

YMCA YOUTH AND GOVERNMENT

In the Pennsylvania YMCA Youth and Government Program, Clubs are organized in local YMCAs or high schools, each with a caring adult role model for an advisor. Clubs meet from September thru May as students identify social issues and problems and select those they wish to resolve by writing legislative bills. Bill Writing is the central focus of the club program framed by a process of research and debate. It also makes it necessary for students to examine many of their values, beliefs and attitudes while confronting the practical demands of freedom.



A STUDENT LED CLUB

Officers and Administration have responsibility for planning, implementation, & leadership of their clubs and the conferences...

Student Legislators author bills, debate and vote on bills, speak their minds on current events, run for office, and vote for officers.

Supreme Court Justices hear oral arguments from teams of **Attorneys**

Lobbyists are trained in the process of influencing legislation

Press Corps keep a careful eye the proceedings by publishing web logs and daily newspapers.

YOUTH AND GOVERNMENT CLUBS

- **Small Groups** of about 25 students in grades 9 through 12 (an online Youth e-Government program is available for middle schools)
- **Teens assume responsibility** for planning their own activities under the supervision of caring adult role models
- Ongoing **regular meetings** from Sept to May
- The club activities are to prepare the students to for the **Model Government Convention**
- All activities address at least one of the four goals of YMCA teen leadership programs: **leadership training, personal growth, service to others, and social development**

ELECTION CONVENTIONS

Election Conventions are conducted annually in Western and Eastern Pennsylvania. Held on a Saturday in November, it is here that club members elect the statewide officers to serve in leadership roles during the Model Government Convention at the State Capitol.

The Youth Governor is elected by popular vote at the Model Government Convention to serve the following year. While serving as the Governor-elect, this student is at work appointing the members of the Governor's administration.



The election conventions are infused with the excitement and intense political negotiations characteristic of the election process. Candidates are highly motivated to seek office, fully recognizing the leadership experience available and the responsibilities of their offices.

MOCK SESSIONS

Mock Sessions are also conducted annually in Eastern and Western Pennsylvania, usually on a Saturday in late January or early February. All club members who plan to participate in the Model Government Convention attend one of these sessions.

Mock Sessions are training sessions where officers and committee chairpersons practice parliamentary skills and learn various procedures. Clubs submit drafts of their bills for limited committee action and general debate, and through the sessions they learn where refinements are needed. The newspaper staff is organized, lobbyists are coached and the cabinet begins organizational plans while reviewing the governor's platform. Speakers address the groups, and information about the Model Legislature and Administration Convention and the National Affairs Conference is shared.

MODEL GOVERNMENT CONVENTION



The annual Model Government Convention held for three days in April is the climax of the YMCA Youth and Government Program. The State Capitol in Harrisburg is the setting for this exciting program that mirrors the function of state government. Student delegates use the Senate, House, and Supreme Court chambers, committee, caucus and hearing rooms. This is a great privilege that creates an aura of realism in the program. (over)

By its nature, the convention is a significant learning and growth experience, but it may also be viewed as the test of all that has gone before. The study of the function of state government, the identification and selection of social problems to be resolved through legislation, the research into these problems, the debates about their resolution, the leadership skills learned and finally, the bills written within each club all converge here.

INTERACTIVE WEB SITE



www.ymcapa.org

- Register to Vote
- Write your Legislators
- Research Your Bill Topic
- Write & Submit your Bill Online
- Read Proposed Model Legislation
- Club Registration, Roster Management
- Links to Government Web Sites
- Civics Education Links

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"Democracy must be learned by each generation"
YOUTH & GOVERNMENT
STATE YMCA OF PENNSYLVANIA