

 **Shelby County YPAR Newsletter 1 (9/11/2023)** 

12 messages

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To: [Email List]

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 **Welcome to the first edition of the Shelby County YPAR Project Newsletter.** 

The goal of this weekly publication will be to share exciting updates about our Youth Participatory Action Research Project (YPAR), give you a chance to learn more about the people involved in it, and keep everyone informed about our next steps and upcoming events.

**It's been a BUSY September (& August too)**

In the last few weeks, we have passed a LOT of critical milestones. We were able to onboard our three amazing Local Research Coordinating organizations: [Beyond Educating Foundation](#) (representing Frasier), [RESPECT The Haven](#) (representing Whitehaven), and [The Collective Blueprint](#) (who will cover other areas of the County). We've already had two productive meetings with the coordinators.

We also presented the most recent version of the overall Project Plan to the Shelby County Youth and Education Subcommittee. If you missed that presentation, [here are the slides](#). Janet Lo also gave an update on the project to Shelby County Mayor Lee Harris and he's excited about our progress

**26+ applications to be Researchers!**

Most importantly, [we launched the form to apply to be a community researcher](#)! And since it went live just before Labor Day, ***we have had more than 26 applications from across the community***. While our local research coordinators have already started to vet the candidates, there is still time to help encourage young people you know to apply!

***We will be taking applications up to the end of the day on Sunday, September 17th!***

We've attached a flyer and social media graphic to this email. The job description can be found at:

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1w7Xf\\_Qx5YpM8V58g6e5FTitOJdebZW4PNt4wU1IGPPQ/edit#heading=h.5csqgt7t2yI3](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1w7Xf_Qx5YpM8V58g6e5FTitOJdebZW4PNt4wU1IGPPQ/edit#heading=h.5csqgt7t2yI3)

And, the application form is here:

<https://forms.gle/NJFoXKCP3EtmfFsKA>

Please help us get the word out!

## 👋 Meet our new YPAR Community Fellow: Josh Webster 👋



We're also excited to announce that **Josh Webster, our Local Initiatives Fellow for the Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) initiative joined the team this past Wednesday.** Josh is a native of Memphis, TN, and a graduate of Bethel University in McKenzie, TN. Prior to working with Code for America, Josh had been working with youth for over 15 years, engaging with them in various roles. He served as a K-12 teacher for 7 years, a case manager, and a membership coordinator. Josh is passionate about youth development and inspired by the potential he sees in the next generation.

*"What interests me most about this project is the ability to be a part of the discussion of change rather than being on the outside looking in. Hearing the stories of our youth's hardships and challenges, and then walking alongside them to find a solution brings me excitement."*

Josh has spent his first few days onboarding and looks forward to meeting everyone in the weeks to come!

### Next Steps

**Our goal is to have the 12 researchers hired by the end of September.** We will be accepting additional applications until the end of the day of Sunday, September 17th.

**We are planning an in-person project kick-off event with all the researchers for Wednesday, October 4th.** This three-hour event will help everyone involved in the project: researchers, research coordinators, and local stakeholders learn more about each other and build alignment about the goals of this project. More details about this event will be in next week's email.

**Training starts in early October.** We are working with our amazing training partners at the [Network for the Development of Children of African Descent \(NdCAD\)](#) to get the virtual and in-person training schedule set up. Once we have more details we will be sharing them with the broader Shelby County community.

### Important Upcoming Dates

**September 17th: The LAST day to get in researcher applications**

**September 19th @ 10:30am CT: Youth and Education: YPAR Advisory Committee Meeting** – The

- advisory committee will be discussing how to support the Shelby County YPAR project.
- **October 4th @ 5:30om CT: The Project Kickoff!**

### Comments or Questions?

We want to hear from you! If you have any questions or comments about how the project is going, please reach out to Matt Bernius, [mbernius@codeforamerica.org](mailto:mbernius@codeforamerica.org). We'd also LOVE feedback on how to improve future newsletters!

👁️ Be on the lookout for the next update a week from now! 👁️