



FAQs About Being A Storyteller on Youth Voice Amplified

Before you decide whether or not to participate in our Youth Voice Amplified podcast, here is some information about the podcast to consider. We hope that after you read these answers to these frequently asked questions about the podcast you will better understand your rights to share your story in a way that respects your boundaries.

1. What is Youth Voice Amplified?

Youth Voice Amplified Podcast is a project within the Kern County Superintendent of Schools Office. Our mission is to give every young person a platform to tell their story and create positive change around them.

2. What is a podcast?

The Cambridge Dictionary defines a podcast as a program made available in digital audio or video files that a user can download from the Internet to a personal device to listen to at their convenience. Podcasts can vary in style, format, and content, but usually, a podcast series will feature one or more recurring hosts discussing a particular topic like video games or starting your own business. Also, the discussion and content within a podcast can range from carefully scripted to completely improvised or in the moment.

3. Why do you want to hear my story?

Lots of people are talking about youth voice today. Youth voice can mean many things but Youth Voice Amplified defines youth voice as the ideas, opinions, involvement, and initiative of people considered to be "young." We understand that these voices often go unheard and/or involvement with youth has often been marginalized. Therefore, Youth Voice Amplified lifts up the wisdom and insight of young people and what their testimonies and experiences tell us. How will we know what youth need, or what works and what doesn't work without hearing what young people have to say?

Lived experiences like yours also have the power to reduce stigmas and to inform and educate others as well as inspire youth who may be on the same journey as you. However, please remember that your decision to share your story is a personal choice - one that should never be forced upon you for any reason.

4. What is the goal of this podcast?

Youth can be champions and influencers for their own futures and other youth, however, we know that many youth voices aren't being heard right now. Overall, the goal of Youth Voice Amplified is to

give a platform for every young person to tell their story and create positive change. Our podcast audience can be anyone, however your story will be of particular relevance to those in education and youth-serving organizations who want to learn from your first-hand experiences and consider new ways to meet the needs of youth sharing the same experiences.

Each podcast episode is also developed as a resource for youth and by youth. Whether it be to hear their peers speak about overcoming challenges, being resilient in the face of adversity, or personal stories of inspiration, the podcasts are also resources for youth who seek advice and support from individuals their own age.

Youth Voice Amplified podcast recordings will be free to all listeners. No profit will be made from your story.

5. What can I expect if I agree to do this?

If you agree to participate, we will first ask you to participate in a one-hour to 90 minute conversation with hosts Gennessa Fisher and Brian Johnson either in person at the Dream Center or via Zoom at a date and time of your choosing. The questions Gennessa and Brian will discuss with you will be emailed to you a week before the first meeting. The Youth Voice Amplified team can also assist with transportation.

Telling your story may be a new and somewhat scary experience. At the first meeting, Gennessa and Brian will review the interview questions with you, answer your questions, and show you the recording equipment. So you are more comfortable telling your story, Gennessa and Brian will work with you on telling your story and give you opportunities to practice speaking with them, both on and off the microphone. You can also write down the answers to your interview questions on cards that you can refer to during the podcast recording.

Next, you will set a time and date for your interview recording at the Kern County Superintendent of Schools recording studio at 1300 17th Street in Bakersfield. Interviews can go as long as two hours or as short as 45 minutes. Youth Voice Amplified staff can also assist you with transportation services to and from the recording studio. At any time during the interview, you are welcome to stop and either schedule a later time to record or end your participation with the project. After the recording is over, Youth Voice Amplified hosts and staff will invite you to share a meal with them and talk about your experience recording the episode.

Soon after, a 'first cut' will be sent to you for comment and a 'final version' will be sent to you for your approval before the recording is uploaded. At these times, you can have anything you shared removed that you are uncomfortable with.

As compensation for your time we are offering a \$100 stipend upon your review and approval of the completed recording. You can stop participation at ANY time and still receive \$30.

Our storytellers (You) and your story will be treated with respect at all times. We will try to preserve the integrity of the story. We will always try to be flexible and sensitive to the needs of storytellers with regard to the place and pace of recording.

Our goal throughout this process is to create a safe and welcoming space where you can share your story and the challenges you are facing during this time, so please let us know what we can do to make this the best experience for you!

6. What are you going to do with my story? Where will it be housed? Who will be listening to it?

The recording of your story will only be an audio recording and it will first be housed on a website on the Kern County Superintendent of Schools Office. In addition, the podcast will be uploaded to Spotify through Buzzsprout Podcasting software. The podcast's audience is anyone, including youth as young as 13, however, we will be promoting the podcast to schools and youth-serving agencies for service improvement.

7. Are you going to tell me what I can say or what can't I say?

We want you to speak your truth. You are the expert of your own lived experiences. If you decide to share your story, be yourself and share from your viewpoint. You are not obligated to speak for anyone but yourself. You can also choose what parts of your story you would like to share. There may be aspects of your story that you don't feel comfortable sharing with others and you would like to keep private, and that is okay. In this case, it may be helpful for you to consider what other details you want to share that you believe will be the most helpful to the school and agency staff and youth who are listening.

The audience for this podcast is anyone, including youth as young as 13. We will be also promoting the podcast as a resource for schools and youth-serving agencies who wish to improve their services. Therefore, please limit excessive profanity that may distract listeners from your story and avoid inappropriate sexual references.

We ask that your story on the podcast cannot threaten others or do anything that deliberately smears another person who is out of the public eye. When referring to specific people, schools, and programs, only use names for positive comments. In other words, if you have something critical or a negative experience to share, please do not use names.

Youth Voice Amplified is part of the Kern County Superintendent of Schools Office and the office's non-discrimination policy prohibits discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying based on actual or perceived ancestry, age, color, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, marital or parental status or association with a person or a group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics.

Youth Voice Amplified staff will reserve final editing rights to the podcast content in order to meet the Kern County Superintendent of Schools Office's non-discrimination policy and guidelines described above.

8. How will you protect my identity?

Your privacy and safety are our priority, however, the nature of a storytelling podcast cannot guarantee anonymity and absolute confidentiality. Even though it is audio and faceless, some people may recognize you by your voice or from details in your story. To help you maintain your privacy, the Youth Voice Amplified team will ask you to adopt a pseudonym or a fake first name. This name will be used during the interview and as part of the title. You will also be asked to use pseudonyms for family and friends who are part of your story, and to not share home addresses, phone numbers, social media account information, or any other information that may identify you. Again, we take seriously the privacy of our storytellers who participate in this podcast. If you have concerns about your safety, before or after the recording, please contact our team immediately.

9. What are possible risks and benefits from sharing my story publicly?

Sharing your story about your experiences, and about what's important to you, is an easy and effective way to create change, start conversations and connect with the people around you. This can

be especially powerful for young people who do not always feel that they have the chance to help others. However, there can be risks in sharing your story on the Youth Voice Amplified podcast that we want you to know. First, it is important for you to imagine what the impact of sharing your story on a podcast will be on you and those who are part of your story. It may be uncomfortable to bring up trauma associated with your story. Storytellers on Youth Voice Amplified will be offered emotional support during and after telling their stories on the podcast in addition to linking you to additional community resources and services. It may be helpful to let a trusted parent or guardian, friend, counselor or teacher know that you plan to share your story. That way, they can be there for you before and afterwards, if needed.

Stories in the digital world last forever, so we also want you to consider the exposure that your story will bring to you. Once information is shared and accessible by the public, there is no going back and it can be difficult to contain. It is important for you to consider how sharing your story could impact future employment, academic pursuits, a court or legal case, and relationships with family and friends - now or in the future.

With that being said, please also know that sharing your story can make a difference in many ways—to your own life, other youth, and to the community. For example, sharing your story has the potential to help someone else feel less alone. Have you listened to someone talk about their life and thought, ‘Wow, someone else has been through that too? I thought it was just me!’ Lived experiences like yours also have the power to reduce stigmas and to inform and educate others. In addition, schools and programs that meaningfully incorporate youth voice into their programming provide more responsive services.

Youth who have taken part in our previous storytelling projects have also told us that sharing their story was healing and it benefited them to know that their personal stories did matter and their insight was valued. Some youth storytellers also reported that they gained confidence from such opportunities to build awareness of issues that matter to them and be part of the solution to a problem. With these benefits and risks in mind, please remember that it is still perfectly okay if you decide to pull back and not do the podcast at any time.

10. Am I ready to share?

Take time to ask yourself if you are ready to share your story with others. If you don't feel ready or comfortable doing so, you don't have to. Even if you have shared your story publicly before, you still have the right to say no.

11. What if I change my mind about sharing my story or if I want the recording taken down afterwards?

We will not record a story unless we have your prior permission and signed consent from you; we will provide whatever information is necessary about the process and answer your questions so such consent can be given. After you have reviewed the final recording, you will be asked to sign a consent form agreeing to the use of the final version of the story as an educational and learning resource intended to improve the quality and responsiveness of services for youth and students in our community.

You can withdraw your consent or participation at any stage of the process, including after the recording is published. If you want a recording to be taken down, please contact Kim Silva at kisilva@kern.org or call 661-636-4900. Your recording will be removed from the Kern County

Superintendent of Schools website and from the Spotify podcast directory within 24 hours of a business day after receiving your request and confirming your identity as the Storyteller.

12. What can I expect after I do the podcast?

Sharing your story may be an emotional experience. In addition to debriefing with our Youth Voice Amplified team, it may be helpful to let a trusted parent or guardian, friend, counselor or teacher know that you plan to share your story. That way, they can be there for you before and afterwards, if needed.

Gennessa and Brian will check in with you after the podcast airs and ask you how you felt about it. If you like, we would like to maintain contact with you and include you as an ongoing part of our Youth Voice Amplified community and future events. This could be gatherings with other guests, leadership development workshops, youth advisory committees, or other storytelling events.

13. Who can I contact if I need more information?

Your participation in Youth Voice Amplified is voluntary. If you have any questions, you can contact the hosts Gennessa Fisher at gefischer@kern.org or Brian Johnson at brjohnson@kern.org. You can also call the Youth Voice Amplified program office at the Kern County Superintendent of Schools Office at 661-636-4900. If you have any questions about your rights as a guest on the podcast or if you would like to talk to someone other than the hosts, you can contact Kim Silva at 661-636-4948 or at kisilva@kern.org.