *Your Case, Your Rights: Your Guide to Exercising Self-Advocacy* project (2023–2024) created a [national map](#) with information on foster youth rights, a [Companion Guide](#), [Interactive Youth Journal](#), [Interactive Journal lite version](#) (condensed and written for a lower reading level), and [Attorney Brief](#). All were developed by and with the voices and direction of those with lived experience in foster care.

RESEARCH INVOLVEMENT

The products described above were created, edited, and reviewed by:

- Members of the [National Advisory Council on Children’s Legal Representation \(NACCLR\)](#) — young professionals with lived expertise in the child welfare system.
- Child welfare attorneys who have lived experience in foster care themselves.
- Staff of the [National Association of Counsel for Children \(NACC\)](#) — an organization that advances children’s and parents’ rights by supporting a diverse, inclusive community of child welfare lawyers to provide zealous legal representation and by advocating for equitable, anti-racist solutions co-designed by people with lived experience who helped research / fact check alongside NACC state coordinators.

SURVEY / FOCUS GROUPS

NACCLR team members led the development, distribution, and analysis of survey and focus groups that informed the entire project. This included creating the questions, collecting survey responses, and hosting focus groups.

- Surveys and focus group participants were those with lived experience in foster care and attorneys who advocated for youth involved in child welfare.



- Four focus groups were held in total, two were with former foster youth (62 participants), one with attorneys that advocate for foster youth (10 participants), and one for NACCLR members.
- There were 68 participants ages 18–30 from 30 states. Demographics included:
 - 84% Black, Indigenous, People of Color.
 - 56% female, 41.2% male, 1.5% nonbinary, gender queer or not exclusively male or female, and 1.5% preferring not to share.
 - 40% identified as LGBTQIA+.
 - 12% self-disclosed a disability.

WAYS FEEDBACK WAS INCORPORATED

- Following the surveys and focus groups, the *Your Case, Your Rights: Your Guide to Exercising Self-Advocacy* project team analyzed the data and identified key themes and strategies, including:
 - The need for these items due to:
 - Experiencing fear and intimidation.
 - Feeling powerless.
 - Having limited access to knowledge / meaningful support to know rights.
 - Experiencing ignorance or incompetence by professionals.
 - What to include
 - The topics to include in the final products
 - Building upon what has worked — such as being involved in the case planning, going to court as a foster youth, reaching out to people in power with data, passion, honesty, and willingness to assist in the process to move change, having step-by-step walk-throughs of how to address issues, and knowing where to find advocacy partners, resources, and more information.
 - Accessibility:
 - Using first vs. third person language.
 - Document formats: ensuring desktop, mobile and print formats.
 - Interactivity: website is clickable and an interactive journal was created
 - Distribution strategy:
 - Which organizations and systems to contact / locations to partner with to get information out to as many people and places as possible.

COMPENSATION

- The *Your Case, Your Rights: Your Guide to Exercising Self-Advocacy* project team members were paid as contractors for their work for development, editing, and distribution of the above-named products.
- Those that participated in the surveys and focused groups received payments through Venmo. ■