



TEXAS YOUTH AND GOVERNMENT

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is Texas Youth and Government?

- **YMCA Youth and Government is** a statewide civic education and leadership development program in which middle and high school students ~~to~~ experience the excitement of our state government in action.
- Students meet regularly as a club during the fall semester. Each club consists of participating students and an adult sponsor (usually a teacher/parent/Staffer). Students choose to participate in one of four areas: legislative, judicial, media, or state affairs forum.
- Regional Conferences occur in November each year
- State Conferences are held in the spring (end of January and end of February or early March).
- A student must attend a regional Conference to qualify for the state conference.
- Even though there is competition involved on some levels, our mission focuses on each generation learning about democracy and fully participating in that process locally, statewide, and/or national.

How do I start a club?

- Texas Youth and Government is a Statewide YMCA program for teens in Middle school and high school. Every new school/team must first connect with their local YMCA to join the regional program.

Who is my local contact?

- Texas is a large state, so as a program we are divided into [8 Districts](#). These District have regional YMCA leaders whom you can contact to learn more about how to start a club or join an existing club. It is important to note that the YMCA can only offer support to areas that have a YMCA or currently active club. If you elect to start a club in your area, we encourage you to first recruit a club sponsors(advisors/teacher/parent) that can help, be the guide for your group.
- How will my sponsor get everything they need? Texas Youth and Government provides annual onboarding support to new club sponsors. We also offer a number of online resources to learn more about each section and virtual opportunities to connect with program leaders to get your questions answered. Check out our website to see more – <https://ymcatexasyg.org/> .

Where can I find information on each of the participation areas?

- At the top of our website, you will find “sections” this is what we call our participation areas.
- Middle School students are able to participate in Media, State Affairs, Legislative and Candidates.
- High school students are able to participate in Media, State Affairs, Legislative, Trial Court, Appeals Court and Candidates.

What do these sections mean?

- **Legislative**
 - In Legislative, students create bills focused on state issues topics that important to them. Bills are debated, considered in committee, and moved to house or senate for consideration. Share your passion with other students from your school, city and across the state! Our student legislature considers bills from across the aisle and across all topics. In the Legislature students are given the opportunity to be involved in healthy debate with peers across all subsections of politics.



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- **Media**

- Everything media you can image, newspaper, broadcast, podcast, blogs and online social media! YG is about teens and covered by teens! Bring your talents and your skills to ensure in-depth coverage of our conferences and events! You could be the star of our news or the head of our newspaper! Are you a format guru, be our print editor? Can only you see the world perfectly through a lens? Helps us see how you see YG and become our head photographer!
- News can make or break politicians! Stretch your influence muscles and show our youth leaders that even in YG somebody is always watching and always listening!

- **State Affairs**

- In our State Affairs section students create proposals assessing topics in these areas! Proposals are debated, considered in committee and moved to full contingency consideration. Share your passion with other students from your school, city and across the state! Our State Affairs section considers proposals from across the aisle and across all topics. In the State Affairs section students are given the opportunity to really develop healthy debate with peers across all subsections of politics. Take this challenge on alone or tag team the debate with a friend or two! Get your graph and visual ready because in State Affairs we challenge you to really think through your stance and defend it!

- **Trial Court**

- Each year students evaluate, present and defend high press cases from across the nation. Double murders, homicides and so much more! This section allows you to team up with a group of friends, to dominate as a duo or to own the gavel SOLO! Students can participate as Judges presiding over the court room and ultimate decision maker on who has the best case!
- Teams can bring together drama addicts and debaters to make your team the one to beat! 2 attorneys lead the team through the trial, while the witness and bailiffs help carry the case and are the difference between not guilty and guilty!

- **Appeals Court**

- Are you the dynamite duo? Our Appellate section is the place for you! Show off your writing skills and ability to defend your stance and you and your teammate could reverse the decision on this case! The Judicial section will give you the knowledge of legal procedure, ability to communicate, questioning skills, reasoning ability, and knowledge of law, organization, critical thinking, preparation and teamwork.

- **Candidates**

- Students can run for office such as: Governor, Attorney General, Chief Justice, County Court Judge, Print Editor, Executive Broadcast Producer, State Affairs Forum Chair, Speaker of the- House, Hyde House, & JuniorYG House along with Senate President Pro-Tem.

Once I join the program, what's the next step?

- When a teacher/parent joins the Youth and Government (YG) program; they will be given a regional YMCA leader as a point of contact for the program.
- Program materials are renewed annually and posted on the <https://ymcatexasyg.org/> website.
- Adult club leaders will be asked to participate in a virtual "onboarding" to help welcome you to the program and share information for the new year.
- Not all students will want to be a part of the State Conference, but all students will learn about how important it is to be involved in their community by speaking up and offering solutions.



How do I enroll my students in the Program?

- Once a new club is established, students must [register](#) with the program. Similar to other National programs Texas Youth and Government has an annual program fee for participants.
- Now that you are registered, we encourage you to visit our "section" tab, here you can look through our program participation areas to decide what "section" your students want to participate in.
- Clubs will utilize the fall semester to prepare for the regional conferences. Regional Conference fees will be determined by our regional District Director.

Can my club participate in more than one section?

- Yes, clubs are welcome to have students participate in various sections. However, as a best practice we encourage you to select one section your first year. Every program has a learning curve when you first start, selecting one participation area will help you learn the process for our program and one section your first year. After that clubs are encouraged to branch out! A student can participate in only one section per school year.

I'm interested in Judicial how does it work in your program?

- Each academic year the Texas Youth and Government program releases a new Trial Case and Appellate Case. Target date for release is Sept 2nd.
- Trial Court area of participation are either Student Judge (second year of participation) or Mock Trial Team (5 min -8 max)
- Each mock trial team must prepare for both sides of the case; student attorney must rotate speaking roles. Attorneys can be different for Prosecution vs. defense. Teams must have a bailiff see trial court rules for details.

What is the competition track for teams?

- From the release of the case material to the regional competitions. Teams have 9 weeks to review case material and practice.
- Separate registration is required for regional conferences if a team elects to attend. (See regional director for fees).
- Regional competitions are required for anyone wishing to attend state competition. Regionals are held statewide based on location on Nov. 5th or Nov. 12th. Teams must attend their local conference.
- Based on scores at the regional conference's teams are elevated for the State Competitions, where all the top tier teams compete statewide.
- State competition has two trial court tiers. Top tier (District Court) – top 42 teams statewide; 2nd tier (county Court) – next 38 teams statewide.
- State Competition is held in March for high school team in the capital city, Austin. Hotel accommodations and competition fees are collected per individual participant. Competition location include Texas Capital, Travis County Court house, Federal Court House and hotel meeting rooms.

How are students selected for Nationals?

- Nationals is based on scores from the State competition. The top 4 trial court team and 4 appellate teams are elevated to attend Summer Nationals competitions.