



**TEXAS YOUTH AND GOVERNMENT**



# **CLUB LEADER GUIDE**

**YMCA TEXAS YOUTH AND GOVERNMENT**

**2025-2026**

# CLUB LEADER GUIDE

---

Dear YMCA Youth and Government Club Leader,

Welcome to Texas Youth and Government. Whether you are returning or beginning this role for the first time, we are excited to have you join us. As a club leader, you play an essential role in helping students grow into informed, engaged citizens, and we are grateful for your commitment.

We are pleased to share the Youth and Government Club Leader Guide, a resource designed to support you throughout the year. It outlines what to expect as you lead your club, from weekly meetings in the fall to preparing for district and state conferences. You will also find helpful information about supporting students who may qualify to participate at the national level. This guide offers practical tips, timelines, and tools to help you run a strong and effective program.

Texas Youth and Government is part of a national YMCA initiative that prepares middle and high school students for moral and political leadership. Through hands on experiences in public policy, legislative processes, media, and more, students gain real world understanding of how government works. The mission of our program is to help teenagers become responsible citizens and future leaders of our nation.

Our motto, drawn from the words of Dr. Earle T. Hawkins, reminds us that democracy must be learned and earned by each generation. Youth cannot inherit democracy. They achieve it as adults provide them with opportunities and leadership. As a club leader, you help bring this to life by mentoring your students and creating space for meaningful civic learning.

Over the course of the program, your students will explore public service careers, develop a stronger understanding of local, state, and national issues, and engage in respectful dialogue across different viewpoints. They will build leadership skills, confidence, and a lifelong connection to civic responsibility, all while meeting key academic standards.

Thank you for your leadership and dedication. We look forward to an inspiring year ahead and are honored to support you and your club.

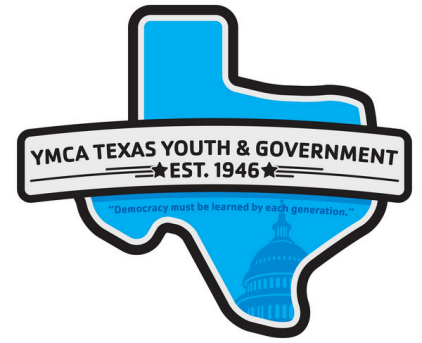
YMCA Texas Youth and Government Team



 **TEXAS YOUTH AND GOVERNMENT**

# ABOUT US

The YMCA Texas Youth and Government program is a national YMCA initiative that prepares high school and middle school students for moral and political leadership through training in the theory and practice of developing public policy. Students gain hands-on experience in government mechanics, media, and more.



**Our Mission** To help teenagers become responsible citizens and future leaders of our nation.

---

**Our Goals** To create an environment in which teens can increase their political awareness and understanding while learning the meaning of social action through an actual hands-on experience in government.

---

**Our Motto** DEMOCRACY MUST BE LEARNED BY EACH GENERATION

The motto of YMCA Youth and Government was adapted from a quote by Dr. Earle T. Hawkins, President of Towson State Teachers College and first Chairman of the Maryland YMCA Youth and Government program: "Democracy is more than being governed by a majority vote. It is a process in government that must be learned and earned by each succeeding generation. Youth cannot inherit democracy. They achieve it as adults provide them opportunities and leadership."

---

**Area of Impact** FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT: Empowering young people to reach their full potential through:

- Understanding of local, state, national and issues
- Exploration of careers in public service
- Interaction with adult and youth leaders across Texas
- A forum to discuss political issues, effectively and diplomatically
- Diversity of viewpoints and respect for ideas, beliefs and the positions of others
- Youth active in democracy; building their own understanding as citizens of our republic.
- Achieves many of the TEKS standards

---

## Program Timeline

### Local Club Participation

Uses materials and curriculum provided by the YMCA. Meet weekly in fall.

### District Conference

All teens are invited to register to attend a one day event that teens participate in a section where youth compete against other clubs in their district.

### State Conference

Qualified teens are invited to register to attend a multi day event held in Austin, Texas at the Kalahari Hotel, the State Capitol and other facilities replicating Texas Government. You

### National Conferences

Qualified and selected Teens participate at the national level in their section.

A LEGACY OF LEARNING THROUGH

# Civic Engagement

## The History and Impact of YMCA Youth and Government

---

The Texas YMCA Youth and Government program has a rich tradition rooted in preparing young students for moral and political leadership through direct participation in democratic processes. Since its beginnings, the program has served as a platform where middle and high school students simulate government, explore public service careers, and actively participate in political dialogue, all while gaining essential academic and civic skills.

Through legislative sessions, judicial trials, media broadcasts, and the State Affairs Forum, students apply classroom knowledge in real-world scenarios. They learn how laws are made, how courts function, how journalists shape public perception, and how to advocate for causes that matter to them. These experiences develop their ability to analyze complex issues, collaborate effectively, and communicate with clarity and purpose.

What sets Youth and Government apart is how seamlessly it aligns with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS). The program cultivates intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, and communication skills across multiple academic disciplines including government, social studies, English language arts, media, and journalism. Students conduct research, develop and defend policy proposals, write legislation, present arguments, analyze diverse perspectives, and engage in respectful discourse.

The foundation of the program reflects the philosophy that democracy is not inherited, it is learned. By engaging students in immersive, hands-on civic education, Youth and Government helps them not only meet academic standards, but also grow into informed, responsible citizens who are equipped to lead in their communities and beyond.

**DEMOCRACY MUST BE LEARNED BY EACH GENERATION**

# YMCA TEXAS YOUTH AND GOVERNMENT SECTIONS

---

## LEGISLATIVE

Delegates identify issues for legislation, bill writing, debating, bill presentation, and participation in a legislative body with parliamentary procedure.

### **Steps to getting started:**

- Choose a topic you're passionate about and write a bill.
- Familiarize yourself with the Committee and floor debate.
- Practice presenting your Bill.
- Ask questions and debate on another delegate's bill.

## STATE AFFAIRS FORUM

State Affairs Forum uses the structure of committee hearings with parliamentary procedure where students propose solutions to important current issues.

### **Steps to getting started:**

- Create a Teams of 2, or 3 people or work by yourself.
- Choose a topic you're passionate about from TXYG Topic List.
- Familiarize yourself with the SAF Proposal Debate Timeline Format.
- Practice present your proposal in committee.
- Ask questions and debate on other delegate's proposal.

## JUDICIAL TRIAL COURT

Delegates participate in a mock-trial setting. They act as judges, attorneys, witnesses, and bailiffs in a series of rounds in which they compete against other teams as either the Defense or Prosecution.

### **Steps to getting started:**

- Read and familiarize yourself with this year's case
- Create a team of 5 to 8 people
- Script your plan as the Defense and as the Prosecution.
- Study YMCA Youth and Government Rules of Procedure and Rules of Evidence

## JUDICIAL APPELLATE

Delegates participate in a mock-court setting. They act as judges, attorneys and compete in a series of rounds in which they compete against other teams as either Appellant or Appellee.

### **Steps to getting started:**

- Read and familiarize yourself with this year case and authorities
- Create a team of 2 people
- Study YMCA Youth and Government Rules and Instruction of Appellate Procedure
- Write your Briefs as the Appellant and as the Appellee
- Script your plan as the Appellant and as the Appellee.
- Practice

## MEDIA

Delegates provide an accurate account of the Youth and Government program and to allow students to gain meaningful, real-life experience in journalism through the publication of a newspaper, social media content, and a news broadcast at the District and State Conferences.

### **Steps to getting started:**

- Actively cover your YMCA Youth and Government Club and research real-life government related topics.
- Submit your weekly media assignment to [txyg@austinyymca.org](mailto:txyg@austinyymca.org)
- Build your YG Portfolio

# WHY PLANNING YOUR TXYG YEAR MATTERS

---

As a Youth and Government club leader, thoughtful planning is one of the most valuable steps you can take. A well-organized year allows you to create structure, set expectations, and ensure that students are prepared for each stage of the program. With multiple components like weekly meetings, fundraising, competition preparation, and travel to conferences, having a clear plan in place can make the experience more successful and enjoyable for everyone involved.

Weekly meetings form the foundation of your club's progress. These regular gatherings are where students learn about their roles, explore topics in depth, practice their skills, and build relationships with each other. Without consistent meetings, it becomes difficult for students to gain the knowledge and confidence they need. A planned schedule helps maintain momentum and gives students something to look forward to each week.

Fundraising is another key part of the year. Whether your club needs support for travel, registration, attire, or supplies, it is important to identify goals early and organize efforts with plenty of time. Planning ahead allows you to spread out events, engage families and your school community, and reduce stress as deadlines approach. Fundraising can also become a great opportunity for students to learn responsibility and leadership as they help manage budgets and outreach.

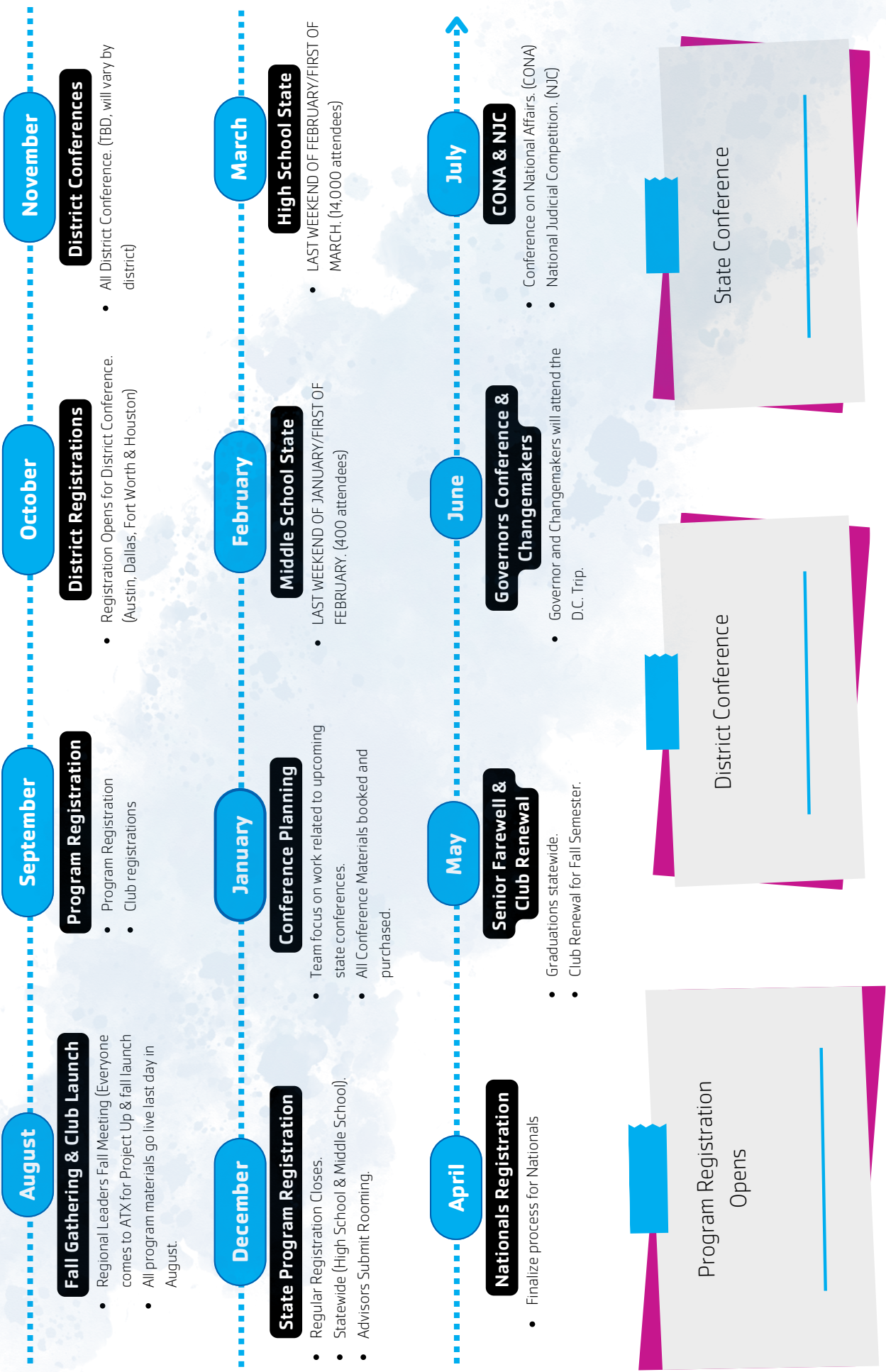
Time for practices is essential, especially in a program that centers on public speaking, research, and debate. Students need space to write and revise legislation, prepare legal arguments, draft media reports, and rehearse presentations. Building practice sessions into your calendar allows students to grow in their roles and gain the confidence they will need at the district and state conferences. Strong preparation also helps teams perform at their best when representing your school or community.

Team bonding is another important area to include in your planning. The program is about more than politics or policy—it is about building a culture of trust, inclusion, and collaboration. Whether through icebreakers, team outings, or shared meals, setting aside time to build relationships strengthens the club dynamic. Students who feel connected and supported are more likely to stay engaged, take risks, and encourage each other throughout the year.

The highlight of the year is your local District Conference and the State Conference in Austin. Attending this multi-day event at the Capitol and Kalahari Hotel requires travel planning, permission forms, registrations, and more. Starting this process early ensures that you meet all deadlines and that your students are fully prepared for the experience. Planning also gives your club time to talk about expectations, logistics, and how to make the most of the trip both academically and socially.

When you plan your year as a club leader, you create a sense of direction and purpose. You also give your students the tools they need to succeed. With preparation, communication, and consistency, your club will thrive and your students will walk away with skills and memories that last far beyond the program year.

# YEAR AT A GLANCE



# THE ROLE OF THE CLUB ADVISOR IN YG

---

The school advisor is one of the most important leaders in the Youth and Government program. As the primary adult mentor and organizer at the school level, the advisor helps students navigate the full experience of civic learning, leadership, and competition. Their support ensures that the club runs smoothly, students are prepared, and the overall program is meaningful and successful.

The advisor's role starts with building a strong foundation. They help organize and register the club, recruit student members, and guide the election or appointment of club officers. The advisor works closely with the student leadership team to schedule meetings, set goals, and plan club activities throughout the year. They also help students understand their options within the program, such as participating in the legislative, judicial, media, or State Affairs Forum sections.

During the school year, the advisor acts as a teacher, coach, and mentor. They support students as they research topics, write legislation, prepare cases, practice speeches, and develop media content. While the program is student-led in many ways, the advisor offers structure, encouragement, and feedback to help students grow. They also foster a welcoming and inclusive club environment where all members feel heard and valued.

The advisor communicates regularly with the YMCA district coordinator and ensures that the club meets deadlines for registration, payment, forms, and conference submissions. They help coordinate transportation, supervise students at events, and assist with any logistical needs related to conferences and competitions. Advisors often serve as chaperones for both district and state events.

Equally important, the advisor encourages students to reflect on what they learn. They ask thoughtful questions, promote respectful discussion, and help students think critically about current issues and civic responsibilities. Advisors help connect classroom learning to real-world experiences and build confidence in students as public speakers, problem-solvers, and citizens.

In addition to their role as educators and mentors, school advisors are also considered official YMCA volunteers. As such, they are expected to uphold the values and standards of the YMCA, which include integrity, respect, responsibility, and care for all participants. To ensure a safe and positive environment for students, all advisors must complete a background check and go through required YMCA volunteer training. These steps help maintain the high standards of youth protection and program quality that define Youth and Government. Advisors are also expected to attend both the District and State Conferences, where they serve not only as chaperones but also as active volunteers. This includes taking on assigned shifts during the events, supporting program logistics, and helping ensure a smooth and enriching experience for all students involved. Their presence and participation are essential to the success of each conference and to the strength of the overall program.

In short, the school advisor is the steady hand behind the scenes. With their guidance, Youth and Government clubs thrive. The advisor's dedication not only helps students succeed in the program—it often inspires them to become lifelong learners and leaders in their communities.

# STUDENT OFFICER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

---

Every YMCA Youth and Government club runs best when student leaders take charge. Serving as a club officer is a great way to build leadership skills, support your team, and help the club succeed throughout the year. Below is an overview of a few leadership position options for your club, how they work together, and what each officer is responsible for. A good practice for teams with multiple sections, is to have a section coordinator to help advocate for section specific things and help set up specific practices for that section.

## **President**

The President leads the club and keeps everything organized. They run meetings, communicate with the YMCA Coordinator, help plan the calendar, and make sure everyone knows what's coming up. They guide the officer team and help the club stay on track all year.

## **Vice President**

The Vice President supports the President and steps in when the President cannot attend a meeting or event. They are a team player who helps lead the group and may take on special projects or assist wherever needed.

## **Judicial Coordinator**

This officer works with students who are part of the judicial section. They help form teams, plan practices, and make sure everyone understands the rules and goals of mock trial and moot court. They also schedule and lead meetings for students focused on the courtroom side of the program.

## **Legislative Coordinator**

The Legislative Coordinator supports students in the legislative sections who are writing and debating bills. They help plan practices, lead training sessions, and prepare students to serve as representatives in the legislative and state affairs sections. They also help decide how the club's seats are assigned for competitions.

## **Media Coordinator**

The Media Coordinator helps students who want to explore journalism, photography, or broadcasting. They lead media-focused meetings and training, help organize roles for conferences, and make sure media students feel prepared.

## **Secretary**

The Secretary keeps the club organized behind the scenes. Secretaries take notes during meetings, send out reminders, and help with registrations. They also keep track of who is in the club and make sure important information is shared on time.

## **Treasurer**

The Treasurer manages the club's finances. They help plan and lead fundraising events, keep track of money collected or spent, and make sure the club stays on budget throughout the year.

## **Webmaster**

This role is chosen by a vote among the officers. The Webmaster is responsible for creating and updating the club website. They make sure the site has up-to-date information, photos, and helpful resources for club members.

A good practice for clubs to clarify roles and responsibilities is to create a document of bylaws. Bylaws are the official rules that help a club stay organized and run smoothly. They create structure, explain how leadership works, and make sure everyone knows what to expect, especially as members graduate and new ones join. Bylaws also help with decision-making by offering clear guidance when questions or conflicts come up. Many schools require clubs to have bylaws in order to be officially recognized. If your club manages money, the bylaws also include rules for handling funds in a responsible and fair way. You can find a sample set of bylaws at the end of this booklet.

# STARTING A YMCA TEXAS YOUTH AND GOVERNMENT CLUB

---

Starting a YMCA Youth and Government club at your school is a rewarding way to engage students in civic education and leadership. Here's how you can get started:

## 1. Connect with Your Local YMCA

Begin by reaching out to your local YMCA to see if they offer the YMCA Texas Youth and Government program or can support starting one. Texas is divided into eight districts, each with regional YMCA leaders who can assist you. If there's no active club in your area, your District Director can guide you on how to establish one.

## 2. Find a Club Sponsor

Identify a teacher, parent, or community member who is passionate about mentoring students and can serve as the club advisor. This sponsor will be the primary point of contact and help guide the club's activities. YMCA Texas Youth and Government

## 3. Recruit Members

Promote your new club through word-of-mouth, flyers, school announcements, or presentations. Aim to gather a diverse group of students interested in government, law, media, and public policy. You can find posters for recruitment and advertising purposes under the resource tab on the [YMCA Texas Youth and Government](#) website

## 4. Register Your Club

Complete the club registration process through the YMCA Texas Youth and Government website. This step is essential for your club to participate in district and state conferences. You will need an advisor to register your club. You can start registering your club on the [website](#) in the spring.

## 5. Organize Club Activities

Plan regular meetings to prepare for participation in Youth and Government events. Activities can include bill writing, mock trials, media production, and debates. Utilize resources provided by the YMCA to structure your sessions effectively. This is also a great time to build team dynamics.

## 6. Prepare for Conferences

Engage your club members in district conferences, which typically occur in November. These events provide students with the opportunity to apply their skills in a competitive and educational environment.



**BE THE MEDIA.  
BE THE JUSTICE.  
BE THE CONGRESS.  
BE THE POWER.**

 **TEXAS YOUTH AND GOVERNMENT**

**LEARN MORE**



**[ymcatexasyg.org](https://ymcatexasyg.org)**

Financial assistance available.

**District Conferences**

November 2024  
Statewide

**State Conference - Middle School**

January 31–February 2, 2025  
Texas Capitol

**State Conference - High School**

February 27–March 2, 2025  
Texas Capitol

**YMCA MISSION:** *Democracy must be learned by each generation in order for it to survive.*

# STARTING A YMCA TEXAS YOUTH AND GOVERNMENT CLUB

---

**Club Fair Dates:**

---

**First day of school is:**

---

**First Meeting:**

---

**Program registration opens on:**

---

## Before School Starts

---

- Decide who your club leaders for the year will be.
- Begin conversations about back to school outreach events like club fairs or freshmen orientation.
  - What would be helpful for you to bring to these events?
- Create a calendar of important event dates to share with team (Registration dates, District Conference, State Conference, National Advocacy Days.)
- Confirm advisor attendance for advisor training

## Beginning of school

---

- Confirm back to school outreach events.
  - Find support for shifts in case these events run all day or across various days .
- Finalize dates with advisors when first club meeting is to plan on attending.
- Print posters with meeting times and post them around campus.
  - Brain storm other ways that you can market your club to new students. Does your club have a social media team? Can you attend freshman orientation or give a pitch in different classes?

## First Club Meetings

---

- Information session should be fun and cover overviews only.
- Confirm with teacher the agenda, snacks, & other parts to this meeting.
- Tip for success plan on having snacks at the meetings the first two weeks. This help attract teens
- Always have a sign in sheet to help track who is attending and interested in joining the club
- Make sure you are not the only one talking, set an agenda and split it with the teachers, teen leaders and DD.
- Send a follow up email to new students who are interested in joining the club



# CLUB INTEREST SIGN IN SHEET

**EVENT:**

**DATE:**

NO.	NAME	EMAIL	PHONE
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			
16			
17			
18			
19			
20			
21			
22			
23			
24			
25			

# DELEGATION MEETINGS

---

Local club/delegation meetings are the heart of Youth and Government programs. Almost all YG delegate training and learning takes place at the local level, so building relationships among advisors and delegates is vital. We encourage schools and Y branches to set up their programs in a club format that allows for student leadership opportunities. However, we know some schools incorporate YG into their classes, so the setup of the sessions/lessons/meetings will vary. We have shared below some basic information that may prove helpful for adult and student leaders as they plan group meetings.

## **Standard Practices for Local Delegation Meetings**

- Set schedule ahead of time for local club/delegation meetings (including parent meetings).
- At a minimum, club/delegation meetings should take place every two weeks.
- Plan all meetings in advance and prepare a definite curriculum, using eight-lesson curricula available on YG website as needed.
- Infuse elements of adult leadership and student leadership.
- Develop mentorship between students, matching experienced students with new students.
- Build relationships between students and adults so they can effectively support and respect each other when at program events.

## **What do these meetings look like?**

Each delegation determines its own meeting agendas, often based on the eight-lesson curriculum for each section available on the YG website. Suggested activities include:

- Icebreaker and team-building activities, especially during early meetings
- Discussing program sections and responsibilities of participation in each area
- Going over the Code of Conduct and other expectations (do this at every meeting if you can!)
- Setting delegation fundraising plans and goals
- Training activities in specific program sections
- Preparing bills, court briefs, news articles, lobbyist position papers, and SAF proposals
- Holding practice sessions so delegates can practice in a “safe” environment. Encourage debate and constructive criticism during these practice sessions.
- Holding research sessions to prepare delegates with background material needed for preparation of submissions and presentations at the District and State Conferences

## **Recommendations for the first one or two club meetings include:**

- An overview of the YG program structure, purpose, and goals
- A group building/get to know you activity
- YMCA Code of Conduct
- Review of calendar of events and District deadlines (registration for program and conferences, payment, bill/proposal/brief submission, candidate application, CONA application, Gov Cab/Lobbyist application, District and State, post-State survey)
- Review of leadership positions. It is crucial that club advisors make students aware of leadership opportunities including chair/clerk positions in SAF and Legislative, Legislative appointed positions, candidacy, Gov Cab/Lobbyist spots, and CONA.
- Go over candidate criteria and responsibilities.
- Discussion of available financial assistance and fundraising needs/plans
- Student leadership team introductions/elections and calendar for any student leadership meetings occurring outside club meetings
- Consider encouraging participation at your first meetings by providing pizza or other food and hosting a Q&A session for new delegates after your first meeting.
- It is always good practice to end a meeting with a reminder of the time and date of the next meeting and to consider bringing in relevant guest speakers.

# POTENTIAL QUESTIONS

---

## HOW OFTEN SHOULD THE DELEGATION MEET?

All delegations should meet at least every other week. At the beginning of the program cycle, it may be necessary to meet every week. After State Conference, meetings may become more infrequent. Regardless of exact schedule, delegates and advisors should get together on a regular basis to prepare for the District and State Conferences.

## WHO SHOULD LEAD THE MEETINGS?

If the club does not have established club officers, the club advisor can run meetings, especially at the beginning of the program cycle. However, the club should establish a student leadership team whenever feasible. An adult needs to be present to keep the group on task, but a club's elected officers/student leadership team should lead the meetings when available. YG is a student-led program.

## MUST ADVISORS COME TO THESE MEETINGS?

YES! Club/delegation meetings help advisors get to know each other and connect with delegates in mentoring relationships. Advisors are held to the same standards of attendance as participants as well as their own Code of Conduct. Advisors can work with each other and delegates to take responsibility for specific parts of meetings or delegate training sessions.

## HOW MUCH SHOULD THE YOUTH LEADERS DO AT MEETINGS?

As much as possible! In smaller/newer delegations, adult leadership will likely initially handle most club leadership and communication of information. However, as students advance in their program participation, they can take on a more active role leading meetings and training their peers. In larger/more established delegations, the students should elect club officers for a program year as noted above. Club officers and advisors should collaborate to set meeting agendas.

## HOW DO I MAKE THESE MEETINGS INTERESTING?

Food, door prizes, and special events/recognition can liven up club/delegation meetings and provide important social elements for the delegation. As long as students and adults set appropriate boundaries for the fun, it should not threaten the quality of preparation for program activities.



# DELEGATION MEETINGS

---

**CONSISTENCY IS KEY! WHILE YOU ARE NOT REQUIRED TO FOLLOW THIS EXACT FORMAT, TRY TO ADHERE TO A SIMILAR STRUCTURE FOR EACH CLUB MEETING. AS STATED, STUDENT AND ADULT LEADERS SHOULD WORK TOGETHER TO PREPARE AGENDAS IN ADVANCE.**

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Focus on Y Values / Opening Thought / Devotional

A three-five minute group discussion about one of the core values of the YMCA (caring, honesty, respect, or responsibility) or a related reading, thought, or brief character discussion.

## **Attendance Taken**

This can be done by the delegation secretary. Keep a written or electronic record of who has been attending meetings.

## **Opening Group Activity**

Any group activity should relate to the topics covered at that day's meeting. In addition, all group activities should end with a "debriefing" question that asks individuals to reflect on what they learned through that activity.

Allow up to 10-15 minutes for a group activity and consider asking a student who is not an officer to lead it. See activity suggestions later in handbook.

## **Officer Reports**

Each of the officers should report individually on an as needed basis.

## **Old Business**

Any topics carried over from the last meeting.

## **New Business**

Announcements/topics new to this meeting.

Includes lesson/key program-related activity for the day (e.g. research session).

## **Other Business**

Any business not previously stated.

You can ask delegates to hold questions until this time.

## **Next Meeting**

Review any delegate responsibilities occurring before the next meeting. May include fundraisers, deadlines, other events, etc.

## **Adjourn**

You may use a more flexible agenda when planning your end-of-year celebration. Consider inviting parents and other guests and holding the event in the evening to facilitate their attendance. Recognize member and delegation accomplishments. You may choose to have a brief invocation and to install new officers during this event. Do something special for your advisors!



# WEEKLY CLUB MEETING ACTION PLAN

THE WEEKLY CLUB ACTION PLAN PROVIDES A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO HELP YOUTH AND GOVERNMENT CLUBS STAY ORGANIZED AND ON TRACK THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM YEAR. IT OUTLINES WHAT TO FOCUS ON EACH WEEK, FROM KICKOFF MEETINGS AND SECTION PREP TO CONFERENCES AND REFLECTION.

<p><b>WEEK 1: CLUB KICKOFF</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce the Youth and Government program and its objectives.</li> <li>• Discuss the different sections: Legislative, Judicial, Media, and State Affairs.</li> <li>• Elect or appoint club officers.</li> <li>• Distribute and review the club bylaws.</li> </ul>
<p><b>WEEK 2: SECTION SELECTION AND OVERVIEW</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have students choose their preferred sections.</li> <li>• Provide an overview of each section's responsibilities and expectations.</li> <li>• Begin brainstorming topics for bills, cases, or media projects.</li> </ul>
<p><b>WEEK 3: RESEARCH AND TOPIC DEVELOPMENT</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guide students in researching their chosen topics.</li> <li>• Encourage collaboration and sharing of resources.</li> <li>• Start outlining bills, case arguments, or media pieces.</li> </ul>
<p><b>WEEK 4: DRAFTING AND WRITING</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist students in drafting their bills, legal briefs, or media scripts.</li> <li>• Provide feedback and support during the writing process.</li> <li>• Ensure all drafts meet the required formats and guidelines.</li> </ul>
<p><b>WEEK 5: PEER REVIEW AND REVISIONS</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organize peer review sessions for students to critique each other's work.</li> <li>• Facilitate discussions on constructive feedback.</li> <li>• Guide students in revising their work based on feedback received.</li> </ul>
<p><b>WEEK 6: PRESENTATION PREPARATION</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Train students on effective presentation and public speaking skills.</li> <li>• Conduct mock sessions to simulate the conference environment.</li> <li>• Provide tips on handling questions and debates.</li> </ul>
<p><b>WEEK 7: FINAL PREPARATIONS</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure all materials are finalized and submitted as required.</li> <li>• Discuss logistics for the upcoming District Conference.</li> <li>• Reinforce expectations and codes of conduct.</li> </ul>
<p><b>WEEK 8: DISTRICT CONFERENCE DEBRIEF</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect on experiences from the District Conference.</li> <li>• Discuss areas of improvement and celebrate successes.</li> <li>• Begin preparations for the State Conference.</li> </ul>
<p><b>WEEKS 9–11: ADVANCED TRAINING AND REFINEMENT</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide advanced training sessions tailored to each section.</li> <li>• Encourage students to refine their work based on District Conference feedback.</li> <li>• Organize additional mock sessions for practice.</li> </ul>
<p><b>WEEK 12: STATE CONFERENCE READINESS</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finalize all preparations for the State Conference.</li> <li>• Review travel plans, schedules, and necessary documentation.</li> <li>• Conduct a final Q&amp;A session to address any concerns.</li> </ul>
<p><b>POST-CONFERENCE: REFLECTION AND CELEBRATION</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold a meeting to reflect on the State Conference experiences.</li> <li>• Celebrate achievements and recognize outstanding contributions.</li> <li>• Discuss plans for the next program cycle and potential leadership opportunities.</li> </ul>



# LEGISLATIVE TIMELINE

Students in the Legislative section write, present, and debate bills. At conferences, bills are heard in a committee first, and some advance to be heard in the House/Senate chambers. Bills that pass both chambers go to the Youth Governor for consideration.

AUGUST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Educate students on Legislative procedures and review banned topic list.</li><li>• Use proceedings script and example bills to practice a mock legislative session.</li><li>• Students can research more than one topic and share information with the team to process which topic will be the best to debate for the year.</li><li>• Students will then be well informed on multiple topics and can then make their final topic selection.</li></ul>
SEPTEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students select topic and begin research. Students are encouraged to choose topics that no one else on their team are choosing.</li><li>• Encourage students to run for state positions and/or serve as committee chair or clerk at conferences. Fill out necessary candidate applications and submit by deadline.</li></ul>
OCTOBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students write bill (no more than 1 page) and practice presenting proposal.</li><li>• Encourage students to sign up for chair/clerk training so they can clerk and/or chair at the District and State Conferences. Each school that has more than 8 students participating in the legislative section should also provide a chair/clerk team</li></ul>
NOVEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Have two mock Legislative sessions with advisors and volunteer adults evaluating students' proposals and presentation technique.</li><li>• Make sure students' bills follow the bill template.</li><li>• Make sure copies of all bills are submitted online prior to the District deadline.</li><li>• Attend District Conference with students and volunteer to help.</li></ul>
DECEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• After District Conference, communicate any changes to bills with the District Director, delegates, and school advisors.</li><li>• Re-submit all current/updated/new bills to District Director via online submission link as a part of the State registration materials.</li><li>• If bills are not received prior to the deadline, it will be the responsibility of the students/school and YMCA advisor to provide copies for the number of legislative delegates at the District and/or State Conference. Furthermore, the bill will not be in the bill book.</li><li>• Continue to have mock legislative sessions until time for the State Conference.</li></ul>



# SAF TIMELINE

Students in the State Affairs Forum section write, present, and debate proposals. At conferences, proposals are heard in a committee first, and some advance to a general assembly. Proposals describe students' non-legislative solutions to pressing state/national/international issues, and students can use visual aids to make their case.

AUGUST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Educate students on State Affairs Forum procedures and topics.</li><li>• Use State Affairs Forum proceedings script and example proposal to practice a mock State Affairs Forum session.</li><li>• Students can research more than one topic from topic list and share information with the State Affairs Forum group.</li><li>• Students will then be well informed on multiple topics and can then make their final topic selection.</li></ul>
SEPTEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students select topic and begin research. Work as an individual author or in a group of 2 to 3 students.</li><li>• Encourage students to run for State Affairs Forum Chair and/or serve as committee chair or clerk at conferences. Fill out necessary candidate applications and submit by deadline.</li></ul>
OCTOBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students write proposal (no more than 2 pages, limit to 1 if possible), create visual aid, and practice presenting proposal.</li><li>• Encourage students to sign up for chair/clerk training (if offered by your District) so they can clerk and/or chair at the District and State Conferences.</li></ul>
NOVEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Have two mock State Affairs Forum sessions with advisors and volunteer adults evaluating students' proposals and presentation technique.</li><li>• Students should practice evaluating each other using the evaluation form.</li><li>• Make sure students' proposals follow proposal template.</li><li>• Make sure copies of all proposals are submitted online prior to the District deadline.</li><li>• Make sure students have all necessary equipment (easels) for visual aids.</li><li>• Attend District Conference with students and volunteer to help. This will help you to become more familiar with policies and procedures.</li></ul>
DECEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• After District Conference, communicate any changes to proposals with the District Director, delegates, and school advisors.</li><li>• Re-submit all current/updated/new proposals to District Director via online submission link as a part of the State registration materials.</li><li>• If proposals are not received prior to the deadline, it will be the responsibility of the students/school and YMCA advisor to provide copies for the number of State Affairs Forum delegates at the District and/or State Conference. Furthermore, the proposal will not be in the proposal book.</li><li>• Make any revisions to proposals and submit online to District Director by established deadline.</li><li>• Continue to have mock State Affairs Forum sessions until time for the State Conference.</li></ul>



# TRIAL COURT TIMELINE

Students in the Trial Court section work in teams to prepare and present a legal case from both the plaintiff/prosecution and defense perspectives. They are assigned roles as attorneys, witnesses, and judges, and spend months learning legal procedures, crafting arguments, and practicing courtroom skills. The program culminates in a District Conference where teams compete in a series of mock trials, putting their knowledge of evidence, objections, and courtroom etiquette into practice.

SEPTEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Week 1: Kickoff &amp; Orientation: Review the Trial Court overview, roles, and responsibilities. Watch introductory videos on topics like opening/closing statements, objections, and evidence admission. Go over the structure of a mock trial.</li><li>• Week 2: Team Formation &amp; Role Selection: Assemble teams of 5-8 students and assign roles as attorney, witness, judge, and bailiff. Ensure each student has at least one active role.</li><li>• Week 3: Case Materials Released: Download and distribute official case materials from the website. Begin analyzing the case: attorneys break down the case theory and build strategy, while witnesses learn and internalize their affidavits. Submit questions about the case content or procedures by September 30.</li></ul>
OCTOBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Week 1: Receive Case Clarifications: Official clarifications will be posted by October 21. Adjust team strategy or roles accordingly.</li><li>• Week 2-3: Legal Skills Training: Attorneys work on crafting opening statements, direct examination questions, and practicing cross-examinations. They also learn rules of evidence and how to handle objections. Witnesses rehearse their character profiles and practice responding to questions in character, staying within the affidavit facts.</li><li>• Week 4: Scrimmage Planning: Conduct internal scrimmages to practice the trial flow. Rotate roles so students experience both plaintiff/prosecution and defense sides. Begin timed runs of trial components.</li></ul>
NOVEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Scrimmages and Feedback: Continue mock trials with feedback from advisors, peers, or volunteers. Focus on evidence admission, making/responding to objections properly, and witness confidence/consistency. Teams must present both sides of the case.</li><li>• Finalize Materials: Polish scripts and outlines for each part of the trial. Verify that all team members can confidently present either side of the case. Submit final judge registrations and rosters if required by your district.</li><li>• District Competition: Prepare materials and attend the District Conference.</li></ul>



# APPEALS TIMELINE

Students in the Appeals Court program review and argue a legal case, preparing both written briefs and oral arguments for both sides of the issue. The program culminates in mock appellate hearings at District and State Conferences, where students alternate between presenting their case as the Appellant or Appellee and are evaluated on their legal writing, oral delivery, and ability to handle questions from judges.

SEPTEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Download and read the Case Packet, which is released early in the month, including both the case narrative and the precedent cases to identify key constitutional/legal questions and understand how prior rulings apply.</li><li>• Form two-person teams where both members prepare arguments for both the Appellant and Appellee sides of the case, dividing responsibilities for both writing and oral argument preparation.</li><li>• Begin drafting written briefs, starting with one brief per side and following the required structure, with a format of 1–8 pages, double-spaced with 1-inch margins.</li><li>• Submit any clarification questions for the case by the end of September via the Appeals Court page on the website.</li></ul>
OCTOBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review official clarifications posted in mid-October and incorporate changes into your strategy.</li><li>• Revise and finalize both the Appellant and Appellee briefs, ensuring they are legally sound and properly cited.</li><li>• Begin practicing oral arguments, focusing on clarity, legal precedent, logical structure, and professionalism.</li><li>• For Student Justices, review case materials and practice asking insightful questions during mock rounds.</li></ul>
NOVEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conduct practice rounds by hosting mock appellate hearings, alternating between Appellant and Appellee roles.</li><li>• Enhance your oral delivery by focusing on courtroom demeanor, transitions, and timing under pressure.</li><li>• Compete at the District Conference, where the written brief is 25% of the score and the oral argument is 75%.</li></ul>
DECEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review District feedback and analyze critiques from judges and advisors on your performance.</li><li>• Revise briefs by updating arguments and citations for the state-level competition.</li><li>• Continue oral practice with new questions and stronger rebuttals, seeking feedback from legal mentors.</li><li>• Register for the State Conference by your district's deadline, confirming your team's qualification and submitting all necessary materials.</li></ul>



# MEDIA TIMELINE

Students in the Media section develop and produce a portfolio of five media projects, including a promo video, an article, an in-depth interview, and a research short, all centered around civic engagement. Throughout the process, they apply journalistic skills, follow AP formatting, and learn to incorporate multimedia elements. After submitting their work for District competition, they may be selected to report on-site at the State Conference, where they cover events and further refine their skills through workshops on advanced journalism and digital editing.

SEPTEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Visit the Media section website to review the overview and watch examples of past assignments.</li><li>• Review the Assignment List, which is released early in the month, detailing the five required media projects for the District competition: a promo video, an Op-Ed article, a Y Club profile, an in-depth interview, and a research short.</li><li>• Create a work plan using the 8-week lesson plan to guide your weekly progress and break down tasks like scripting, interviewing, drafting, and editing.</li><li>• Organize collaborations with other students for brainstorming or editing, but remember that all work must be submitted individually.</li></ul>
OCTOBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Production and Editing: Begin drafting Op-Eds and research shorts, then script and film the promo video. Conduct interviews and edit all content, incorporating multimedia and using tools like Canva, Adobe Express, or iMovie.</li><li>• Journalism Skills: Apply journalistic style to all work, focusing on accuracy, clarity, and AP formatting. Track your progress to ensure all five projects are on schedule and meet the rubric's expectations.</li><li>• Finalization and Submission: Proofread and revise all five assignments to ensure proper formatting, citations, and original content. Package and submit all projects at once as part of the District Registration by the specified deadline.</li></ul>
NOVEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Self-evaluate your work by reviewing the evaluation form criteria, which consists of 20 possible points across five key areas.</li><li>• Prepare for on-site reporting, even though formal debate is not required, to report on bills, trials, candidates, speeches, and events at the District Conference, bringing cameras, notebooks, and other devices for live coverage.</li><li>• Be aware that an on-time submission increases your chances of being selected for the State Media House.</li></ul>
DECEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review District feedback and reflect on evaluation comments, noting areas for improvement for state-level storytelling, editing, and visual work.</li><li>• Register for the State Conference by confirming your selection for the State Conference Media House and completing registration by your district's deadline.</li><li>• Attend Media Prep Workshops, which are optional but recommended, to participate in media skills webinars and state-specific orientation sessions, and to learn advanced tips for breaking news coverage, digital editing, and professional journalism ethics.</li><li>• If applicable, begin your State Assignment by completing the pre-State media project once the details are shared after selection.</li></ul>



# TEAM BUILDING

## **The purpose of team/group building is to:**

- Help create a feeling of belonging
- Help the group learn to work together
- Learn the value of group decision making
- Help identify leaders within the group

Every YMCA Youth and Government meeting builds a team of young people who can support, challenge and help each other. While each group will develop its own identity based on the individuals involved, club leaders must set the stage and provide the tools to create a healthy group. Remember that the YMCA is built on relationships! We facilitate the connections that make experiences meaningful for delegates and advisors. The exercises in this section are designed with that task in mind. Team/group building should occur ASAP and begins the first day of YMCA Youth and Government club meetings! It should be an ongoing activity at all group meetings/events, and it does require some planning and preparation.

## **Times team/group building may prove especially helpful:**

- When introducing the group to each other (VERY important during recruiting)
- At the opening of meetings
- During problem solving/conflict resolution
- When acknowledging group successes

When processing team building activities with your group, consider using the What? So What? Now What? Group Processing Method. Select from the questions below, tailoring them to the activity but asking at least one from each category to the group at large after an activity.

**WHAT?** Helps people recall what they have experienced. Sample What questions include: □ What was the task you were given?

- What did we just do? Any observations about the experience? What was that like for you? Was it easy or difficult? Any frustrations? What did you notice/observe about the experience?

**SO WHAT?** Helps people analyze and discuss the purpose of the experience. Sample So What questions include:

- Why did we just do that? How did you feel about it? Was it what you expected? What was the high point or low point for you? What did you notice about the people or the process? Did you have any "aha moments" (breakthrough learning experiences)? What did you learn...about yourself, the task, the process, the issue, the group? Did this experience have any impact on you?

**NOW WHAT?** Helps people think of new applications for their experience and ways to transfer the experience to their everyday lives. Sample Now What? questions include:

- What did this activity have to do with YG? What did you learn or experience today that impacts your life? What did this activity have to do with teamwork, service, and leadership skills? How will you work differently as a group after this experience? Do you see the group using this in any way later during the year? Will you do anything differently as a result of having done this activity?



# TEAM BUILDING

Every YMCA Youth and Government meeting builds a team of young people who can support, challenge and help each other. While each group will develop its own identity based on the individuals involved, club leaders must set the stage and provide the tools to create a healthy group. Remember that the YMCA is built on relationships! We facilitate the connections that make experiences meaningful for delegates and advisors. The exercises in this section are designed with that task in mind. Team/group building should occur ASAP and begins the first day of YMCA Youth and Government club meetings! It should be an ongoing activity at all group meetings/events, and it does require some planning and preparation.

## **The purpose of team/group building is to:**

- Help create a feeling of belonging
- Help the group learn to work together
- Learn the value of group decision making
- Help identify leaders within the group

## **Times team/group building may prove especially helpful:**

- When introducing the group to each other (VERY important during recruiting)
- At the opening of meetings
- During problem solving/conflict resolution
- When acknowledging group successes

When processing team building activities with your group, consider using the What? So What? Now What? Group Processing Method. Select from the questions below, tailoring them to the activity but asking at least one from each category to the group at large after an activity.

## **WHAT? Helps people recall what they have experienced. Sample What questions include: □ What was the task you were given?**

- What did we just do? Any observations about the experience? What was that like for you? Was it easy or difficult? Any frustrations? What did you notice/observe about the experience?

## **SO WHAT? Helps people analyze and discuss the purpose of the experience. Sample So What questions include:**

- Why did we just do that? How did you feel about it? Was it what you expected? What was the high point or low point for you? What did you notice about the people or the process? Did you have any "aha moments" (breakthrough learning experiences)? What did you learn...about yourself, the task, the process, the issue, the group? Did this experience have any impact on you?

## **NOW WHAT? Helps people think of new applications for their experience and ways to transfer the experience to their everyday lives. Sample Now What? questions include:**

- What did this activity have to do with YG? What did you learn or experience today that impacts your life? What did this activity have to do with teamwork, service, and leadership skills? How will you work differently as a group after this experience? Do you see the group using this in any way later during the year? Will you do anything differently as a result of having done this activity?



# ACTIVITES

## LINE UP

- Have participants line up according to birthday, alphabetically by first name, middle name or last name, height, etc.
- Gradually make the game more challenging by blindfolding the entire group or particular individuals, silencing the group or particular individuals, or doing both before you give the next "line up" category!
- Possible discussion questions:
  - How well did you work as a group?
  - What made the activity easy/difficult?

## INTERVIEW

- Come up with a few interview questions for students to ask each other (examples: If you could star on any television show, which show would you choose and why? If you could be anywhere but here right now, where would you be and why?)
- Have individuals partner up with other participants they don't know very well and interview each other using the provided questions.
- Based on the information gathered, partners should introduce each other to the group and emphasize the three most interesting things that they learned.

## CANDY, CANDY, CANDY

- Purchase an assorted candy bag and assign a question to each type of candy.
- Pass around a bowl. Ask participants to choose a piece (you can have them do multiple pieces if you would like) and ask them not to eat it yet.
- Post the questions you have assigned to each piece of candy and tell participants they can eat each piece only after they have shared an answer to the question. They can answer each question multiple times if they took several of the same kind despite instructions.
- Sample questions include:
  - What makes you laugh? What makes you cry? If you could become an animal, what would you choose to be? What about your cultural heritage makes you proud? When you were much younger, what did you want to be when you grew up? If you could have any job without having to go to school, what would you do?

## BALLOOP

- Split delegates into groups of three, and give each group a blown up balloon.
- Have players join hands within their small groups. Each group should attempt to keep the balloon up in the air while continuing to hold hands. Give one minute of practice time.
- When practice is over, call out the name of a body part. While continuing to hold hands, the group must use that body part to keep the balloon up (e.g. hands, heads, elbows, noses, etc.) Change parts every 10-15 seconds.
- As groups improve, call out a sequence (e.g. elbow, knee, and nose). In that case, the first person uses an elbow to hit the balloon, the second uses a knee, and the third uses a nose. Remind groups that the balloons should never hit the ground or stop moving and that hands must be joined at all times.



# ACTIVITES

## **BACK ART**

- Form two teams and have each team sit in a row, one person behind the other. Have participants take a vow of silence that lasts for the duration of the exercise.
- Give the person in the front of each row a piece of paper and a pencil.
- Show the last person in each row a simple hand drawn picture of an object (flower, ice cream cone, etc.) This person uses his or her finger to draw the object on the back of the person in front of him or her.
- This drawing on the back of the person in front of you continues until the drawing gets to the first person in line. He or she draws what he or she thinks the object is on these pieces of paper.
- Compare to initial object.

## **BLINDFOLDED**

- Pair individuals up with other group members they don't know as well.
- Blindfold one member of each pair. Spin the blindfolded person around a few times to disorient him or her.
- Ask the other member of each pair to lead their partner to a destination.

## **SNOW BALL FIGHT**

- Give everyone a piece of paper and have them write a fun fact about themselves on the paper
- Once everyone is done, have them crumble the piece of paper and throw it into a bucket in the center of the room. (collect all the ones that didn't make it and put them in the bucket.)
- Pass around the bucket and have everyone pull out one of the crumbled snowballs.
- Take turns reading out the fun fact and guessing who it belongs to.

## **SPIDER WEB**

- Stand in a circle and have one person start by holding on to a piece of yarn and throwing the yarn ball to someone else. Whoever is throwing the yarn says something they appreciate about the person who is catching the yarn.
- Continue until everyone has been appreciated and holds a piece of string, creating a web.
- Make an analogy about the web and the Youth and Government session.
  - Ask questions like: How was our group like this web this session? How did we support each other? What happened when one of us was down or didn't follow through? What happened when one of us accomplished/completed something or achieved a success? How can we carry the lessons we learned with us during the off-season?

## **STONES**

- Sit in a circle and pass around a basket of small, attractive stones or beads. Have each participant take one.
- Ask participants to say one thing they learned or will take from the group and one thing they would like to leave with the group. As each person finishes, all participants should pass their stones to the left and receive a stone from the right. By the time everyone has spoken, each participant has touched every item and has the stone he or she chose originally.
- Provide leather and wire to make necklaces with the items after discussion.



# FUNDRAISING

The State Office highly recommends that clubs have fundraising projects during the fall. Past projects have included candy sales, bake sales, pancake breakfasts, shows, dances, selling concessions at athletic events, partnering with restaurants to receive a portion of proceeds, etc. In addition, many schools and YMCA branches will work with students to provide financial assistance and scholarships. The State Office actively seeks grants that support student financial assistance. Organizations like service clubs have also responded to requests for contributions.

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

## Does your school provide funds?

Students participating in Youth and Government programs can approach their schools for funding by presenting a well prepared, thoughtful proposal that outlines the educational and civic value of the program. They should begin by explaining what Youth and Government is and how it aligns with the school's academic and extracurricular goals, particularly in areas like government, civics, leadership, and college readiness. Youth and Government covers many of the TEKS and can be presented with the presentation. A clear breakdown of costs and a specific funding request should be included, along with details about what the funding would cover (e.g., registration fees, travel, lodging).

When making the ask, students should speak with the most relevant contacts, such as a teacher sponsor, their local DD, or the principal, and be prepared to demonstrate how their participation benefits not only them but also the school community. Offering to give a presentation, share their experience, or create a civic engagement project upon return can further show the program's impact. Even if full funding isn't possible, students can ask about partial support or fundraising assistance. Approaching the conversation with professionalism, preparation, and gratitude goes a long way in making a strong and persuasive case.

## Why do we do fundraisers?

We fundraise to attend both our Regional Conference and the State Conference in Austin, Texas.

At the State Conference, students from across Texas come together to model the state government process through engaging in debates on statewide issues and participating in mock court litigations.







## How to get started?

- Print off a calendar or keep it digital.
- Share this calendar with neighbors, co-workers, friends, and family. Spread the word to your community that you are doing a sponsor a day fundraiser. Use social media, emails, text, etc.
- Have people choose a calendar day to sponsor. They will donate the amount of money equal to the corresponding number (i.e. September 15th equals donating \$15. Keep Going until every day is sponsored (a person could sponsor more than one day if they'd like).
- Explain what Youth and Government is and what sponsor a day is. Tell your Y story and why Youth and Government is important to you.

# SEPTEMBER 2025



TEXAS YOUTH AND GOVERNMENT

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
31	01 	02	03 	04	05	06 <i>Leader Today!</i>
07	08 <i>Learning in my community</i>	09	10	11	12	13
14 	15	16	17	18	19 	20
21	22 	23	24	25 <i>I believe in civics education</i>	26	27
28	29	30 <i>Texas Capitol here I come!</i>				

## SPONSOR A DAY

YOU CHOOSE!

Example:

Day 7 = \$7 Sponsorship!

Send your sponsorship to:

## In YG, I learn...

- Civics Education
- Leadership Development
- To engage and practice democracy

## GOAL:

\$495

Your support ensures I can participate from Regionals all the way to State!

# “Democracy must be learned by each generation”

# HOW YOUTH AND GOVERNMENT ALIGNS WITH TEXAS EDUCATION STANDARDS

Understanding how Youth and Government aligns with TEKS enables students to clearly demonstrate the program's connection to state academic standards, strengthening its credibility and relevance for schools today. By highlighting these connections, students can make a persuasive case to school administrators for program approval and potential funding support.

Participating in Texas Youth and Government provides students with a powerful academic experience that aligns directly with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) standards. While students are immersed in real-world simulations of government, law, journalism, and public policy, they are also actively developing skills and knowledge that meet and often exceed state educational requirements.

Through the legislative program, students analyze the structure and function of government. They research political issues, draft and propose original legislation, and debate policy in committees and chambers. These activities support government standards such as evaluating constitutional principles like checks and balances, federalism, and individual rights. Students come to understand the roles and responsibilities of each branch of government, including how laws are created, reviewed, and enforced. In doing so, they meet TEKS standards that call for analysis of the U.S. Constitution, legislative procedures, and the judicial process.

The judicial section of the program allows students to step into the role of attorneys and judges as they prepare and argue legal cases. This deepens their understanding of how the court system works, including jurisdiction, due process, and judicial review. Students also learn to identify credible sources, build structured arguments, and evaluate competing perspectives. These are core expectations under both social studies and English language arts standards.

In the media and State Affairs Forum tracks, students explore the role of journalism and public discourse in shaping society. They learn to write clearly and persuasively, conduct interviews, fact check their sources, and deliver professional presentations. These experiences connect directly with standards in English language arts and journalism, including composing well-organized texts, evaluating sources for reliability, and speaking effectively in both group and individual settings.

Across all program areas, students sharpen their research, writing, speaking, and critical thinking abilities. They learn how to synthesize information, communicate ideas clearly, and respond to feedback. These are central elements of the TEKS standards in composition, inquiry and research, and oral communication. Students also learn how to engage in respectful dialogue, consider diverse viewpoints, and work collaboratively—skills that support both academic goals and personal growth.

Because the program is rooted in civic education, students also fulfill TEKS expectations related to civic engagement, political participation, and understanding the responsibilities of citizenship. Whether debating a bill, presenting a news report, or arguing a court case, students are applying classroom knowledge in a real-world context that makes learning meaningful and lasting.

Youth and Government not only meets the state's academic expectations, it enhances them. It gives students a chance to put their learning into action while building the confidence and leadership they need to succeed in school and beyond. By participating, students fulfill TEKS requirements in a way that is both educational and inspiring. Under resources page.

# UNDERSTANDING THE DISTRICT CONFERENCE

The YMCA Texas Youth and Government State Conference is the capstone event of the program year, offering students a hands-on opportunity to simulate the functions of state government. Delegates who qualify through their District Conference gather from across the state to participate in this immersive experience, where they step into roles as legislators, judges, attorneys, lobbyists, media representatives, and executive officials. The conference is designed not only to deepen students' understanding of civic processes but also to build leadership, critical thinking, and public speaking skills.

To attend the State Conference, students must have completed registration for the program, participated in and qualified through their District Conference, and submitted all required materials for their assigned section. Only those who meet these criteria are eligible to attend, and participation in the District Conference is mandatory. The High School State Conference typically takes place over four days in late February, running from Thursday through Sunday. The Middle School (Junior Youth and Government) Conference occurs earlier in the year, usually in late January or early February, and spans three days from Friday to Sunday. Both events are held at the Kalahari Resort and Water Park in Round Rock, Texas, which provides lodging, meeting space, and easy access to Austin venues.

In addition to activities at the resort, the conference utilizes several official sites across Austin. These include the Texas State Capitol, the Supreme Court of Texas, the U.S. Federal Courthouse, the Court of Criminal Appeals, the Travis County Courthouse, and Austin Community College. These authentic government facilities allow students to engage in their simulations within the spaces where real decisions are made, adding to the educational depth of the experience.

All delegates must be officially registered, with completed forms, payment, and parent authorization submitted before the conference. Delegates are also responsible for turning in all required materials for their section, such as bills, briefs, or proposals, and no changes may be made after submission.

Each delegation must meet the adult supervision requirement of at least one adult for every ten students. Advisors are responsible for submitting rooming lists, and no changes to these lists will be accepted once submitted. Ensuring adequate supervision and preparation helps maintain the smooth operation and high quality of the conference experience.

During the State Conference, students engage in one of several program areas, each simulating a key aspect of state government. In the Legislative section, students write, present, and debate bills. Judicial participants take on roles in mock trial or appellate court cases, while State Affairs Forum delegates research public policy issues and present innovative solutions. Those in the Media section document the conference through articles, photography, or video production. Students may also serve as lobbyists, simulate roles in the Governor's Cabinet, or run as candidates for elected office within the program. Every role is vital and offers a unique lens through which students explore democracy in action.

# UNDERSTANDING THE STATE CONFERENCE

The YMCA Texas Youth and Government State Conference is the capstone event of the program year, offering students a hands-on opportunity to simulate the functions of state government. Delegates who qualify through their District Conference gather from across the state to participate in this immersive experience, where they step into roles as legislators, judges, attorneys, lobbyists, media representatives, and executive officials. The conference is designed not only to deepen students' understanding of civic processes but also to build leadership, critical thinking, and public speaking skills.

To attend the State Conference, students must have completed registration for the program, participated in and qualified through their District Conference, and submitted all required materials for their assigned section. Only those who meet these criteria are eligible to attend, and participation in the District Conference is mandatory. The High School State Conference typically takes place over four days in late February, running from Thursday through Sunday. The Middle School (Junior Youth and Government) Conference occurs earlier in the year, usually in late January or early February, and spans three days from Friday to Sunday. Both events are held at the Kalahari Resort and Water Park in Round Rock, Texas, which provides lodging, meeting space, and easy access to Austin venues.

In addition to activities at the resort, the conference utilizes several official sites across Austin. These include the Texas State Capitol, the Supreme Court of Texas, the U.S. Federal Courthouse, the Court of Criminal Appeals, the Travis County Courthouse, and Austin Community College. These authentic government facilities allow students to engage in their simulations within the spaces where real decisions are made, adding to the educational depth of the experience.

All delegates must be officially registered, with completed forms, payment, and parent authorization submitted before the conference. Delegates are also responsible for turning in all required materials for their section, such as bills, briefs, or proposals, and no changes may be made after submission.

Each delegation must meet the adult supervision requirement of at least one adult for every ten students. Advisors are responsible for submitting rooming lists, and no changes to these lists will be accepted once submitted. Ensuring adequate supervision and preparation helps maintain the smooth operation and high quality of the conference experience.

During the State Conference, students engage in one of several program areas, each simulating a key aspect of state government. In the Legislative section, students write, present, and debate bills. Judicial participants take on roles in mock trial or appellate court cases, while State Affairs Forum delegates research public policy issues and present innovative solutions. Those in the Media section document the conference through articles, photography, or video production. Students may also serve as lobbyists, simulate roles in the Governor's Cabinet, or run as candidates for elected office within the program. Every role is vital and offers a unique lens through which students explore democracy in action.

# YOUR GUIDE FOR WHAT TO WEAR AT YG CONFERENCES!

Dressing professionally at Youth and Government (Y&G) events is important because it helps participants embody the roles they are simulating, whether as legislators, lawyers, judges, lobbyists, or press. These roles are part of a formal, real-world system where attire reflects respect, credibility, and preparedness. By dressing the part, students demonstrate that they take their responsibilities seriously and are ready to engage in thoughtful, civic-minded dialogue.

### What is the difference between Business Casual and Business Professional?

- Cardigan or jacket
- Un-collared blouse, polo shirt
- Boots, flats
- Trousers, Khaki pants or knee length skirts.
- Blazer
- Blouse, or button-up shirt
- Heels or flats
- Knee length skirt or longer

Please remember that if you are in session on the House or Senate floor, you are required to wear a blazer or formal jacket. This is a rule that elected officials must adhere to, we ask that you please respect the facility and do the same.



### What is the difference between Business Casual and Business Professional?

- Button - up, polo shirt
- Slacks or Khaki's
- Boots or nice laced shoes
- Cardigan or jacket
- Button - up with a Tie (Or bowtie)
- Suit Jacket
- Dress Shoes
- Slacks

Please remember that if you are in session on the House or Senate floor, you are required to wear a suit jacket. This is a rule elected officials must adhere to, we ask that you please respect the facility and do the same.



# NATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

The YMCA Texas Youth and Government program offers exceptional national-level experiences that allow students to engage with civic issues, leadership development, and peer collaboration on a broader scale. These events include the National Judicial Competition (NJC), the Conference on National Affairs (CONA), and National Advocacy Days (NAD). Each one provides a unique opportunity for delegates to represent Texas on a national stage and work alongside fellow Youth and Government participants from across the United States.

## **National Judicial Competition (NJC)**

At NJC, top-performing students from the Judicial section come together to participate in rigorous mock trial and appellate court competitions. Held annually and hosted by the YMCA of the USA, NJC is a showcase of legal knowledge, courtroom presence, and critical thinking. Delegates prepare in advance and face off against other highly skilled teams from around the country. The experience challenges participants to refine their legal arguments, analyze case materials deeply, and display professionalism under pressure. NJC not only strengthens advocacy and analytical skills but also encourages collaboration and networking with youth who share a passion for the law.

## **Conference on National Affairs (CONA)**

CONA is a weeklong civic experience like no other. Delegates selected for this prestigious opportunity research a topic of national or international significance and craft a detailed proposal outlining a solution. During the conference, they present, defend, and debate their proposals with thoughtful young leaders from across the U.S. The environment is dynamic and intellectually stimulating, offering a blend of public speaking, research, and diplomatic discussion. Beyond the formal debates, students build strong friendships and gain broader insight into national issues. Participation in CONA encourages informed citizenship and develops confidence in discussing complex global challenges.

## **National Advocacy Days (NAD)**

National Advocacy Days take students to the heart of American democracy, Washington, D.C. During NAD, selected delegates join YMCA staff and national leaders to advocate for the Y's key focus areas: youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility. Delegates meet with legislators and staffers on Capitol Hill, learn the basics of federal policy, and take part in briefings and discussions that strengthen their understanding of public advocacy. This experience connects real-world policy to the values of the YMCA and empowers youth to be vocal agents of positive change in their communities and beyond.

## **Youth Governors' Conference**

Each year, the elected Youth Governors from participating states come together at the Youth Governors' Conference, a leadership summit focused on connection, collaboration, and vision-setting. During this conference, Texas's Youth Governor joins peers to explore shared goals, discuss best practices, and represent the youth voice on national civic matters. The event helps build a network of young leaders who are committed to shaping the future of their states and the country.



## YMCA Texas Youth and Government Student Code of Conduct

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to identify personal behaviors consistent and inconsistent with the YMCA Texas Youth and Government program core values of respect, responsibility, caring, and honesty. The items in this Code of Conduct are designed to uphold these values and program goals and protect students' wellbeing while at State Conferences.

EXPECTATION OF STUDENT	PENALTIES IN CASES OF VIOLATION
1. For the purposes of this code, there are no "innocent bystanders." Any student who stands by while a violation of this code occurs without reporting it or leaving the area is liable for the violation, even if he or she does not actively participate. Our program aims to create responsible future leaders who take ownership of their decisions.	As outlined in code
2. Students cannot leave YMCA Texas Youth and Government conference facilities early or for reasons unrelated to programming without permission from a parent or legal guardian and approval from club advisor and District Director.	Call parents, send home
3. YMCA Texas Youth and Government delegates should not steal, deface, or otherwise damage public or private property including program facilities and the belongings of other participants. Violations of this provision may be considered criminal activity and prosecuted as such.	Call parents, send home Call facility security (Possibly) summon police (Possibly) financial responsibility for damages
4. Students must abide by all rules set by conference facility partners. For example, students cannot eat or drink in the Senate and House chambers or Capitol committee and conference rooms and cannot order room service at the hotel.	Report to club advisor → staff discretion
5. Students are not permitted to possess or use incense or tobacco products (including e-cigarettes and juuls/vaping devices), weapons, non-prescription drugs, or alcohol while at YMCA Texas Youth and Government programming.	Call parents, send home Summon police
6. Delegates may not enter hotel rooms other than their own.	Call parents, (possibly) send home
7. Students may not ride in taxis or personal vehicles or use public transportation without adult supervision.	Report to club advisor → staff discretion
8. Delegates must abide by all curfews outlined in State Conference schedules.	Report to club advisor → staff discretion (Possibly) lose participation rights
9. All delegate visitors must sign in to State Conference following visitor procedures. If visitors will stay with delegates overnight, delegates must receive approval from the State Office. Visitor passes are not allowed for evening activities.	Call parents, send home
10. Delegates may not switch hotel rooms during State Conference unless they obtain approval from the State Office.	Call parents, send home
11. Except in cases of emergency or serious illness, delegates must attend all sessions of State Conference for their sections as well as opening and closing ceremonies, delegation meetings, and the conference banquet.	Lose participation rights
12. Delegates should wear only their own nametags. Nametags should be visible at all times.	Report to club advisor → staff discretion
13. Delegates should not harass or intimidate others by words, gestures, body language, or action. Delegates should respect one another regardless of race, gender, religion, sexuality, national origin, disability, and other identity characteristics.	Report to club advisor → staff discretion (Possibly) call parents, send home (Possibly) summon police
14. Delegates will abide by the State Conference Dress Code at all times.	Sent back to room to change (Possibly) lose participation rights (Possibly) lose Premier Delegation for club (Possibly) lose right to participate in evening activities
15. Delegates attending the State Conference dance must abide by all guidelines in Conference Brochure. They should not dance suggestively (e.g. grinding, bending over), bunch up in groups, or remove their shoes. Delegates' hands must remain visible.	Warning from adult chaperone (Possibly) removed from dance (Possibly) report to club advisor → staff discretion

I understand that my participation in YMCA Texas Youth and Government indicates that I have reviewed the above standards of conduct and agree to abide by them. I understand that the YMCA Texas Youth and Government program maintains discretion regarding penalty if I am found to be in violation of any provision of this Code of Conduct. I understand that the YMCA is not responsible for any expenses associated with enforcement of the above penalties or refunding my participation. I understand that the YMCA Texas Youth and Government State Conference security team will assist in ensuring that delegates follow this code.

# CLUB OFFICERS AND BYLAWS

Bylaws are the foundational rules that govern a high school club's operation, establishing structure, setting expectations, and ensuring consistency as members graduate and new ones join. They clarify membership and leadership requirements, guide conflict resolution by providing a neutral reference, and often meet school requirements for official recognition. Additionally, if the club handles money, bylaws outline financial procedures to ensure responsible management.

Officers are elected or appointed leaders who manage different aspects of a club's operations by distributing tasks, providing accountability, and enhancing member engagement. They help organize communication between members and faculty, develop leadership and teamwork skills, and maintain the club's momentum by setting goals and keeping activities on track throughout the school year.

## **SAMPLE OF CLUB OFFICERS AND BYLAWS**

Thank you to the Houston District, Ft. Bend YMCA for this example.

### **Article 1. General Provisions**

1.1 Club name. The name of this organization shall be the Fort Bend YMCA Texas Youth and Government Club, called "the Club."

1.2 YMCA Coordinator. The person designated by the Fort Bend YMCA to oversee and assist the Club shall hereinafter be known as "the YMCA Coordinator." All Club actions shall be subject to the approval of the YMCA Coordinator.

### **Article 2. Membership**

2.1 Eligibility for membership. Membership in the Club shall be open to any individual who is eligible to participate in the YMCA Texas Youth and Government program or who has participated in the program during the previous six months; and who is not a member of any other YMCA Texas Youth and Government club.

2.2 Requirements of membership. The membership of the Club shall consist of those who have registered with the Secretary and met all other requirements of membership.

2.3 Attendance at District Conference. All members shall be required to attend the District Conference. This requirement may be waived by majority vote of the Club or of the Club officers.

2.4 Financial obligations. Payment of assessed dues by the specified deadline shall be a requirement to maintain membership. This requirement may be waived for individual members by majority vote of the Club or of the Club officers.

2.5 Fundraising. Participation in mandatory fundraising activities shall be a requirement of membership, but such requirement may be waived for individual members by majority vote of the Club or of the Club officers.

### **Article 3. Meetings**

3.1 Club meetings. Meetings of the Club may be called by the President at his or her discretion. The President shall call a meeting upon the request of a majority of the Club officers or of one-third of the membership of the Club.

3.2 Procedure. All meetings shall be conducted according to the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised except as specified in these bylaws or special rules of the Club.

3.3 Notification of meetings. Notification shall be provided to all members and interested parties at least two weeks in advance of the meeting. This notification shall include a summary of business to be conducted at the meeting. Meetings may be called with two days advance notice with the approval of a majority of the Club officers.

# CLUB OFFICERS AND BYLAWS

## Article 4. Officers

4.1 List of officers. The officers of the Club shall consist of the following: President, Judicial Coordinator, Legislative Coordinator, Media Coordinator, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

4.2 Terms of office. Each club officer shall serve a term of one year from the time of their election, or until their replacement is elected.

4.3 Vacancies. If the office of President shall fall vacant, the Vice-President shall assume the office of President. If other offices shall fall vacant, the President shall appoint an acting replacement who shall serve until the election of a permanent replacement.

4.4 Duties of the President. The President shall preside at all meetings. He or she shall act as a liaison between the members of the Club and the YMCA Coordinator. He or she shall be responsible for scheduling necessary meetings, directing the Secretary to provide notification of those meetings, and performing any other duties normally associated with the office of President.

4.5 Duties of the Judicial Coordinator. The Judicial Coordinator shall train members participating in the judicial section, shall assist them in the formation of judicial teams, and shall act as liaison between them and the President and YMCA Coordinator. He or she shall schedule and preside at judicial training meetings. He or she shall be responsible for coordinating mock trials, with the purpose of allowing all teams the equal opportunity for training prior to competition.

4.6 Duties of the Legislative Coordinator. The Legislative Coordinator shall train members participating in the legislative section and shall act as liaison between them and the President and YMCA Coordinator. He or she shall schedule and preside at legislative training meetings and shall serve as Parliamentarian at all official meetings of the Club. He or she shall prepare a plan for the allotment of the Club's legislative seats, which shall be subject to approval by majority vote of the officers.

4.7 Duties of the Media Coordinator. The Media Coordinator shall train members participating in the media section and shall act as liaison between them and the President and YMCA Coordinator. He or she shall schedule and preside at media training meetings.

4.8 Duties of the Vice-President. The Vice-President shall assist the President, shall preside at all official meetings at which the President is not present, and shall perform any other duties normally associated with the office of Vice-President.

4.9 Duties of the Secretary. The Secretary shall keep minutes at all official club meetings, issue informational notices to club members at the direction of the other officers, facilitate the registration processes, complete any necessary clerical work for the YMCA Coordinator and for the other officers, and fulfill any clerical duties that may arise in connection with the District and State Conferences. He or she shall be responsible for keeping the official membership roster of the Club and determining the voting strength of the membership. He or she shall perform any other duties normally associated with the office of Secretary.

4.10 Duties of the Treasurer. The Treasurer shall keep the financial records of the Club, coordinate its fundraising activities, and perform any other duties normally associated with the office of Treasurer.

4.11 Selection of Webmaster. By majority vote, the officers shall select the Webmaster. The Webmaster shall be responsible for the maintenance of and content of the Club website.

# CLUB OFFICERS AND BYLAWS

## Article 5. Nominations

5.1 Offices requiring nomination. Any member desiring to seek office at the District or State level must receive the nomination of the Club in order to do so.

5.2 Qualifications. A candidate for office must meet the applicable District and State qualifications for the office being sought, as well as being a member of the Club.

5.3 Filing deadline. All candidates seeking the nomination of the Club must declare to the President their intention to do so, prior to the specified filing deadline. This filing deadline shall be determined by the President and announced at least two weeks in advance.

5.4 Necessity of nomination election. In the event that multiple candidates file for the same office, an election shall be held to determine the nominee of the Club. Two weeks' notice of the election shall be required unless waived by majority vote of the Club officers.

5.5 Governor. Candidates for Governor shall be elected by the membership of the Club.

5.6 Section offices. Candidates for District or State section offices shall be elected by their respective sections.

## Article 6. Elections

6.1 Times of election. Officer elections shall be held annually, before June 1 but after the State Conference. Nomination elections shall be held, as necessary, at a time chosen by the President and announced at least two weeks in advance. Nomination elections for statewide, judicial, legislative, and media offices shall be held after the August meeting but before the registration deadline of the District Conference. Nomination elections for Hyde House offices shall be held after the District Conference but before the State Conference.

6.2 Method of voting. Voting in all officer elections and nomination elections shall be by secret ballot, with the exception of absentee ballots. Ballots which result in a tie shall be decided by a secret-ballot majority vote of the officers after the second ballot.

6.3 Absentee voting. Absentee voting via email, phone, and written ballots shall be permitted in all elections. Absentee ballots must be received by the President, Vice-President, Secretary, or, in the case of section nomination elections, the respective section coordinator, before the election.

6.4 Coordinator elections. Candidates for section coordinator shall be elected by their respective sections.

## Article 7. Treasury

7.1 Dues. Any dues shall be assessed by majority vote of the membership of the Club.

7.2 Fundraising. Any Club fundraising efforts shall be approved by majority vote at a Club meeting, or by majority vote of the Club officers. In any case such that participation shall be a requirement of membership, efforts shall be ratified by majority vote of the membership of the Club.

## Article 8. Amendments

8.1 Adoption. These bylaws may be amended at any Club meeting by a two-thirds vote, provided that the amendment has been submitted in writing, and distributed to the Club, at least two weeks in advance of the meeting. However, a majority vote of the Club membership shall be sufficient to adopt an amendment without prior notice.

8.2 Distribution of amendments. An amendment shall be distributed to the Club by the President or Secretary upon the request of any Club member.

# YG VOTING & MEMBERSHIP RULES

This document serves as an example that clubs may use or adapt to fit their specific needs. The following guidelines are intended to support fair, transparent, and consistent elections, while allowing flexibility for each club's unique structure and preferences. Clubs are encouraged to review these recommendations carefully and implement practices that best promote integrity and equal opportunity in the election process.

## **What constitutes full membership?**

- To be a full member of Youth and Government, you must have at least 75% meeting attendance.
- There are typically 35 Fridays in a school year, so this means you cannot miss more than 9 meetings.
- The bare minimum for full membership in Youth and Government is attending the District Conference every year you are in the club.

## **Who can run for a position?**

- To run for a YAG position, you must meet all of the full membership requirements above.
- All candidates must have demonstrated significant effort to participate in the State Conference.
- All candidates must have completed at least 1 year in Youth and Government
- Who is eligible to vote in the election?
- To vote in a Youth and Government election, you must meet all of the full membership requirements above.
- Graduating seniors will be ineligible to vote in any elections in the club.

## **Club leadership requirements**

- All elected club leaders must still adhere to the full membership requirements to keep their position and membership in Youth and Government.
- If a club leader or club position holder misses or cancels over 9 meetings (75%), they will lose their position and membership in the club.

## **Voting outside of elections**

- All full members of Youth and Government are eligible to call a vote on any topic of their concern
- When a vote is called, it can be passed with a two thirds majority
- If the two thirds majority is not reached, the vote will not be passed.