



This mural is located in the Upham's Corner area of Dorchester.

Our Mission

We aim to protect and advance the legal and human rights of children and to promote their healthy development through active partnerships with the community. We strive to ensure that every child has access to zealous legal representation, essential community-based services, and a quality education.

Our Achievements

- ➔ In 2001, YAP was recognized by the U.S. Department of Justice as a “model juvenile defender agency.”
- ➔ In 2002, YAP became the first juvenile defender organization in the country to receive the National Legal Aid and Defender Association’s highest honor.
- ➔ “If it wasn’t for YAP, I wouldn’t be working and in school right now. I’d be in jail.”
- YAP client, age 15

YOUTH ADVOCACY PROJECT

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www.youthadvocacyproject.org

YOUTH ADVOCACY PROJECT

DEFENDERS IN THE COURTROOM | PARTNERS IN THE COMMUNITY

Who We Are

The Youth Advocacy Project (YAP) provides legal representation for Boston’s indigent children charged with criminal offenses. YAP integrates the work of attorneys, social workers, community outreach workers, and a psychologist to fully address the legal and developmental needs of our clients. YAP, established in 1992, is one of two juvenile defender units of the state's public defender office, the Committee for Public Counsel Services, and represents hundreds of children each year.



This mural of local youth is part of a Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative mural in Roxbury.

“We are guilty of many errors and many faults, but our worst crime is abandoning the children. Many of the things we need can wait. The child cannot. Right now is the time his bones are being formed, his blood is being made, and his mind is being developed. To him, we cannot answer ‘tomorrow.’ His name is ‘today.’”

-Gabriela Mistral, “The Name of the Child Is Today”

YOUTH ADVOCACY PROJECT
SERVICES

LEGAL SERVICES

YAP's five staff attorneys provide quality representation to children in all stages of the juvenile justice process. Typically, every child is assigned an attorney and a social worker, who are joined, when necessary, by the staff psychologist, an education attorney and/or a community outreach worker to form a comprehensive team. We help our clients, their families, and the court system develop strategies for long-term success by:

- ◆ Providing delinquency and education representation
- ◆ Encouraging youth and their families to participate actively in their own cases
- ◆ Advocating for alternatives to detention and confinement
- ◆ Administering social service assessments
- ◆ Building active and productive partnerships within the community, helping YAP connect its clients with local services
- ◆ Helping children develop the tools they need to lead productive and fulfilling lives



This scene from a mural located on Dudley Street in Roxbury was created by local youth from the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative.

YOUTH ADVOCACY PROJECT
INITIATIVES

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Community Outreach and Partnering staff is dedicated to fostering a proactive relationship between YAP and the communities it serves through the formation of alliances with youth worker networks, teen councils, neighborhood initiatives, and state agencies. Community Outreach offers a series of law-related workshops and has reached more than 1,200 youth at 117 different community-based organizations in the last two years alone.

THE EDLAW PROJECT

Children charged as delinquents and youthful offenders are disproportionately likely to have experienced educational difficulties. In 2000, YAP and the Children's Law Center of Massachusetts, Inc., founded the EdLaw Project to address this overarching concern. Edlaw engages in direct representation in school matters, community empowerment, and system reform to ensure children receive the education they need and deserve.

JUVENILE DEFENSE NETWORK

The Juvenile Defense Network (JDN) provides information, training, and support to hundreds of juvenile defenders across the state. By holding workshops, providing a resource center for case-specific advice, creating a web database and email list for advocates to share information, and distributing hardcopy mailings featuring updates on juvenile law, the JDN helps bar advocates to achieve a high standard of youth representation.

Since 1992, YAP has provided representation in over 7,000 juvenile cases and 500 administrative hearings, and has offered consultations to over 3,500 indigent clients.