

# Building Effective Youth Councils

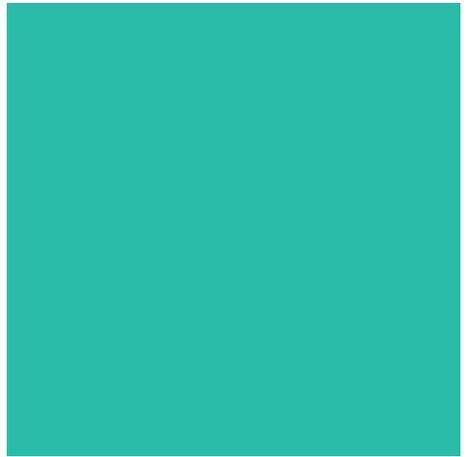
A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO ENGAGING YOUTH IN POLICY MAKING

*Shanetta Martin, Karen Pittman, Thaddeus Ferber, Ada McMahon*

Part of the Youth Engagement Series for Municipal and State Leaders

In Collaboration with The National League of Cities' Institute for Youth, Education, and Families, and The National Conference of State Legislatures

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of STATE LEGISLATURES  
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FOR YOUTH INVESTMENT

## About the Forum for Youth Investment

The Forum for Youth Investment is a nonprofit, nonpartisan “action tank” dedicated to helping communities and the nation make sure all young people are Ready by 21™ – ready for college, work and life. Informed by rigorous research and practical experience, the Forum forges innovative ideas, strategies and partnerships to strengthen solutions for young people and those who care about them. A trusted resource for policy makers, advocates, researchers and practitioners, the Forum provides youth and adult leaders with the information, connections and tools they need to create greater opportunities and outcomes for young people.

The Forum was founded in 1998 by Karen Pittman and Merita Irby, two of the country’s top leaders on youth issues and youth policy. The Forum’s 25-person staff is headquartered in Washington D.C. in the historic Cady-Lee House with a satellite office in Michigan and staff in Missouri, New Mexico and Virginia.



## A Practical Guide to Engaging Youth in Policy Making

# Building Effective Youth Councils

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*Shanetta Martin, Karen Pittman, Thaddeus Ferber, Ada McMahon*

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Please contact the Forum for Youth  
Investment at The Cady-Lee House,  
7064 Eastern Ave, NW, Washington, D.C.  
20012-2031, Phone: 202.207.3333, Fax:  
202.207.3329, Web: [www.forumfyi.org](http://www.forumfyi.org),  
Email: [youth@forumfyi.org](mailto:youth@forumfyi.org) for information  
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Special thanks to the New Mexico Youth Alliance, Hampton Youth Commission, Maine Legislative Youth Advisory Council and Boston Mayor's Council for their candid and abundant advice and for providing the photos used throughout this report. We also owe a debt of gratitude to the national organizations that work on youth engagement issues – specifically the California Research Bureau (CRB) for their assistance in connecting us to existing youth council groups across the country.

This guide was informed by CRB's recent report, "Youth Involvement in Policymaking," which discusses and tracks the intentional involvement of young people in the public policy arena. Thanks also to the National Conference of State Legislatures who have worked to bring youth involvement in policy to the forefront with state legislators across the country, tracked legislation around youth participation in state government and partnered with the Forum to hold an audio conference showcasing the work of youth councils across the country.

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Finally, thanks to the Surdna Foundation, the Volunteer IMPACT Fund and the New Mexico Community Foundation. Their financial support of the Forum's youth engagement work helped make his guide possible.

## State Youth Councils

Arizona Governor's Youth Commission, Tammy Paz-Combs  
Iowa Youth Action Committee, Beth Govoni  
Louisiana Youth Advisory Council  
Maine Legislative Youth Advisory Council, Phillip McCarthy  
Maryland Youth Council  
Missouri Governor's Youth Cabinet  
Nebraska Governor's Youth Advisory Council  
Nevada Youth Legislative Issues Forum  
New Hampshire Youth Advisory Council  
New Mexico Youth Alliance, Lanny Leyba  
North Carolina State Youth Council, Cynthia Giles  
Washington State Legislative Youth Advisory Council, Greg Williamson

## City Youth Councils

Boston Mayor's Youth Council (MA), Patty McMahon  
Des Moines Youth Advisory Board (IA), Karen Ligas  
Grand Rapids Mayor's Youth Council (MI), Shannon Harris  
Hampton Youth Commission (VA), Cindy Carlson  
Nashville Youth Advisory Council (TN), Sherica Clark  
San Francisco Youth Commission (CA), Rachel Antrobus

## National Resource Organizations

National League of Cities  
National Conference of State Legislatures  
California Research Bureau  
Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development  
Youth on Board  
University of Wisconsin  
Youth Leadership Institute

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# Rationale for Youth Engagement in Government



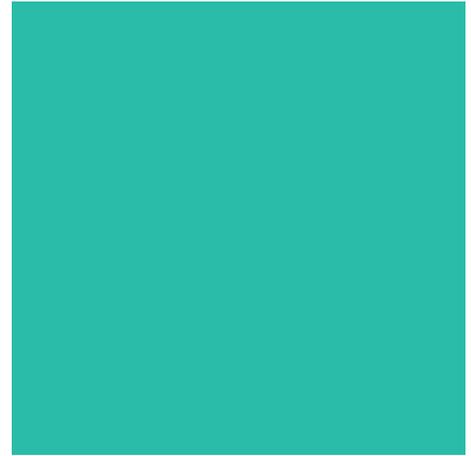
New Mexico Youth Alliance with Governor Richardson



[Youth councils are] a popular and effective way to get more youth involved in solving local problems and more actively engaged in the community.



“Promoting Youth Participation,”  
National League of Cities, 2002.



Socially engaged young people have the knowledge that their actions can effect positive change. They possess an awareness and motivation about the need for positive change in their world that is based on knowledge. They have the skills and capacity to make a contribution. They are resourceful, connected and experienced; they know how to access and navigate their ways through different settings and institutions to find and create opportunities to be engaged in purposeful collective action that can lead to positive social change or improvements in conditions for themselves and others.



“Youth Acts, Community Impacts,”  
Forum for Youth Investment, 2001.



# Overview

## What is a Youth Council?

Many mayors, governors and legislatures across the country have created youth councils: formal bodies made up of youth (typically ages 16-18) who advise high-level decision makers and elected officials.

The structure and role of councils vary from city to city and state to state. In some cases they provide advice on proposed and pending legislation, state budget expenditures and funding for youth programs. In Maine, the council also has the duty of drafting and proposing legislation. Whatever their structure, youth councils give young people a meaningful role in the policy and decision-making process.

Young people of all ages have found their voice through organizing, advocacy and community leadership. Since young people aged 18 and over have direct voting power, youth councils are not the only way that young people can be involved in policy making. Youth Councils, however, provide the opportunity to have direct access to policy makers. Increasingly, youth and adults are looking for strategies to ensure that they take full advantage of this opportunity.

## About the Guide

The Forum for Youth Investment believes that meaningful youth engagement is critical for the creation of sustainable, widespread, high-impact change in the systems and settings that can either support or hinder young people's progress.

This guide builds on the Forum's earlier work on youth engagement — Youth. Action. Community. Development: The Community and Youth Development Series, produced with funding from the Ford Foundation and available on the Forum's web site ([www.forumfyi.org](http://www.forumfyi.org)). This guide is also part of a larger goal of the Forum to produce timely, practical and helpful publications for change-maker leaders on the national, state and local levels. These leaders can be members of government, nonprofit organizations, communities or youth and their families, all of whom take a Big Picture approach to ensuring that young people are Ready by 21™: ready for college, work and life.

The guide is designed to help states and localities create or strengthen their own youth councils. It is a synthesis of theory and practice that provides a general framework for thinking about youth councils, explaining the principles for youth action and the importance of youth engagement. It also incorporates advice and lessons from people in the field who have started or currently staff youth councils across the country. The guide incorporates examples from these youth councils to illustrate key points, focusing heavily on the youth councils in Boston, Massachusetts; Hampton, Virginia; and the state of New Mexico.

Because of the growing interest in creating state youth councils, we have written the lessons here with the particular challenges of state councils in mind. But most, if not all, of these lessons are also applicable on the local level.

The guide is divided into three parts:

- ***The Rationale for Youth Engagement in Government*** provides a theoretical and historical context for youth councils by articulating the rationale for engaging youth in policy and decision-making processes and by explaining the Forum's Principles of Youth Engagement.
- ***6 Keys to Creating Effective Youth Councils*** delves into the nuts and bolts of creating a youth council. This section focuses on two essentials — *laying the foundation and supporting youth action* — and offers tested options for achieving six key tasks associated with these two objectives. There are two types of action required to create an effective council. If your state or community has an established, staffed and funded council, you may want to skim the first three keys associated with laying a strong foundation and focus on the second three to learn about strategies for increasing the effectiveness of your council and its members.
- ***Resources*** includes basic information about a range of youth councils, a list of additional available resources, samples of youth council enabling legislation and samples of youth council application forms.

All in all, this guide should provide you with the basic information, advice, tools and resources necessary to create effective youth councils.

# The Importance of Youth Engagement

## Genuine Engagement

The true engagement of young people in the change process signals a fundamental shift in how decisions are made. Young people are too often excluded from the decision-making process, even on the issues that most concern them. As Jason Warren noted a decade ago when he was a member of the New York City Youth Force, “Every day, in local arenas all the way to the White House, adults sit around and decide what problems youth have and what youth need, without ever consulting us.” Data on the status of youth in the U.S. brings urgency to Jason’s call for youth to be at the table as informers, critics and strategists.

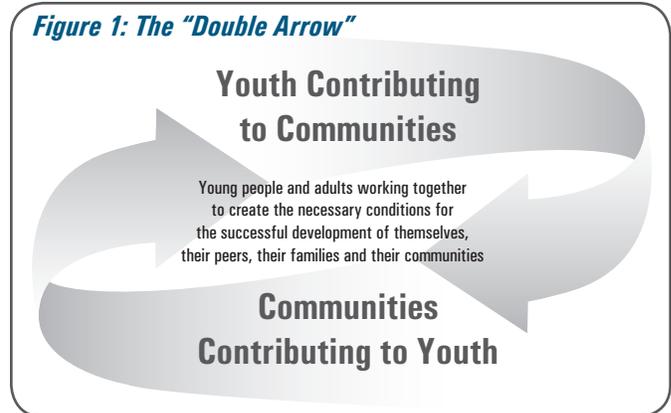
Young people are disproportionately involved in and affected by the problems that beset communities and states. Recent research by Gambone, Connell and Klem, reports that only four in ten young people in their early 20’s are “doing well”: in college or working, emotionally and physically healthy and engaged in political or community life (Gambone, et. al, 2002). Another study, commissioned by America’s Promise Alliance, suggests that only three in ten young people ages 12 to 17 get the supports that they need to flourish: caring adults, safe places, a healthy start, effective education and opportunities to help others (America’s Promise, 2006).

These data are certainly cause for concern. But they are also cause for engagement. Young people are the source for many solutions. And studies show that young people want to be engaged as change makers.

## The “Double Arrow”

As Figure 1 suggests, change happens when youth and community development are seen as two sides of the same coin.

Young people need stronger family and community supports. They also, however, need to be afforded the tools, training and trust to apply their creativity and energy to effect change in their own lives and in the future of their neighborhoods, communities, cities and states. The first argument led the Forum to create the Ready by 21 approach to help public, private and



community leaders in states and communities make fundamental changes in the way they do business. The second argument led the Forum to emphasize youth and family engagement as one of the four key strategies for long-term, sustainable change in order to change the odds for youth.

The key to meaningful youth engagement or meaningful engagement at any age, however, is asking and answering the question, “Engagement for what?” As shown by Figure 2, youth can and should be engaged in each of the four key change strategies needed to ensure strong and sustained progress. The Forum has been promoting strategies for deeper youth engagement since 1999.

## Engagement for Change

Improving the quality and coordination of youth services and supports is critical to improving youth outcomes. Communities need to respond with a greater sense of urgency and commitment. Generating improvements often requires changes in policies and resource allocations. These happen faster when there is strong community demand. Without direct youth and family input, however, improvement efforts can miss the mark. The Forum separates youth and family engagement from the task of increasing broad public demand for change to underscore the importance of engaging those directly affected.

In order to create opportunities for change, adult change makers need to find effective ways to involve youth in shaping policy, improving services and building

demand (three of the four change strategies). Similarly, those who work to engage youth (the fourth strategy), should make sure these youth are engaged in service improvement, policy decisions and increasing demand. Meaningful youth engagement requires engagement in the full range of deliberate change strategies, and all successful change efforts depend on the meaningful engagement of youth.

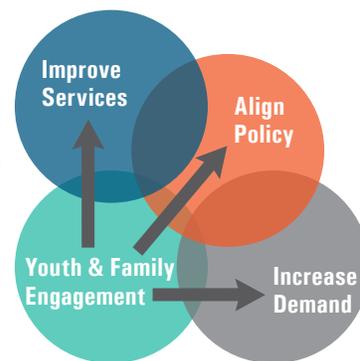
**Figure 2: Promoting Integrated Change Strategies: Engaging Youth to Improve Services, Align Policy and Increase Demand**

**Engaging Youth and Families.** Since 1999, the Forum has worked with community and youth engagement leaders across the country and around the world to document effective strategies for youth engagement to increase authentic community engagement. In 2002, the Forum formally partnered with community mobilization organizations in Nashville and Austin to develop a strategy for engaging young people as core staff. These “youth mobilizers” research community problems, engage community members and community partners, and work towards long-term solutions.

**System Change/Services Coordination.** In 2003, the Forum began work with educators and education advocates to develop guides to involve young people in school reform efforts and has helped youth map and assess community resources. The Forum developed an observation and discussion tool for helping young people and adults have conversations about what makes a good youth-centered school.

**Increasing Demand through Issue Advocacy.** In 2004, the Forum helped create the Youth Policy Action Center, a collaborative effort of more than 100 organizations, using the Web as a tool for giving young people a voice in national and local advocacy efforts.

**Policy and Resource Assessment.** In 2005, the Forum began involving young people in policy development by providing them with direct links to policy makers and/or to the policy-making and assessment process.



# The Principles of Youth Engagement

Research shows that young people who are actively engaged in social change efforts have three core strengths:

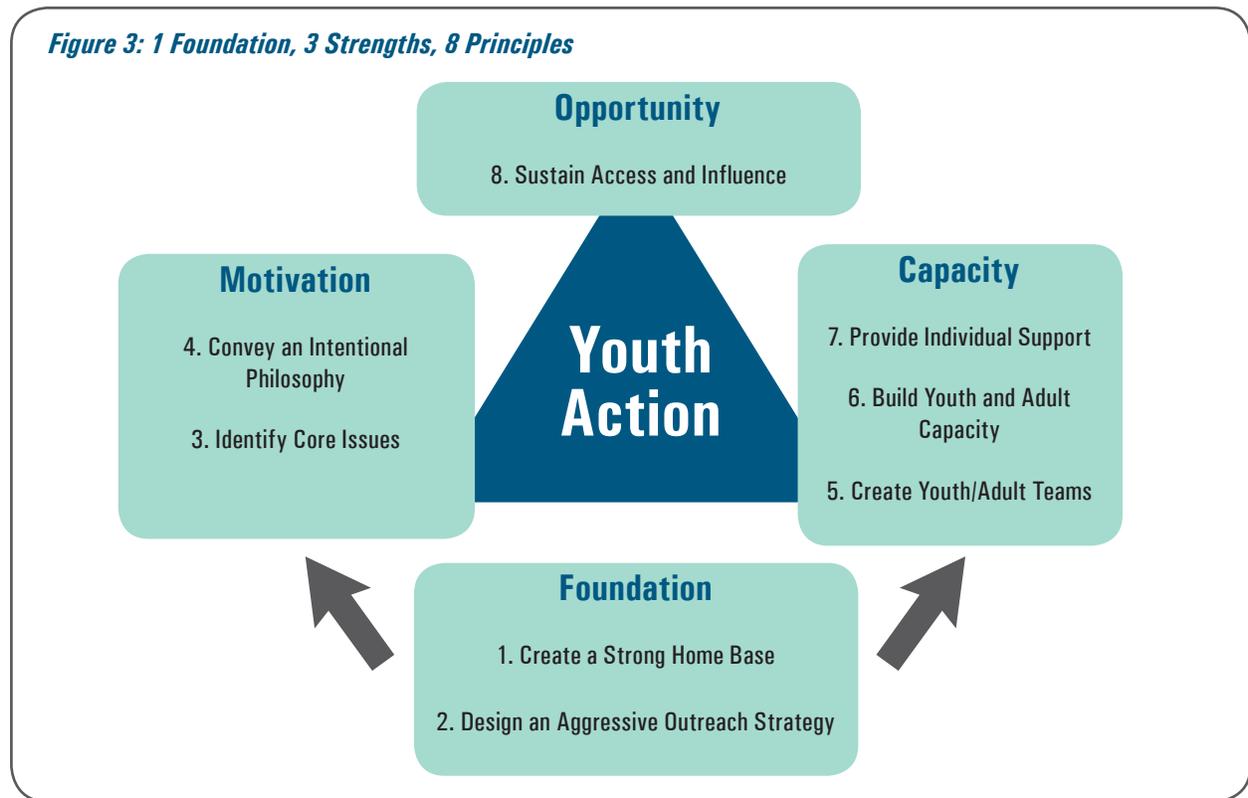
- **Capacity:** Knowledge, leadership and action skills.
- **Motivation:** Understanding and awareness of issues and root causes, systems, strategies for change, commitment and a sense of responsibility.
- **Opportunity:** Chances to act on passions, use skills, and generate change through relevant sustained action.

These strengths do not occur by chance. Young people build skills, acquire passions, come to understandings and take on responsibilities for changing their worlds as they grow, learn and develop. Practice suggests that young people are most likely to develop these strengths when they are connected to programs and organizations that have effective youth engagement strategies explicitly designed to address these core needs.

To help programs and organizations develop these effective engagement strategies, the Forum, in partnership with youth and adult community leaders in Nashville and Austin, adapted the Youth Mobilizer model originally developed by Community IMPACT! USA to create eight Youth Action principles (see Figure 3). The eight principles are explicitly organized around the three core strengths discussed above, and a fourth category: foundation. Organizations and institutions seeking to engage youth need a strong foundation and a stable operational infrastructure that is suited to the level (e.g., neighborhood, state) and type (e.g., policy advocacy, community mobilizing) of youth engagement desired.

We used these eight principles from the Forum’s report, *Core Principles for Engaging Young People in Community Change* (Pittman et al, 2007), in creating six keys to successful youth councils, introduced on page 18. For this guide, we expanded and tailored the basic principles to address the specific challenges and considerations youth councils encounter and require.

**Figure 3: 1 Foundation, 3 Strengths, 8 Principles**



# Youth Engagement in Government

The National League of Cities (NLC) suggests that there is no one “right” way to promote youth participation in local government and identifies four options for municipal leaders to consider: a) youth service, b) youth summits, c) youth mapping efforts and d) youth councils or youth appointments to local boards and commissions. NLC writes that while youth councils “by their nature only reach a small fraction of a city’s youth population, they make a powerful statement to all young people and adult residents that youth are full and valued members of the community” (National League of Cities, 2002).

Youth councils are clearly growing in popularity (see Figure 4). The NLC web site lists more than 140 local youth councils in 19 states plus the District of Columbia. The Forum’s research found twelve states with youth councils that act in an advisory role to state policy makers. Six of these state councils were created in statute: Maine (2002), Nevada (2007), New Mexico (2003), Washington state (2005), New Hampshire (2006) and Louisiana (2007). The remaining six youth councils – in Iowa, Maryland, North Carolina, Nebraska, Arizona and Missouri – were created through executive order. Of those five, North Carolina has the longest existing youth council with 35 years of experience.

## Youth Engagement in Hampton, VA

Hampton’s powerful history of youth engagement, which culminated when the city received the prestigious Innovations in American Government Award in 2005, provides a promising example of how an effective youth council can be developed over time.

Hampton’s story is proof that youth civic engagement can be done comprehensively and well. Hampton sees the options for youth civic engagement suggested by the National League of Cities not as a menu from which to pick one option, but as a mandate for ensuring that all young people have opportunities that match their skills and interests.

With the support of the Hampton Coalition for Youth, Hampton youth and adults worked to develop a rich “pyramid of opportunities” outlining three levels at which

## Youth Civic Engagement in Hampton, Virginia 1990 – 2005

**1990-1995** The City Council convenes the Coalition for Youth, charged with developing recommendations for the city’s youth/family agenda. The Coalition’s federal planning grant ends in 1995, but the work doesn’t. The Coalition for Youth becomes a city department. Young people begin participating in neighborhood planning efforts.

**1996-1998** Hampton’s Planning Department hires two youth as city planners and youth engagement becomes a topic of the city’s new Neighborhood College. The Hampton Youth Commission, an outgrowth of the Mayor’s Youth Council, is established. City Council funds the Youth Commission’s grant program. The Hampton Superintendent of Schools creates a Youth Advisory Board with help from Alternatives, Inc. High school principals soon follow suit.

**1999-2001** Youth become voting members of the Parks & Recreation Youth Advisory Board and on the Citizens’ Unity Commission. The first Youth Component of the city’s Comprehensive Plan is adopted. Youth become full voting members on several civic associations. Local youth and adults create the “pyramid of opportunities” to describe the emerging youth engagement system.

**2002-2004** Hampton is awarded the Our Town award through Jostens Foundation and Search Institute. Hampton is selected as one of eight cities to receive the Kellogg Foundation’s Youth Innovation Fund through the National Service Learning Partnership. Hampton’s Youth Civic Engagement initiative is a finalist in the prestigious Innovations in American Government Award sponsored by the Ash Institute and Kennedy School of Government.

**2005** Hampton’s Youth Civic Engagement initiative is a WINNER of the prestigious Innovations in American Government Award sponsored by the Ash Institute and Kennedy School of Government.

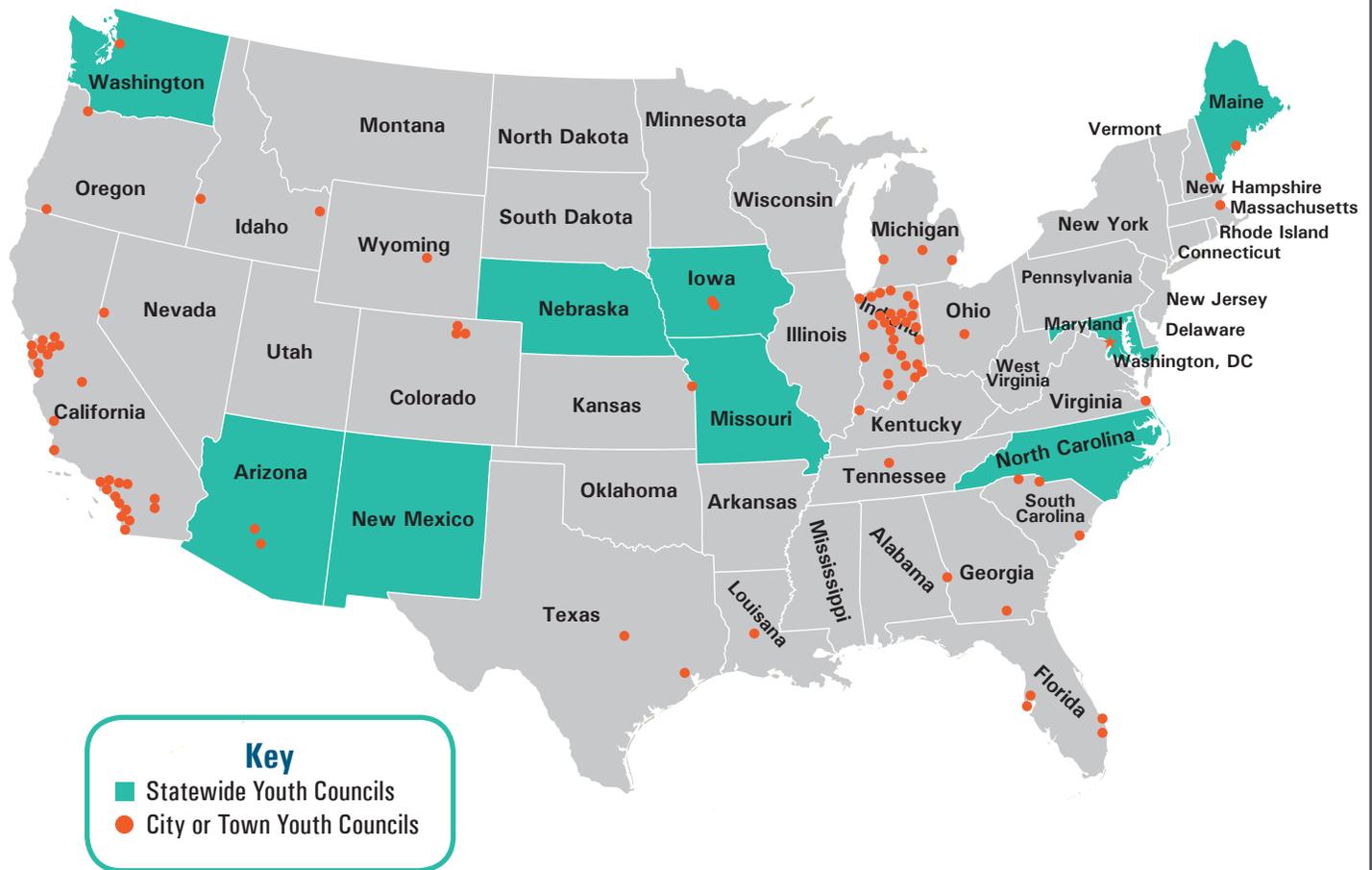
Abbreviated from Youth Engagement Milestones, the Coalition for Youth [www.hampton.gov/for youth/youth\\_milestones.htm](http://www.hampton.gov/for youth/youth_milestones.htm)

youth can be involved. At the pyramid's base are projects, tasks and service learning opportunities, which build to opportunities for input and consultation and culminate at the top in opportunities for shared leadership.

and adults can be sure that these commission members have gained through experience the capacity, motivation and opportunity needed to responsibly develop recommendations for the city's Comprehensive Plan.

Because the two dozen high school students who sit on the Hampton Youth Commission have made their way up the "pyramid of opportunity," Hampton youth

**Figure 4: Locations of City and State Youth Councils**



# 6 Keys to Creating Effective Youth Councils



Boston Youth Council meeting with Senator Kennedy

Young people want and deserve a voice in their communities. City officials make decisions that affect youth on a daily basis. Yet young people often have no direct role in shaping or influencing local policies and programs. Even well-intentioned efforts to work for youth – by ‘protecting’ them from perceived threats or by ‘rescuing’ those who already are in jeopardy – can prevent us from recognizing the importance of working with youth to identify positive solutions and build stronger communities.

Promoting Youth Participation,  
National League of Cities.



WANTED: 20 high school students with vision, community spirit, leadership and – here’s where it gets interesting – the ability to deal with City Hall.

Hampton Daily Press, October 27, 1997.



# Introduction to the 6 Keys

What does it take for every community and state to create an effective youth council with a diverse and engaged membership that is supported, connected, respected and heard? There is little dispute that, if done well, involving young people in the policy-making process can empower youth and build their strengths, help policy makers view youth as a resource to inform their decisions, and result in policies and priorities that are more relevant to youths' lives. But what does it take, especially at the state level, to create youth councils that really work as a part of an overall commitment to youth engagement?

Youth councils are representative bodies whose composition, functions and structure are often set by law. Their members are appointed and publicly recognized. The public and formal nature of youth councils pose challenges to almost every aspect of infrastructure development – from outreach to funding to staffing to the selection of an administrative home. Adding to infrastructure challenges, the strong intuitive appeal of youth councils means that frequently the time lapse between idea and implementation is quite short. This means youth councils are sometimes created and announced before a solid plan has been devised for supporting them or a common understanding has been developed about their roles and responsibilities.

## The 2 Essentials

The specific advice and concerns expressed by the youth councils referenced in this paper relate to the challenges of learning to operate in city or state government and of becoming familiar with the world of public policy and policy makers. Their experiences confirmed that there are two simple, but essential, ingredients to a strong youth council: a solid foundation and an unwavering belief that youth engagement in government is good for government.

## The 6 Keys

Those interviewed were most passionate and consistent on one point: Creating successful youth councils entails laying a strong *foundation* that addresses issues of 1) membership, 2) infrastructure and 3) work environment.

These are the first three keys to successful youth councils. If these foundation-laying tasks are not done well, it will be difficult to provide youth council members with the supports they need to make a difference. Even when the basic foundation is well laid, however, youth council directors must work to deliberately support meaningful youth action by addressing the second trio of keys: 4) building youth *capacity*, 5) deepening youth *motivation* and 6) negotiating *opportunities* for access to policy makers and youth constituents.

Figure 6 shows the relationship between the six keys and the suggested steps to achieving them. These steps are further elaborated in the pages that follow. The six keys were adapted from the principles for youth engagement, presented on page 11, with the specific challenges that youth councils face in mind.<sup>1</sup>

## The Big Goal

Youth development, youth leadership, youth voice, youth service, youth action, youth organizing. Underlying all of these terms is a commitment to engage young people as people with talents, opinions and a desire to make a difference while simultaneously remembering that they are young people. Youth programs of all stripes have difficulty getting this balance right.

As Irby et al note in Youth Action (2001), “Efforts that lean too far toward individual development may run the risk of linking young people with purposeful but unimportant activities that keep them busy, but are not essential to the long-term health of their organizations or their communities. Efforts that lean too far toward community development or broad social justice, however, run the risk of exploiting or excluding young people as programs struggle to maintain their pace and focus in the drive to achieve external goals.”

Youth councils tend to err on the side of individual development. “Rubbing elbows” with policy makers can be heady stuff for youth (or for anyone). It is easy to

<sup>1</sup> The scope of the challenges to creating a youth council, compared to other structures for youth engagement, warrant an expansion of the principles related to laying a strong foundation.

### KEY 6: Negotiate OPPORTUNITIES for Access

#### Arrange Authentic Access to Policy Makers

- Create shared leadership opportunities with policy makers
- Bring member into policy-making process
- Hire a youth Liaison
- Facilitate concrete opportunities to advise top officials
- Integrate members into government departments by pairing with directors

#### Create a Visible Public Presence

- Develop a communications plan
- Facilitate opportunities for youth to testify at public hearings

#### Facilitate Connections to Youth Constituents

- Be intentional about creating a “ripple” effect
- Convene the broader youth community
- Connect the broader youth community to resources and information

### KEY 4: Build Youth CAPACITY

#### Provide Ongoing Training and Support

- Provide skill building for youth
- Provide orientation and training for adults
- Identify authentic ways to integrate training and real work
- Make sure youth have skills needed to do tasks assigned
- Provide information coaching and support

#### Utilize teams

- Create youth-adult teams
- Create a core team if necessary
- Use work teams as capacity-building and workload sharing strategy

## Support Meaningful Youth Action

### KEY 5: Deepen Youth MOTIVATION

#### Help Youth Identify Core Issues

- Reconcile youth concerns with political realities
- Connect immediate issues to broader systemic challenges
- Make sure members do their homework
- Find creative ways to document broader youth opinions

#### Help Youth Understand Strategies for Policy Change

- Be sure youth know roles council can play
- Help youth leverage formal and informal access
- Help youth understand that change takes time

## Lay the Foundation

### FOUNDATION

#### Key 1: Determine Council Membership

- Define Composition carefully
- Select manageable size
- Weigh representation goals against size/cost
- Consider age range
- Create aggressive recruitment strategy
- Recruit diversity
- Connect to existing organizations for outreach

#### Key 2: Ensure a Sound Infrastructure

- Secure adequate, long-term funding
- Assess funding needs
- Lock in out-year funding
- Select an appropriate administrative home
- Weigh pros and cons of being inside government
- Connect to a coordinating body rather than single department
- Institutionalize council

#### Key 3: Provide a Supportive Work Environment

- Recruit the right staff
- Get youth development and policy backgrounds
- Find creative ways to get more expertise
- Create a strong home base
- Provide a dedicated workspace
- Plan face-to-face meetings
- Use technology to connect
- Ensure members have a strong home-base back home

declare your youth council a success because it offered young people leadership skill development, opportunities to speak in public, to travel, to interact with a diverse group of youth and to have air time with policy makers. But youth councils can and should be more than leadership development opportunities. The more informed young people are about the issues and the policy options, the more they represent not just themselves but their peers, the more likely it is that policy makers will listen and policies will change. Even the most informed young person needs an outlet in order to affect policy. Youth must be taken seriously by the adults who work with them, be expected to work hard, be given a real role and have access to the policy-making process.

Again, we suggest that those looking to create a youth council begin with the three tasks associated with *laying the foundation*. Those who already have a youth council in place and are looking to strengthen its impact or reach may want to scan the first three tasks but focus on the set of tasks associated with *supporting youth action*.

Twenty-two of us have been given the means to represent our peers and potentially change Washington.

Member, Washington State Legislative Youth Advisory Council



# Key 1: Determine Council Membership

It's very important to me that young people with different perspectives from different neighborhoods give ideas.

Mayor Menino, Boston, "Movers and Shakers."

## Define the Council's Composition Carefully

### *Select a manageable size for the youth council.*

Youth councils generally have between 15 and 20 members, but each youth council must decide how many participants is ideal given its goals.

The New Mexico Youth Alliance, for example, draws one member from each legislative district, for a total of 112, making it the largest youth council in the country, on paper. In reality, however, New Mexico has found it challenging to recruit the full number and found it even more challenging to keep such a large group of youth engaged (see next point).

The Hampton Youth Commission, on the other hand, recommends "staying away from massive numbers, but having enough members so the workload can be divided evenly and the existing members are not given an overwhelming amount."

***Balance the desire to represent all schools, neighborhoods and districts with the need to manage size and cost.*** Cities/states must decide if they are selecting their young people to come from and represent distinct neighborhoods/districts or schools/school districts. For states, geography becomes an even more important consideration.

Many state youth councils wish to have broad representation from all areas of the state, but they find that doing so limits the number of times the council members can all come together for trainings and activities without significant expense.

New Mexico's ambitious 112-seat Youth Alliance covers each legislative district of the large, mostly rural state. Transportation is a major problem for the Alliance given how spread out members are, the large geographic distance required to travel to meetings and the relative lack of resources available for the task. In addition, there is often limited support capacity in Youth Alliance members' home communities, particularly for members who live in rural areas.

### ***Determine a term length that creates a steady stream of youth leaders.***

Youth council members tend to serve two-year terms. When starting a council, consider using staggered terms to ensure that there are sufficient numbers of youth who remain from one year to the next. Consider creating part-time staff positions that talented, committed youth members could shift into beyond their tenure as an actual member.

The Hampton Youth Commission reports that "there seem to be two considerations when deciding how long someone can serve on the commission. On the one hand, it is a wonderful opportunity that should be available to as many youth as possible. On the other hand, it takes about a year to really understand what you're doing. Two years is a big commitment, but one year goes by very quickly." Some commissions have a two-year or longer term, but members must reapply at the end of each year or at the end of one term to be able to serve another.

### ***Carefully consider the age range of youth members.***

Most youth council groups have high-school-aged youth at their core, starting at age 16. Some include older youth, extending the age limit up to 24. Older youth bring an experience/skill level that can be utilized by the council to grow the work quickly, especially in the formative years. Older youth can also serve as mentors for younger adolescents on the council. Yet younger youth also have much to contribute. In Washington State, for example, an 11-year-old helped found the youth council but was not allowed to serve as an official member because he was younger than 14.

In communities like Hampton, where there are numerous levels of engagement, it is possible for young people to be involved at earlier ages. Having a range of ages on the council requires intentional work to achieve age diversity. One way to bridge the gap would be to allow members to age into the upper limit, allowing a few seniors to stay on as mentors or committee leaders. If the council covers a range of ages, be aware of the different needs of different age groups and consider creating different roles within the council.

## Create an Aggressive Recruitment Strategy to Ensure Diverse Representation

### *Recruit a diverse group of youth for the council.*

To ensure diversity in perspective, it is important to engage both traditional (e.g., high achieving students) and nontraditional (e.g., disconnected and out-of-school youth, teen mothers) youth leaders. Nontraditional youth leaders lend a unique perspective and authentic stories on what it takes to help young people that are in challenging situations. Most youth councils work to ensure their members reflect the diversity of young people across the city or state, both in terms of racial/ethnic background and life experience.

For example, the Seattle Mayor's Youth Council reserves two spaces for homeless youth on the 38 member council. The North Carolina State Youth Council utilizes intentional outreach and marketing strategies to recruit diverse groups of young people. They do site visits and collaborate with organizations that serve young people of color such as the NAACP and Hispanic groups. They offer scholarships for participation in their programs to young people who otherwise would not be able to afford the opportunity.

To ensure diversity in life experience, a number of youth councils recruit young people from community-based programs, rural communities, client-based youth-serving agencies, juvenile justice programs and faith-based organizations.

### *Connect with existing organizations to reach youth.*

At the local level, young people are typically recruited through schools, youth-serving agencies, community-based organizations and faith-based organizations. State youth councils also recruit young people from local youth councils or leadership groups. In areas where few programs exist that serve youth, youth councils rely on a nomination process to recruit young people and sometimes go out into the community to share information about the council and encourage young people to sign up. For example, New Mexico, a very rural state, enlists legislators to help identify young people in their districts to participate on the council. In addition, they require each young person to apply with an adult partner.

If you have a good system of neighborhood-based, school-based and community-based civic engagement opportunities, then you have a tremendous pool of young people to pull from... By the time they get into those roles, the kids that come up through neighborhood groups have just as much skill or right to be on the commission as those that came from some other route.

Cindy Carlson, Hampton Youth Commission

## Key 2: Ensure a Sound Infrastructure

### Secure Adequate Long-Term Funding

**Accurately assess funding needs.** The primary costs for youth councils are staffing, transportation and meeting expenses. Some councils' primary costs also include grants they award to projects they deem worthy. Budgets vary greatly due to large ranges in each of these items.

Youth councils that receive pro-bono staff time and cover a small geographic area (limiting transportation costs) can function effectively with relatively small budgets.

For example, the Hampton's 24-member Youth Commission's general budget of \$46,000 covers personnel, trainings and support, youth planners, travel to national meetings, transportation, printing, food and supplies. In comparison, state councils or those with more members often incur higher costs. For example, the New Mexico Youth Alliance's \$100,000 budget is modest because it must fully fund its staff and devote significant resources to covering transportation for its 112 members across a large, rural state.

**Lock in out-year funding as much as possible**, using multiple sources if needed. Funding for youth councils comes from a variety of sources. Most youth councils receive government funding and some also receive funding from the private sector. The Hampton Youth Commission, for instance, receives its full budget from city government, while the North Carolina State Youth Council has been successful in raising corporate funds to support its work (particularly the Youth Legislative Assembly, a mock legislative session for youth). The North Carolina council also uses its final report, which includes bills created by young people, to help raise funds.

### Select an Administrative Home

**Weigh the benefits of housing the council inside or outside of government.** Most youth councils are housed inside government departments; some are housed inside nonprofit organizations; and a few are jointly run by governments and nonprofits as a public-private partnership. Each approach has its strengths and limitations. Housing a youth council in government helps facilitate access to government personnel and

### Funding Uncertainties & Shared Responsibilities

Several youth councils have experienced funding cuts that almost led to their demise. The Maine Legislative Youth Advisory Council (MLYAC) had a near-death experience after its second year when its funding was cut back from two years to one.

The MLYAC is staffed by both the Office for Policy and Legal Analysis (OPLA) – staff to the Maine State Legislature – and the Muskie School of Public Service (part of the University of Southern Maine). This design worked when there was funding to support the work. But when the funding was cut, the responsibility for supporting the Council shifted from government to the Muskie School of Public Service, leaving the Council with limited capacity to immerse members in policy training. It also left the Council in financial trouble.

Since the MLYAC was a political entity, not a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit, a number of foundations were unable or unwilling to provide support, making it difficult for the Muskie School to raise the \$50,000 annual budget. Fortunately, the Council was able to secure a major civic education grant to cover a portion of the budget. Legislators were instrumental in helping to revive the Council and instructed the Office for Policy and Legal Analysis to resume staffing the council.

In 2004, legislation was passed to have the Muskie School of Public Service staff and fund MLYAC until June 2005, then shift staffing responsibilities to OPLA in July 2005 with the provision that staffing MLYAC would not interfere with the support OPLA provided to the legislature. Leaders of MLYAC suggested that in order to institutionalize the Council, it would be best for them to be housed and staffed inside of OPLA to put them in line and on target with other legislative committees.

can provide built-in infrastructure and staff support. However, government personnel may not have as much experience in working with youth as some nonprofit organizations. Nonprofits may be better positioned to serve the range of their youth members' needs.

A handful of youth councils, such as Maine and New Mexico, have formed public-private partnerships to jointly run their youth councils. The New Mexico Youth Alliance is financially supported by the New Mexico Office for Children, Youth and Families (providing access to the Governor, Children's Cabinet and legislators) but is housed inside the New Mexico Forum for Youth in Community, a statewide intermediary organization. This arrangement gives them the autonomy they need to be an independent voice for youth throughout the state.

***Connect to a coordinating body,*** rather than a single department. A final consideration is which government office a youth council should be connected with. Young people are served by multiple departments and agencies. Unfortunately, government structures are often fragmented and isolated. Depending on how the council is staffed and positioned (e.g., whether it reports to a Children's Cabinet or is charged to make recommendations on a specified range of issues) housing a youth council in any one department or agency may limit its purview to the narrow range of issues addressed by that particular department.

Youth councils often seek to avoid this limitation by attaching themselves to a neutral coordinating body that works across departmental lines, such as a Children's Cabinet. Some youth councils also seek to work with both the executive and legislative branches. The New Mexico Youth Alliance, for example, is attached to both the New Mexico Children's Cabinet and to the state legislature.

***Institutionalize the youth council so that it exists beyond a change in administration.*** One way to ensure that the youth council endures over time is to formalize it in legislation and to include a requirement that the council will remain in place regardless of who is in office. The Hampton Youth Commission is integrated

into the ongoing operations of its local government as a result of being located inside the Coalition for Youth, which is a city department. The San Francisco Youth Commission was institutionalized by a ballot measure and city charter amendment.

***Authorize the youth council to draft legislation.***

To secure the efficacy of a youth council, make sure its structure allows for deep engagement in the policy-making process. The Maine Legislative Youth Advisory Council has the distinction of being the only state youth council in the country that has the authority to introduce legislation. In 2004, the Council succeeded in getting legislation passed that raised the age from 21 to 23 to allow for continued support (i.e., room, board and education expenses) for foster care youth enrolled in college.

## Key 3: Provide a Supportive Work Environment

We are the youth commissioners' staff. We do their work. They tell us... we are their legs inside city hall. Any good and effective youth leadership model would have adults being supportive and staffing them.

Rachel Antrobus,  
San Francisco Youth Commission

### Recruit the Right Staff

**Hire staff with both a youth development background and a policy background.** Staffing youth councils with people who understand the need to balance youth development with policy development, and who are trained in both areas, is critical to the overall success of youth councils. Youth councils are typically staffed by one full-time director with support from youth council members and interns. Staff are responsible for recruiting and training young people, and helping them influence the policy-making process.

As discussed previously, successful youth councils strategically blend youth development and policy development, leading to a stronger influence on the policy-making process. Striking this balance has a lot to do with staff choice. Youth councils run by youth workers often do a good job of meeting the needs of the individual young people but fail to have an influence on policy; whereas youth councils run by policy makers often do a good job at influencing policy but fail to solicit the perspectives of young people in an authentic manner. As the council's director often sets the tone for the work of the youth council, a good director should have skills in working with young people (often developed through direct service experience) and working with policy makers.

#### **Find creative ways to bring in additional expertise.**

Many youth councils struggle to find a director with both policy and youth development skills. To compensate, youth councils may bring in additional staff or utilize available resources to provide the missing elements.

For example, in both Nebraska and San Francisco, directors with a youth work background utilize policy staff inside their organizations or inside state and local government to assist in policy-related content planning for the youth council. These staff help train youth councils to navigate the policy-making process and provide access to policy makers and facilities in civic buildings.

As noted on page 22, Maine solved its staffing needs by establishing a formal partnership between the Office for Policy and Legal Analysis (OPLA) and the Muskie School of Public Service at the University of Southern Maine. OPLA provides the legislative policy training while the Muskie School organizes the Council, does follow-up and serves as a liaison between youth and adults to ensure power sharing. The director of the council felt this function was particularly important to make sure that adults don't dominate and to provide the space for young people to have a voice and act on their ideas. The Boston Mayor's Youth Council also partners with Northeastern University. Consider exploring how local colleges and universities can provide additional resource to your council.

### Create a Strong Home Base

**Provide a dedicated space where members can do their work.** One of the most important kinds of support young people need to be effectively engaged is a home base – a place where they find stability in the staff and the surroundings, and where they have the option of working separately or with others. Neighborhood-based youth leadership programs often rely on schools, nonprofits or faith organizations to provide a dedicated space where youth leaders can meet to get work done in between meetings. Creating a home base for city or statewide youth councils, who must bring together young people from different schools, neighborhoods and/or cities, is a challenge but one that must be overcome.

**Plan (and budget) for face-to-face meetings.** For a youth council to operate, members need to spend time together. This is a relatively easy proposition for city youth councils – simply set a meeting time and place. State youth councils face additional challenges. How do you get young people from across the state together

often enough to collaborate on their work? State youth council meetings require significant funding allocations to cover transportation costs for their members. States also have to think through the challenges of asking minors to travel outside of their communities.

***Use technology to create real-time connections.***

Some youth councils have developed technological solutions to their communications challenges, utilizing conference calls, email, e-lists and Web sites as ways to keep members connected between face-to-face meetings. For example, Arizona's Governor's Youth Commission has a Web site created specifically for members of the commission. On the site, members can find meeting information, directions to events, information about current and past projects, minutes of past meetings, meeting agendas, contact information for staff and commission members, membership roster, announcements, email updates and funding opportunities. Technological solutions are cost effective, but they only work when most young people have easy access to the Internet.

***Make sure that council members have a strong base back home.*** Young people from low-income or rural neighborhoods report that it is important for them to have a) experience working as a youth leader back home and b) an individual or organization back home to help them anticipate and interpret their experiences on state or even city-wide youth councils. Youth council staff members often reach out to other youth organizations and leadership groups to help them recruit council members. These connections are also an important way to support young people and facilitate their meaningful engagement. All youth council staff, but especially those operating at the state level, should ensure that youth council members have a solid home base by forming working relationships with point people within the organizations they use to recruit youth. As an ongoing liaison, the program coordinator communicates with the youth council director and is responsible for preparing youth council members, transporting them to meetings, communicating with young people on their work between meetings, and making logistical connections for youth council members to help them get their work done.

### The Arizona Governor's Youth Commission

The Arizona Governor's Youth Commission has kept the commission members connected between meetings by:

- Convening the Youth Commission via conference calls;
- Sending out weekly emails with best practices, news updates and resources;
- Creating a private web site for the youth commission where they post meeting information, minutes, announcements, current and past projects, a member roster, weekly email log, directions to events, etc.

## Key 4: Build Youth Capacity

### **Provide Ongoing Training and Support** *Provide skill-building training for youth members.*

Training, training and more training is the name of the game. Training is perhaps the most critical function of staff, yet it is also an area that many youth councils struggle with. Training youth council members and the adults who work with them is critical to helping young people develop leadership and life skills.

Youth will also need training to understand policy issues, to work with policy makers and to navigate the policy making process. One way to ensure that young people are well prepared for youth council responsibilities is to work with the broader youth development/civic engagement community to make sure that young people have ample opportunities to build and apply communication, planning, teamwork, research and analytical skills.

*Provide orientation and training for adults.* As they are responsible for training youth members, it is important to remember that adult staff often can benefit from training themselves. This is particularly true when a staffer lacks experience and skills in either policy making or youth development (see page 24). See the resources section for materials designed for adults who are new to working with youth (page 35).

*Identify authentic ways to integrate training into the council's work.* Youth councils typically hold retreats, summer leadership camps and quarterly meetings to train young people, do team-building work and focus on the substance of their policy work. Youth council staff often

We never put a young person in a position to embarrass him or herself. If young people haven't been given the opportunity and/or training to be properly prepared for the tasks you are asking of them, don't ask.

Rich Goll, former Director,  
Alternatives Inc., Hampton, VA

collaborate with nonprofit youth development agencies, policy advocacy groups and even legislators to provide the trainings. There is a constant need to balance and intersperse training with action. The North Carolina State Youth Councils undergoes a six-month planning and training process to build their skills and confidence in interacting with state policy makers. The Council is trained by the director of the Council, past student leaders, alumni of the Youth Legislative Assembly and legislators. Similarly, the Nebraska Governor's Youth Advisory Council utilizes legislative aids to provide training to the council on how to present to the legislature. They also hold retreats on leadership training, advocacy strategies and how to engage the media.

*Make sure young people have the skills needed to do the tasks at hand.* Often making sure young people are properly trained is a matter of timing. Youth council members will have a lot to learn, so prioritize training around upcoming tasks. Work with young people to make sure that they know what to anticipate before they take on a new task, especially a visible one. Be sure that they have the skills needed to do the job. Planned training sessions can be a key component for skill building, but be prepared to do real-time skill building and to identify a range of roles that allow members to use their strengths while building new skills.

*Provide informal coaching and support.* Ensuring that young people are trained and equipped to be policy analysts, advocates and true representatives of their peers is clearly a challenge. Yet staff must keep in mind an equally important challenge: to support youth members in their personal development. Staff must provide youth council members with guidance, supervision and, frequently, life coaching. Recruiting diverse members requires being prepared to deal with diverse needs. Young people from low-income neighborhoods or low-performing schools frequently have deep insights into problems and powerful recommendations for change. But they may also have personal challenges and basic skill deficits that can hamper their full participation if not met.

## Utilize Teams

**Create youth-adult teams.** New Mexico has effectively implemented youth-adult teams in its Youth Alliance, requiring prospective Youth Alliance members to apply with an adult partner who would commit to serve as a mentor, connect the young people to resources in the community, mediate relationships with other adults in the community, help the young people reflect on their Youth Alliance experience as well as share their own experiences, and provide transportation. These teams help provide a home base for youth who don't have access to community organizations. One challenge in using this strategy is assigning clear roles to adult sponsors and providing adequate training for them in youth-adult partnerships, youth empowerment and youth development.

**Create a core team if necessary.** It may not be possible to engage all members equally, which is especially true for councils that have large numbers of members spread across a wide geographic area. Youth council staff must work to avoid two possibilities: 1) that engagement, especially between meetings, is so light and sporadic that the staff end up doing the work and 2) that engagement is uneven. A few actively engaged youth might take more initiative than the others, creating an informal but visible two-tiered system. One solution to this problem is to openly call for a small group of young people to take on differential leadership roles. These young people can apply, volunteer or be appointed by their peers. There can be scheduled rotations or reelections to ensure that those who want to play a deeper role can. These rotations signal to new members that there are opportunities for greater recognition and engagement. Consider an age-based tiered system of engagement as well.

**Use work teams as a capacity-building and workload-sharing strategy.** Several youth councils create leadership positions on the council (usually through committees) to get their work done between meetings. Others use teams as a way to provide on-task coaching and to pair members with different skill strengths and needs. Teams also can maintain engagement by giving

## What Kinds of Training Are Most Useful?

- Policy training for youth council members on all aspects of the policy-making process
- Legislative advocacy strategies
- Communications skills for various audiences (e.g., policy makers, the media, the broader public)
- Research skills (e.g., topic research, basic statistics and data analysis, survey development)
- Interviewing and focus group skills
- Networking and collaboration
- Community mobilization and youth outreach strategies
- Team-building and teamwork skills
- Project and time management

members an opportunity to work with a smaller group of youth and adults and/or an opportunity to work on a specific project that interests them.

## Key 5: Deepen Youth Motivation

### Help Youth Identify Core Issues

***Reconcile the concerns and interests of youth council members with political realities.*** The members you recruit should be selected because they have skills and passions. Don't let the legislative agenda or the mayor's or governor's priorities overly determine the discussions and work of the council. Allow young people the opportunity to tackle the issues that they identify as most pressing in their families, schools, neighborhoods and broader communities. Yet in order to effectively make change, a youth council must strategically connect its issues to a policy agenda that can be championed with policy makers. Make sure the issues your youth council focuses on are both significant to its members, well researched (not anecdotal) and grounded in political reality.

***Connect immediate issues to broader systemic challenges.*** Connecting immediate issues to root causes is a critical process for both adults and young people engaged in community change. Two things are critical in helping to move this process along. First, a theoretical and historical frame of reference can help people understand the full scope of the issue and how it relates to other community challenges and assets. It can also help link local neighborhood realities to city, state and national policy issues, and create natural bridges between the young people's work and the agendas of other organizations and initiatives in the community.

***Make sure members do their homework.*** The second critical component to understanding issues and causes is conducting research. Members' experiences are valuable, but youth and adult members can often lack historical perspective and/or be unaware of facts or trends. Research helps youth and adults deepen their knowledge about issues, understand root causes, appreciate alternative perspectives and develop effective arguments and responses.

***Find creative ways to help youth collect and document the opinions of the broader youth community.*** Surveys are a popular method of collecting youth voices and can be a quick way to garner the opinions of young

### Nashville's 3 E's Framework Helps Youth Focus their Passions

Community IMPACT! in Nashville has become a consistent feeder system for the Nashville Youth Advisory Council. Young people in East Nashville, a high poverty, predominantly African-American, low-income neighborhood, confront the barriers to their future success on a daily basis. They come to Community IMPACT! with immediate concerns. These concerns, however, almost always fit under one of CII's three E's for community change – Economics, Education and Environment.

Young people and adult staff work together to identify critical issues within that framework to focus on, and return to the framework regularly in order to keep their individual projects and campaigns grounded in a systemic understanding of root causes and their overall community change agenda. Over the past three years, Youth Mobilizers have researched the impact of predatory lending practices on their community (and worked to close down check cashing vendors and increase EITC filings) and have documented the reasons for poor college attendance among East Nashville students. They have taken these issues into citywide discussions as representatives of East Nashville youth.

people. Ideally, young people will help design the survey instrument and will think through where, when and how the survey will be administered. For example, the Hampton Youth Commission surveys its peers and uses this information to inform the city plan. Likewise, New Mexico has surveyed young people two years in a row. The Youth Alliance linked its survey directly to the issues that policy makers have made a priority in the state. Similarly, the San Francisco Youth Commission runs YouthVOTE, a citywide voter education and mock election that drives the platform of the Youth Commission.

## Help Youth Understand Strategies for Policy Change

***Be sure youth know what formal roles the council is designed to play.*** There is significant variation in the roles played by different youth councils in the policy-making process. Some have a light advisory role, some take on substantial organizing and advocacy roles, others work directly with policy makers to develop and advance youth policies. Use the council's charter or mission statement as the starting point for discussions about the purpose of the council and the opportunities for access provided. Determine which things the youth council will need to do to equip itself with the tools needed to ultimately influence public policy. This decision will help the council focus its time and resources in ways that prepare it to inform policy with relevant and timely information. The lack of an intentional focus on policy (e.g., review and researching bills) could result in recommendations that are disconnected from the larger policy context. Maine has perhaps the most clearly articulated policy roles, including advising policy makers on proposed and pending legislation, reviewing state budget expenditures and addressing policy matters related to youth. They are also required to examine a specific set of issues such as education, youth access to services on a municipal and statewide basis, and strategies to increase youth participation in municipal and state government.

***Help members understand how to leverage formal and informal access.*** Most youth councils utilize both formal (e.g., submitting testimony) and informal (e.g., setting up lunches to meet with policy makers) approaches. Strong youth councils utilize both approaches strategically. Strong youth councils create formal roles with policy makers to yield the greatest impact on policy. They utilize informal roles to help build relationships with policy makers and to support policy makers when called upon to be a resource. For example, in Nebraska, youth council members have lunches with their legislators. In this informal setting, they get time to discuss issues and have found the lunches to be among their most productive activities. The youth council members get heard and the policy

makers enjoy the one-on-one interaction with the young people. Overemphasizing formal interaction can lead policy makers to view the youth council as just another interest group to be avoided, manipulated or placated. Overemphasizing informal interactions, however, can lead to “feel good” councils that are pleasant to both policy makers and youth but do little to influence policy. Effective youth councils facilitate timely opportunities for policy makers to hear directly from youth councils before they make decisions that affect them.

***Be sure that young people understand that change takes time.*** It took Mayor Menino's Youth Council four years to get the legislature to reduce the age at which youth can get a state ID card, even with his support. Other types of policy change – regulatory or administrative changes – can be faster. Be sure that young people understand the full range of strategies at their disposal.

## Key 6: Negotiate Opportunities for Access

As the Washington State Legislative Youth Advisory Council, we strive to be a voice for youth, examine issues of importance to state legislators, adults and young people.

Mission Statement, Washington State Legislative Youth Advisory Council

### Arrange Authentic Access to Policy Makers

***Cultivate ownership and accountability in the council by creating shared leadership opportunities between youth council members and policy makers.*** Some youth councils are structured to include policy makers as members. For example, in Maine, the Youth Advisory Council consists of four legislators (two members of the Senate and two members of the House of Representatives) and 18 youth members – all appointed by Senate and House leadership. The Council is co-chaired by a member of the Legislature and a youth member. The legislative chair position alternates every two years between the House and the Senate. Legislators and youth council members work together to identify and champion issues. A strength of this model is engaging legislators in an authentic way with young people by integrating them into the structure of the Council. Similarly, the North Carolina State Youth Council is governed by the State Youth Advisory Council that has 10 members appointed from the legislature by the governor, as well as 10 young people from the State Youth Council.

### ***Bring members into the policy making process.***

Special meetings between the council and elected officials ensure that youth are heard, but do not provide a realistic picture of how government works. The most effective youth councils utilize opportunities to bring young people together in policy settings for the purpose of allowing them to speak out on issues important to them and to provide hands-on experience with the policy-making process. The benefit is twofold: Young people build their civic knowledge and skills by experiencing the policy-making process firsthand. Policy makers get the

rare opportunity to see young people where they normally don't – in the halls of government – which helps them to connect with young people as their constituency rather than as invisible, non-voting citizens.

***Hire a youth liaison.*** A youth liaison can often facilitate interactions between youth councils and the policy-making bodies they advise. In New Mexico, the Children, Youth and Families Department hired a youth liaison to work in their state office to help bridge the Children's Cabinet and the Youth Alliance. The youth liaison position was created to strengthen communications and transfer information between the Children's Cabinet and the Youth Alliance.

***Facilitate concrete opportunities for the youth council to advise top officials.*** A subgroup of the New Mexico Youth Alliance met directly with the Governor, who sought their input on a range of issues, including school-based health centers. Hearing how these centers made a difference in the lives of the Youth Alliance members made a significant impact on the Governor's thinking, securing his support to double the number of school-based health centers across the state. Similarly, in Nebraska, youth council members informed legislators that foster care youth were not aware of policies affecting them. As a result, in 2005 the council was involved in drafting a resolution that created a foster youth bill of rights, which was adopted by the Legislature.

### Duties of the Main Legislative Youth Advisory Council

- Advise the Legislature on proposed and pending legislation, state budget expenditures and policy matters related to youth.
- Advise the legislative joint standing committees and study commissions, committees and task forces on issues related to youth.
- Conduct periodic seminars on leadership, government and the legislature
- Report annually to the Legislature

Other youth councils move from such “one-shot” interactions to structuring routine interactions that allow for greater depth. In Hampton, the Director of the City Planning Department and the Director of the Coalition for Youth (a city department), regularly attend the youth commission meetings and communicate the feedback they hear to other government officials. Note that some of these access issues are a matter of laying the foundation well, particularly for legislated councils. Enabling legislation can explicitly create a powerful place in local government structures for a youth council.

***Integrate youth council members into government departments and agencies by pairing them with state directors.*** Some youth councils go beyond simply providing advice by placing members into government departments. The Missouri Youth Cabinet assigned members to work directly with the directors of 19 state departments and three state task forces for their full two-year term. Similarly, the Hampton City Planning Department hires two Youth Planners that staff the Hampton Youth Commission (HYC) and report to the Director of the City Planning Department. Youth Planners play an integral role in helping to move the work of the HYC by connecting the HYC to the city department. Youth Planners are responsible for integrating HYC’s work into the overall city plan and for implementing the youth component of the city plan.

***Commission the youth council to develop the youth component of city and state plans.*** The Hampton Youth Commission (HYC) writes the youth component of the Hampton Community Plan. While HYC is perhaps the first local youth council in the country to develop a plan for young people that is adopted into the overall city plan for the community, a number of Mayor’s Youth Councils are taking part in a Youth Master Planning process supported by the National League of Cities. This process involves the full range of stakeholders at the local level setting policy priorities for the community at large, including action steps to improve the lives of young people. In fact, the Des Moines Youth Advisory Board is looking to strengthen its role in policy by spearheading a Youth Master Planning process for the city.

## Create a Visible Public Presence

***Develop a communications plan.*** In addition to allowing youth to be heard by policy makers, youth councils can play an important role by helping ensure youth voices are heard by the public at large. To reach the general public, youth councils use typical media outreach strategies: writing letters to newspaper editors, holding press conferences and producing press releases. They also use Web sites to inform the public about their work. Youth councils often utilize communications capacity within government offices to help craft their messages and reach out to state and local media. Most youth councils distribute year-end reports to policy makers that highlight the activities of the council and provide policy recommendations.

***Facilitate opportunities for youth council members to testify at public hearings.*** The New Mexico Youth Alliance played a role in establishing the Next Generation Fund, a state endowment for positive youth development programs. Approximately 40 Youth Alliance members attended, including one who testified along with the former First Lady of New Mexico and the New Mexico Community Foundation at a hearing on the Fund. The bill passed and the Youth Alliance continues to work each year to ensure that state investments are made in the endowment. As the Youth Alliance demonstrated, public hearings are a great opportunity for youth councils to both affect policy changes and establish a visible public presence.

## Facilitate Connections to Youth Constituents

***Be intentional about creating a “ripple effect.”*** Plan for how to expand the council’s impact beyond the group of young people directly involved as council members. Be intentional about bringing information into the council from the community and taking information back out into that community. This is particularly important for state youth councils, which need intentional strategies to represent the diverse views of young people in communities across the state. North Carolina has the most extensive reach and support structure for its youth council work: Its state council builds off of a network

of local youth councils. The State Youth Council is composed of representatives from 25 local youth council groups. This is a useful model to consider for building a sustainable structure that creates a revolving door for youth leadership and engages youth at a grassroots level.

***Convene the broader community of youth to discuss their issues and develop a policy agenda.*** The Hampton Youth Commission holds a series of public meetings and focus groups with youth in their city to develop recommendations for the youth component of the city plan. The Commission also holds regular meetings that are open to youth in their community. The North Carolina State Youth Council convenes young people from across the state for a three-day mock legislative session, called the Youth Legislative Assembly, where high school students voice their opinions on issues concerning young people. Bills are submitted in a final report that is distributed to the governor, legislators and other interested individuals. What makes this program unique is that young people outside of the council from across the state are invited to participate in the Youth Legislative Assembly to provide input to legislation and to identify issues of concern to youth.

***Connect the broader community of youth to resources and information.*** Some youth councils play an important role connecting young people in their city or state to available services and opportunities. For example, the Boston Mayor's Youth Council provides comprehensive information to young people about programs and services in their community through the Mayor's YOUTHLINE. The YOUTHLINE provides young people in Boston with a confidential telephone/computer service that connects them with resources in their community and provides peer counseling to youth. The YOUTHLINE is staffed by trained high school and college students, and utilizes a geographically-based computer system that maintains a database of all youth programs and services in the city, so callers are able to find neighborhood and citywide services.

***Link with other youth engagement strategies.*** Youth councils are just one of many strategies for youth civic engagement. Ideally, individual youth council members

come from, and are simultaneously engaged in, other groups. The youth council should make every effort to reach out formally to other groups to make sure that they are representing the broadest possible base.

## What Next?

We hope the main questions about youth councils — Why? What? and How? — have been answered in this guide. We have provided a framework for thinking about youth engagement; concrete, specific and practical advice for establishing and strengthening youth councils; examples from the field; and additional resources.

Now it is up to you — community leaders, young people, elected officials, youth council staffers — to do the challenging work of actually creating and sustaining effective youth councils. This requires hard work: laying the foundation, erecting the infrastructure, recruiting diverse and capable young people, supporting the action of these young people, building their capacity, deepening their motivation and negotiating their access.

Even for the most effective youth council, change will be slow and incremental. Yet over time, as youth councils embed themselves in the policy-making process, they will become an integral part of how state and local governments set policy and make decisions. This increase in meaningful youth engagement will lead to more and better policies to address the issues that matter to young people. This will mean that more young people are Ready by 21™: ready for college, work and life.

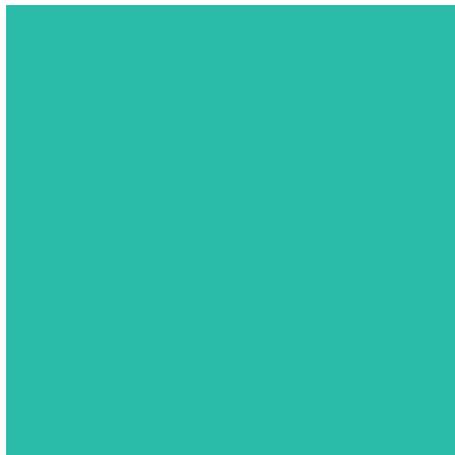
As youth councils and the research about them grow and evolve, so do our expertise, resources and advice. Visit the Forum's web site at [www.forumfyi.org](http://www.forumfyi.org) for up-to-date case studies, resource recommendations and tools as we find or develop them. Also please contact us ([youth@forumfyi.org](mailto:youth@forumfyi.org)) with any resources or updates you'd like to contribute to the site or with general questions and comments about this guide, youth councils and youth engagement.

Finally, in addition to disseminating ideas and conducting research and analysis, the Forum for Youth Investment advises, consults, trains, makes connections for and offers long-term support to state and local leaders. If you would like support in creating a youth council through informal conversations or through more formal contractual work, please contact the Forum ([youth@forumfyi.org](mailto:youth@forumfyi.org)).

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# Resources



# State Youth Councils: Basic Info

## Arizona Governor's Youth Commission

Established: 1989 by executive order.

### *Bodies the Council Advises:*

- Governor.
- Governor's Office for Children, Youth and Families.
- Arizona Taskforce on Youth Development.

### *Membership:*

- 40 youth members in 10th–12th grade.
- One-year term.
- Formal application process.
- Meets four times per year.

### *Structure:*

- Housed inside the Governor's Office for Children, Youth and Families in the Division for Community and Youth Development.
- The Council's 1 full-time staff person is supported by 2 additional adult staff who help coordinate and implement the work of the Council.

### *Funding Sources:*

- Governor's Office.
- Safe and Drug Free Schools.
- Arizona Parent's Commission.

### *Contact for Information:*

Youth Development Program Administrator  
602.542.3489  
[www.gocyf.az.gov](http://www.gocyf.az.gov)

## State of Iowa Youth Action Committee

Established: 2001.

### *Bodies the Council Advises:*

- Governor.
- Other state policy makers.

### *Membership:*

- 20-25 members.
- 15–19 year olds (typically 10th–12th grade).
- Intentional recruitment, screening and interview process.
- Meets once a month.

### *Structure:*

- Housed under the umbrella of the Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development.
- The Council is staffed by 1 adult and is divided into three committees: an executive committee and two issue-specific committees (public relations and legislative).

### *Funding Sources:*

- Department of Public Health
- Federal Block Grant for Substance Abuses; in-kind staff support from the Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development.

### *Contact for Information:*

Amy Croll  
Department of Human Rights  
Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning  
Lucas State Office Bldg., 2nd Floor  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319  
515.281.5999  
[www.iowaspromise.org](http://www.iowaspromise.org)

## Louisiana Legislative Youth Advisory Council

Established: 2007.

### ***Bodies the Council Advises:***

- Legislative joint standing committees.
- Commissions.
- Task forces of the Legislature.

### ***Membership:***

- Up to 21 youth members ages 14–19.
- 1 senator.
- 1 representative.
- Chair of the Louisiana Commission on Civic Education.
- State Superintendent.
- Two-year term.

### ***Structure:***

- Housed under the auspices of the Louisiana Commission on Civic Education.
- Staffed by legislative staff.

### ***Funding Sources:***

- The Louisiana Commission on Civic Education may seek, accept and expend donations, appropriations and grants on behalf of the Youth Council.

### ***Contact for Information:***

Sherri Breaux, Chief Legislative Researcher  
Louisiana Senate  
P.O. Box 94183  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804  
225.342.6145  
breaux@legis.state.la.us  
Web site: to be developed

## Maine Legislative Advisory Council

Established: 2002.

### ***Bodies the Council Advises:***

- State Legislature.
- President of the Senate.
- Speaker of the House of Representatives.

### ***Membership:***

- 16 youth.
- 2 Senators.
- 2 State Representatives.
- 5 adults (non-voting members).
- Secondary and post-secondary students.
- Two-year term.
- 8 youth appointed by Speaker of the House and 8 youth appointed by the President of the Senate.
- Meets once a month.

### ***Structure:***

- Housed inside the Office of Policy and Legislative Analysis with support from the Muskie School of Public Service (part of the University of Southern Maine).
- Staffed by OPLA.

### ***Funding Sources:***

- Maine Legislature (\$30,000).

### ***Contact for Information:***

Patrick Norton, Director  
Patrick.Norton@legislator.maine.gov

Brenna Byrne, Legislative Researcher  
Brenna.Byrne@legislator.maine.gov

Office of Policy and Legislative Analysis  
Maine State Legislature  
13 State House Station, Room 215,  
Cross State Office Building  
Augusta, Maine 04333  
207.287.1670

[www.maine.gov/education/mecitizenshiped/youth/lyac.html](http://www.maine.gov/education/mecitizenshiped/youth/lyac.html)

## Maryland Youth Council

Established: 2006.

### ***Bodies the Council Advises:***

- Children's Cabinet.
- Governor.

### ***Membership:***

- 24 youth, ages 13-19.
- Selected by the Executive Director of the Office for Children with concurrence of the Governor to the extent possible, selected from established public and private youth councils and youth empowerment organizations.

### ***Structure:***

- Housed in and staffed by the Governor's Office for Children.

### ***Funding Sources:***

- Governor's Office for Children.

### ***Contact for Information:***

Mary Beth Stapleton, Director of Positive Youth Outcomes  
Governor's Office for Children  
301 West Preston Street, Suite 1502  
Baltimore, MD 21201  
410.767.3526  
mstapleton@goc.state.md.us

## Nevada Youth Legislative Issues Forum

Established: 2007.

### ***Bodies the Council Advises:***

- State Legislature.

### ***Membership:***

- 21 members.
- Each state senator appoints 1 member.
- One-year term, may be reappointed.
- Must be enrolled in public school.
- Must be in graders 9-12.

### ***Structure:***

- May employ a person to provide administrative support for the Forum.

### ***Funding Sources:***

- May accept gifts, grants and donations from any source for the support of the Forum.

### ***Contact for Information:***

Valerie Wiener, State Senator  
vw Wiener@sen.state.nv.us

## New Hampshire Youth Advisory Council

Established: 2006.

### ***Bodies the Council Advises:***

- Legislative joint standing committees.
- Commissions.
- Task forces of the Legislature.

### ***Membership:***

- 21 members: 1 representative, 1 Senator, 19 youth ages 15–22.
- Two public hearings per year.
- Two-year term.
- Meets four times a year with 2 public hearings per year.

### ***Structure:***

- Housed in the Legislature with staff support from the New Hampshire Alliance for Civic Engagement.

### ***Funding Sources:***

- New Hampshire Alliance for Civic Engagement.
- Secretary of State's Office.

### ***Contact for Information:***

Julie Yerkes, Civic Education Programs Manager  
 New Hampshire Institute of Politics  
 Saint Anselm College  
 100 Saint Anselm Drive  
 Manchester, New Hampshire 03102  
 603.222.4115  
 jyerkes@anselm.edu

## New Mexico Youth Alliance

Established: 2003 by the Youth Council Act made permanent (2005).

### ***Bodies the Council Advises:***

- Governor.
- Lieutenant Governor.
- New Mexico Children's Cabinet.
- State Legislature.

### ***Membership:***

- 112 members (1 representative from each district).
- Youth members are aged 14–22.
- Formal application process, legislators also recommend youth.
- Up to two-year term.
- Meets four times per year.

### ***Structure:***

- Housed inside a nonprofit organization – the New Mexico Forum for Youth in Community.
- Staffed by 1 full-time staff person.

### ***Funding Sources:***

- Children, Youth and Families Department.

### ***Contact for Information:***

Lanny Leyba, Director  
 924 Park Avenue SW, Suite D  
 Albuquerque, NM 87102  
 505.821.3574  
[www.nmforumforyouth.org/youth\\_alliance.htm](http://www.nmforumforyouth.org/youth_alliance.htm)

## Washington State Legislative Youth Advisory Council

Established: 2005 by Senate Bill 5254 (modified in 2007 by House Bill 1052).

### ***Bodies the Council Advises:***

- State Legislature and its standing committees, study commissions and task force.

### ***Membership:***

- 22 members.
- 14 –18 years old.
- Two-year term.
- Students apply directly for a position and submit their applications to the Lieutenant Governor’s Office.
- Meets two to six times per year.
- Can hold up to two public hearings on issues of its choice.

### ***Structure:***

- Housed in the office of the Lieutenant Governor in partnership with OSPI and the legislature.

### ***Funding Sources:***

- Support for meetings comes out of the legislative budget for the Senate.
- Funding from other sources is accepted but not solicited.
- A half-time staff is funded through OSPI and other staffing is on a volunteer basis.

### ***Contact for Information:***

Kate Berry, LYAC Chair  
lyac@leg.wa.gov  
www.leg.wa.gov/Legislature/LYAC/

## North Carolina Youth Advisory Council and State Youth Council

Established: 1970.

### ***Bodies the Council Advises:***

- Governor.
- North Carolina General Assembly.
- State Boards and Commissions.

### ***Membership:***

- SYC: 300 members drawn from local councils.
- NCYAC: 20 members (10 youth from SYC, 10 adults appointed by the governor).
- Meets four times per year.

### ***Structure:***

- Housed inside State Department of Administration under the Youth Advocacy and Involvement Office.
- Staffed by 1 director and 4 youth leaders.
- Youth council work involves three layers: 25 local youth councils, the State Youth Council (SYC) and the Youth Advisory Council (NCYAC).
- NCYAC provides support and advice to SYC and local councils and administrative oversight to SYC.
- SYC represents the local youth councils and members are recruited from these councils.
- SYC differs from NCYAC in that its primary responsibility is to consider problems affecting youth and recommend solutions to those problems to state and local government.

### ***Funding Sources:***

- North Carolina General Assembly.
- Corporate Support.

### ***Contact for Information:***

Cynthia Giles  
100 E. Six Forks Road, 1st Floor  
Raleigh, NC 27699  
919.789.5880  
www.doa.state.nc.us/yaio

# City Youth Councils: Basic Info

## Boston Mayor's Youth Council (Massachusetts)

Established: 1994.

### *Bodies the Council Advises:*

- Mayor.
- City Officials (police commissioner, human services chief, school superintendent).

### *Membership:*

- 40 members.
- 11th–12th grade.
- One-year term.
- Formal application process.
- Meets twice per month.

### *Structure:*

- Housed inside Mayor's office.

### *Funding Sources:*

- Not available.

### *Contact for Information:*

Patty McMahon  
617.635.4490  
[www.bostonyouthzone.com/myc](http://www.bostonyouthzone.com/myc)

## Des Moines Youth Advisory Board (Iowa)

Established: 1993.

### *Bodies the Council Advises:*

- City Council.
- City Departments.
- City Boards.
- State of Iowa.
- Youth Advisory Council.

### *Membership:*

- 15 youth: 7 representing schools, 3 representing community organizations, 5 representing the community at-large 7 adults representing the city (parks/recreation), the school district, business (young professionals from the chamber) and community organizations (YMCA, Youth Leadership Initiative and Homeless youth) as well a liaison from the City Manager's office.
- Youth aged under 19 must be in high school and may serve until graduation with a 15–51 month term limit.
- Adults serve a three-year term.
- Board meets monthly and all members serve on at least 1 committee.

### *Structure:*

- Housed inside city government and serves as a city council commission.
- Receives staff assistance from the City Manager's office.
- Board has 4 youth officers (chair, vice-chair, secretary and treasurer) and 4 committees (executive, policy, fundraising and community engagement) that meet monthly.

### *Funding Sources:*

- The city appropriated up to \$8,000 for FY 08.
- Youth-led fundraising.

### *Contact for Information:*

City Clerks Office  
P.O. Box 10326  
Des Moines, IA 50306  
[www.dmgov.org/youth](http://www.dmgov.org/youth)

## Grand Rapids Mayor's Youth Council (Michigan)

Established: 1999.

### ***Bodies the Council Advises:***

- Mayor and City Commission.
- West Michigan State Legislators.

### ***Membership:***

- 15 Youth: 5 from each of the city's three wards.
- 9th–12th grade.
- Meets monthly with the Mayor and twice per term with their own city commissioners.
- Council President presents the MYC annual report to the City Commission.

### ***Structure:***

- Managed and staffed by the City of Grand Rapids' Office of Children, Youth & Families.

### ***Funding Sources:***

- Private donations and sponsors.

### ***Contact for Information:***

Shannon L. Harris, Program Coordinator  
300 Monroe Street, Suite 480  
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503  
616.456.3558  
sharris@grcity.us  
www.grcity.us/ocyf/myc

## Hampton Youth Commission (Virginia)

Established: 1997.

### ***Bodies the Council Advises:***

- Mayor.
- City Council.
- School Board.
- City Planning Commission.

### ***Membership:***

- 25 members.
- 9th–12th grade.
- Two-year term.
- Formal application process.
- Two or more meetings per month.

### ***Structure:***

- Housed in the Coalition for Youth, a separate city department.
- Staffed by a director, 3 youth staff, including 2 youth city planners who are hired by the City Planning Department and responsible for integrating HYC's work into the overall city plan and implementing the youth component of the city plan.
- 3 committees that meet twice a month, each committee addressing 2 of the 6 key youth issues of the Youth Component of the Community Plan: Caring Relationships; Youth Share Leadership; Essential Life Skills; Career Preparation; Getting Around; and Places to Go, Things to Do (currently focused on building a Teen Center).

### ***Funding Sources:***

- General Fund.

### ***Contact for Information:***

Cindy Carlson Director, Hampton Coalition for Youth  
22 Lincoln Street  
Hampton, VA 23669  
757.728.3280  
ccarlson@hampton.gov  
www.hampton.gov/youth  
www.areyouinthegame.com

## San Francisco Youth Commission (California)

Established: 1995 by City Charter Amendment, Prop F.

### *Bodies the Council advises:*

- Mayor.
- Board of Supervisors.
- City departments.

### *Membership:*

- 17 members.
- 12–23 years old.
- Applications reviewed by council, members officially appointed by the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor.
- Meets twice a month.

### *Structure:*

- Housed in City Hall, operating under the clerk of the Board of Supervisors.
- Staff of 3: director, policy coordinator and program coordinator.
- According to the City Charter that created the Commission, it can only meet under quorum.
- Steering committee assigns work, sets priorities, distributes information and leverages committee opportunities.
- 4 other standing committees are the working groups of the Commission, including youth justice, youth employment, health & social services and recreation & services.

### *Funding Sources:*

- In-kind donations.
- Volunteer staff within city government.

### *Contact for Information:*

Rachel Antrobus  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 345  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
415.554.6446  
Rachel.antrobus@sfgov.org  
[www.sfgov.org/site/youth\\_commission\\_index.asp](http://www.sfgov.org/site/youth_commission_index.asp)

## Nashville Mayor's Youth Council (Tennessee)

Established: 1999.

### *Bodies the Council advises:*

- Mayor.
- Local boards and commissions.
- City departments.
- Other city officials.

### *Membership:*

- 32 members.
- 11th–12th grade.
- One-year term.
- Meets monthly.
- Quarterly meetings with the Mayor.

### *Structure:*

- Housed inside the Mayor's office.
- Committee meetings and other events require approximately 2 hours per week after school from members.

### *Funding Sources:*

- Not available.

### *Contact for Information:*

Sherica Clark  
Mayor's Office of Children and Youth  
Metro City Hall, 225 Polk Avenue  
Nashville, TN 37203  
615.880.1890  
[www.nashville.gov/mocy/index.htm](http://www.nashville.gov/mocy/index.htm)

## Additional Resources

### Online Resources

- At the Table: Youth Voices in Decision Making: [www.atthetable.org/](http://www.atthetable.org/)
- The Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development: [www.theinnovationcenter.org](http://www.theinnovationcenter.org)
- National League of Cities: [www.nlc.org](http://www.nlc.org)
  - Youth Leadership & Youth Participation in Municipal Government: [www.nlc.org/iyef/program\\_areas/youth\\_development/4348.aspx](http://www.nlc.org/iyef/program_areas/youth_development/4348.aspx)
  - Youth Participation Advisors Network (YPAN): [www.nlc.org/iyef/program\\_areas/youth\\_development/4349.aspx](http://www.nlc.org/iyef/program_areas/youth_development/4349.aspx)
  - Youth Master Planning: [www.nlc.org/iyef/program\\_areas/youth\\_development/810.aspx](http://www.nlc.org/iyef/program_areas/youth_development/810.aspx)
  - Youth as City Leaders (site for youth): [www.nlc.org/iyef/networks\\_assistance/7164.aspx](http://www.nlc.org/iyef/networks_assistance/7164.aspx)
- Onsite Insights: [www.onsiteinsights.com/](http://www.onsiteinsights.com/)
- Youth In Focus (Youth REP): [www.youthinfocus.net/](http://www.youthinfocus.net/)
- Youth Leadership Institute: [www.yli.org/](http://www.yli.org/)
- Youth on Board: [www.youthonboard.org/](http://www.youthonboard.org/)

### On Youth Engagement

- Butler, B. & Wharton-Fields, D. with Ferber, T. & Pittman, K. (1999). *Finding Common Agendas: How Young People Are Being Engaged in Community Change Efforts*. Community & Youth Development Series (4). Takoma Park, MD: The Forum for Youth Investment, International Youth Foundation.
- The Forum for Youth Investment. *Youth. Action. Community. Development: The Community and Youth Development Series*. Takoma Park, MD: The Forum for Youth Investment, International Youth Foundation.
- The Forum for Youth Investment. (2004, May). "Youth Action." *Forum Focus*, 2 (2) Washington, DC: The Forum for Youth Investment, Impact Strategies, Inc. Retrieved online at [www.forumfyi.org](http://www.forumfyi.org)

- Irby, M., Ferber, T., Pittman, K., with Tolman, J. & Yohalem, N. (2001). *Youth Action: Youth Contributing to Communities, Communities Supporting Youth*. Community & Youth Development Series, Volume 6. Takoma Park, MD: The Forum for Youth Investment, International Youth Foundation.
- Penn State College of Agricultural Science and Cooperative Extension. *Say Y.E.S. to Youth: Youth Engagement Strategies*. Retrieved online at <http://agexted.cas.psu.edu/cyfar/PDFs/yesbookweb.pdf>
- Tolman, J., & Pittman, K. with Cervone, B. Cushman, K. Rowley, L. Kinkade, S. Phillips, J. & Duque, S. (2001). *Youth Acts, Community Impacts: Stories of Youth Engagement with Real Results*. Community & Youth Development Series, Volume 7. Takoma Park, MD: The Forum for Youth Investment, International Youth Foundation.
- UNICEF. (2001). *The Participation Rights of Adolescents: A Strategic Approach*. New York, NY: United Nations Children's Fund. Retrieved online at [www.unicef.org/adolescence/files/Participation\\_Rights\\_of\\_Adolescents\\_Rajani\\_2001.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/adolescence/files/Participation_Rights_of_Adolescents_Rajani_2001.pdf)
- Fletcher, A. & Vavrus, J. (2006). *The Guide to Social Change Led By and With Young People*. Olympia, WA: CommonAction. Retrieved online at [www.atthetable.org/images/Details/09080620230187\\_SocialChangeGuide.pdf](http://www.atthetable.org/images/Details/09080620230187_SocialChangeGuide.pdf)

### On Building Organizational Capacity

- Youth in Focus Movement Strategy Center. (2004, December). *Measuring up and Throwing Down! Evaluation and Self-Assessment Tools for Youth Organizing Groups*. Oakland CA: Youth In Focus Movement Strategy Center. Retrieved online at [www.youthinfocus.net/pdf/yoevaltool.pdf](http://www.youthinfocus.net/pdf/yoevaltool.pdf)
- Zimmerman, K. & London, J. "Getting to Go: Building Organizational Capacity to Engage in Youth-led Research, Evaluation, and Planning." *Community Youth Development Journal*. Retrieved online at [www.youthinfocus.net/pdf/YIF\\_CYD.pdf](http://www.youthinfocus.net/pdf/YIF_CYD.pdf)

## On Youth Led Research

- John Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities, Stanford University. (2001). *Youth Engaged in Leadership and Learning, A Handbook for Supporting Community Youth Researchers*. Stanford, CA: John Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities, Stanford University. Retrieved online at [http://nationalserviceresources.org/filemanager/download/citizenship/YELL\\_handbook.pdf](http://nationalserviceresources.org/filemanager/download/citizenship/YELL_handbook.pdf)
- National League of Cities. (2000). *Promoting Youth Participation: Action Kit for Municipal Leaders, from the National League of Cities*. Washington, DC: National League of Cities. Retrieved online at [http://www.nlc.org/iyef/publications\\_resources/actionkits.aspx#youth](http://www.nlc.org/iyef/publications_resources/actionkits.aspx#youth)

## Tools

- Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development. (2001). *Organizational Assessment Checklist, Youth on Board*. Takoma Park, MD: The Innovation Center. Retrieved online at [http://atthetable.org/images/Details/Handouts\\_rad0A250.pdf](http://atthetable.org/images/Details/Handouts_rad0A250.pdf)
- Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development. *The Youth/Adult Partnerships Self-Assessment*. Chevy Chase, MD: The Innovation Center. Retrieved online at [www.atthetable.org/images/Details/03130216040354\\_Youth-AdultPartnershipsAssessment.pdf](http://www.atthetable.org/images/Details/03130216040354_Youth-AdultPartnershipsAssessment.pdf)

## Youth Council Applications

- New Mexico: [www.nmforumforyouth.org/documents/ya/NMYAMembershipApplication.pdf](http://www.nmforumforyouth.org/documents/ya/NMYAMembershipApplication.pdf)
- Boston: [www.bostonyouthzone.com/myc/apply\\_form.asp](http://www.bostonyouthzone.com/myc/apply_form.asp)
- Hampton: [http://www.hampton.gov/youth/pdf/commissioner\\_application08.pdf](http://www.hampton.gov/youth/pdf/commissioner_application08.pdf)
- San Francisco: [www.sfgov.org/site/uploadedfiles/youth\\_commission/2006%20YC%20application.pdf](http://www.sfgov.org/site/uploadedfiles/youth_commission/2006%20YC%20application.pdf)
- Seattle: [www.ci.seattle.wa.us/mayor/issues/myc/docs/06-07MYC\\_Application.pdf](http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/mayor/issues/myc/docs/06-07MYC_Application.pdf)
- Nashville: <ftp://ftp.nashville.gov/web/mocyc/07->

08\_myc\_liaison\_application.pdf

## Youth Council Bylaws, Membership Agreements, Release Forms

- San Francisco Bylaws: the charge, duties, responsibilities and roles that Commissioners are held accountable to, amended and passed by the 2006-2007 Commission. Retrieved online at [www.sfgov.org/site/uploadedfiles/youth\\_commission/Documents\\_and\\_Publications/2006-2007%20bylaws.doc](http://www.sfgov.org/site/uploadedfiles/youth_commission/Documents_and_Publications/2006-2007%20bylaws.doc)
- North Carolina Release Forms and Permission Slips. Retrieved online at [www.doa.state.nc.us/yaiio/documents/yla/yla.pdf](http://www.doa.state.nc.us/yaiio/documents/yla/yla.pdf)
- Nebraska mission statements and requirements of membership. Retrieved online at [www.pcanebbraska.org/includes/downloads/missionstatement.doc?PHPSESSID=9147](http://www.pcanebbraska.org/includes/downloads/missionstatement.doc?PHPSESSID=9147)
- Nebraska membership agreement. Retrieved online at [www.pcanebbraska.org/includes/downloads/membershipagreement.doc?PHPSESSID=9147](http://www.pcanebbraska.org/includes/downloads/membershipagreement.doc?PHPSESSID=9147)

## Youth Council Enabling Legislation

- San Francisco Youth Commission: [www.sfgov.org/site/uploadedfiles/youth\\_commission/Documents\\_and\\_Publications/SF%20Charter%20-%20Youth%20Commission.doc](http://www.sfgov.org/site/uploadedfiles/youth_commission/Documents_and_Publications/SF%20Charter%20-%20Youth%20Commission.doc)
- Des Moines Youth Advisory Board: [www.ci.des-moines.ia.us/mayor\\_council/ordinanc/2005/14466.htm](http://www.ci.des-moines.ia.us/mayor_council/ordinanc/2005/14466.htm)
- The Maryland Youth Council: [www.ocyf.state.md.us](http://www.ocyf.state.md.us)

## Youth Council Products and Publications

- *Youth Component of the Hampton City Plan (2005)*. [http://www.hampton.gov/community-plan/iframe.html?linkfrom=main&bc=Youth%20Component%20Update&url=pdf/youth\\_component.pdf](http://www.hampton.gov/community-plan/iframe.html?linkfrom=main&bc=Youth%20Component%20Update&url=pdf/youth_component.pdf)
- Carlson, C. "Youth with Influence: The Youth Planner Initiative in Hampton, Virginia". *Children, Youth and Environments* 15 (2): 211-226. Retrieved online at [www.colorado.edu/journals/](http://www.colorado.edu/journals/)

cye/15 \_ 2/15 \_ 2 \_ 12 \_ YouthwithInfluence.pdf

- Boston YouthZone Online Database: [www.bostonnavigator.org/](http://www.bostonnavigator.org/)
- Boston Online Survey: [www.bostonyouthzone.com/myc/survey\\_form.asp](http://www.bostonyouthzone.com/myc/survey_form.asp)
- San Francisco Youth Commission's Election Glossary: [www.sfgov.org/site/youth\\_commission\\_page.asp?id=27427](http://www.sfgov.org/site/youth_commission_page.asp?id=27427)
- Boston Youth Constituents Comments: [www.bostonyouthzone.com/myc/issues.asp](http://www.bostonyouthzone.com/myc/issues.asp)

## Youth Council Reports

- *Maine Fourth Annual Report*: [www.state.me.us/legis/opa/lyac2006rpt.pdf](http://www.state.me.us/legis/opa/lyac2006rpt.pdf)
- *New Mexico Annual Report*: <http://nmforumforyouth.org/documents/ya/NMYA2006Report.pdf>
- *Washington Legislative Report*: [www.leg.wa.gov/documents/senate/sadm/lyac/FinalReport\\_Jan2006.pdf](http://www.leg.wa.gov/documents/senate/sadm/lyac/FinalReport_Jan2006.pdf)
- *San Francisco Annual Report*: [www.sfgov.org/site/uploadedfiles/youth\\_commission/2006-2007%20Annual%20Report.pdf](http://www.sfgov.org/site/uploadedfiles/youth_commission/2006-2007%20Annual%20Report.pdf)
- Los Angeles Youth Engagement Taskforce, *Our Voice is Your Future, giving L.A.'s Youth Real Voice and Real Power*: [www.childrengovernment.org/resource-files/committees/ye/ytf\\_report.pdf](http://www.childrengovernment.org/resource-files/committees/ye/ytf_report.pdf)
- Hampton Youth Council Annual Report: [http://www.hampton.gov/youth/hyc\\_ar.html](http://www.hampton.gov/youth/hyc_ar.html)

# Youth Council Enabling Legislation

## Maine Legislative Youth Advisory Council (3 pages)

Sec. PPPP-1. 3 MRSA §168-A is enacted to read:

### §168-A. Legislative Youth Advisory Council

There is established the Legislative Youth Advisory Council, referred to in this section as the "council."

#### 1. Duties. The council shall perform the following duties:

A. Advise the Legislature, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives on proposed and pending legislation, state budget expenditures and policy matters related to youth;

B. Advise the joint standing committees of the Legislature and study commissions, committees and task forces regarding issues related to youth;

C. Conduct an annual seminar each August for its members regarding leadership, government and the Legislature, to which Legislators must be invited;

D. Meet at least 6 times per year and conduct 2 public hearings per year on issues of importance to youth; and

E. Publish an annual report of its activities and present the report to the Legislature by February 15th of each year. The council may submit legislation to the Legislature.

2. Jurisdiction. The council shall examine issues of importance to youth, including, but not limited to, education, employment, strategies to increase youth participation in municipal government and State Government, safe environments for youth, substance abuse, emotional and physical health, foster care, poverty, homelessness and youth access to services on municipal and statewide bases.

3. Membership. The council consists of 21 voting members and 5 nonvoting members who are Maine residents in accordance with this subsection. In appointing members, the appointing authorities shall consider geographic distribution and shall appoint at least one member from each of the 3 service regions of the Department of Human Services. Members shall serve for terms of 2 years and, if eligible, may be reappointed for subsequent 2-year terms, except that the appointing authorities shall appoint 1/2 of the members first appointed to the council to terms of one year.

A. The President of the Senate shall appoint 10 members as follows:

- (1) Six youths who are students in secondary schools or who are enrolled in programs that lead to a secondary school diploma or certificate of attendance or a general equivalency diploma;
- (2) One youth who is enrolled in an equivalent instruction program under Title 20-A, chapter 211, subchapter I-A;
- (3) Two students at postsecondary educational institutions located in the State; and
- (4) One member of the Senate whose term coincides with the term of office in the Senate.

B. The Speaker of the House shall appoint 11 members as follows:

- (1) Six youths who are students in secondary schools or who are enrolled in programs that lead to a secondary school diploma or certificate of attendance or a general equivalency diploma;
- (2) One youth who is enrolled in an equivalent instruction program under Title 20-A, chapter 211, subchapter I-A;
- (3) Two students at postsecondary educational institutions located within the State; and
- (4) Two members of the House of Representatives whose terms coincide with their terms of office in the House of Representatives.

C. The members of the Children's Cabinet, established pursuant to Title 5, section 19131, serve ex officio and may not vote.

4. Chairs. At the first meeting of each calendar year, the members shall elect one of their youth members to serve as cochair for a term of one year. The member of the House of Representatives who is the first appointed by the Speaker shall serve as cochair.

5. Cooperation with Department of Education. The council shall work cooperatively with the Department of Education on the integration of council experience into the learning results standards in student service and career preparation.

6. Priorities. The council shall set priorities and shall determine the function of subcommittees, standards of conduct, process, procedures and the use of technology to convene meetings. Council members shall review and consider the procedures and rules used by the Legislature as they may be

appropriate for use as models for the council.

7. Communication. The council may provide testimony on legislation pending before the Legislature.

8. Compensation. Members of the council who are Legislators are entitled to the legislative per diem and to reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred in order to serve on the council as provided in Title 5, section 12004-I, subsection 54-C. All other members who are not otherwise reimbursed for their service on the council are entitled to compensation for reasonable expenses incurred in order to serve on the council as provided in Title 5, section 12004-I, subsection 54-C.

9. Freedom of access. Meetings of the council are public meetings and all records of the council are public records as defined by Title 1, section 402, subsection 3.

10. Staff. The Office of Policy and Legal Analysis and the Edmund S. Muskie School of Public Service shall provide staff assistance to the council.

Sec. PPPP-2. 5 MRSA §12004-I, sub-§54-C is enacted to read:

54-C. Legislature Legislative Youth Legislative Per Diem and Expenses 3 MRSA §168-A

Advisory Council for Legislators and Expenses Only for Certain Members

Sec. PPPP-3. Appropriation. The following funds are appropriated from the General Fund to carry out the purposes of this Part.

2002-03  
LEGISLATURE  
Legislature  
Personal Services \$11,660  
All Other \$36,200

Provides funds for the per diem and expenses of legislative members and other eligible members of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council, to hold public hearings, to hold an annual seminar and for printing and miscellaneous costs.

LEGISLATURE \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ TOTAL \$47,860

Sec. PPPP-4. Effective date. This Part takes effect July 1, 2002.

## Maryland Youth Council (3 pages)

01.01.2006.10

EXECUTIVE ORDER 01.01.2006.10 The Maryland Youth Council

WHEREAS, It is the goal of Administration to ensure that all Maryland's children are successful in life;

WHEREAS, To reach this goal, there must be a commitment to youth-centered public policies and programs designed to ensure all Maryland youth have access to support services that meet their needs and build on their aspirations to be fully prepared for work, education and life skills;

WHEREAS, In order to implement this policy, it is essential that young people are given power to take a leadership role in creating meaningful change for themselves, their families and their communities;

WHEREAS, The programs, policies and budgets of Maryland's child serving agencies are coordinated through the Children's Cabinet to ensure effective, efficient, and comprehensive delivery of services; and

WHEREAS, There is a need for a Youth Council comprised of youth representatives from across the State to act as a statewide advisory group to the Children's Cabinet, enabling state administrators to create and refine youth policies with the benefit of feedback and recommendations of the population they are designed to serve.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ROBERT L. EHRlich, JR., GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF MARYLAND, BY VIRTUE OF THE AUTHORITY VESTED IN ME BY THE CONSTITUTION AND LAWS OF MARYLAND, HEREBY PROCLAIM THE FOLLOWING EXECUTIVE ORDER EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY:

A. The Maryland Youth Council is hereby established to encourage young people throughout the State of Maryland to consider and discuss how government, working with its public and private-sector partners to develop possible solutions for presentation to the Children's Cabinet and, thereby, achieve better outcomes for youth.

B. Membership.

(1) The Youth Council will consist of up to 24 youths, aged 13 to 19, selected by the Executive Director of the Office for Children with concurrence of the Governor. A Chairperson shall be selected in a similar manner from among the members of the Council.

(2) To the extent possible, the Youth Council members will be selected from each jurisdiction of the State from established public and private youth councils and youth empowerment organizations in Maryland, including, but not limited to, youth in service learning and leadership programs, teen court programs, foster care, student councils, juvenile service and transitional programs.

(3) Youth Council members will serve terms of 2 years, or until they have reached the age of 20, whichever shall first occur. The terms of the members shall be staggered from initial appointment commencing July 1 of the year this Executive Order takes effect.

#### C. Procedures.

(1) The Youth Council will meet four times a year for the purpose of improving youth outcomes.

(2) A majority of the Youth Council members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of any business.

(3) The last meeting of each year will be to present recommendations to the Children's Cabinet and the Governor.

(4) The Chair of the Youth Council will assign a representative to attend meetings of the Advisory Council for Children.

(5) Members of the Youth Council may not receive any compensation for their services, but may be reimbursed for reasonable expenses incurred in the performance of duties, in accordance with the Standard State Travel Regulations, and as provided in the State budget.

#### D. Duties. The Youth Council shall have the following duties:

(1) Make recommendations for the Three-Year Children's Plan to the Governor;

(2) Participate in local youth activities or organizations and advise local officials and community leaders on youth issues;

(3) Collect information from other youth groups in order to inform the Youth Council; and

(4) Meet on a statewide level four times a year to discuss youth issues and develop their recommendations.

#### E. Staffing. The Governor's Office for Children will provide staff to the Youth Council and will:

(1) Identify the existing youth councils in Maryland;

(2) Work with those existing councils to select representatives for the Maryland Youth Council;

(3) Ensure that youth selected from those existing councils provide a broad representation on the Youth Council of all jurisdictions and populations;

(4) Organize four Youth Council meetings a year;

(5) Attend Advisory Council meetings with the Youth Council representative;

(6) Assist the Youth Council in preparing recommendations to the Children's Cabinet and the Governor;

(7) Act as a liaison between the Youth Council and the Governor's Office for Children.

Effective date: October 30, 2006 (33:23 Md. R. 1783)

GIVEN, Under My Hand and the Great Seal of the State of Maryland, in the City of Annapolis, this 30th day of October, 2006.

## Nevada Youth Legislative Issues Forum (5 pages)

Senate Bill No. 247—Senators Wiener, Horsford, Woodhouse, Titus, Schneider, Amodei, Cegavske, Heck, Lee, Mathews and Washington

Joint Sponsor: Assemblywoman Parnell

CHAPTER.....

AN ACT relating to education; creating the Nevada Youth Legislative Issues Forum; prescribing the membership, powers and duties of the Forum; and providing other matters properly relating thereto.

**Legislative Counsel’s Digest:**

**Sections 3-5** of this bill create the Nevada Youth Legislative Issues Forum, consisting of 21 members who are enrolled in grades 9-12 in public schools or otherwise eligible for enrollment in public schools but enrolled in a homeschool or private school. Each Senator appoints a member to the Forum. **Sections 6-10** of this bill set forth the powers and duties of the Forum. The Forum must hold at least two public hearings each school year, review issues of importance to the youth in this State and submit an annual report of the activities of the Forum. In addition, the Forum may, within the limits of available money, hold meetings during a regular session of the Legislature to advise the Legislature on proposed legislation concerning the youth in this State. The Forum may also conduct seminars for the benefit of its members relating to leadership, government and the legislative process. Finally, the Forum may submit a request for the drafting of one legislative measure which relates to matters within the scope of the Forum.

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WHEREAS, The United States is facing a population of youth that is disengaged and lacks the necessary knowledge, skills and dispositions to participate in and carry out civic duties; and

WHEREAS, In the 2004 presidential election, 53.1 percent of Nevadans over 25 years of age voted, compared with 38.4 percent among Nevadans 18 to 24 years of age; and

WHEREAS, The lack of voter turnout for citizens who are 18 to 24 years of age is often attributed to cynicism toward the political process, disillusionment with politics, voter apathy and a lack of acknowledgment by the media and politicians of issues involving youth; and

WHEREAS, Most governmental services are designed with input and participation from the people being served; however, young people under the age of 18 are not allowed to vote and are often left out of the democratic process; and

WHEREAS, Several issues are important to the youth in the nation as well as the youth in this State, including, without limitation, education, employment opportunities, participation in state and local government, a safe environment, the prevention of



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substance abuse, emotional and physical well-being, foster care and access to state and local services; and

WHEREAS, Research shows that the programs designed for youth which are most effective at promoting positive outcomes are framed in terms of the constructive assets the programs seek to build rather than the negative behaviors the programs seek to avoid; and

WHEREAS, There is a growing need to reverse the trend of apathy by engaging our youth directly with policymakers in a manner that will provide genuine opportunities for our youth to acquire civic knowledge and develop the skills necessary to participate fully in a democratic society; and

WHEREAS, Within the past 5 years, Maine, New Mexico, Washington and New Hampshire have enacted bills that create a Youth Issues Forum, which institutionalizes the participation of youth in the policy-making process in those states; and

WHEREAS, The creation of a Youth Issues Forum offers policymakers an opportunity to learn from youth as well as provides a meaningful opportunity for youth to learn about the policy-making process; and

WHEREAS, By providing an avenue for participation, this State will provide our youth with an opportunity to understand the ideals of citizenship and to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to participate in effective government and appreciate the value of American democracy; now, therefore,

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

**Section 1.** Chapter 385 of NRS is hereby amended by adding thereto the provisions set forth as sections 2 to 9, inclusive, of this act.

**Sec. 2.** *As used in sections 2 to 9, inclusive, of this act, "Forum" means the Nevada Youth Legislative Issues Forum created by section 3 of this act.*

**Sec. 3. 1.** *The Nevada Youth Legislative Issues Forum is hereby created, consisting of 21 members.*

*2. Each member of the Senate shall, taking into consideration any recommendations made by a member of the Assembly, appoint a person who submits an application and meets the qualifications for appointment set forth in section 4 of this act. A member of the Assembly may submit recommendations to a member of the Senate concerning the appointment.*

*3. After the initial terms:*



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(a) *Appointments to the Forum must be made by each member of the Senate before June 30 of each year.*

(b) *The term of each member of the Forum begins July 1 of the year of appointment.*

4. *Each member of the Forum serves a term of 1 year and may be reappointed if the member continues to meet the qualifications for appointment set forth in section 4 of this act.*

**Sec. 4. 1.** *To be eligible for appointment to the Forum, a person must be a resident of the senatorial district of the Senator who appoints him and must be:*

(a) *Enrolled in a public school in this State in grade 9, 10, 11 or 12 for the school year in which he serves; or*

(b) *Exempt from compulsory attendance pursuant to NRS 392.070, but otherwise eligible to enroll in a public school in this State in grade 9, 10, 11 or 12 for the school year in which he serves.*

2. *A person who is eligible for appointment to the Forum may submit an application on the form prescribed pursuant to subsection 3 to the Senator of the senatorial district in which the person resides for appointment or reappointment to the Forum.*

3. *The Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau shall prescribe a form for applications submitted pursuant to this section, which must require the signature of the principal of the school in which the applicant is enrolled or, if the applicant is exempt from compulsory attendance pursuant to NRS 392.070, the signature of a member of the community in which the applicant resides other than a relative of the applicant.*

**Sec. 5. 1.** *A position on the Forum becomes vacant upon:*

(a) *The death or resignation of a member.*

(b) *The absence of a member for any reason from two consecutive meetings of the Forum, unless excused by the Chairman of the Forum.*

(c) *A change of residency of a member which renders that member ineligible under his original appointment.*

2. *A vacancy on the Forum must be filled for the remainder of the unexpired term in the same manner as the original appointment.*

**Sec. 6. 1.** *The Forum shall elect from among its members, to serve a term of 1 year beginning on July 1 of each year:*

(a) *A Chairman, who shall conduct the meetings and oversee the formation of committees as necessary to accomplish the business of the Forum. The Chairman must be:*

(1) *Enrolled in a public school in this State in grade 9, 10 or 11 for the school year in which he serves; or*



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(2) *Exempt from compulsory attendance pursuant to NRS 392.070, but otherwise eligible to enroll in a public school in this State in grade 9, 10 or 11 for the school year in which he serves.*

(b) *A Vice Chairman, who shall assist the Chairman and conduct the meetings of the Forum if the Chairman is absent or otherwise unable to perform his duties.*

2. *The Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau:*

(a) *Shall provide meeting rooms and teleconference and videoconference facilities for the Forum.*

(b) *Shall, in the event of a vacancy on the Forum, notify the appropriate appointing authority of such vacancy.*

(c) *May accept gifts, grants and donations from any source for the support of the Forum in carrying out the provisions of sections 2 to 9, inclusive, of this act.*

**Sec. 7. 1. The Forum shall:**

(a) *Hold at least two public hearings in this State each school year.*

(b) *Simultaneously teleconference or videoconference each public hearing to two or more prominent locations throughout this State.*

(c) *Evaluate, review and comment upon issues of importance to the youth in this State, including, without limitation:*

- (1) *Education;*
- (2) *Employment opportunities;*
- (3) *Participation of youth in state and local government;*
- (4) *A safe learning environment;*
- (5) *The prevention of substance abuse;*
- (6) *Emotional and physical well-being;*
- (7) *Foster care; and*
- (8) *Access to state and local services.*

(d) *Conduct a public awareness campaign to raise awareness about the Forum and to enhance outreach to the youth in this State.*

2. *The Forum may, within the limits of available money:*

(a) *During the period in which the Legislature is in a regular session, meet as often as necessary to conduct the business of the Forum and to advise the Legislature on proposed legislation relating to the youth in this State.*

(b) *Form committees, which may meet as often as necessary to assist with the business of the Forum.*

(c) *Conduct periodic seminars for its members regarding leadership, government and the legislative process.*



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*(d) Employ a person to provide administrative support for the Forum or pay the costs incurred by one or more volunteers to provide any required administrative support.*

*3. The Forum and its committees shall comply with the provisions of chapter 241 of NRS.*

*4. On or before June 30 of each year, the Forum shall submit a written report to the Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau and to the Governor describing the activities of the Forum during the immediately preceding school year and any recommendations for legislation. The Director shall transmit the written report to the Legislative Committee on Education and to the next regular session of the Legislature.*

**Sec. 8.** *The Forum may:*

*1. Request the drafting of not more than one legislative measure which relates to matters within the scope of the Forum. A request must be submitted to the Legislative Counsel on or before July 1 preceding the commencement of a regular session of the Legislature unless the Legislative Commission authorizes submitting a request after that date.*

*2. Adopt procedures to conduct meetings of the Forum and any committees thereof. Those procedures may be changed upon approval of a majority vote of all members of the Forum who are present and voting.*

*3. Advise the Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau regarding the administration of any appropriations, gifts, grants or donations received for the support of the Forum.*

**Sec. 9.** *The members of the Forum serve without compensation. To the extent that money is available, including, without limitation, money from gifts, grants and donations, the members of the Forum may receive the per diem allowance and travel expenses provided for state officers and employees generally for attending a meeting of the Forum or a seminar conducted by the Forum.*

**Sec. 10.** 1. Each Senator shall appoint a member to the Nevada Youth Legislative Issues Forum created by section 3 of this act to an initial term commencing on July 1, 2008, and expiring on June 30, 2009.

2. The Forum shall hold its first meeting not later than October 1, 2008. At the first meeting of the Forum, the members of the Forum shall elect a Chairman and a Vice Chairman who hold those positions until June 30, 2009.

3. After the initial terms of office, sections 3 and 6 of this act govern the terms of office of the members of the Forum.



## San Francisco Youth Commission (2 pages)

City and County of San Francisco Charter  
Re: The San Francisco Youth Commission

### SEC. 4.122. YOUTH COMMISSION.

There is hereby established a commission to be known as the Youth Commission (hereinafter called "Commission") to advise the Board of Supervisors and Mayor on issues relating to children and youth. The Commission shall operate under the jurisdiction of the Board of Supervisors.

### SEC. 4.123. YOUTH COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP; APPOINTMENT; TERMS; MEETINGS; COMPENSATION; DIRECTOR.

(a) Commission Membership. The Commission shall consist of seventeen (17) voting members, each of whom shall be between the ages of 12 and 23 years at the time of appointment. Each member of the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor shall appoint one member to the Commission. The Mayor shall also appoint five (5) members from underrepresented communities to ensure that the Commission represents the diversity of the City. All appointments shall be completed by the sixtieth day after the effective date of this charter amendment and by that date of each year thereafter. Commission members shall serve at the pleasure of their appointing authorities.

The Commission shall consist of individuals who have an understanding of the needs of young people in San Francisco, or experience with children and youth programs or youth organizations, or involvement with school or community activities. The members shall represent the diversity of ethnicity, race, gender and sexual orientation of the people of the City and County, and shall be residents of the City and County.

(b) Term of Office. Members shall serve a term of one year. The first one year term for all members shall begin upon the date the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors certifies that all members of the Commission have been appointed following the adoption of this charter amendment. Future terms of office shall begin on that date of each successive year. Members shall conduct the first meeting of the Commission within thirty days of the appointment of all members.

In the event a vacancy occurs during the term of office of any voting member, a successor shall be appointed to complete the unexpired term of the office vacated in a manner similar to that which the member was initially appointed.

(c) Removal of Members. Any member whom the Commission certifies to have missed three regularly scheduled meetings of the Commission in any six month period without prior authorization of the Commission shall be deemed to have resigned from the Commission effective on the date of the written certification from the Commission.

(d) Compensation. Members of the Commission shall not be compensated, nor shall they be reimbursed for expenses.

(e) Meetings. The Commission shall meet at least once a month.

(f) Minutes of Meetings. The Commission shall prepare and maintain permanent minutes of the actions taken during its meetings, and shall file copies with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors.

(g) Bylaws. To aid in the orderly conduct of business, the Commission shall have the authority to create, amend,

and repeal its own code of bylaws.

**SEC. 4.124. YOUTH COMMISSION – PURPOSE AND DUTIES.**

The purpose of the Commission is to collect all information relevant to advising the Board of Supervisors and Mayor on the effects of legislative policies, needs, assessments, priorities, programs, and budgets concerning the children and youth of San Francisco. Before the Board of Supervisors takes final action on any matter that primarily affects children and youth of the City and County, the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors shall refer the matter to the Commission for comment and recommendation. The Commission shall provide any response it deems appropriate within 12 days of the date the Board of Supervisors referred the matter to the Commission. After the 12 day period has elapsed, the Board of Supervisors may act on the matter whether or not the Board has received a response. This referral requirement shall not apply to any matter where immediate action by the Board of Supervisors is necessary to protect the public interest. The Commission shall have the following duties and functions:

- (a) Identify the concerns and needs of the children and youth of San Francisco; examine existing social, economic, educational, and recreational programs for children and youth; develop and propose plans that support or improve such programs; and make recommendations thereon to the Mayor and Board of Supervisors.
- (b) Identify the unmet needs of San Francisco’s children and youth through personal contact with these young people, school officials, church leaders, and others; and hold public forums in which both youth and adults are encouraged to participate.
- (c) Elicit the interest, support, and mutual cooperation of private groups (such as fraternal orders, service clubs, associations, churches, businesses, and youth organizations) and city-wide neighborhood planning collaborative efforts for children, youth and families that initiate and sponsor recommendations that address the social, economic, educational, and recreational needs of children and youth in San Francisco. Advise the Board of Supervisors and Mayor about how such recommendations could be coordinated in the community to eliminate duplication in cost and effort.
- (d) Advise about available sources of governmental and private funding for youth programs.
- (e) Submit recommendations to the Mayor and Board of Supervisors about juvenile crime prevention, job opportunities for youth, recreational activities for teenagers, opportunities for effective participation by youth in the governmental process, and changes in city and county regulations that are necessary to improve the social, economic, educational, and recreational advantages of children and youth.
- (f) Respond to requests for comment and recommendation on matters referred to the Commission by officers, departments, agencies, boards, commissions and advisory committees of the City and County.
- (g) Report to the Board of Supervisors the activities, goals, and accomplishments of the Commission by July 1 of each calendar year, effective July 1, 1997.

**SEC. 4.125. JURISDICTION.**

The Commission shall be under the jurisdiction of the Board of Supervisors; the Commission shall have only those powers created by Sections 4.122 through 4.125 or by ordinance of the Board of Supervisors.

## Des Moines Youth Advisory Board City Ordinance (3 pages)

### ORDINANCE NO. 14,466

AN ORDINANCE to amend the Municipal Code of the City of Des Moines, Iowa, 2000, adopted by Ordinance No. 13,827, passed June 5, 2000, and amended by Ordinance No. 14,232, passed May 5, 2003, and Ordinance No. 14,243, passed June 23, 2003 by amending Sections 2-1176 and 2-1177 thereof, relating to the youth advisory board.

Be It Ordained by the City Council of the City of Des Moines, Iowa:

Section 1. That the Municipal Code of the City of Des Moines, Iowa, 2000, adopted by Ordinance No. 13,827, passed June 5, 2000, and amended by Ordinance No. 14,232, passed May 5, 2003 and Ordinance No. 14,243, passed June 23, 2003 is hereby amended by amending Sections 2-1176 and 2-1177 relating to the youth advisory board, as follows:

Sec. 2-1176. Created; composition; appointment.

(a) There is established in and for the city a youth advisory board comprised of 22 members.

(b) The youth advisory board shall consist of seven adult members and fifteen youth members.

(1) The adult members shall include representatives from the following originating organizations:

a. One representative from the YMCA.

b. One representative from the Des Moines Independent Community School District.

c. One representative from the Greater Des Moines Partnership.

d. Two representatives to be appointed by the city manager. Employees of the city of Des Moines may serve in this capacity.

e. Two representatives nominated by community organizations such as: Iowa Homeless Youth Shelter, Youth Emergency Services, Young Professionals Organizations, Rotary Club, Drake University, Des Moines University, Des Moines Public Library, the YMCA, the Des Moines Independent Community School District, the Greater Des Moines Partnership, the city manager's office, or others.

(2) The youth members must be under the age of 19 at the time of appointment and shall include:

• a. One representative from each of the following originating organizations:

- § East High School
- § Hoover High School
- § Lincoln High School
- § North High School
- § Roosevelt High School
- § Scavo Campus School
- § Dowling High School
- § Des Moines Christian School

b. Four representatives at-large

c. Four representatives nominated by community organizations (Creative Visions, Making Connections, Grubb YMCA, Des Moines Public Library, Sister City Commission, Partners for Economic Progress, and others)

(c) All adult members shall be appointed for thirty-six month terms commencing the first meeting in June. All youth members shall be appointed for terms commencing the first day in June and ending the first meeting in August upon high school graduation. The length of term for a youth member shall be no less than 15 months and no more than 51 months.

(d) Notwithstanding the appointment and residency requirements of division 1 of this chapter, the board shall appoint all members by election, subject to removal by the city council at any time. Residency for the youth of the youth advisory board will be as follows: the youth must attend a Des Moines high school full time, live within the city limits of Des Moines, or have fulfilled one of these requirements at the time of their appointment to the board.

(e) Upon termination or resignation of any board member, that member shall be replaced by an individual from the departing members originating organization. Notwithstanding the provisions of section 2-1048, the new member shall serve a term pursuant to section 2-1176(c).

(e) No person holding elective office in the municipal government shall be eligible for appointment to or service on the board.

Sec. 2-1177. Powers and duties.

The youth advisory board shall have the following powers and duties:

- (1) Oversee in a responsible manner all programs and events sponsored by the board.
- (2) Maintain a positive, effective relationship with the local media to market special events and inform the public about youth-related issues.

(3) Work with local agencies as requested and when deemed appropriate to deliver services to youth and to advise youth of service providers.

(4) Coordinate with the city's departments and boards and to advise the city's departments and boards concerning the planning and supervising of events sponsored by the youth advisory board.

(5) Advise and make appropriate recommendations to the city council and city departments.

Sec. 2. This ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and publication as provided by law.

**FORM APPROVED:**

Bruce E. Bergman, City Attorney

T.M. Franklin Cownie, Mayor

Attest: I, Diane Rauh, City Clerk of the City of Des Moines, Iowa, hereby certify that the above and foregoing is a true copy of an ordinance (Roll Call No. 05-1712), passed by the City Council of said City at a meeting held July 18, 2005 signed by the Mayor on July 18, 2005 and published as provided by law in the Business Record on August 1, 2005 Authorized by Publication Order No. 4824.

Diane Rauh, City Clerk

# Youth Council Application Forms

## Hampton Youth Commission (3 pages)



Youth Commission  
Application for Membership  
2006 - 2007

The Youth Commission is a City funded Commission composed of high school aged-youth from Hampton. The Youth Commission is an opportunity for youth to have a formal role in the city's planning and decision-making process.

**Youth Commission Members:**

- Represent Hampton youth on issues important to them.
- Identify ways to improve Hampton for its Youth.
- Appropriate funds for youth related activities.
- Act as an advisory board to City Council and other groups

**Membership Criteria**

Applicants must be willing to attend two or more meetings a month between the dates of July 2006 and June 2007. All applicants will be considered regardless of race, color, gender, national origin, or disability

**If interested, complete this application and submit it by May 4, 2006 to:**

**Hampton Coalition for Youth  
22 Lincoln St.  
Hampton, VA 23669  
Attn: Hampton Youth Commission  
Or call: 728-3285**

<b>Applicant Information:</b>	
Name	Social Security Number
Address	Phone Number
Date of Birth	Age
School	Current Grade 8 9 10 11 12
<b>Where did you get this Application?</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. School</li> <li>2. Alternatives</li> <li>3. Community Center</li> <li>4. Place of Worship</li> <li>5. Recreation Activity</li> <li>6. Other _____</li> </ol>	
<b>Applicant Experience:</b>	
Please list your most recent jobs and/or volunteer experience. Include organizations and club participation.	
Name of Organization	Title or Position
Period of Involvement	Hours Per Week
Name of Reference	Phone Number
Name of Organization	Title or Position
Period of Involvement	Hours Per Week
Name of Reference	Phone Number
Name of Organization	Title or Position
Period of Involvement	Hours Per Week
Name of Reference	Phone Number





### Adult Section

Adult Name:	
Other names used: (nicknames, etc.)	
Physical Home Address*:	
City, State, Zip:	
Mailing Address:	
Nine-Digit Zip**:	
Phone:	Email:
Gender:	
Ethnicity:	
Employer:	
Title/position:	
Business Phone:	
Other contact information:	

### Youth Member Legislative District Section

Senate District: #	Sen.:
Representative District: #	Rep.:
Congressional District: #	Congressman:
<p>* Using your physical home address, you can find your senate &amp; house district online!                  Go to <a href="http://www.legis.state.nm.us">www.legis.state.nm.us</a>                  Click on "find your legislator" and enter your zip code. You will need your 9 digit ZIP code.                  **To find your 9 nine digit zip code, go to <a href="http://zip.usps.com/zip4/welcome.jsp">http://zip.usps.com/zip4/welcome.jsp</a>.</p>	





### Reference Section

Please list at least two ADULT mentors, partners, teachers, and employers who have known you for at least a year or two. No relatives please.

Reference name	Phone number	Address

### Membership Application Certification Section

We both understand that if selected to participate in the New Mexico Youth Alliance, we fully understand the role that we must undertake. We also understand the responsibilities that we are accountable for and agree to follow as we complete the two year commitment.

We also both understand any misrepresentation or omission of any material fact on this application may result in the possible disqualification to join the New Mexico Youth Alliance.

Also any behavioral misconduct will garner the possible termination of our partnership within the New Mexico Youth Alliance. We have both read and understand what is expected.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Youth Member Signature/Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Adult Member Signature/Date

## Nashville Mayor's Youth Council (5 pages)

Metropolitan Nashville Davidson County

# City Youth Liaison and Mayor's Youth Council

## 2007–2008 APPLICATION

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Use the attached application to apply to be a City Youth Liaison and/or member of the Mayor's Youth Council. You may apply to both. **Please send in your completed application by April 20, 2007.**



### CITY YOUTH LIAISONS

**Background:** In April of 2003 at the annual Mayor's Youth Summit, Mayor Bill Purcell announced his plan for greater youth involvement in Nashville's government. Mayor Purcell amended an Executive Order giving the Mayor's Youth Council the responsibility to appoint liaisons to a number of different local boards and commissions and city departments. In March 2004, Mayor Purcell announced additional liaisons to work with the Planning Commission, Police Department, and Public Works Department.

City Youth Liaisons are appointed to the following boards and commissions or city departments.

Board of Health	Metropolitan Transit Authority
Board of Parks and Recreation	Homelessness Commission
Police Department	Public Library Board
Nashville Career Advancement Center	Social Services Commission

Metropolitan Nashville Arts Commission

\*See description of each board and commission on back page.

#### What does a youth liaison do?

Provides ongoing and direct input on government policies and practices that may affect teenagers  
 Contributes to the work of the board and commission or city department by creating youth-driven and specific projects.  
 Meets monthly with the department director or board and commission chairperson. Attends board and commission meetings.  
 Work with the boards and commissions to produce an annual report on activities and programs affecting youth, which will be presented at the annual Mayor's Youth Summit.

**Requirements:** Liaisons must be high school students. Liaisons meet once a month, typically on the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday from 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm at the Main Public Library. There are committee meetings & other activities requiring approximately 2 hrs. per week after school.



### MAYOR'S YOUTH COUNCIL

**Background:** On November 11, 1999, Mayor Bill Purcell appointed the first Mayor's Youth Council. The Mayor's Youth Council consists of 32 high school **juniors** and **seniors** from public and private schools. The Council holds monthly meetings and meets quarterly with the Mayor.

**Mission:** The mission of the Mayor's Youth Council is to (1) provide ongoing and direct input on government policies and practices that may affect teenagers, (2) recommend and foster initiatives for and by youth, (3) act as a communication link between the Metropolitan Government and the young people of Nashville, (4) promote and give recognition to the abilities, accomplishments, and contributions of young people in their communities, and (5) organize countywide forums, including an annual Mayor's Youth Summit.

#### What are some events and projects of the MYC?

City Youth Liaisons. Mayor's Youth Council members and selected youth from the community at large are appointed as liaisons to Metro boards and commissions and city departments.

Mayor's Youth Summit. In partnership with several youth organizations, the MYC plans and organizes the annual summit that brings together youth from across Nashville Davidson County. At the Summit, youth address key issues that impact their lives, strengthen their leadership and citizenship skills, and are empowered to make positive changes in their communities.

Citywide High School Talent Show. Mayor's Youth Council members host an annual citywide talent show which promotes the diverse talents of young people in a safe and drug-free environment.

**Requirements:** Members must be a rising high school Junior or Senior. Mayor's Youth Council meetings are held once a month. Most meetings occur on the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday from 5:00 pm – 6:30 pm at the Main Public Library. There are committee meetings & other activities requiring approximately 2 hrs. per week after school.

**Application Deadline is April 20, 2007**

Please **mail completed applications** to Mayor's Office of Children and Youth, Metropolitan Courthouse, Nashville, TN 37201 **Phone:** 862-6000

Your complete application should include:

1. Student Information
2. Parent/Guardian Permission
3. Short Answer
4. 2 Recommendation Form (mailed separately)

**Homelessness Commission.** The Homelessness Commission. A part of the Department of Social Services is responsible for implementing Nashville's strategic plan to end chronic homelessness.

**Metropolitan Government Board of Parks and Recreation**

The Board of Parks and Recreation is in charge of supervising, controlling, and operating the park and recreation system of the metropolitan government of Nashville and Davidson County. The Board formulates the policies to be followed in the administration of the park and recreation system, employs directors, supervisors, and other employees as it deems necessary; reviews, approves rejects, or amends budget requests; make recommendations to council; and establish fees and charges for programs and facilities.

**Metropolitan Government Public Library Board.** The library board has direct charge of the Nashville Public Library and shall have exclusive authority to make expenditures, accept gifts, bequests, and contributions. Appointed by the mayor, the seven-member board sets policy for the library. One of its most important goals is to insure outstanding customer service in all the libraries.

**Metropolitan Nashville Arts Commission.** The MNAC provides leadership that stimulates and advances the arts for the enrichment of the community through programs and projects. The grant program awards over \$2.4 million to approximately fifty local nonprofit arts organizations. The public art program is preparing to initiate its first public art projects. In addition, the MNAC provides arts information resources primarily through its website, such as an *Artist Registry* for visual artists and their work, and a local arts organization directory. The Commission also publishes an annual Arts in the Economy research study and sponsors forums and workshops on timely topics.

**Metropolitan Nashville Davidson County Police Department.** The mission of the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department is to provide community-based police products to the public so they can experience a safe and peaceful Nashville.

**Metropolitan Social Services Commission.** The Social Services Commission administers general assistance to residents, make social investigations and reports to council, engages in study and research regarding the cause of financial dependency, administers public and private grants for welfare and relief purposes, supervises welfare facilities, enters into agreements with public welfare agencies of other local governments, the state, and the national government, etc.

**Metropolitan Transit Authority.** The Metropolitan Transit Authority Board governs the Metropolitan Transit Authority. The Board consists of a five-member panel, which is appointed by the Mayor. A management team, headed by a chief executive director, oversees the day-to-day operations. The Metropolitan Transit Authority provides public transportation services (local and express routes) to citizens and visitors within the Metropolitan Nashville area. The agency also has contracts with the Regional Transportation Authority to run bus service to Murfreesboro, Lebanon, and Hendersonville. Another key service that the MTA provides is the AccessRide door-to-door transportation services for people with disabilities and those who are unable to ride the local and express buses.

**Nashville Career Advancement Center.** The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 created a national system of One-stop Career Centers and the Workforce Investment Board has oversight responsibilities of Career Center activities. The goal of the One-stop is to create a seamless system of employment related services. NCAC visualizes a skilled workforce in a community that promotes self-sufficiency, economic opportunity and lifelong learning, and supports business and economic growth.

**Metropolitan Public Health Department.** MPHD is the agency of local government responsible for protecting and promoting the health of the residents of the county and the thousands of others who work, shop, and play in our city everyday. The department's 555 employees are committed to providing high quality services through more than 40 programs with an annual budget of \$43 million.



Metropolitan Nashville Davidson County  
**CITY YOUTH LIAISON and MAYOR'S YOUTH COUNCIL**  
2007 - 2008 Application

Please check the leadership opportunity you are applying for. You may apply to both.

**City Youth Liaison**

**Mayor's Youth Council**

If you are applying to be a City Youth Liaison, please list the board, commission or department where you would like to serve.

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_

Please type or write neatly. Write in ink.

**I. STUDENT INFORMATION**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_ Grade Level (07-08) \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Gender \_\_\_\_\_ Race \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have transportation to and from meetings?    Yes            No

**Please Note:** Monthly meetings are mandatory for participation. There are also committee meetings and other events requiring approximately 2 hours per week after school. An appointment to the Mayor's Youth Council/ City Youth Liaisons is a one year commitment.

I have read and understand the time commitment required. I also know the importance of teamwork and cooperation. I am able to make such a commitment.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**II. PARENT/ GUARDIAN PERMISSION**

Name(s) of Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

*I hereby give my child permission to apply for selection to the Mayor's Youth Council.*

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### III. SHORT ANSWERS

We want to know more about you. Please thoroughly answer the following questions.

1. Are you willing to COMMIT to the MYC or CYL monthly meetings and activities.?
2. What activities or commitments will you have, especially during after school hours, during 2007-2008? (including employment, volunteer activities, clubs, etc.)
3. What personal skills and characteristics do you possess that would make you a good representative for the Mayor's Youth Council?
4. What work do you hope to accomplish by serving as a Mayor's Youth Council member or City Youth Liaison?

### IV. RECOMMENDATION FORM

You must submit a recommendation form. The recommendation must come from someone who is familiar with your background and who has served as an advisor/leader of a school and/or community related organization or club that you have been a part of while in high school. Use the attached recommendation form. **The form must be submitted directly to the Mayor's Office by the person making the recommendation.**



Name of applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

**IV. Recommendation Form**

The Mayor's Youth Council consists of 32 high school juniors and seniors from public and private schools in Nashville Davidson County. The Council holds monthly meetings and meets quarterly with the Mayor. Mayor's Youth Council members serve as a communication link to the Metropolitan Government and Nashville youth. The Council organizes events such as the Mayor's Youth Summit and a citywide talent show. Members also serve as liaisons to local board and commissions. Mayor's Youth Council members are required to attend monthly meetings, as well as committee meetings and events throughout the month. Members take an active role in planning and organizing events.

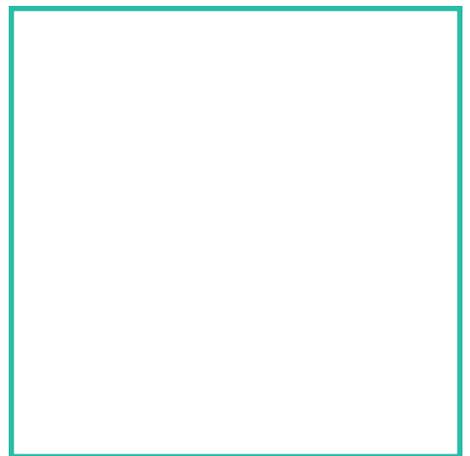
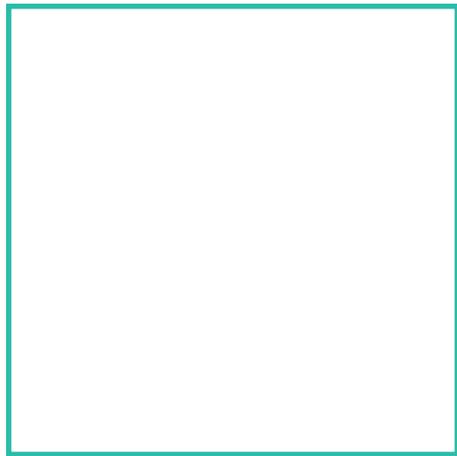
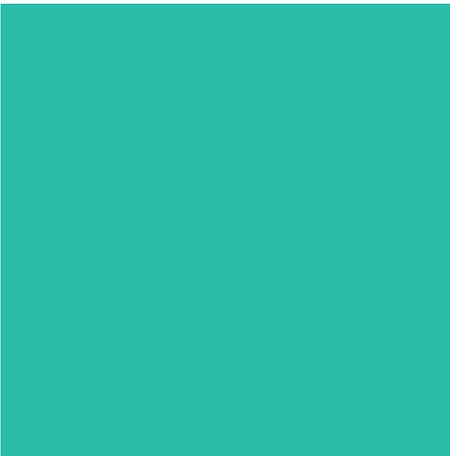
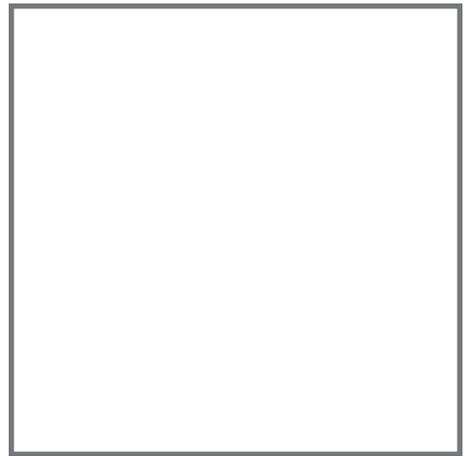
**Name of Reference:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Organization/Affiliation:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

1. In what capacity and how long have you known the applicant? \_\_\_\_\_ 2.  
What would you consider to be the applicant's strengths? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What would you consider to be the applicant's weaknesses? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How reliable is the applicant? \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Give an  
example of how this candidate takes initiative:  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Discuss the applicant's ability to effectively communicate with others (peers, adults)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this recommendation form. **REFERENCES MUST BE RECEIVED BY APRIL 20, 2007.** Please mail to Mayor's Office of Children and Youth, Metropolitan Courthouse, Nashville, TN 37201



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The Forum for Youth Investment  
 The Cady-Lee House  
 7064 Eastern Avenue, NW  
 Washington, DC 20012-2031  
 Phone: 202.207.3333  
 Fax: 202.207.3329  
 Web: [www.forumfyi.org](http://www.forumfyi.org)  
 Email: [youth@forumfyi.org](mailto:youth@forumfyi.org)

