



Lead. Impact. Advocate. Engage.

New York State Governor's Youth Council Application Guidance Document

Purpose

The New York State Governor's Youth Council (Youth Council) provides an effective way to engage youth in state government and creates a platform for their voices to be heard by policymakers. This is an incredible opportunity for New York's youth to represent their county on a statewide level! Members of the NYS Governor's Youth Council will offer their solutions to key issues facing young people in NYS to the Governor and other policymakers, including how to have better outreach and communication strategies to young people. Youth voice is recognized through this initiative; if you would like your voice heard apply today!

Online Application at:

<https://nysylc.secure-platform.com/a/solicitations/10/home>

Please Note: Youth must be a New York State resident to apply. You will need to first create a user profile with first name, last name, and email before starting the application.

The NYS Youth Council creates opportunities for youth to participate in regional and state level activities to better inform State government on issues and challenges. Below is a sampling of topics:

1. Influence of Positive Role Models & Mentors
2. Mental Health Challenges on Youth
3. Substance Use and Prevention
4. Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
5. Gender-based Violence Prevention & Response
6. Creating Positive Interactions between Youth & Law Enforcement
7. Youth Programming in a Virtual World
8. Youth Voice & Engagement: Creating Opportunities
9. Addressing Identity and Community Needs

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About the NYS Governor's Youth Council

Composition of Council

The Youth Council will be made up of 62 young people ages 13-21, one representing each county to be selected.

Main Objectives of Council

The Youth Council is youth-run and adult supported. Its members will work to identify and prioritize issues that matter to New York State youth.

Give Formal Voice to Youth

The Youth Council provides representation for New York's youth and creates a forum for advocacy. It facilitates ongoing, 2-way communication with policymakers. The Youth Council will assist State and local governments to promote positive youth development throughout initiatives. Youth Council members are expected to develop ways to get regular input from other youth about their ideas and concerns.

Civic Engagement and Education

Youth Council members get first-hand experience with how the democratic process works by becoming involved in government in a practical, hands-on way.

Community Contribution

In addition to representing the needs and interests of youth to policymakers, the Youth Council will assist State and local governments to promote positive youth development throughout initiatives.

Youth Council Member Commitments

Youth must understand the great opportunity offered upon selection and commit to the following if appointed to the NYS Governor's Youth Council:

- Participate in virtual statewide youth led networking and training events about government, civic engagement and positive youth development.
- Attend regional meetings via online platforms.
- Work on selecting policy issues to inform local, regional and/or state changes.
- Seek out, listen to and respect others' opinions and experiences.
- Maintain your membership until March 31, 2027.

Participation Requirements

The NYS Governor's Youth Council members will be required to participate in virtual regional meetings, usually twice monthly, as well as statewide virtual training and youth-led/facilitated shared learning exchanges.

Youth Council Example Topics

The NYS Governor's Youth Council creates opportunities for youth to participate in regional and state level activities to better inform State government on issues and challenges in the following example topic areas:

Influence of Positive Role Models & Mentors

Role models can play an important role in a youth's life as research has stated that it can help shape behavior, especially if the youth know the mentor on a personal level. What elements are most important to developing a successful mentoring program?

Mental Health Challenges on Youth

Mental health and the challenges that come with it are being discussed now more than ever. What can we do to reach youth that are facing mental health challenges and how can we best meet their needs?

Substance Use and Prevention

How can we keep youth informed on the dangers of substance use and what are the best methods for prevention?

Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Justice, equity, diversity and inclusion continues to be embraced to celebrate all youth. How can we better address these issues from a youth's perspective?

Gender-based Violence Prevention & Response

We have seen too many situations where race has played a role but what about perceived gender? How can we work to establish a neutral response to violent situations?

Creating Positive Interactions between Youth & Law Enforcement

Unjust tragedies have widened the gap between law enforcement and the community they serve. How can we narrow this gap to build better relationships for the future?

Social Media Impact on Youth

Many studies have demonstrated that overuse of social media for children and youth result in mental health concerns, bullying, and can negatively impact overall well-being. What is needed for youth to use social media responsibly and limit some of the negative effects.

Youth Voice & Engagement: Creating Opportunities

How could youth make their voices heard in their community? What opportunities are needed in your community?

Addressing Identity and Community Needs

What needs to change in communities for youth to feel safer? How can youth play a role in that?

Selection Process

County Selection Process

Youth between the ages of 13–21 can apply to the NYS Governor’s Youth Council. The State and County will work to have a balanced representation on the Youth Council based on age, gender, ethnicity and other factors that make up the diversity of New York’s youth. The application will be submitted to a county selection committee comprised of individuals that represent, support or provide youth services. Each county will look to advance the top three candidates to the State selection committee for review.

State Selection Process

The original application will be submitted to the State’s selection committee. Applications cannot be changed after the original submission. Judges at the state level will use the scoring framework contained herein. The State selection committee will appoint ONE youth per county to the NYS Governor’s Youth Council.

Please Note: Youth advancing to the statewide selection process may have their public social media viewed for appropriateness, including but not limited to public settings of Facebook, Instagram, X, blogs, message boards, chat rooms, social networking sites and others.

State and Regional Participation Requirements

The NYS Governor’s Youth Council members will be required to participate in virtual regional and statewide meetings, trainings and youth lead shared learning experience.

- Candidates selected at the state level will participate in regional teams. Youth will be expected to attend virtual meetings with the regional representatives. One or more county youth bureau directors will provide coordination and adult partnership.
- Each regional team will work on policy topics determined by New York State.
- If the regional team feels strongly about an additional topic not listed above it may submit an additional topic to address.
- Youth will make recommendations to the State on how to effectively address concerns regarding the topic area.
- Recommendations will include at a minimum a definition of the problem, proposed changes to law, regulation and/or policy and suggested programmatic ideas to address the problem, and if the proposal is local, regional or statewide.

Eligibility Requirements

Age

Youth between the ages of 13-21 can apply to the NYS Governor's Youth Council. The State and County will work to have a balanced representation on the Council based on age, gender, ethnicity and other factors that make up the diversity of New York's youth.

Candidates must be at least 13 and no older than 21 during the one-year term which runs from April 1, 2026 through March 30, 2027.

Identification

Youth must be a New York State resident to apply. Youth must reside in the county that they are applying to represent.

If you move to the State Selection Process, an acceptable form of identification must be presented to the youth bureau director. Forms of identification may include: state-issued driver's license or learner's permit, State or New York City non-driver ID card, school ID, birth certificate, U.S. passport, Social Security Card, certificate of citizenship and naturalization, employment authorization number or Native American identification card. **(U.S. citizenship is not required.)**

Cultural Diversity and Inclusion

In order to ensure diverse perspectives, special consideration for membership will be given to members of historically underserved, disadvantaged and marginalized populations. These populations include but are not limited to; people of color, members of the LGBTQ+ community, rural New Yorkers, immigrants, people with disabilities (including physical), and people who have limited English proficiency.

Application Process

County youth bureau staff will be assigned to assist the candidate with completion of this step.

Application

Application submissions will only be accepted online at <https://nysylc.secure-platform.com/a/solicitations/10/home>.

Online application submissions may not be altered once submitted. This is a one-time submission, the portions of your application completed online will be available to download after submission and will be used during both the County and State selection process. Please print or save your application for your records.

Who Completes the Application?

Eligible youth should complete the application online.

How/When are Applications Submitted?

All applications must be submitted through the NYS Governor's Youth Council online application portal linked above. Only complete applications will be processed and forwarded to the judges for consideration.

What Happens After Submission?

All completed and approved applications will be forwarded to the judges for consideration. All applicants will be notified if they were or were not selected. Selected candidates will be submitted to the statewide selection committee for review and only one (1) youth per county will be appointed to the NYS Governor's Youth Council.

Photo

A photo head shot in high resolution format (PDF, JPG, PNG) must be submitted with the application online.

Scoring Framework

The two (2) weighted categories below will inform the judging process on the county and state levels. Additional instructions for creating the best possible application are found throughout this guidance document. Please reference the individual forms and sections for guidance.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	WEIGHT
Candidate Essay	Candidates must write a short essay response (no more than 500 words) supporting two questions (see page 10 for more detail). The essay will be judged for content, clarity and overall quality.	50%
Overall Application Quality	Judges will use the following criteria to assess each application: clarity, passion and completion of each section. Candidate's character will be evaluated through demonstrated qualities such as leadership skills, academic achievement, civic engagement, service to the community, work ethic, roles on youth/county/school advisory board, etc. Each area in this section will be weighted the same. For example, a youth who may not have "excellent academic achievement" but may excel in civic engagement/leadership skills will be given equal consideration in scoring.	50%

Application Checklist

All applications must include each item noted below. Check off each item on this page to ensure that the application is complete. **PLEASE NOTE:** Once applications are submitted, they cannot be altered!

Online Application at: <https://nysylc.secure-platform.com/a/solicitations/10/home>

You will need to first create a user profile with first name, last name, and email before starting the application.

<i>Check here once all forms are complete and ready for inputting into the portal.</i>	FORMS All forms should be completed, signed and submitted through the online application. ☐ A: Applicant Nomination Page ☐ B: Candidate Qualifications ☐ Forms for Emergency Care Release, General Waiver Form & Authorization Form
	ESSAY Essay instructions are included on page 10 of this document. The essay should be composed and typed by the candidate on the NYS Governor's Youth Council online application.
	ONE RECOMMENDATION LETTER The letter of recommendation should: • highlight the youth's experience or passion in civic engagement and social responsibility; • support the youth's general character, leadership skills, academic achievement, civic engagement and service to the community. The letter should be submitted as a PDF attachment through the portal.
	CANDIDATE PHOTO A high-resolution PDF, JPG or PNG headshot of the candidate must be submitted as an attachment to the portal.

A. Application Nomination Page

Applicants must enter the following information when applying in the online application portal by typing directly in the space provided. Answers are limited to 125 characters.

1. **Applicant Information:** name; date of birth; street address including city, state & zip; phone number; email address; social media handles (Facebook, X, Instagram & others); race/ethnicity; gender/gender identity and pronouns
2. **Education Information:** education experience including current status and degrees (if applicable)
3. **Employment Status:** current employment status
4. **Experience with Other Boards:** other youth boards or leadership positions held by the candidate.

B. Candidate Qualifications

Applicants must answer the following questions when applying in the online application portal by typing directly in the space provided. Answers are limited to 125 characters.

1. Provide up to two examples that supports your leadership capabilities including but not limited to advanced courses taken, extracurricular activities (sports, STEM, community theater, youth agency/county advisory boards, etc.) recognitions, etc.
2. Provide up to two examples of your service, including community service projects, volunteerism and activism as related to the topic areas.
3. Provide up to two examples of how you support your health and well-being, and/or practice self-care (for example, riding a bicycle, meditation, abstaining from substances, etc.).

Essay Structure

Please respond to the following questions with as much thought and clarity as possible.

The essay must be typed directly into the space provided in the online application portal. Each essay has a character limit of 500 words (roughly the equivalent of two paragraphs). Essays will be judged on content, clarity and overall quality.

- What does the youth voice mean to you?
- What will you offer by becoming a member of the NYS Governor's Youth Council?

Letter of Recommendation

Applicants should upload one (1) letter of recommendation on official letterhead and in PDF format to the online application portal.

The letter should support the candidate's suitability to participate on the NYS Governor's Youth Council by highlighting the youth's experience or passion in civic engagement and social responsibility and supporting the youth's general character including but not limited to, leadership skills, academic achievement, civic engagement, service to the community, etc.

Applicants should connect with their local Youth Bureau director should they have any difficulty in completing the application.