



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

USE YOUR VOICE

MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN
YOUR COMMUNITY



MINNESOTA YMCA YOUTH IN GOVERNMENT

Get engaged with the important issues that face the state, nation and world. Learn how government works in order to make change happen. Speak your truth and listen with respect while others share theirs.

Everyone is welcome here. We are better together.

ymcayouthvoice.org

Democracy Must Be Learned By Each Generation



"I feel like YIG has really recharged me. I feel motivated and ready to take action in my own community."

ABOUT YOUTH IN GOVERNMENT

Since 1946, students throughout Minnesota have gathered at Youth in Government to find their voices and to learn how to use them out in the wider world. 75 years later, being able to speak out and to make change is more important than ever. It isn't enough to **want** change – understanding how systems work strengthens the ability to transform our world to a better, more just place.

We will have special features in this year's virtual conference, including focused discussions on current issues, a wide variety of social events, engaging evening activities, time for small-group reflection and chances for recognition. This won't be like the average school day – it will be filled with engagement and interaction, in sessions led **by** youth, **for** youth.

YIG is an experience like no other – even in an era when COVID has changed the world so greatly. Students come together to be inspired, explore ideas, meet new friends from all over the region . . . and have fun the whole time.

WAYS TO PARTICIPATE AT YOUTH IN GOVERNMENT

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

Youth legislators identify state issues important to them, their families, their schools, or their communities and write legislation to improve Minnesota. Delegates present their bills in committee hearings online to the full legislature. Students work together to find solutions to some of Minnesota's biggest issues in a format that encourages respect and understanding.

Youth Legislature **Grades 9 & 10**

Youth Legislature **Grades 11 & 12**

NATIONAL ISSUES FORUM

Delegates prepare, present, and discuss important national issues with their peers in a forum that is focused on productive, respectful debate. Each student prepares a proposal on a topic relevant to current events.

National Issues Forum **Grades 10, 11, & 12**

LEADERSHIP CORPS

Students are introduced to each aspect of Youth in Government, have a chance to learn about the workings of state government, and participate in skill-building and leadership development activities. Students work in small groups, create bills, argue court cases, write media articles, and get exposure to all the program areas in order to kick off their Youth in Government careers.

Leadership Corps **Grade 8**

JUDICIAL BRANCH

Court members prepare for hearings and make arguments before Youth Judges or Justices. Each student has the opportunity to argue both sides of their assigned case and will have an opportunity to serve on the bench.

Appellate Program – Youth lawyers make legal claims on issues related to citizen rights and responsibilities and application of constitutional law.

Court of Appeals **Grades 9 & 10**

Supreme Court **Grades 11 & 12**

Trial Program – Students make legal arguments in civil or criminal cases – to determine guilt or innocence or establish legal facts and models the experiences of lawyers and judges in real-life court hearings.

Trial Court **Grades 9 & 10**

District Court **Grades 11 & 12**

PROGRAM LEADERSHIP ROLES

Youth leadership is the core of our programs. The program is conducted and led almost entirely by students. Participants have opportunities to serve as up-front leaders elected by their peers or as officials who are appointed to help carry out program functions.

Elected Officers – These leadership positions are determined at the end of the conference the preceding year. Students who are elected make a year-round commitment to Youth in Government and to the students they serve. Candidates stand for election for one of about 20 leadership roles for the following year's conference.

Appointed Officials – These students are in specialty roles selected by the Elected Officers to assist in leading the various program areas. Leading up to the conference, students attend various trainings where they prepare for and learn about their specific roles. Application for these roles concludes shortly after Youth in Government adjourns.



WHY SHOULD YOU GET INVOLVED NOW?

- **Build skills for the real world**
- **Have powerful conversations on important issues in respectful and mind-opening ways**
- **Meet new people and make friendships that will last a lifetime**
- **Get exposed to students from other parts of the state who have different viewpoints**
- **Learn things you can't learn from a test – critical thinking, professional skills, and leadership**
- **Strengthen resumes and college applications**

CONFERENCE LIFE

CONFERENCE DATES

Thursday, January 7 – Sunday, January 10, 2021

LOCATIONS

Online, via Zoom platform

EVENING ACTIVITIES

Youth in Government delegates work hard each day of the program – and they get to play each evening.

Examples of some of the free-time activities:

- Fun Virtual Activities
- Leadership Candidate Forums
- Delegate Talent Show
- Issue Discussions

“YIG makes me feel like I belong somewhere. It has given me self-confidence. It gives me something I can be truly passionate about. I have met my best friends through the program. It has taught me how to be a leader and a good follower.”

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Keeping students safe is our top priority. We gather YMCA staff, teachers, and volunteers to coach, support, and supervise students throughout our conferences.

- All volunteers undergo criminal background checks
- Each delegation conducts a group check-in meeting each night

CODE OF CONDUCT & DRESS CODE

YIG programs promote a trust-based Code of Conduct. We expect that all delegates will conduct themselves in a mature and respectful manner. The Code outlines expectations for conduct and possible consequences for not following those expectations.

During program hours, everyone is required to wear business attire. During evening activities and other personal time, students are allowed to dress more casually. The dress code has a wide range of what is considered “business” attire.

The full text of the Code of Conduct (including dress expectations) can be found on the website at ymcayouthvoice.org



FAQs

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who runs the program?

Student officers who are elected during the previous program year run Youth in Government. YMCA staff members, teachers, alumni, and volunteers are always present to guide from the side and help things run effectively. Students are involved in the leadership of YIG programs in meaningful and hands-on ways.

How does conference preparation happen?

Local delegation meetings are the place where students write preparation materials for their program area, listen to speakers and practice their presentation skills. In November, delegates from all over the state come together for online training called LAUNCH to get ready for the January conference.

What is included in the state program fees?

Virtual platform costs, training and program preparation leading up to the conference, including LAUNCH training in November.

What is included in the local delegation fees?

Local delegation expenses – these vary by group.

What is the role of adults?

Dedicated adult advisors help each local delegation organize, conduct trainings, raise funds, and prepare for Youth in Government.

How do the local delegations work?

A delegation is a group from a school, YMCA, or community group that is organized on the local level for participation in the program. Local delegations support and prepare youth for Youth in Government. Delegations can be of a variety of sizes and are led by youth and adults in partnership. All communication, financial arrangements, and preparation happen at the local delegation level.

What if I have more questions?

Contact your local Delegation Director to get your questions answered and to learn more about how to participate. For more information, check out the website at ymcayouthvoice.org

“I’ve become much more comfortable speaking up about my thoughts and opinions, especially when they differ from those around me. I have become much more self-sufficient and confident in my abilities.”

HOW TO REGISTER

- Register online at ymcayouthvoice.org
- Each delegation has a different local fee – see the local Delegation Director for specifics
- The completed registration process will secure your place at Youth in Government.

PAYMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS

- **Online Fee – Due at registration**
- **Cancellations may be made until November 30**, when all fees and rosters are final.
- Cancellations must be in writing and are submitted to the local Delegation Director.
- If a delegate has a significant discipline issue or violation of the Code of Conduct, we reserve the right to dismiss the delegate, without refund, for the remainder of the session.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

- The YMCA is committed to providing access to all who wish to participate in our programs. Need-based financial assistance is available giving those who are eligible between 10% and 40% off. We raise funds through the Annual Fund to help make that possible. Financial Assistance is granted on first-come, first-served basis. Apply via our website by **November 30**. Incomplete applications will not be considered.
- **Some requesting Financial Assistance may not be able to complete their registrations online. Please check with your Delegation Director for more information.**

ACCESSIBILITY

Students with disabilities requiring an accommodation or some special need program leaders should be aware of, please contact the local Delegation Director. The Delegation Director will work with the State Office related to the request. This information enables us to better meet the needs of students within available resources. For students requiring special accommodations, decisions are made on a case-by-case basis.





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IMPORTANT DATES 2020–2021

REGISTRATION OPENS WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 2, 2019

Priority Registration Deadline	November 2, 2020
LAUNCH Online Training Event	November 21, 2020
Registration Closes	November 30, 2020
Delegate Materials Deadline #1	December 4, 2020
Delegate Materials Deadline #2	December 16, 2020
Youth in Government Online Session	January 7–10, 2021

**** Each group has its own schedule of local prep meetings in addition to these dates. Please check with your local Delegation Director for more info on local delegation meeting calendars.**

GET INVOLVED

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Visit us online at ymcayouthvoice.org