



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# DEMOCRACY'S NEXT GENERATION

## YOUTH & GOVERNMENT

Youth & Government is a national YMCA program for high school and middle school students that prepares them for moral and political leadership through training in the theory and practice of developing public policy.

### MISSION

The mission of the YMCA Texas Youth & Government program is to help teenagers become responsible citizens and future leaders of our nation.

### GOAL

To create an environment in which students can increase their political awareness and understanding, while learning the meaning of social action through an actual experience in government.

### OVERVIEW

This youth-led, civic engagement program allows students to receive exciting hands-on experience in the mechanics of government, along with print and broadcast media. Students participate in their clubs, followed by competition at their local District Conference, and finally culminating in a 3-day State Conference at the Capitol in Austin, Texas. Students compete to be selected for the Conference on National Affairs and the National Judicial Competition.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Over the past 70 years, YMCA Texas Youth & Government student legislators have debated and passed hundreds of mock legislative bills. On occasion, these bills have ultimately become law in cities and states across the United States.



## BENEFITS OF STARTING A CLUB

We believe Youth & Government encourages teens to be civic-minded and socially responsible.

### Adult Club Advisors

- Spend time with students and create an environment of learning
- Build healthy, positive relationships with students
- Help club participants choose the section of Youth & Government in which to participate
- Register the club online for District and State Conferences
- Help students follow all payment and application deadlines
- Help students fundraise to offset fees
- Attend required advisor trainings at the beginning of the program year
- Volunteer at District and State Conference(s)
- Help select students to fill allocations at State Conference
- Enforce all YMCA policies at Conferences, including curfews and dress code

### Student Participants

- Gain understanding of formal and informal government structures
- Participate actively in the legislative, judicial, lobbyist and/or press process
- Become aware of societal issues and their resolutions
- Develop confidence in and dedication to the democratic process
- Learn participative leadership skills
- Enhance communication skills
- Listen to and learn to respect varying viewpoints
- Learn accountability and respect for others' rights
- Work alongside and learn from older, experienced students
- Apply moral and ethical valuing processes to public policy making
- Gain exposure to potential career opportunities
- Gain hands-on experience with parliamentary procedure, bill research, bill writing, judicial brief writing, public speaking training, position paper writing and debate training

## COLLABORATION BETWEEN YMCA AND SCHOOLS

### Students, Teachers and Principals

- Collaborate with local YMCA, or start at club.

### Recruit Students

- We welcome any teen who has an interest in gaining a better understanding of how our state government works.



### YMCA Staff Roles

- Facilitate club advisor communication with District Director and State Office
- Attend club meetings as needed to assist with trainings/conference preparations
- Assist club advisors with registration and document submission
- Volunteer at District and State Conference(s)
- Communicate information about conferences with club advisor and participants
- Help select students to fill allocations at State Conference
- Enforce all YMCA policies at Conferences, including curfews and dress code



# AREAS OF PARTICIPATION



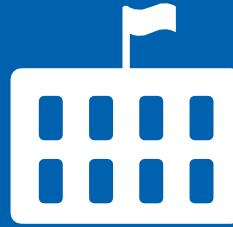
## LEGISLATIVE

Bills are debated, considered in committee and moved to house or senate for consideration



## JUDICIAL TRIAL OR APPELLATE

Gives students the knowledge of legal procedure, ability to communicate, questioning skills, reasoning ability and more to debate high press cases



## STATE AFFAIRS FORUM

Gives students the opportunity to develop healthy debate with peer across all subsections of politics on the state and national level



## MEDIA

Allows students to fully understand and practice the relationship of media with the government

### Legislative

- Discuss topics of student interest
- Research a selected policy area
- Write a bill
- Learn and follow Parliamentary Procedure
- Learn and utilize debate skills
- Utilize and increase public speaking skills

### Judicial

- Study a realistic criminal or civil case
- Learn trial/appellate court procedures
- Provide Burden of Proof for both prosecution and defense
- Write opening/closing statements and witness examination questions
- Write briefs as well as arguments for court

### State Affairs Forum

- Create solution for topics of concern
- Research selected topic
- Write proposal for solution
- Prepare visual aids to illustrate the issue
- Learn and utilize debate skills
- Utilize and increase public speaking skills

### Media

- Learn about journalism through completion of assignments
- Select area to participate: broadcast, print, social media, photojournalism
- Report on conferences, create broadcast videos, etc.

### Leadership Roles/Officers

- Elected Officers: Youth Governor, Lt. Governor, Secretary of State, Attorney General, Chief Justice, Print Editor, Broadcast Producer, President Pro-Tem of Senate and Speaker of the House
- Lobbyist Roles and Governors Cabinet (work with Youth Governor)

### For more information about Youth & Government, contact:

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