

# Starting the Summer at VAYLA

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Hi everyone! My name is Divya, I use she/her/hers pronouns, and I am a rising senior at Tulane studying Public Health and Spanish on the Pre-Medical track. I have posted on this blog previously as a research assistant on a Working and Nursing study in the Tulane Sociology department, but I am so excited to be returning to the program this summer as a reproductive justice intern at VAYLA!!

I admire VAYLA's mission to equip youth of color with the necessary tools to speak for themselves and make an impact in public policy. As an AAPI organization, VAYLA

has a unique focus on communities that have been previously left out of reproductive justice discussions. This summer, I will be working within the youth reproductive justice program. So far, I have begun reading AAPI Racial Justice workshops and started working on curriculum for the youth reproductive justice program.

I will also be working on VAYLA's social media and outreach. I'm excited to gain awareness about reproductive justice work in New Orleans, knowledge about developing a reproductive justice curriculum, and a greater proficiency in graphic design. Additionally, I hope to improve my public speaking and storytelling skills through helping to lead the reproductive justice program at VAYLA. I think it is important to learn to speak in a variety of contexts, and I would also like to become more comfortable sharing information about my identity and my experiences. I am also interested in creating a college student and high school student mentorship program with a specific focus on AAPI communities. High school is a vulnerable time during which many adolescents struggle with career goals, family conflicts, and identity; having a relationship with an older student who has been in similar situations recently could be helpful to high school students. Overall, I think interning at VAYLA will be a great opportunity for me to grow as an advocate for reproductive justice, especially within the AAPI community.