

The State Youth Council of North Carolina

N.C. Department of Administration, Council for Women & Youth Involvement Office

Program Overview

The State Youth Council (SYC), a program of the NC Council for Women & Youth Involvement Office, is the statewide coordinating agency interested in the development of Youth Councils. It works to foster the development of responsible leadership among youth through involvement in community affairs and in decision-making processes at all levels of government and to provide a voice for the youth of North Carolina.

The SYC coordinates local Youth Councils across the state, assists newly-organized councils, and sponsors a number of activities, including three yearly youth leadership conferences and a Spring Convention: Service Learning, Mini-Grant, and Teambuilding Conference. The advisory body for SYC, the Youth Advisory Council (YAC), is made up of high school students and adults appointed by the governor, as well as youth members elected by SYC.

History & Legislation

For more than 40 years, the State Youth Council (SYC) has provided opportunities for youth to learn leadership skills through participation in local government matters as outlined in *GS 143B-387*.

The State Youth Council is authorized and empowered to do the following:

- ❖ To consider problems affecting youth and recommend solutions or approaches to these problems to State and local governments and their officials;
- ❖ To promote statewide activities for the benefit of youth; and,
- ❖ To elect the youth representatives to the Youth Advisory Council.

The State Youth Advisory Council (YAC) of the Department of Administration was created as the governing body of the State Youth Council and has the following functions and duties as outlined in *GS 143B-385*:

- ❖ To advise the youth councils of North Carolina;
- ❖ To encourage State and local councils to take active part in governmental and civic affairs, promote and participate in leadership and citizenship programs, and cooperate with other youth-oriented groups;
- ❖ To receive on behalf of the Department of Administration and to recommend expenditure of gifts and grant from public and private donors;
- ❖ To establish procedures for the election of its youth representatives by the State Youth Council; and
- ❖ To advise the Secretary of Administration upon any matter the Secretary may refer to it.

Facts and Figures

The State Youth Council coordinates local youth councils across the state by assisting newly organized councils, and sponsoring three yearly youth leadership conferences and a Spring Convention. Leadership conferences are planned and coordinated by Youth Council members with the assistance of an adult advisor. The following conferences are sponsored by SYC:

The Mini-Grant Program was initiated by the Youth Advisory Council in 1977. The mini-grants give youth an opportunity to develop program ideas, write grant proposals, screen grants submitted by youth groups, and implement defined program objectives. With an annual appropriation from the N.C. General Assembly, the Youth Advisory Council is able to award grants averaging from \$100 to \$500 for a wide range of youth-directed projects. Grant applications are received in the fall of each year.

Leadership and Service programs' primary foci were to provide opportunities that would enable young people to successfully complete their developmental tasks. Providing seminars on public speaking, leadership skills and participation in a joint service project (e.g. Habitat for Humanity, clean-up litter campaign) would educate youth on the importance of making contributions to their communities.

Teambuilding Programs youth essential skills: cooperation, communication and teamwork. These concepts are usually taught through Adventure Learning Programs such as The Blue Ridge Assembly. Team-building programs show how groups function and how individuals contribute to group success. The dynamics of group process are modeled through challenge course activities to create educational, motivating experiences with real impact.

The Spring Convention is a time for all SYC councils to assemble together to wrap up the various service they have done throughout the year. This is also a time to award the Most Diverse Council, Most Outstanding Council, Most Outstanding Member, Service Project of the Year, and present Seniors with awards.

Benefits

For more than 40 years, the State Youth Council (SYC) has provided opportunities for youth to learn leadership skills through participation in local government matters. The following opportunities are available to members of SYC:

- ❖ Apply for a Mini-Grant and receive funding for projects
- ❖ Participate in the Legislative and Governor Page Programs
- ❖ Attend leadership conferences
- ❖ Host leadership conferences (receive financial assistance & bring publicity to your council)
- ❖ Serve on State Boards and Commissions (Juvenile Justice, Education, etc.)
- ❖ Serve on the Youth Advisory Council (appointed by the Governor)