

RECRUITMENT

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RECRUITMENT

If you are new to Youth & Government and are attempting to recruit new students, you may feel at a serious disadvantage. How can you ask people to participate in something you have never attended? There are actually a number of resources available to you:

- ◆ Attend the Youth & Government Advisor Training in August or September. There are usually several dates to choose from, and you will have plenty of resources at your fingertips.
- ◆ Read the YG manual! You'll be much better able to explain the program.
- ◆ Use your returning delegates to both help you understand the program and make recruiting visits with you. If you are a new club, there are delegates from other clubs that will be willing to help.
- ◆ Call other Youth & Government programs around the state. The District Directors can help you develop a good recruitment strategy.
- ◆ Call the State Office.

The earlier you begin recruiting the better! There is a lot to be done in the program, and the quicker you are able to get started, the more time you'll have with your delegates.

PRE-PLANNING TIPS

- ◆ Secure YMCA or school administrative approval/support
- ◆ Read, read, read the manual.
- ◆ Identify key leadership for the delegation through YMCA, school, community groups and volunteers.
- ◆ Identify local funding resources (community organizations, businesses, individuals).
- ◆ Secure program resources.
- ◆ Contact established delegation advisors, YMCA staff, teachers, former participants and parents. (The State Office has contact information available).
- ◆ Establish a "sister delegation" relationship with another local group. (The State Office has contact information available).

HELPFUL HINTS IN GETTING STARTED

1. Look to the YMCA Board or Committee members who might have connections with schools or local school boards. History has shown that strong support within the schools can be a crucial ingredient to a successful delegation. Tap your YMCA staff for any contacts they may have through other programs.
2. Two approaches to consider:
 - A. Meet with a teacher to discuss program ideas and let that person tell you the best way to establish Youth & Government at his/her school.
 - B. Meet with the school principal or counselor and let him/her direct you to the appropriate staff person.
3. When talking to teachers, a logical place to start is in the Social Studies department. Let the chair of the department suggest teachers who might be interested. Meet with the whole department if possible so everyone knows what the program is about.
4. Social Studies isn't the only place to work in, though. Any faculty member who is interested can help! Don't forget to include other contacts with other departments as you recruit students—participants need not always come from Social Studies Departments or "gifted and talented" programs. Look at including students of all academic achievement ability levels and socio-economic backgrounds, races and interests.
5. Make short presentations to selected classes or meet with students after school to discuss Youth & Government. Leadership classes or Student Councils are often good places to start. Don't forget about the high school-age youth that are already coming to your YMCA and are involved in other programs.
6. If you have returning delegates, you will find that they are your best recruiters. If they had a good experience the year before, they will usually be willing to bring many of their friends into the program. Set up a meeting with them before you begin recruiting, organize their efforts and help ensure they recruit from all grades. Whenever possible, have youth make presentations to their peers - the "pitch" is more effective when it comes from a peer and students tend to be very excited about having an opportunity to "sell" the program.

7. In any discussion about Youth & Government, emphasize the fact that its activities are curriculum-related. The program is a learning tool for taking classroom discussions and turning them into first-hand experiences in the governmental process. Let people know that this is a unique experience that began in 1946 in Texas and has a long tradition of academic excellence.
8. It is wise to remember that Youth & Government is not for everybody! To get youth, adult, volunteer, administrative and local support from the school systems and YMCA (all at one time) is a tough task. Only those students and adults who really see the benefit of such a program will find the going smooth.
9. When talking with students, sell the program first and then you can answer questions of cost. It is much easier to talk money when they are excited about the concept.
10. Focus on positive, intentional recruitment. Invite potential adult advisors and students to be a part of something great. Talk about the benefits.

RECRUITING YG ADVISORS IN SCHOOLS

- 1) Must be in person—letters, emails, calls are useless on their own. Dress professionally. Be early.
- 2) Do your homework—know the Principal’s name, school rivalries, Social Studies Chairperson’s name, successful programs currently at school, etc.
- 3) Memorize **ALL** pertinent data of your program—history, dates, cost, opportunities, area schools or YMCAs that participate, etc.
- 4) “Bribe” school secretaries—many actually run the school!
- 5) Create **WORLD CLASS** materials—including DVD.
(bring a laptop)
- 6) Get face to face with a teacher(s)—administrators will rarely find you a volunteer, but they can introduce you to teachers and possibly student leaders in their school.
- 7) Practice your pitch—time yourself: 5, 10, 15, 30 minute presentations; learn through Role Playing—practice this just before school starts; sharpen often.
- 8) Find the “buzz” that educators/Y-Directors are looking for in that area: asset development, civic engagement, character education, service learning, etc.
- 9) Have FUN!!! Exude Passion—sincerity for the program. If you can’t do this like a Rock Star, find a Rock Star to do it.
(a square peg will never fit into a round hole)
- 10) Persistence, Persistence, Persistence—keep going back till you get `em. Tweak your strategy each time if needed.

ROLE PLAYS

PRINCIPALS

- 1) You are very, very supportive—you have a history with the YMCA and youth leadership programs in general
- 2) You are supportive of our efforts, but too busy to talk
- 3) You are super nice—love to talk—but seem clueless about what we are promoting
- 4) You were a former participant or Y-Club or KYA/KUNA
- 5) The school where you once taught had one of our programs
- 6) You are rude—stressed out—not really interested in what we’re promoting
- 7) You are supportive, but have every excuse in the book for not bringing in our programs
- 8) You see value in our programs but believe that there is already too many clubs, programs...for your students and teachers

TEACHERS

- 1) You are very supportive—really love what we’re all about and you wish to get involved
- 2) You like our programs and would love to assist us but you are already involved in so much at the school
- 3) The principal wanted you to meet with the Y-Staff, but you are a bit cynical about our programs and the value of them
- 4) You heard about our programs from a student or another teacher and want more info
- 5) You’re interested in our Student Y program because it could involve everyone, but you’re very leery about the cost of our conferences
- 6) You work at the Family/Youth Resource Center and you want to offer more for troubled kids at you school
- 7) Your middle school has a strong Gifted and Talented program, which you direct, but you’re looking for more ideas and more chances to network
- 8) You are already the sponsor of a service club but you were recommended as a contact