

WHO WE ARE

For 72 years, Illinois YMCA Youth and Government has been part of one of the leading hands-on, civic engagement programs in the nation. Across the State of Illinois, we have 50 delegations, from Lincolnshire to Mt. Vernon – all focused on the premise of ‘Democracy Must Be Learned By Each Generation.’

EMPOWERING YOUTH

Teens participate through their local high school or YMCA delegation. They draft legislation, train in judicial processes, learn proper parliamentary procedure, and develop public speaking and networking skills.

Students attend two regional Pre-Legislative training sessions in late fall. The program culminates at a three-day state-wide Assembly, when all delegates from across the state come together to elect the Youth Officers, utilize the Capitol’s facilities, debate bills in Committees and on the floor of the Illinois House and Senate Chambers, argue cases in the Supreme Court Building, conduct interviews and write articles for the newspaper and produce newscasts.

Event Dates For 2021–2022

Pre-Legislative Sessions

- November 5th or 6th
(depending on location in the state)
- December 3rd or 4th
(depending on location in the state)
- February 23, 2022 (virtual)

73rd General Assembly

- March 18–20, 2022

DEMOCRACY IS NOT A SPECTATOR SPORT

Roles and Participation

Students participate in the following ways:

- Legislators (serve in the House or Senate)
- Lobbyists
- Legislative Assistants
- Attorneys and Clerk-Bailiffs
- Media (Newspaper or Video Press)

Advisors participate in the following way:

Each delegation of students needs an adult advisor to help with meetings, prepare the students for the Pre-Legislative trainings, attend the events and chaperone at Assembly. We have materials, mentors and staff to provide guidance during the year.

IMPACT

- Develops critical thinking skills.
- Provides awareness of and engagement in social issues and their possible solutions.
- Provides opportunities to hear and respect varying viewpoints from their peers.
- Develops self-confidence and self-expression.
- Encourages interest and active participation in both political and public affairs.

JOIN US

Contact our State Office:

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ILLINOIS YMCA YOUTH AND GOVERNMENT MISSION STATEMENT

To provide the youth of Illinois with an immersive educational experience to inspire and promote life-long leadership, ethics, responsible citizenship and self-confidence through participation in a unique model state government program.