



# **TEXAS YOUTH AND GOVERNMENT**

## How to Lead a Club Overview

### **Module 1: The Beginning**

Complete this module before school starts, or as soon as possible after school starts.

This module covers:

- Section descriptions
- How to choose a section for your club
- Your commitment as an advisor
- How to connect with your YMCA
- Getting permission to start your club

### **Module 2: Recruitment**

Complete this module as soon as possible after school starts.

This module covers:

- The commitment required of students
- Benefits of participation in YG
- Tips to recruit students into your club

### **Module 3: Club Meetings**

Complete this module before your first club meeting.

This module covers:

- What happens at club meetings
- How frequently should clubs meet
- Attendance expectations
- Role of student officers

### **Module 4: Registration and Fundraising**

Complete this module before your first club meeting.

This module covers:

- How to register your club and students
- Fundraising ideas

### **Module 5: Training and Preparation**

Complete this module before your second club meeting.

This module covers:

- How to prepare students for participation each section

### **Module 6: Team Building**

Complete this module before your second club meeting.

This module covers:

- Importance of developing group cohesion and a feeling of belonging in all students
- Types of team building activities

### **Module 7: Developing Student Leadership**

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Complete this module within a month of starting your club.

This module covers:

- Development of leadership skills in club members
- How to set up effective peer mentorship

## **Module 8: District Conference**

Complete this module at least two weeks before District Conference.

This module covers:

- What to expect on the day of District Conference
- How to prepare for State Conference



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## How to Lead a Club Module 1: The Beginning

### Learning Objectives

After reviewing this module, advisors will be able to:

- Identify which program section(s) would be the best fit for their situation
- Connect with a YMCA staff liaison to discuss club formation
- Present information about YG to school administrators in order to promote club formation
- Describe the roles, responsibilities, and commitment of YG advisors

### Tasks

#### Do Your Research

High School YG includes Legislative, Judicial, State Affairs Forum, and Media sections. Middle School YG includes Legislative, State Affairs Forum, and Media sections.

Follow the links below to read short descriptions of each section.

Learn more about the [Legislative section](#).

Learn more about the [Judicial section](#).

Learn more about the [State Affairs Forum section](#).

Learn more about the [Media section](#).

To form a club, you need to select at least one section in which students will participate. You may base this decision on your own interests, the number of students who you expect to participate, or student interests. It's best to start your club with students participating in just one, or at most two sections. See the "Tips and Tricks" section below for more insights into this choice.

Becoming a YG advisor requires a significant commitment of time and energy to ensure that students receive the preparation they need to successfully participate in the program. Read through these [advisor expectations](#) and confirm that you will be able to fulfill the role of advisor.

#### Get Connected

Connect with a YMCA staff member to discuss forming a club. Use this [tool](#) to find your District Director.

Next, meet with your principal or other school administrator to get permission to start a club. Administrators should be aware of competition dates and days that you and the students will need to miss school. Make

sure you are familiar with your school's policies and procedures regarding taking students off campus.

**Tips**

**How to Choose a Section**

**Judicial**

**Trial Court**

Trial Court teams are composed of five to eight students. Two students participate as attorneys, and the remainder of the team members act as witnesses. Students can also participate in this section individually as judges.

**Appellate Court**

Appellate Court teams are composed of two students who participate as attorneys. Students can also participate in this section individually as judges.

This section is a good choice if your students would like to work in teams and enjoy composing arguments, role-playing, and debating.

If you would like to participate in this section, evaluate what teams you could form with the number of students you have. For example, if you have nine students, you could make one trial team and one appellate team. If your students don't want to participate in Appellate Court, then you will have one student too many for a trial team.

**Legislative**

Students in the Legislative section write, present, and debate bills. This section is a good choice if your students would like to work individually and enjoy writing, researching, and debating.

**State Affairs Forum**

The State Affairs Forum uses the structure of committee hearings to encourage debate, allow discussion, and foster in-depth understanding of problems faced in Texas, the nation, and the world. Students in this section work individually or in teams of two to three. This section is a good choice if your students would like to work individually or in teams and enjoy writing, researching, and debating.

**Media**

Students in the Media section work with other delegates to report on District and State Conferences. This section is a good choice if your students are interested in journalism and would like to work in a fast-paced environment with other students from all over the state.



## **Curriculum Connection**

For more information about each program section, access and view the first lesson for each section through the curriculum hyperlinks found in the Advisor Tools tab of the [Resource Portal](#).

## **What's Next: Module 2**

Recruit students to join your club!



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## How to Lead a Club Module 2: Recruitment

### Learning Objectives

After reviewing this module, advisors will be able to:

- Describe the commitment required by students to participate in YG
- Explain the benefits of participation in YG
- Recruit students to join a newly formed club

### Tasks

#### Plan

Read through the [Student Code of Conduct](#) to become familiar with what is expected of YG participants. In addition to adhering to the rules outlined in the code of conduct, students must be willing to commit to regular attendance at club meetings, maintaining the academic and behavioral standards required by their schools for extracurricular participation, and preserving a cooperative relationship with students and advisors.

Browse the [Texas YG website](#) to compile a list of leadership skills that your students will gain through participation in YG. Examples include public speaking, team work, argument formation, debate, and time management.

Review information about [District and State Conferences](#) in order to share with students.

#### Recruit

Next, recruit students to join your club!

Strategies include:

- Present information about YG in your own classes
- Present information about YG in as many social studies classes as you can arrange
- Put up flyers in any area where other clubs or extracurriculars display their information
- Hold a meeting for students to learn more about YG
- After securing the participation of a few students with strong leadership qualities, ask them to help spread the word and bring in friends

### Tips

- Providing food at the initial interest meeting is a sure way to increase



students' enjoyment of the event.

- Prioritize quality over quantity when it comes to student participants. Ensure that each student who joins your club is ready to make the commitment required.
- Communicate clearly with interested students about the conference dates, paperwork deadlines, costs, and time commitment associated with YG.
- Ask social studies teachers in advance who they specifically recommend for YG, and follow up with those students individually.
- Diversify the age range of your club as much as possible; a club full of seniors will completely start over after one year.

### **Curriculum Connection**

For more information about each program section, access and view the first lesson for each section through the curriculum hyperlinks found in the Advisor Tools tab of the [Resource Portal](#).

### **What's Next: Module 3**

Learn how to run club meetings!



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## How to Lead a Club Module 3: Club Meetings

### Learning Objectives

After reviewing this module, advisors will be able to:

- Hold officer elections to develop student leadership
- Plan effective club meetings
- Explain expectations regarding student participation in meetings

### Tasks

#### Plan

Read page 4-5 of the [Delegation Manual](#) for information about how to run club meetings.

Important highlights include:

- Delegations should meet at least every other week
- Advisors will have a larger leadership role in meetings at the beginning of the program cycle, but student leaders should take ownership when possible
- Hold elections for student officers early in the program cycle
- Club meetings should include team building, section-specific training and preparation, research, and practice sessions

After you hold an initial interest meeting and have a group of students committed to participating in YG, decide on a regular day, time, and location for club meetings.

Sample club meeting:

4:30-4:40 Take attendance, team building activity

4:40-4:45 Announcements (registration, fundraising, due dates, etc.)

4:45-5:30 Section-specific training and preparation (see curriculum for support)

#### First Club Meeting

1. If you haven't already chosen which section your club will participate in, make that decision at this meeting.
2. Share registration information with students.
3. Brainstorm fundraising ideas with students.
4. Engage in lots of team building! Learn names and get to know one another.
5. Explain available officer positions and ask students to consider



running for office.

### Tips

In order to schedule club meetings, it's best to account for other extracurricular activities that have fixed times, like athletic events or theater rehearsals. It could be helpful to use an online scheduling tool (e.g. [Doodle](#)) for students to vote on what days/times work best.

Each club can determine the number and type of student officer positions. Most clubs have at least a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. Hold officer elections early in the program cycle and establish roles and expectations with student officers.

Sample officer duties:

**President:** presides over club meetings, maintains order, ensures deadlines are met, models exemplary compliance with Code of Conduct, maintains contact with club advisor, serves as spokesperson for club

**Vice President:** assists president as needed, assumes duties of president in president's absence, serves as spokesperson for club

**Secretary:** maintains attendance records, notifies members of meetings and events, reminds members of deadlines, assists members with registration

**Treasurer:** researches and plans fundraising opportunities, enthusiastically participates in all fundraisers, tracks progress toward funding goals, assists members with application for financial aid

What if my students participate in more than one program section?

If you have delegation members in multiple sections of YG (e.g. Legislative and Media), your club meetings will need to provide more differentiated guidance and support for students.

Suggestions:

- Keep all students together as you open the meeting, take attendance, and make announcements, and then divide students into sections to work on curriculum.
- Designate a student leader for each section. Meet with student leaders before club meetings and ensure that they know the curriculum plan for the upcoming club meeting.
- Allow student leaders to guide the rest of the students through the curriculum and training for their section. For example, one student leader facilitates Media Lesson 2 for a group of four Media students while a different student leader facilitates Legislative Lesson 2 for a group of 12 Legislative students. In this situation, your role as an



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advisor would be to divide your time between the groups and support as needed.

- Students could use your computer/projector or a personal/classroom computer with everyone gathered around.

## **Curriculum Connection**

Each section has an eight-lesson curriculum that you can access through the hyperlinks found in the Advisor Tools tab of the [Resource Portal](#). Now that you have selected the section in which your students will participate, review that section's curriculum and implement it in your club meetings. One lesson per meeting is recommended.

## **What's Next: Module 4**

Register your club and begin fundraising!



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## How to Lead a Club Module 4: Registration and Fundraising

### Learning Objectives

After reviewing this module, advisors will be able to:

- Register their club and guide students through individual registration for YG participation
- Describe conference fees and ways to cover them
- Plan effective fundraisers with participation from students

### Tasks

#### Registration

Read the [Registration Information](#) and access the links on the YG website. Each club, advisor, and student, whether new or returning, must complete a registration form every year. It's preferable to complete all registrations online, but a printable version is available if needed.

Be sure to follow your school's procedures to put conference dates on the calendar. Secure parental permission and arrange transportation for students well in advance of conference dates, in accordance with your school's policies.

#### Fundraising

Delegates pay a District and State Conference registration fee. On average, District Conference fees range from \$40 to \$100 and State Conference fees range from \$325 to \$400. Fees can be paid out of pocket, from fundraising proceeds, and/or from financial assistance based on income.

Advisors are also responsible for fees to cover hotel and meal costs. Advisor fees can be paid out of pocket, from fundraising proceeds, or from your school.

Be sure to follow your school's policies regarding fundraising.

Since fees are due in advance of conferences, fundraising should begin quickly once a club is formed. Fundraising ideas include:

- Sell food after school
- Host a student event that requires ticket purchase (dance/video game competition/movie night/5K, etc.)
- Organize a car wash
- Sell concessions at athletic events
- Partner with a restaurant to receive a portion of proceeds



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- Ask local businesses to sponsor your club
- Offer a parents' night out with student delegates providing babysitting

## **Tips**

Student participation in fundraisers is crucial; don't fall into the pattern of planning and executing fundraisers on your own. Ensure that students actively participate in choosing, planning, and carrying out each fundraiser.

Set a goal based on the dollar amount per student that your delegation is hoping to cover through fundraising. For example, if you want to offset costs by \$50.00 per student and there are 10 students in your club, set a fundraising goal of \$500.00.

Post a graphic in your classroom to track fundraising (e.g. empty bottle that you color in as you approach your goal).

## **Curriculum Connection**

## **What's Next: Module 5**

Prepare your students to participate in their section!



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## How to Lead a Club Module 5: Training and Preparation

### Learning Objectives

After reviewing this module, advisors will be able to:

- Guide students through the training necessary to successfully participate in their chosen section

### Tasks

Although registration, fundraising, and announcements are important tasks that must be accomplished through club meetings, the heart of YG participation is preparation for District and State Conferences. How your students prepare will look very different depending on their section, which is why it's helpful to start a club with students participating in only one section.

#### Legislative

Students participating in the Legislative section will need to prepare by conducting research, writing a bill, presenting a bill, and debating various bills. The curriculum available (see Curriculum Connection below) will be a great support for you and your club to prepare for District and State Conferences.

Find additional Legislative resources [here](#).

#### Judicial

Students participating in the Judicial section in Trial Court will need to prepare by learning the case materials, deciding on team roles (attorney/witness), constructing defense and prosecution arguments, and practicing arguments in a mock trial setting. In Appeals Court, students will prepare by learning the case materials, assigning responsibilities to each partner, conducting research, composing briefs, and practicing delivery of Appellant and Appellee arguments. The curriculum available (see Curriculum Connection below) will be a great support for you and your club to prepare for District and State Conferences.

Find additional Judicial resources [here](#).

#### State Affairs Forum

Students participating in the State Affairs Forum will need to prepare by selecting a topic, conducting research, writing a proposal, selecting visual aids, presenting a proposal, and engaging in debate. The curriculum available (see Curriculum Connection below) will be a great support for you

and your club to prepare for District and State Conferences.

Find additional State Affairs Forum resources [here](#).

## Media

Students participating in the Media section will need to prepare by selecting a specific role within the section, practicing interviews, recognizing bias, writing stories/captions, and engaging in peer revision. The curriculum available (see Curriculum Connection below) will be a great support for you and your club to prepare for District and State Conferences.

Find additional Media resources [here](#).

## Tips

In addition to working through the curriculum of your chosen section, students should spend extra time practicing specific skills they will need to be successful in YG and beyond. Observe individual students during club meetings and provide feedback on what skills they should continue to practice.

Examples:

- Speaking pace and volume: do students need to speak more loudly, slowly, or naturally?
- Body language: do students hold themselves in a way that conveys confidence?
- Team work: is each student contributing to the team positively and cooperatively?
- Time management: are students focusing on the task at hand?

## Curriculum Connection

Each section has an eight-lesson curriculum that you can access through the hyperlinks found in the Advisor Tools tab of the [Resource Portal](#). You may or may not have time to implement all of the curriculum depending on your school's calendar and how quickly you formed your club, so it's recommended that you individually review all lessons associated with your chosen section and decide how best to use the lessons for your club and schedule.

## What's Next: Module 6



# **TEXAS YOUTH AND GOVERNMENT**

Build your students into a team!



## Learning Objectives

After reviewing this module, advisors will be able to:

- Use team building activities to develop relationships among students and advisors
- Develop a feeling of belonging in all students
- Promote the value of cooperation and group decision-making

## Tasks

Team building is a critical component of every YG club. As students learn to cooperate through a variety of tasks, games, and experiences, they will grow in social-emotional intelligence and develop group cohesion.

### Plan

Read p.13-14 of the [Delegation Handbook](#) for a description of the purpose and strategies associated with team building.

The Delegation Handbook contains activities divided into the following categories:

- Initial Exercises (beginning on p.15)
- Group Exercises (beginning on p.21)
- Closure Exercises (beginning on p.24)
- Character Development (beginning on p.29)
- Conflict Resolution (beginning on p.32)

It's not necessary to read through every activity right now! Instead, try to plan ahead to incorporate one activity per club meeting from whichever category you think is most appropriate for your club's current circumstances.

### Implement

Ensure that you have the materials, time, and space to implement the activity you choose. Feel free to make any adjustments necessary to suit your group size and demographics. Most importantly, make sure that every team building activity leaves the group feeling more connected, more positive, and more willing to work together to achieve the club's goals.

## Tips

Pay particular attention to students who seem quiet, shy, or disconnected





from the group. They will need the most encouragement to participate in team activities.

When it becomes necessary to redirect or reprimand a student, make all attempts to have a private discussion. This avoids embarrassing the student and provoking a reaction in front of an audience of other students.

It's easier to prevent conflict through proactive approaches than it is to resolve conflict that has been allowed to grow unchecked. As the program cycle progresses, watch for situations that could provoke conflict. Examples include uneven division of labor among team members, outside drama being brought into YG, and personality clashes.

### **Curriculum Connection**

### **What's Next: Module 7**

Develop leadership skills in your students!



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## How to Lead a Club Module 7: Developing Student Leadership

### Learning Objectives

After reviewing this module, advisors will be able to:

- Encourage the growth of leadership skills in all club members
- Develop successful peer mentorship relationships among club members

### Tasks

The mission of YG is to help young people become responsible citizens and future leaders of our country. In order to accomplish this mission, each club advisor must foster the personal growth and leadership development of all students.

#### Leadership Skills

While participation in YG is a great way to foster “hard skills” such as reading comprehension and professional writing, students in YG will benefit for life if they pay particular attention to the development of “soft skills.” Soft skills are non-measurable, subjective skills such as work ethic, communication, emotional intelligence, teamwork, and problem solving.

See Section I of the “Cross Disciplinary Standards” of the [Texas College and Career Readiness Standards](#) for more detailed descriptions of important skills to foster in your YG students.

#### Peer Mentorship

Your club should have diversity in the age of student participants; capitalize on this diversity by establishing peer mentor relationships. Peer mentorship is a two-way, reciprocal learning activity in which younger students benefit from the support and encouragement of older students and older students gain valuable experience in serving others.

Assign peer mentor partners. It’s ideal to pair older and younger students together, but if this isn’t possible based on your student demographics you can pair same-age students. Peer mentors should check in with each other regularly (perhaps establish a two-minute check-in at the beginning of each club meeting).

In your first year as a YG club, all students (even the older ones) are learning the process together. If you establish peer mentorship as a part of your club at this point, students will benefit in future years as older students who are familiar with YG are able to guide new, younger students into full participation in the program.



## **Tips and Tricks**

In the busyness of fulfilling your role as a YG advisor and your regular job duties , it's normal to feel like you are only capable of satisfying the basic responsibilities of being an advisor. Encouraging the development of soft skills in your students does take awareness, but not necessarily extra time, and the results are so important!

Don't try to address too many skills at one time. Perhaps you could choose a different skill to watch for during each club meeting. This week, pay attention to how students work together. Give praise and positive attention to those who display great teamwork, and gently redirect those who become argumentative, domineering, or unhelpful toward others. Next week you could choose to focus on how efficiently students are using their time.

## **Curriculum Connection**

## **What's Next: Module 8**

Prepare yourself and your students for District Conference!

## How to Lead a Club Module 8: District Conference

<h3>Learning Objectives</h3>
<p>After reviewing this module, advisors will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain to students what to expect on the day of District Conference</li> <li>• Prepare and train students for participation in State Conference</li> </ul>
<h3>Tasks</h3>
<p><b>Before District Conference</b> All YG students are expected to participate in the District Conference specific to their geographical region.</p> <p>The District Conference is an event in which students compete to qualify for spots in the State Conference. This one-day event provides students with valuable experience and expert feedback as they prepare for the next step in the program cycle. Not all students qualify for State Conference; the number of spots available in each section varies depending on how many total students participate in a given year.</p> <p>Find up-to-date information about District and State Conference <a href="#">here</a>, and ensure that you share details with students.</p> <p><b>After District Conference</b> At the club meeting after District Conference, hold a time of reflection about the students’ experiences and any feedback they received from peers and evaluators. Use this feedback to formulate a plan with students to enhance strengths and address weaknesses. The time between District and State Conference is crucial for training and preparation; be sure that students utilize all of it appropriately (including your school’s scheduled winter break, if possible).</p>
<h3>Tips</h3>
<p>It can be emotional and overwhelming for students to compete for the first time. Your first-year students will be engaging with students who have years of experience participating in YG. Before, during, and after the conference, remind students that doing their best is all that is expected of them, and it’s normal that they may perform at a lower objective level than peers with more experience.</p>



## Curriculum Connection

If you were not able to work through all of the curriculum for your section before District Conference, you could use the time between District and State Conference to include any additional lessons that you wanted to implement with your students. The hyperlinks can be found in the Advisor Tools tab of the [Resource Portal](#).

## What's Next

Use the information you've gathered throughout the program cycle to prepare your students for State Conference!