OVERVIEW
The Youth Mentoring Action Network (YMAN) is a Black-led, youth-centered organization dedicated to building and amplifying the power of youth of color—with a particular focus on low-income youth of color, Black girls, and LGBQT+ youth—both in the Inland Empire (IE; Riverside and San Bernardino counties) of California and nationally. We provide programming that focuses on leadership development, college and career preparedness, arts, wellness, and civic engagement. Young people serve on our Board of Directors, work for us, and design and lead our programs.

The linchpin uniting these activities is critical mentoring, an innovative perspective that reframes the mentoring experience as a youth-centered one, with an emphasis on race, ethnicity, class, citizenship, gender, and sexuality. Throughout all our programming, volunteer mentors serve as supportive and trustworthy adults in the lives of YMAN youth participants and are available through a mix of one-on-one and group mentoring.

COMMUNITY NEED
Youth of color, particularly Black girls and young women, are among those affected most by the intersectional forces of racism and sexism and that create systemic barriers and sustain institutionalized disparities in opportunity, academic achievement, and career advancement. Research shows that, in comparison to their non-Black peers, Black girls have less access to programs and activities that boost their chances of success in school and life. Other BIPOC youth, such as Latinx women and girls, also face both gender and racial discrimination that limit their economic, social, and other opportunities. And LGBTQ+ people are more likely than straight people to face poverty, food insecurity, and economic hardship because of discrimination and bigotry.

This is in addition to the amplified racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and other forms of hatred and bigotry that have been on the rise in recent years contributing to increased anxiety, depression, and stress, especially among Black, Brown, and queer young people.

Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic has not only taken a toll on the youth we serve and their families—educationally, economically, and emotionally—it has also impacted how we have engaged youth over the past 18 months. The year, 2022, will be a pivotal moment in re-imagining youth engagement and YMAN’s empowering programming.
BLACK GIRLS (EM)*POWER is a leadership development initiative, featuring individualized and small group mentoring, that centers on creation of spaces where young Black women meet, build skills and knowledge, and amplify their collective voice and power.

*EM = Education and Mentoring

THE INLAND EMPIRE YOUTH WELLNESS COLLABORATIVE promotes exercise, mindfulness, life-skills building, and self-empowerment for youth of color, ages 12-25, through partnerships with a community garden, community boxing gym, youth advocacy organization, therapists, and others.

YOUTH ARTISTS COLLECTIVE provides education, development, and resources to young artists. For example, we run a 7-week STEAM and music academy for young musicians.

YOUTH POWER, YOUTH LEAD mentors and pays a cohort of ten IE youth to develop leadership skills and apply those skills to leading mission and activities of YMAN.

V vision for 2022

To continue to build youth power through transformative mentoring, education, and wellness opportunities, our objectives in 2022 include:

✓ Sharpening and sustaining best practices of current programming.
✓ Expanding our geographic reach within the Inland Empire and growing the number of youth and volunteer participants.
✓ Launching the Black Girls (EM)Power National Fellowship Program to support young Black women who are already doing critical work in communities.
✓ Launching QuTIE (Queer Trans Inland Empire) to serve as a hub to identify needs of LGBTQ+ youth in the IE, connect youth to available resources, and fill the gap in resources at YMAN.

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