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## **YMCA Texas Youth and Government Program Receives \$10,000 Grant from Texas Bar Foundation**

*The Teen Civic Engagement Program Will Use Grant to Fund New  
Projects through 2018*

AUSTIN, JUNE 6, 2017 – Following its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of engaging teens in the Texas democratic process, the YMCA Texas Youth and Government (YG) program received a \$10,000 grant from the Texas Bar Foundation. The grant will help fund the implementation of the Texas Youth and Government Judicial Curriculum Project, which will provide teen participants with a more robust and preparatory understanding of the state’s judicial system.

“We are so grateful and honored to have been selected to receive this grant from the Texas Bar Foundation,” Angela Castilleja, Texas YG State Director, said. “We are excited to begin the Judicial Curriculum Project and more fully align our program with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills standards.”

Since 1946, Texas YG has provided opportunities for students across the state to study and debate public issues, through hands-on experience of Texas Government. The program focuses on four areas: the judicial branch, legislative branch, state affairs section and media, with the goal of increasing students’ political awareness and understanding. In 2016, the statewide program was offered in 113 Texas communities and served nearly 2,700 high and middle school students, which is the program’s largest number of participants to date.

“The Judicial section is our largest, with nearly 600 of the 1,100 high school students at our 2017 State Conference participating,” Castilleja said. “Students fill roles as judges, attorneys, witnesses and bailiffs in either trial or appellate courts. In addition to updating curriculum, our volunteer needs have grown in this area, so the grant will also help us focus on volunteer recruitment and training to support students before and during the conferences.”

In addition to providing a learning experience with more breadth and depth, the Judicial Curriculum Project will equip students with working knowledge and skills to prepare them for future careers in law, public policy, advocacy and media. The Judicial Curriculum Project will also offer Texas YG students access

to judicial resources through online training videos, materials and other civic engagement tools.

With the help of the generous grant from the Texas Bar Foundation, this year's Texas YG student delegates will be more equipped with tools to further their future careers in civic engagement and social responsibility than ever before.

"On behalf of the YMCA Texas Youth and Government board members, students, staff and volunteers, I want to thank Texas Bar Foundation for this grant that will have a statewide impact," Castilleja said.

To learn more about Texas YG and how to get involved, [please visit our website](#).

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#### ***About the Texas Bar Foundation***

Since its inception in 1965, the Texas Bar Foundation has awarded more than \$17 million in grants to law-related programs. Supported by members of the State Bar of Texas, the Texas Bar Foundation is the nation's largest charitably-funded bar foundation.

#### ***About YMCA Texas Youth and Government***

YMCA Texas Youth & Government (YG) is part of a nationwide, youth led, civic engagement and academic enrichment program for high school and middle school students. YMCA Texas Youth and Government program was organized in 1946. The program provides middle school and high school youth training in democracy and our three branches of government.

#### ***About the YMCA of Austin***

Founded in 1953, the YMCA of Austin is a nonprofit organization dedicated to building a healthy spirit, mind and body for all. The YMCA of Austin currently serves more than 65,000 active members and provides program services to an additional 60,000 people citywide. The YMCA puts Christian principles into practice through programs that promote good health, strong families, character values, youth leadership, community development and international understanding. To learn more about the YMCA of Austin, click [here](#).