



OCTOBER IS YOUTH JUSTICE ACTION MONTH. HERE ARE NINE WAYS TO CELEBRATE



October is Youth Justice Action Month. In a [proclamation](#) issued September 30th, President Biden called “upon States and communities to join [him] in seeking justice for our youth and modernizing our juvenile justice system, a system that should allow young people to build their lives and grow with freedom and dignity.”

The [Research Hub for Youth Organizing](#), which is based at CU Boulder’s School of Education and affiliated with the NEPC, partners with youth justice organizations on research and curricula relevant to their initiatives. Here are nine ways you can educate yourself and get involved in their work and the work of others.

1. Listen to students. [Student Voices](#) is a nonprofit that educates students about their rights and helps them tell their stories and advocate for themselves.
2. Explore “relationship-centered schools,” as defined by [Californians for Justice](#). This approach is based upon 10 months of youth-led action research surveying 2,000 students and interviewing 65 school leaders across California. It emphasizes the creation of trusting student-adult relationships that emphasize “confronting bias and trauma, uniting social and emotional learning with academics, and uniting people to lead together towards a shared vision for our schools.” For more information, go to <https://caljustice.org/our-work/rcs/>.
3. During the pandemic, confinement and detention has turned into a death sentence for too many youth who have contracted COVID behind bars. Read this [report](#) on the issue by [Puente](#), an organization of youth and adults impacted by law enforcement

abuse and attacks on migrants and immigrants in Arizona.

4. Volunteer. Organizations such as Padres & Jóvenes Unidos, a Colorado-based youth justice organization, are often [seeking youth and adults](#) to assist with their work.
5. Advocate. For example, [RISE Colorado](#) has developed guides to help parents advocate for their children at school.
6. Learn more about the current status and history of the field of youth organizing. *20 Years of Youth Power: The 2020 National Youth Organizing Field Scan* is based on a year-long study involving interviews and a survey of youth organizers.
7. Opportunities for youth internships and work—both volunteer and paid—have been severely limited by the pandemic, according to a [report](#) by [Philanthropiece](#), a non-profit organization based in Longmont, CO, with branches in Quiche, Guatemala and Baja California Sur, Mexico. Consider how you might offer youth opportunities for these real-world development experiences in a safe socially distanced or virtual manner.
8. Educate yourself about youth justice issues outside the United States. [Equal Education](#), for example, supports youth leadership and justice in South Africa. Philanthropiece's work includes [financial education in Mexico](#) and [social entrepreneurship in Guatemala](#).
9. The social justice movement that followed the murder of George Floyd at the hands of the Minneapolis police led to nationwide demands to rethink and diminish the role of school police. This youth-created [report](#) from the [Center for Popular Democracy](#) explains and quantifies ways in which law enforcement makes students feel unsafe at school and sustains the school-to-prison pipeline.

NEPC Resources on Democracy and Education

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