

# LEVELS OF YOUTH ENGAGEMENT



**DEPENDING ON AN ORGANIZATION'S GOALS AND CAPACITY**, there are various ways to include and empower newcomer youth when designing and implementing programs. The Annie E. Casey Foundation breaks down youth engagement into five helpful strategies.

## Youth-Led

Newcomer youth **drive** the planning, design, and implementation of the project, and **take responsibility for all aspects**

*EXAMPLE: School counselors at a local high school engage a group of newcomer students to create and run an orientation for newly-arrived newcomer youth. The group leads in every aspect, including planning, communication, decision-making, implementation, and impact evaluation.*

## Collaborate

Newcomer youth **partner with adult staff** to organize, plan, design, and execute the program deliverables, sharing **equal responsibility** of the project with adult staff

*EXAMPLE: A community-based organization creates a newcomer youth advisory council and appoints youth to help design and implement programs that directly impact them, alongside staff.*

## Involve

Newcomer youth **participate in** the entire program development process while adult staff still execute and manage the project

*EXAMPLE: A church attended by many newcomer families involves newcomer youth in planning a neighborhood clean-up. Newcomer youth share ideas on outreach strategies, activities, and program design. Adult staff oversee overall coordination and decision-making.*

## Consult

Adult staff communicate with newcomer youth to **gather input and feedback** during the program planning phase, while managing and executing all aspects of the project

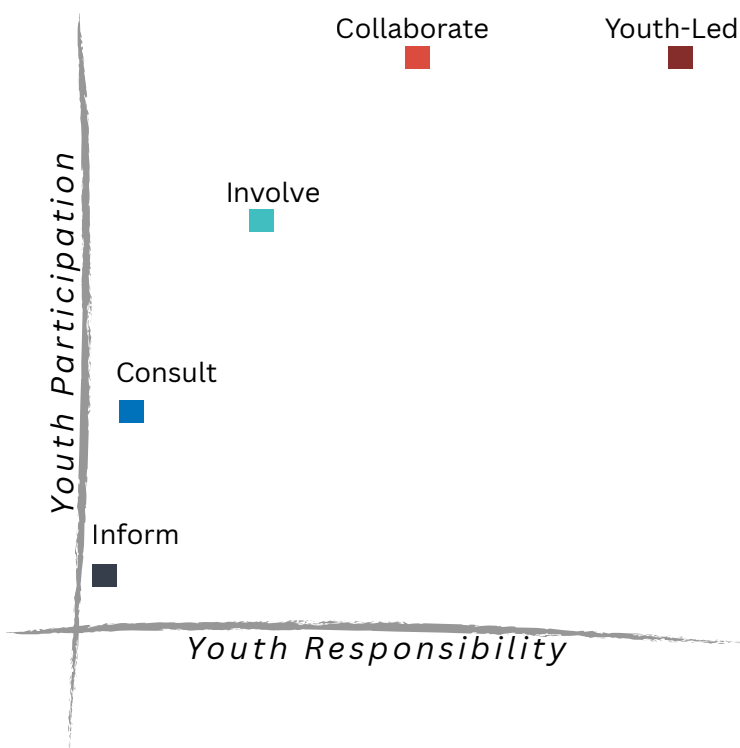
*EXAMPLE: A Youth Mentorship Program Coordinator invites newcomer youth to complete a feedback survey about a proposed program. Program staff analyze and incorporate feedback into program delivery.*

## Inform

Adult staff plan, design, and implement all aspects of the project, while youth are **briefed** on the project and **assigned roles** during implementation.

*EXAMPLE: Adult staff at a local community gardening nonprofit develop an after-school program for newcomer youth, recruit youth in local schools, and assign them to various roles within the project.*

Adapted from [Annie E. Casey Foundation](#) and [UNICEF](#)



This graph depicts each of the five engagement levels as they relate to one another. The Youth Responsibility axis represents how much responsibility and leadership youth have in the design, development, and implementation of a project, while the Youth Participation axis represents the amount of youth voice and participation.

**The more newcomer youth participate and are given responsibility over the process, the more ownership they have in addressing real needs for themselves and their communities. This is a great way to restore and build youth's agency and self-confidence.**

