

# GAME CHANGERS

## Establishing a Youth Advisory Council




generationOn

A POINTS OF LIGHT ENTERPRISE



Founding Partner



**Welcome** to the **generationOn Game Changers: Establishing a Youth Advisory Council toolkit**. We're excited that you are interested in developing a youth council. This guide will walk you through some key concepts, planning tools and resources to help you get started.

## About generationOn

GenerationOn is the global youth service movement igniting the power of all kids to make their mark on the world. Our mission is to inspire, equip, and mobilize youth to take action that changes the world and themselves through service.

As the youth enterprise of Points of Light, generationOn has brought the nation's leading youth service organizations and programs under one umbrella including New York-based Children for Children, The League, Learning to Give, Points of Light's Kids Care Clubs, HandsOn Schools, and HandsOn Network's youth-driven programs. By partnering with teachers, parents, schools, community organizations and businesses, generationOn gives kids the opportunity to see firsthand the issues in their communities and the tools and resources they need to respond and become part of the solution.





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- ▶ Clay Hurdle, generationOn YAC
- ▶ Rachel Ley, generationOn YAC
- ▶ Liu Zhen Huang, generationOn YAC

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# Introduction

*This toolkit is designed to support organizations seeking to infuse youth leadership into their work. In the following pages you will find tips and tools to strengthen an existing council or build one from the ground up. It is our goal that you will create engaging opportunities for youth to have a voice in your work while supporting young people who want to make their mark on the world.*

*The materials compiled here are divided into several sections that will help you explore how to plan, create, and maintain a youth advisory council. Taking you from the initial idea through the selection of your first council and beyond. This comprehensive resource will help your organization determine how youth voice and youth leadership can generate authenticity and strengthen your mission and goals.*

# About the generationOn Youth Advisory Council

*The **generationOn National Youth Advisory Council (YAC)** is a service-learning and leadership development program comprised of 12-15 outstanding youth from across the country. These young people are selected to contribute to and inform generationOn programming, while acting as ambassadors and leaders for youth service in their communities.*

*The generationOn National Youth Advisory Council first launched in March, 2011 in Washington, D.C.. Members meet biweekly to plan service projects, review generationOn programming and engage in thought-leadership for special events. They coordinate workshops and present at national and international conferences and events, serve as reviewers of grant and recognition program proposals, and represent the organization on webinars, at trainings and through blogs and other online content.*

# Introduction

## UNIT 1

*In Unit 1, you will learn some suggested definitions and purposes of a youth advisory council, and begin to think about creating your own council. By the end of this unit, you should have a better understanding of how youth leadership can benefit your organization and how a youth advisory council can support your mission and further your work.*



# What is a Youth Advisory Council?

**In short,** a youth advisory council can be considered a body of young people who provide counsel and support to organizations and governing bodies and create and participate in a variety of projects and community initiatives.

One member of the generationOn YAC described the Youth Advisory Council as: “A group of talented, diverse youth brought together to form a board... The charge of a YAC should be to advise its parent organization on youth related topics and issues” (Clay Hurdle, 18). Another noted, “A YAC is a group of youth who are committed to being ambassadors for an organization. These ambassadors engage their community, show leadership, and work together to spread the organization’s mission” (Rachel Ley, 14).

Of course, each youth advisory council will be unique with different purposes, goals and intended outcomes. A community center may need a small local council to plan after-school activities, while a city orchestra may design a council with young musicians to support the launch of a local youth symphony, and a national nonprofit organization may require a larger council with a diverse cohort of youth from across the country to organize service projects. Each council is driven by a unique vision that is enhanced by the addition of youth leadership.

However you shape your youth advisory council, remember that it is a collaborative partnership between youth and participating adults. Ideally, your council will work as a team, with all parties valuing what each member brings to the table. Form a clear purpose for your youth advisory council and know that the members have been nominated or selected to be representatives, leaders and project managers and should be treated as such. Lastly, don’t forget that the experience is meant to be positive and fun for everyone, so you should look forward to getting started!

## TIP

If you’re thinking about starting a youth advisory council, do some online research to find some inspiration. The generationOn website is a great place to start. Check it out here: [www.generationOn.org](http://www.generationOn.org).

You might also consider exploring the YSA, NYLC or DoSomething! Youth Advisory Councils or the State Farm Youth Advisory Board.

# Why Create a Youth Advisory Council?

**“A Youth Advisory Council** is a benefit to any organization, nonprofit or for-profit. Having a youth voice can only help you. Kids are the future—why not invest in them to prepare them for the future and to forge a brighter tomorrow for the planet!” – Clay Hurdle, 18

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, over 60 million people volunteered in the U.S. between September 2009 and September 2010, 30% of whom were between the ages of 16 and 19 years old.<sup>1</sup> More than ever before, youth are recognizing the importance of volunteering and service both for their communities and for their own personal growth. In the last decade, a wealth of research has gone into reporting the positive effects of youth development and community engagement initiatives for improving the livelihood and career prospects for the nation’s youth. Providing leadership and management opportunities can be mutually beneficial to all parties involved with your organization or your project.

Is a YAC really right for your organization? There are different ways that you can involve youth in your organization that do not require forming a council. Go back to the original purpose intended for the council. If your organization only needs youth feedback for a specific, short-term project, then maybe a focus group with youth volunteers would be a better fit.

## Benefitting Youth

### *Making tomorrow’s leaders today*

Forming a youth advisory council can be an important step for an organization’s commitment to youth development and youth leadership. By engaging council members in the creation and implementation of programs and services that affect other youth, your organization is establishing a framework of sustainable leadership that draws from and gives back to the community. In addition, youth create new networks and partnerships with adults and peers in their community, which provides them with greater support and allows them to impact more people with their ideas.

**Being a YAC member has made me realize that I can do something bigger and better than anything I have ever done before with the support the YAC has given me. — Malaika Worsham, 16**



## ***Empowerment and building confidence***

As young people transition to adulthood, many desire opportunities to demonstrate that they are mature and independent. Providing young people with the opportunity to voice opinions about concerns that matter to them, and to participate in decision making can be empowering, and may inspire them to take on greater initiative. Young people can put their creative ideas into action when they have control over decisions and plans, no matter how big or small.

**The YAC provides me with a specific and clear purpose and helps me figure out how I can take action, and how I can improve my ideas and projects in the future. — Liu Zhen Huang, 18**

## ***Cultivating important life skills***

Career development for youth today is critically important, as the population of youth and the demand for more sophisticated skills is higher than ever. Young people are full of potential — they are informed, talented, and tech-savvy — but they may not be equipped to use their abilities to help other people. You can provide the tools and the confidence necessary for them to use these special skills for positive change.

Aside from increasing their creativity, confidence, and their sense of independence, being a part of a youth advisory council will also build valuable knowledge and skills. These include:

- ▶ Teamwork and cooperation
- ▶ Conflict resolution
- ▶ Time-management and organization
- ▶ Communication, public speaking and negotiation skills

In addition, having more exposure to the operations of your organization and to communicating with adults is excellent pre-professional preparation for future employment.

## Benefitting the Community

Using youth councils raises awareness about issues affecting the community and youth. Councils that focus on service and volunteerism will not only support existing programs and create new service projects, but will also increase the number of youth getting involved in these projects. Projects that generationOn YAC members have initiated include a literacy program for young children, a school dropout prevention program, and a sports camp for children with disabilities. These programs are supported by youth volunteers and have been enthusiastically received by the community.

**I strongly feel that being a part of the YAC has inspired youth in my community to get involved in service. Many of my peers have contacted me and asked, “How can I help?” ...**

**... It’s great that my community is gaining interest in service and I think with what I have learned from being on the YAC that I can help them find opportunities to volunteer. — Rachel Ley, 14**

## Benefitting Your Organization

Having a youth advisory council will enable your organization to better represent the people it serves and to inform a larger section of the community. More specifically, your organization’s employees and partners will form a stronger connection with the community’s youth, and gain greater insight into the needs of young people. As a result, your programs can reach a wider audience and make more authentic impact. Today’s youth are eager to be involved in issue areas that are important to them. Their energy and fresh perspectives make for innovative new solutions.

## NOTE

While ‘community’ often means the constituents of a local area, your targeted ‘community’ could be national, global, or a very specific region or group. It could be a community of artists, environmentalists, scientists, medical professionals, or knitting enthusiasts who want to incorporate youth voice in their projects and initiatives.

# Before You Begin

## Assessing Your Program Needs

The first step in forming a new youth council is figuring out how you will work with your youth. Start thinking about how your organization and the individuals receiving your services, such as service agencies, schools, and stakeholders will benefit from having increased youth voice. Ensure that you have the capacity to provide structured opportunities that support youth development and leadership, not merely participation.

## Staff Support


The level of staff support that a youth council requires will vary based on the size and activity level of your council. You may only need the equivalent of a part time employee to facilitate meetings and help youth plan projects. If you plan to meet monthly or even less frequently, and especially if you plan to meet via conference call, less staff time will be required than if you have in-person, weekly meetings.

Ideally, the more responsibility that council members are asked to take on, the more they will oversee projects themselves and have ownership over outreach, coordinating meetings and managing deadlines. Council members may be able to oversee their own subcommittees, which can also help decrease staff time.

Of course, if you are able to create a fulltime position to oversee council activities, a designated person should still be identified to oversee the formation of the council and act as the primary point person for participants.

## Getting Everyone On Board

So now you know the benefits of a council, but how do you convince others? Generating organization-wide buy-in is crucial and securing funds for new projects can prove challenging in the best of times. It is important for all parties involved with the council to be fully supportive. This includes your organization's leadership team, program staff, and stakeholders.



You may encounter questions about the value of investing in this council and in involving youth:

- ▶ Can we trust young people to be responsible enough to manage our projects?
- ▶ Are youth capable of improving our programs? Aren't we doing enough already?  
What value will they add?
- ▶ How do we know that youth will be interested in serving our organization?

Be prepared to answer these questions with facts and statistics on youth engagement.

A report from the William T. Grant Commission on Work, Family, and Citizenship explains that, “there is virtually no limit to what young people can do, no social need they cannot help meet, and giving young people the opportunities to serve enable them to become contributors, problem-solvers, and partners with adults in improving their communities and larger society (Benson & Roehlkepartain, 1993, pg 21).”

When your staff and stakeholders are fully vested, develop a strategic plan and budget. Consider creating

bylaws or a resolution that will establish the new council under the auspices of the host organization.

## Ready, Set...


### ***Different ways your youth council can get involved:***

- ▶ Designing and implementing specific projects through a task force (think: MLK day community-wide service project or hunger awareness walk)
- ▶ Designing and planning initiatives and activities “by youth, for youth”
- ▶ Acting as peer mentors, conflict mediators, or educators for youth service organizations and projects
- ▶ Advocating for an organization’s mission - environmental issues, animal rights, homelessness, hunger, etc. (What if every press release, conference workshop proposal or funding request included content authored by youth?)
- ▶ Advocating on behalf of a specific group of youth



## SIDE STAT

Children who served just one hour or more a week were less likely to be involved in at-risk behaviors than those who are not active in volunteering (Benson & Roehlkepartain, 1993).

- 
- ▶ Representing or speaking on behalf of an organization (in a community where 30% of residents are youth, shouldn't 1 in every 3 members of a panel discussing community issues be a young person?)
  - ▶ Researching or making assessments and evaluations of current youth and community programs
  - ▶ Creating standards and performance measures for youth services

Once the commitment has been finalized in writing, begin to develop your vision and mission statement for the council. This idea should be flexible enough to change over time while providing enough structure to begin creating the new council.

Here are a few ways to think about the council's role within your organization:

- ▶ **Advisors to the Organization — Decision-Makers**

In other words, who makes the decisions? Will the council serve in an advisory capacity to the organization, making recommendations that inform others' decisions, or will members have the authority to make important procedural decisions on things like budgets and programming?

- ▶ **Targeted Programs — Comprehensive System-Building**

Will the council work to develop, grow, or advise on specific programs, or will it help to establish systemic improvements for the organization as a whole?

- ▶ **Solving Youth Issues — Developing Youth Assets**

Will the council focus its efforts on directly supporting and addressing the needs of youth, or will it focus on the strengths or assets of youth and seek strategies to develop and capitalize on those assets?

# Summary

## UNIT 1

- ▶ A youth advisory council is a body of young people who provide counsel and support to organizations and governing bodies, and create and participate in a variety of projects and community initiatives.
- ▶ Youth councils allow organizations to form a stronger connection with the community and its youth.
- ▶ Organizations invest in the future of youth by giving them a voice.

The best preparation for creating a council is assessing your organization's needs.





# Building a Youth Advisory Council

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## UNIT 2

*Unit 2 will explore the process of selecting council members, and what to do once members have been accepted. In order to create a vibrant Youth Advisory Council, you will need a comprehensive and thoughtfully organized recruitment and application process. You will then need to decide how to select applicants. Finally, this section will give you ideas for an orientation and welcome reception.*

## Who should be on your youth council?

Imagine your ideal youth advisory council. What does it look like? Where are members coming from? What do they care about? Do you see a school president? Someone already involved with lots of school clubs? Sports teams? A rock band? Maybe they have talents and skills you don't know about yet like blogging, photography, or speaking different languages.

There are so many different possibilities for selecting your council members and it's a good idea to try to narrow down some options while still allowing for plenty of diversity in your team. First you must decide who is the right fit for your organization!

**I am very fortunate to have the chance to be around people who understand what it means to be a volunteer and who serve with just as much passion as I do. The people and ideas I have been exposed to have ultimately changed me for the better; they have made me a better volunteer, and most importantly, a better person. — Clay Hurdle, 18**

### *A youth leader is someone who...*

- Takes initiative in coordinating activities and projects
- Is accountable for a project's success
- Can organize a project from start to finish
- Inspires other youth and adults to action
- Communicates clearly
- Is a great listener, taking everyone's opinions into consideration

## Points of consideration:

### *Age/Grade Level*

How old do you want council members to be, or how wide is the age range? Should all of the members be in high school? While you want your council members to be mature and to be able to relate to each other, that doesn't necessarily mean that you can't have members who are in junior high/middle school or younger. On the contrary, it could be beneficial and more sustainable to have younger members who train to be stronger leaders as they get older. If younger members are asked to stay on for additional years, they can be important assets to the council.

### *Academic Requirements*

A traditional way of selecting youth for activities is by reviewing their transcript or considering their GPA. It is important, however, to recognize that a letter grade alone does not necessarily indicate potential, talent, or creativity. This is especially true for students who have moved schools, are non-native English speakers, or have learning disabilities. You may want to use a resume or portfolio instead of a school transcript to get a better sense of where applicants are coming from and what they can bring to your council. If you do decide that it is appropriate to use a minimum GPA, consider giving applicants other ways to show their achievements, such as a writing sample, documentation from a service project, or recommendation letters.

# DEFINING YOUTH

The word “youth” generally refers to a time of life that is neither childhood nor adulthood, but rather somewhere in between. In some cases that includes people who are under 18 in other cases under 21. In Europe, youth may refer to everyone under 25 or 30 years. Don't get bogged down by the ambiguity of “youth”— in this case, you get to define it yourself!

## ***Leadership and Service Experience***

Today's youth come with their own unique strengths, and more and more young people are devoting their time and talents to community service. Whether through their schools, clubs, families, or faith-based organizations, young people have many outlets for volunteering, and these experiences should be valued by their peers and by adults.

Recruiting members with leadership and service experience can make for a strong team, but be sure to look for council members with diverse knowledge and experiences. As YAC member Clay Hurdle points out, "being a member of YAC [requires] more work on organizing and scheduling which is an ever-changing process. It is always a challenge to coordinate academics and extracurricular activities so that I can give each my best concentration and effort."

**I think that being a member of the YAC has definitely inspired me to be a leader in my community because I have always been shy and did not recognize that I have a voice in my community. It helped me to be confident in front of a group of people, and to communicate and work with different people to deliver important messages.**

**—Liu Zhen Huang, 18**

While experience is a great asset, try not to focus entirely on having a council full of your typical all-stars who are already involved in a multitude of leadership opportunities. Having many pre-existing commitments means that members have less time to dedicate to the council. The council can also act as an opportunity for youth who haven't had as much experience to adopt a new enthusiasm for service and to develop leadership skills. In this way, you may want to choose "novice" members who show great enthusiasm and as-of-yet untapped potential.



## ***Diversity***

Ideally you will have youth with different experiences and interests to offer. To bring the most to your council, consider involving different variables in your council selection process. If your council serves a city or town, try to select youth from different schools in your district or in neighboring districts, including public, private, and charter schools. If your council is operating on a state-wide or national level, try to select students from different cities and states.

Since your council is also meant to be representative of the community, it is important to include a cross-section of ethnicity, age, gender and socio-economic background as well as other skills, abilities and preferences.

# Recruiting New Members

Now that you have a better idea of who might be on your youth advisory council, it's time to start a far-reaching, comprehensive recruitment plan.

The type of recruitment that you need to undertake is very much dependent on the type of group you ultimately want to create. Here are some points to consider:

## ► **Where will you be recruiting?**

Recruitment can be wide-spread or focused. You may choose to only open council membership to youth that have already been involved in your organization in another capacity, or those who are filtered through one of your partners, or you may decide that anyone can apply. Each of these options will determine how you promote your council, how many applications you receive (and in turn have to review) and how broad an audience you will reach.


The following recruitment suggestions are recommended for an open call for applications.

## ► **Recruiting at middle schools and high schools**

Schools are excellent places to spread the word about your council, and to reach potential members directly. Getting school administrators, counselors, and teachers involved will ensure that students receive detailed information about the council as well as instructions on how to apply. In addition, school employees may be able to identify students who they think would be good candidates for your council.

Depending on how much time school employees are willing to commit, you may be able to designate some time during the school day to talk about community-youth engagement and about your council. You may also be able to set up an assembly or an information session at a school.

Be aware that not all youth may attend schools in your designated district. Consider how you will reach youth who attend public, private, charter, parochial, or other independent schools and how you may include students who are homeschooled, or youth who have dropped out of school. Consider whether youth council members must be students (enrolled in school).



**I think finding the right youth to be on the YAC is essential. Involving schools, other organizations and using social media are just some examples of tools that could be used for recruitment. In my community, service isn't quite so popular, and I think by using social media and today's technology to spread the word, generationOn's YAC is even more successful! — Rachel Ley, 14**

► **Promoting on and offline**

When creating a plan for promotion, think about where kids and teens can go and spend their time. You can use the traditional method of putting up flyers and posters in public areas that they frequent, like shopping malls, libraries, movie theaters, music stores, sports facilities and bike and skate shops.

However, the best way to directly reach youth today may be online. Young people use websites and other online networking resources like Facebook, Twitter, and blogs to communicate with each other and to get information about things they care about. There's a good chance that different groups such as schools, clubs, sports teams, local chapters of a 4-H, Boys Scouts, Girls Scouts, and other youth-friendly organizations will already have websites and blogs where you can promote your youth advisory council.

► **Does your organization currently have any partnerships with local organizations or corporations that work with youth and/or schools?**

Many organizations have extended networks throughout the country, including large companies and government offices. Utilize existing networks to recruit youth who are already actively involved in their community. If you are doing state-wide or national recruiting, these types of partnerships can be extremely helpful to reach a larger range of youth.

Attend conferences and youth summits such as the National Conference on Volunteering and Service to promote your youth council and distribute flyers and contact information and a link to your website.

► **Do you or your organization have ties to people who are influential in the community?**

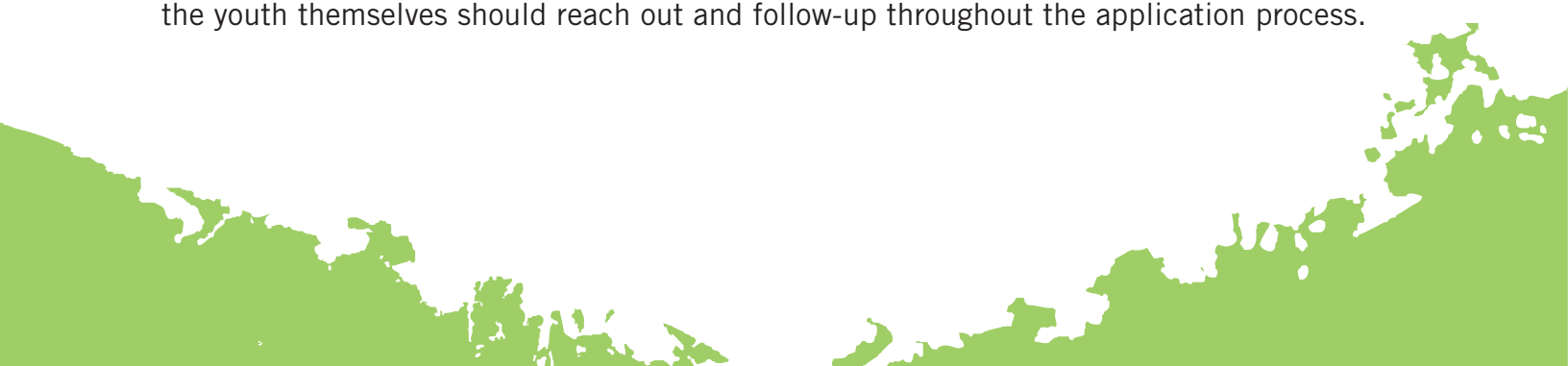
If possible, use your existing networks and relationships to gain the support of community VIPs, including government leaders, business owners, and clergy, who can spread information about the council to their own constituents and youth programs.

Involving elected government officials can put a familiar face and a name that people trust to your council's projects. You can ask an elected official such as a mayor or state representative, to talk at a school or a public event to catalyze interest in the youth advisory council for youth, parents, and schools. Additionally, you can ask these representatives to make a statement on your website or on flyers and other promotional materials. While a political figure can be a great way to publicize your organization, be mindful of his or her political associations and how they may affect how your cause is viewed.

► **Find ways to involve families**

More than anyone else, it's the parents and guardians who want their children, especially their teens, to be active in the community, and to take on responsibilities that develop leadership and independence. As a result, it is essential to involve family members in the recruitment process. Try sending a letter to parents and guardians letting them know about the youth advisory council, its goals for the community and for its members. Family members should know details about the council's projects, about your organization, and about the application and selection process.

Knowing that their children are working with individuals that they know and trust will help gain their support but remember that the prospective youth members themselves should take responsibility for applying for your council. Demonstration of initiative is a key quality in an effective council member. Muster the courage to defer inquiries from parents. Explain that the youth themselves should reach out and follow-up throughout the application process.





# The Application and Selection Process

A successful recruitment and marketing plan will result in a large number of prospective youth leaders who are interested in expanding their skills and knowledge and want to learn more about your organization's youth advisory council. The application process should be thorough and comprehensive, giving youth different ways to show you why they should be selected.

## Nominating prospective youth members

To simplify things, in the following pages, the process of selecting youth for your council will be referred to as an 'application,' but selecting members doesn't have to involve a traditional application. You may want to consider using a system where prospective youth are nominated to be in your council, as opposed to applying directly. Nominators may be

family members, teachers, counselors or adults who work with youth volunteers. Candidates may also be nominated by peers who can vouch for their leadership or volunteering experience, or they can be self-nominated. If you use this process, you should include a section on the nomination form indicating whether or not the youth is aware that he or she has been nominated.

There are several benefits to having a nomination system, aside from acting as a recommendation. Youth who are doing great work in their communities or have unique innovative ideas might not think of themselves as leaders or know about your council, or that they are eligible to join. Junior high and high school students generally haven't gone through the process of applying for jobs or developing their resumes, so they may be a bit shy when talking about their strengths. Nominators can talk in greater detail about their nominee's accomplishments and their impact on the community.

### SIDE NOTE

A sample application is included in the Appendix.

## Forms and agreements

An application form might include the following:

- ▶ Youth name and contact information
- ▶ Parent/Guardian name and contact information
- ▶ Nominator name and contact information (if applicable)
- ▶ Name of school and grade level
- ▶ Mini-essay (long-form narrative) questions


GenerationOn recommends including a section on how the applicants or nominees learned about the youth advisory council, and a couple of brief descriptions of why they want to be on the council, why they would be good fits for the council, and what skills and experience they would bring to the council.

Depending on what type of youth you want to select and how competitive the selection process is, you may also request a high school transcript, letter of recommendation, and a letter from school administration confirming good attendance.

It is up to your organization to decide if you have special minimum requirements such as age/grade level, area of residence, GPA, or hours of community service. If you do have such requirements, make them easily accessible either on a FAQ or requirement webpage by including them in a visible area of the application/nomination form. The timeline for the application process, along with all relevant deadlines should be clearly delineated on the website.

## Forming a selection committee

In order to ensure diversity and buy-in, consider forming a selection committee, even if you already have a staff member supervising the council and the application process. The members of this committee may be other employees or volunteers in your organization, board members, teachers, community members, and even other youth- but not youth who would be applying to be new members!



The selection committee may be involved at different levels of the process. For example, participating as a reader of all nominations or joining with just a few people to make the final selection. You may find it useful to form a committee that includes your organization's leadership team, which will select and confirm the members of the council.

The selection committee should ensure that evaluation of applications is fair. To achieve this, the committee should:

- 1** Agree on a rubric from which to score all youth in each round of the application process.
- 2** Consider creating a blind review process for at least the initial phase of review- remove all identifying information from applications and score only qualifying responses using the rubric.
- 3** Make sure that all readers/reviewers are in agreement about standards and expectations of the Youth Advisory Council. An orientation for all reviewers will help ensure everyone is on the same page.
- 4** Request that all involved with the process recuse themselves from reviewing an applicant if they are affiliated or connected with him/her.

## Interviewing applicants

Depending on the number of applicants, you may want to have a round of interviews later in the application process. It is very important for you and/or your selection committee to communicate with applicants directly at some point before the final selection is confirmed. While in-person interviews are generally preferred, if your council is not local, or if applicants are out of town, youth may opt for a phone interview.

As always, remain sensitive to the fact that you are working with youth. It is the interviewer's responsibility to try to make them feel comfortable about talking about their interests and experiences. There's no need to grill nominees—or try to trip them up with a series of difficult questions. Instead, think of ways to make them comfortable. Consider starting with a bit of lighthearted conversation. If the interview is with more than one candidate, have a fun icebreaker activity. The interviewer or interviewing team should make it clear that they are excited about the council and that they are really pleased that the youth is interested in getting involved.

Be clear with youth who are applying if there is a dress code for meetings and interviews and send directions or map of location in advance.

## Sample recruitment and review timeline:

- ▶ Application period opens – 12 weeks prior to start (based on three week application period)
- ▶ Application period closes – 9 weeks prior to start
- ▶ First round of review – 8 weeks prior to start
- ▶ Second round of review – 6 weeks prior to start
- ▶ Final round of review and selection – 5 weeks prior to start
- ▶ Applicants notified of their status – 4 weeks prior to start
- ▶ Secure member forms – 3 weeks prior to start
- ▶ Orientation call – 2 weeks prior to start
- ▶ Council launches

Notes:

- ▶ This timeline reflects a council that will meet locally. If flights will need to be secured, allow additional time between selection of council members and start
- ▶ If this is your first time coordinating a review process, include an additional week to allow for unforeseen delays

### SIDE NOTE


To see examples of an acceptance and declination letter, as well as a generationOn YAC acceptance packet, check out the Appendix.

## After Selecting Your Council

After the selection committee has gone through a formal evaluation and selection process, there is still plenty of work to do before the council starts operation.

### ***Letters of acceptance and declination***

Before making the news public, decide how you are going to inform applicants of your decision. For letters of acceptance, generationOn recommends calling, then following up with an email or letter after confirmation of acceptance. For letters of declination, a letter or email can be a good way to deliver the news.



Your congratulatory letter of acceptance may be included with a Youth Advisory Council Acceptance Packet. This packet may request photos (head shots and service ‘action’ shots), mini-bios, information on the date, time, and location for an orientation session, and an additional waiver and agreement form outlining expectations and responsibilities to send off to selected members and their parents. Include in the Acceptance Packet a checklist of all the forms that need to be returned with dates. Parents/guardians and nominators (if applicable) should also be notified of the decision and of next steps.

## Youth Advisory Council Acceptance Packet CHECKLIST

- ▶ Waiver
- ▶ Letter of agreement
- ▶ Photos (head shots and action shots)
- ▶ Mini-bio paragraph about the applicant
- ▶ Orientation information

For applicants who are not selected to be on the council, write a polite declination letter thanking them for taking the time to apply. You may encourage them to apply again for the following year. If the applicant was nominated, send a similar letter to the nominator. Consider including a sentence or two about the difficult challenge of selecting from a competitive applicant pool and include additional ways that they can get involved with your organization.

If you are forming a local council, there is a very good possibility that applicants may be friends and classmates. If time allows, make each finalist letter unique by talking about a particular story or accomplishment that was brought up in their interview.

### ***Publicizing the decision***

Once all of the new council members have accepted and returned all of their paperwork, begin publicizing the selection widely through all of your organizational and social networks. Begin by writing a press release and officially announce who has been selected. The announcement can include a brief bio and photo of each member.

After you have drafted your press release, update your organization's website, make announcements on local news programs, in newspapers, and on your organization's Facebook page, Twitter account, blog, and other social networking sites. Whenever possible, get schools, community centers, youth development organizations, and any other partnering institutions to advertise the news on their websites and social networking sites as well.

## Youth Advisory Council Publicity CHECKLIST

- ▶ Create press release
- ▶ Post on organization website(s)
- ▶ Notify local news outlets and schools
- ▶ Ask new council members to post on their sites
- ▶ Announce through social media



# Orientation



**A youth advisory council orientation** is an opportunity to bring all council members together and sets the tone for all future meetings. Therefore, it is critical to carefully plan the orientation agenda.

An orientation agenda could include:

- ▶ Icebreakers
- ▶ A closer look at your organization's initiatives and programs, and the community that they serve
- ▶ Understanding the mission of the youth advisory council
- ▶ Clarifying roles and responsibilities of council members and adult facilitators or supervisors
- ▶ Any performance measures, expectations, or requirements that have already been established
- ▶ Public speaking training or media preparation
- ▶ Expectations around attendance and participation

## **A Note About Leadership:**

Since a youth advisory council is an opportunity to allow youth to be leaders in your organization, it is important to engender a sense of self-efficacy from the start. To do this, make sure that amidst your aggressive agenda for day 1, the new council members are empowered to lead as much of the agenda as possible.

One way to accomplish this is by outlining some roles and responsibilities that you have considered, but ask them to fully flesh out their role and drive a mission statement for the group or list of responsibilities and expectations. Consider leaving the room for periods of time and asking them to self-identify someone to write and someone to moderate the conversation to ensure that they begin to take ownership over the group and the direction of their work.

## Activities

As you craft the agenda, remember that the orientation is also meant for council members to get to know each other and start feeling comfortable in their new roles. They might be nervous or shy, so while the meeting should be orderly, it should also be fun and welcoming. Start with icebreakers that will let everyone share things about themselves, and that will also get them to start thinking about the importance of themes that will come up later in the orientation, like teamwork, responsibility, and respect.

## Group Agreement


During the orientation, and for many meetings to come, your council members will be making decisions that impact other members as well as your organization. In order for the council to be successful, the youth need to be respectful of each other's opinions and ideas. One way to promote this is to form Group Agreement. The Group Agreement is formed based on the idea that mutual respect and understanding are necessary for successful teamwork and how members would like to be treated. While the discussion about making the agreement can be facilitated by an adult, the YAC members should generate the points themselves.

The agreement will start by asking council members to think about what needs to happen for them to feel like they are respected and successful in being leaders. After discussing their answers, the group will come up with an agreement that each member will sign. You might want to keep this on a poster that will hang in your meeting room, or you can make laminated copies for each member. In the future, if any members feel that they are being treated unfairly, or if there are disagreements or conflicts within the council that are preventing the group from moving forward, everyone will refer back to the Group Agreement and move on together as a team.

## Formatting meetings, minutes and miscellaneous items

One very important item in the orientation agenda is to set up a schedule for meetings. A facilitator may make suggestions, but the youth members should have a say in the final decision about how frequently they have meetings, on which days, and at what times. For example, members may agree to meet on the first and third Tuesday evening of each month, with Saturday afternoons as a backup time if meetings have to be canceled. Or they may agree that when it is more difficult to meet—for example, during winter and summer vacation, they will meet once a month and post updates on the council blog.





Aside from scheduling meetings, the orientation is an opportunity to adjust any rules or requirements, or to take note of points that may have been omitted from the application process. Approval of any changes, especially changes to the council’s mission statement, should be approved by the whole group, as well as the adult facilitator.

## Public speaking and media training

Since council members will act as ambassadors of your organization and likely represent you at special events and in the media, it is important to make sure they are comfortable with your branding and messaging. The orientation is a good time to review your mission statement, establish talking points, and practice an elevator speech. Your council members may already know how to talk about your work to their peers but what about to school officials, younger youth, a news reporter or community members? Each will require a different tone and perspective and this should be reviewed. This is another great opportunity for the council members to lead the discussion. Ask them to get into groups and pitch your organization to a prospective funder (complete with visuals if time allows). For added value, video record them, and have them critique their messaging and create a master “tip” sheet for each other. If time allows, invite local news reporters to be a part of the process and provide advice and recommendations on how to get camera ready! If you will expect council members to create collateral (videos, posters etc.), make sure to review your branding guidelines and any publication requirements as well.

## Making it Official!

Either during the orientation or in a second meeting, you can have an induction ceremony that formally welcomes members into the youth advisory council. This would be a nice way to involve parents/guardians and also nominators who were a part of the application process. This event should also be attended by your organization’s leadership; they can present special certificates to each member.

# Summary

## UNIT 2

- ▶ Recruitment for the Youth Advisory Council will be guided by your goals and your organization's needs
- ▶ Ensure diversity of opinion and organizational buy-in by forming a selection committee
- ▶ Be open-minded about which strengths will prove to be your assets as you recruit members
- ▶ Recruit at schools and youth centers, and network through national conferences, government offices, and online sites like Facebook and Twitter
- ▶ Consider using nominations instead of or in combination with traditional applications
- ▶ Prepare declination letters and an acceptance packet with a waiver, letter of agreement, photos, a brief essay about the youth, and orientation information
- ▶ Organize an orientation with an agenda that clarifies the mission, expectations, and roles and responsibilities

Host an official ceremony to induct members.

# Nuts and Bolts

## UNIT 3

*Unit 3 will discuss the basic items that will make your youth advisory council work—the ‘nuts and bolts.’ Use this section to think about ways to organize your council and get youth involved in the inner operations of the council so that you will be prepared to embark on a productive year with a cohesive group.*

# Operational Logistics

## Creating a Handbook

A council handbook is a guide for the council that outlines rules, terms of tenure, and organizational structure and member's roles. You may want to have a handbook in place prior to creating a new council, but members should have the option of updating or adjusting items within the handbook at the beginning of the first term. Contents of your council handbook may include the following:

### ► Naming your council

In order to develop a unified identity you may ask your youth to create a name for the council. Your first batch of council members can brainstorm and select the name, or choose to change the name. For example, instead of being called "Arbor County Youth Council" your youth may want to change the name to "Arbor County Teens for InnovatiON (ACTION)". Encouraging members to think of names will help develop ownership and leadership.

### ► Background and history

Particularly for a brand new council, there might not be much history to tell, but if your organization's council is meant to exist for years to come, this would be a good way to establish why it was formed and when. If the council runs annually, it might be nice to keep a list of each year's council members in the back of the handbook.

### ► Membership requirements

This section notes minimum qualifying criteria, such as age, grade, residence, and how many members can be in the council.

## SIDE NOTE

Whenever major rules in the handbook are made or changed, make sure that they align with organizational standards. Check with Human Resources to make sure there aren't conflicts between your organization's policies and the council's handbook.

## SIDE NOTE

For sample generationOn YAC Code of Conduct, see the Appendix.

### ► Application and terms of tenure

This covers how applicants are selected, the length of their term as members and any applicable rules or processes for how members may terminate or extend their tenure as a council member. Terms may also include minimum hours of attendance, and consequences for lack of participation in meetings and events.

### ► Roles and responsibilities

While roles and expectations for members are subject to change even after a Council has already started running, this section should delineate each Council member's expectations and roles. If members are working on projects where they come across sensitive information about community youth or other members, there should also be a note about discretion and how to handle such situations.

## Scheduling and Organizing Meetings

One of the biggest challenges in making a council can be finding a time and a place to meet with youth whose lives are already taken up by homework, sports, clubs, and volunteering, not to mention time for family and friends. During your orientation you should have already clarified a time when everyone can meet and a location (perhaps a school lounge), but here are other considerations when planning meetings:

### ► Setting an agenda

Either the facilitator or members of the council can be in charge of setting an agenda for each meeting and emailing reminders to members before each meeting. Your organization's ongoing projects may be structured in such a way that it is better for the adult facilitator to organize each meeting, but it is important to involve members in shaping the agenda as often as possible.

### *Long and short-term goals*

Maintaining long-term goals helps give direction to short-term projects, and makes all members think about how their actions contribute to that common goal. One council's goal may be to promote healthy lifestyles for children in the community.

Short-term goals may include organizing a field day at a school that includes activities about healthy eating

## SIDE NOTE

For ideas on how you can help your youth form goals for the council and for themselves, use the Youth Advisory Council Goals and Expectations worksheet included in the Appendix.

and exercise or handing out pamphlets to teachers and parents on nutrient-rich diets for kids at elementary schools and day care centers. Part of the commitment to long-term goals may include having your council research relevant topics and keep track of statistics so that they can explain why the council's project is important to the community.

### ► Key roles/ YAC Leadership

One way that your council can get everyone involved in meetings is by giving each member a role to play. These roles may either be static, or you can take volunteers at the beginning of each meeting to mix things up. Not all members will need to have a specific role in order to participate, but it takes some of the load off of the adult facilitator and gives members greater ownership over their discussions and decisions.

#### ***Officer positions***

Setting traditional positions such as a President, Vice-President, Chief Officer, etc., can encourage individuals to take on responsibility, and to focus on keeping a certain order. If you decide to use this structure, make sure that all members still feel that they are equally important to the Council, and that they have equal say in the decisions that are made.

#### ***Rotating responsibilities***

Instead of having permanent positions, you may choose to rotate responsibilities so that different members have a chance to try chairing a meeting, managing a budget, or directing a project. Some possible positions include:

- Chair: Keeps meetings on track; facilitates discussion; writes agenda before the meeting
- Contact Point: Responsible for updating contact information and contacting members to remind them of meetings and events; keeps track of how many people are expected.

- ▶ **Secretary:** Takes minutes at meetings, particularly to record decisions, types and distributes minutes to rest of the YAC and makes sure everyone is informed
- ▶ **Accountability Manager:** Informally keeps tabs on time and the agenda, and how the group is working. Keeps people accountable for following the Group Agreement
- ▶ **Scheduling Coordinator:** Keeps track of a calendar for meetings, deadlines and events
- ▶ **Social Media Coordinator:** Gathers content and pics for Facebook, Twitter etc., and posts on behalf of the group

## Sharing and Dividing Responsibilities

As you start to organize new projects and promote your council, members may take on certain roles that will help keep everyone focused and on-track.

### ***Subcommittees***

As projects and special events come up, tasks can be broken down and taken on by subcommittees. For example, if your council is planning a toy drive for local families, there may be a logistics subcommittee that finds a location and secures transportation, a budget subcommittee to calculate a budget and allocate funding, and another subcommittee that reaches out to local schools, youth service organizations, and media outlets to spread the word about the toy drive. Subcommittees may be formally established for special projects or positions, or they may be created as needed.

**Think objectively about which council members have the time, skills, and desire for each project in order to ensure success- but empower the council members themselves to make these decisions.**

**Make sure that no council member feels overwhelmed or under appreciated.**

**You may also consider creating special roles for council alums or those who return for additional terms.**

# Communication in the Council

**Whether it's to avoid confusion** about scheduling meetings, or to make sure two people are not doing the same job, effective communication between council members is critical to the success of the YAC and its programs. Early on, your council should establish the best mode of communication for the group, for example conference calls, emails, Facebook messages, or Tweets.

Ask council members how they typically communicate with other peers—there may be more than one way to continue discussions and interaction even after meetings end. For instance, a private Facebook group for your council is a great way for members to present their work, post documents, ask questions, and make suggestions. generationOn's Youth Advisory Council has a closed Facebook group where members exchange information, photos, and updates as well as collaborate on ongoing projects. Council members also communicate with the entire generationOn audience through public Facebook posts and Twitter tweets posted by generationOn staff members.

## ► Rescheduling


There may be times when several council members will not be able to come to meetings due to important conflicts such as final exams, vacations, sports tournaments, or religious holidays. If you have a set schedule, like the first Tuesday of every month, come up with a back-up day and time when all or most of your members are available. A volunteer could be asked to be in charge of maintaining and updating a council calendar to keep track of members' schedules, and to organize and inform everyone about rescheduled meeting times. If a change is made at the last minute, council members should be notified through multiple communication channels.

## ► Transportation

Take into consideration how your council members will be getting to and from meetings. Ideally, all members will live and go to school nearby your meeting place, and can easily get there by walking, biking, taking a car or, if you're in a larger city, taking public transportation. Make sure that families know when and how often meetings are going to take place so that they can be prepared to drive or carpool. You might think about arranging a meet-up at a location that is accessible to everyone such as inside a school building or at a local library.

Waivers should reflect any





responsibility your organization will take for coordinating transportation.

The generationOn Youth Advisory Council meets over the phone and through an online web meeting platform. Even if your members are all local, you may decide to host remote meetings in between regular, in-person meetings. A web meeting platform (such as Skype or Google Meet Up) allows for online chat, video conferencing, document sharing and meeting notes to be recorded directly on the screen for all to see and participate.

► **Food**

Including snacks and beverages at meetings can work as an incentive for the members to be punctual and make it through longer meetings. It can help members socialize and relax, especially when meeting after a long school day. Teens lead busy lives, and by the evening it can be difficult for them to concentrate, especially when they haven't eaten. If you bring food to meetings, always be sensitive to dietary requirements and food allergies, which should be noted in the Acceptance Packet.

► **Technology**

Make sure that the council has access to special tools and technology that will help them with their projects and meetings. This may include an overhead projector or SMARTboard, photo or website editing software, a computer camera and microphone for telephone or Skype meetings, and digital cameras to document projects and activities. Prepare your council's budget to purchase equipment or make repairs or replacements, and invite suggestions from your council members, as they might be more tech-savvy than you would have thought!

**One of the huge differences between the YAC and my roles at school, clubs, or organizations is the webinars and phone conferences. It took me awhile to get used to these forms of communication, but I have found them to be very efficient, and I hope to use them in my own community. — Rachel L.**

# Funding and Budgeting

**Successful YACs must always plan ahead** both in terms of projects and activities, and also in terms of funding. Think about where funds might be found—grants from organizations, individuals, local businesses and stakeholders. Involving your council members in grant writing and funding pitches will give them great first-hand experience in budgeting and development.



# Summary

## UNIT 3

- ▶ Create a council handbook (ideally with members' input) that provides background about the council and its purpose, outlines rules, terms of tenure, and the organizational structure
- ▶ Make a set schedule for meetings—plan the location and time in advance, and make sure that council members are all able to attend on a regular basis
- ▶ Create a budget that includes purchasing special tools and technology and plan ahead to secure funding

# Facilitation and Supervision

## UNIT 4

*Before the applications go out, before meetings are scheduled, and before your council members start taking on new projects, you need to clarify what your role is as the adult facilitator. Unit 4 discusses some challenges that you might face, and the best way to supervise effectively without taking over the reins.*

# Balancing Youth Autonomy with Adult Facilitation

## Mind the “Age Gap”

In Unit 1 we discussed how youth councils should be constructed to benefit both the youth and the sponsoring organization, but youth participants and organization staff may hold misconceptions of each other. Adult facilitators, especially those who lack experience working with youth, may question the ability of teens to make long-lasting commitments when they haven't had any 'real' responsibilities like working at a 9 to 5 job. Meanwhile, your council members will feel like you don't take them seriously if they are given too few responsibilities, or if their tasks are too simple. They may also feel overwhelmed if projects are too complex and difficult. It is up to the adult facilitator to recognize the difference between operating behind the scenes and running the show. You want to give your council members guidance and mentorship through each step, but you also want them to have autonomy and ownership, and to be able to be creative and productive on their own.

No matter the size or the scope of your council, finding a balance between youth autonomy and adult supervision will be an ongoing challenge. You and your council should always work together to identify gaps between youth abilities and adult expectations.

## The Adult Facilitator Role

Begin to think about the ideal attributes of a group facilitator.

### An effective adult facilitator may be:

- ▶ focused but able to see the 'bigger picture'
- ▶ very organized, but flexible
- ▶ patient and willing to listen
- ▶ be able to facilitate activities but NOT micro-manage or know how things should absolutely, definitely, for sure be done (your role is not “director”—sorry!)
- ▶ able to relate to youth and respect their views and ideas
- ▶ able to maintain a high level of energy
- ▶ approachable and friendly
- ▶ and funny! A good sense of humor is essential

**Opinions and ideas lead to bigger things and inevitably to projects. With generationOn, every council member pitches ideas geared toward a bigger picture and making a difference in the world. —Lance**

Always remember your council's purpose and goals. Focus on the things you want to accomplish during meetings because youth members can sometimes get distracted or diverted. It is important to keep things on track by keeping sight of the goals and items on your agenda. To make sure everyone is clear of your role, it is helpful to ask the council members themselves to outline how they see you supporting their work (check it out- you scaffold their experience but they are the architects laying the bricks and mortar that will build their legacy. Don't try to do their job!)


Your support will get members motivated and will keep projects moving. Your council members might be very enthusiastic and eager to ask questions and share insights and experiences, but it's important to keep discussions focused and to give other members a chance to share their thoughts. Likewise, some members may be more timid or shy about talking in a group, and adult support may be helpful in stepping in and encouraging them to participate.

When overseeing meetings, it may be helpful to use open-ended questions to elicit the youth voices. Try not to ignore anyone's ideas or push your own agenda, especially when there's a lot of brainstorming in the room. This can give way to creative, spontaneous ideas. Even ideas that seem odd or far-fetched may still be worth discussing and trying out, so show them that you believe in their ideas, and help your members develop abstract concepts into real solutions!

As a facilitator, your job might be to:

- ▶ Maintain the agenda and keep the group focused
- ▶ Ensure that each member is able to participate
- ▶ Be open to brainstorming and supportive of creative ideas





Also, as a facilitator, you shouldn't be afraid to make projects and tasks challenging, but keep your objectives realistic. If you're not sure if your members have the time or the skills necessary to tackle a project, see how you can break up tasks so that it won't appear that a project will go unfinished or a problem will go unresolved. Reflection sessions during meetings may also help give you an idea of where your council members stand with tasks, and if they need any support, or if they are ready for something more challenging.

To ensure that meetings stay on track, it is helpful to establish an agenda. Always leave time for council members to include topics that they would like to address and open up the dialogue to shout outs and announcements.

When presenting a topic for discussion, explain why the topic is important and allow the council members to decide how to approach it. If they struggle, suggest making a list or timeline. If you hear crickets, break down a task into step-by-step pieces and ask a probing question for each. For example, if your aim is for the group to plan a service project, ask them what kind of documents they will need to record their plans, where they want to share this information (in person, email, Google Docs, Facebook Docs, etc), what the timeline should be and what supplies they will need. In this way, they are making the decisions but you are facilitating the progress.

# Representing Your Organization

**One of the main roles** of your council members is to act as ambassadors for your organization. It is really up to you to determine to what extent the organization's brand will be conveyed through your council. Will you develop a separate logo or slogan for your council to include on t-shirts, publications, web posts, mailing and other official forms? You may want to strike a balance. Present your organization's brand guidelines, but give the council members the opportunity to shape the council logo. When developing your council logo, ask pointed questions to facilitate a dialogue such as, "What look and feel would most appeal to your peers?" and "how can this be tied into our existing brand?" In this way you can teach the importance of brand consistency while also opening up the decision making process to the youth.

**I feel that with the resources I have from GenerationOn I can actually help the youth progress from a point of understanding youth service and leadership to a sense of empowerment to be able to go out and affect change in their community.**

— **Elizabeth Hailand**  
**Americorps Volunteer Action Liaison**







## Maintaining Goals and Objectives

### *Keeping it real*

Young people are motivated by knowing that their actions make a real difference. While your council should not completely base success on results-driven measures, it is important for your members to see things getting done. If a project is ongoing and lacks outputs, think of ways for members to benchmark their progress— through additional research, writing blog updates, or journaling reflections—so that they have a way to remind themselves that their progress is “real.” This will also provide them with important tangible products that they can include on their resume or college applications, and will provide you with outcomes you can share with stakeholders.

# Summary

## UNIT 4

- ▶ Being an adult facilitator doesn't mean you have to act like the boss—it involves giving youth autonomy over decisions and plans
- ▶ A good adult facilitator will be able to encourage and relate to youth, while making sure everyone is on track and on task

It is important that the adult facilitator shows that he or she values the council members and their ideas and treats everyone fairly.

# Training, Development and Planning

## UNIT 5

*Your council will gain an array of skills and abilities that you can supplement with professional development opportunities. Unit 6 will show you how councils can provide different kinds of learning opportunities for your YAC members and explore types of projects your group could organize.*

# Training and Development

## Job Shadowing

It is always useful to talk to your council members at the beginning of the term to see what kind of leadership development they hope to gain. Often, there are additional skills or experiences that they will identify beyond the scope of the council. To support their interests, you can match them with your partners—nonprofit, government, or other agencies—for a chance to shadow a professional. This will supplement their skill base and create ties to your stakeholders.

## Field Trips and Conferences

There are dozens of local and national conferences on youth development, leadership, and community engagement that take place throughout the year.

- ▶ These conferences bring together educators, youth workers, and youth leaders to discuss new and innovative ideas and projects within the area of volunteering and service.
- ▶ Your council members can attend information sessions, workshops, and plenaries that will help generate interest in new ideas for service projects, as well as a renewed enthusiasm for what they do in the council.
- ▶ Will you rely on your council to write a workshop proposal? If you want to be authentic in presenting your youth programs, there's no better way than to have council members develop and present content.

**I have loved everything about being a part of the generationOn YAC, but what I have liked best is networking with people around the country learning more about service, and engaging my peers in service. The experience and knowledge I have gained from being on the YAC is extensive! — Rachel L.**

- ▶ This can also act as a professional development opportunity and will give students an opportunity to network. What better way to reinforce their fluency in your mission?
  - ▶ Don't forget to equip your youth with program materials—business cards are a great idea!

## SIDE NOTE

For more ideas and tools to get you started on service projects, visit [generationOn.org](http://generationOn.org) or check out the Service Project Plan, Overview, and Evaluation forms in the Appendix.

## Planning Events and Projects

### *Service projects*

If your council runs through the course of a year, create a calendar of potential times when your members can spearhead individual projects with the support and guidance of your organization. For example, the generationOn National Youth Advisory Council members create and implement projects for five different days of service during the year: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (January), Make Your Mark (March), Global Youth Service Day (April), a “Summer of Service and Volunteering” project and the 9/11 Day of Service and Remembrance (September).

Depending on your schedule, you may be able to do more small-scale projects, like spending one weekend a month volunteering at different places in your community. Ideas for service projects include:

- ▶ “Spring cleaning” – Picking up litter, pulling, weeds, etc., in parks, schools, and community centers
- ▶ Food/clothing/toy/school supply drives
- ▶ Tutoring/mentoring younger children
- ▶ Teaming with a local animal shelter or ASPCA
- ▶ Leading trips to senior homes, food banks, etc.

This is by no means a comprehensive list—the best way to invest your council members in the project is to have the idea come from them and give them ownership over the planning process.

For all service projects, encourage your youth members to document their activities. GenerationOn provides council members with service project evaluation forms and video cameras for this purpose. Again, if time allows, have the council members design and distribute these tools and let them get creative! Perhaps members could write a blog or post pics on a Facebook page. Also, schedule a follow-up meeting for members to present and share their experiences.



## ***Advocacy campaign***

If your organization encourages council members to come up with their own project ideas, you may look into launching an advocacy campaign that addresses an issue that affects youth. Ideally, this project will be chosen by council members, and it may include issues like global warming, school violence and bullying, recycling, or preventing teen substance abuse. Maybe your local public schools are at risk of losing sports or music and art programs, and your council members want to galvanize the community to take action. Or perhaps a council member was inspired by a documentary on global child illiteracy and wants to donate books to underserved schools in developing countries. Be open to whatever issues your members are passionate about, and encourage them to create a full-fledged campaign. Advocacy campaigns are big projects that may seem too large to achieve in one year, but with the right support and hard work, they can also give the greatest payback for both the youth and for the community they serve.

## ***Writing newsletters and other publications***

A responsibility that can either be shared by some or all members is writing articles and updates that can be added to websites, newsletters, and other publications. Your council can publish its own quarterly newsletter, or contribute articles to other publications about your projects, listing specific ways that members have made a difference in the community.

Is there space in your ongoing communications or on your website for a designated council section?

After your council has been running long enough to get feedback from members and from the community, you might consider writing articles for a youth development or community-service themed journal, or for a national magazine that discusses the benefits of operating a youth advisory council. This would also be a great way to keep your members engaged during quieter points in the year.

**I feel like the YAC has encouraged and supported my ideas and service projects. I really appreciate how our advisor encourages us to share our stories in many ways for example, guest blogging for the Points of Light blog.” —**

## **Workshops**

Do some research to see how you can involve your council members in career development that is applicable to their work. This could be by attending conferences (discussed previously), local events, or by inviting guest speakers to join your council meetings.

Workshops are a great way to help your council members prepare to become your organizational ambassadors or representatives. Workshop topics may include the following:

### ▶ **Speechwriting and public speaking**

Whether leading a group of youth on a service project, announcing an upcoming event at a school assembly, or addressing members of your organization, your council members will have various opportunities to speak to an audience of both adults and youth. Having the chance to learn pointers and practice speechwriting and public speaking skills increases confidence, and can also help your council members prepare speeches for different audiences.

### ▶ **Business meeting decorum**

How to run a meeting, set an agenda, or design a PowerPoint might be unfamiliar. Consider having a workshop to teach best practices and then use them at your meetings.

### ▶ **Conflict resolution**

Youth encounter conflict in different ways. In their lives, they witness school fights, they have disputes with family members, etc. They may also have disagreements in the council itself. In order to prevent these tensions from becoming a problem, offer a conflict resolution workshop. The skills taught will have life-long value.

## **SIDE NOTE**

**See Appendix for Tips for Speaking at Formal Events and Talking Points**

# Summary

## UNIT 5

- ▶ Providing training and professional development opportunities through the council can help your youth gain a new perspective on how they approach their work. It is also hugely beneficial for their future career plans.
- ▶ Shadowing professionals, government workers, and nonprofit representatives is a great way to gain some insight into ways they can continue to serve the community in the future.
- ▶ Additional activities which can enhance your council members' experience include participating in conferences, taking field trips, and attending or organizing workshops on special topics such as public speaking, business meeting decorum, and conflict resolution.



# Transitions for the Future

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## UNIT 6

*Before your first council comes to a close, you will need to plan for the future. Will current members stay on, and how can they inform decisions about the upcoming selection process for new members? In Unit 6 we address important issues that may come up, and ways that you can prepare for a smooth transition to another successful council.*

# Establishing the Next Council

**Youth councils should be designed** to be sustainable, even when a term concludes. You will want to prepare for transitions in your council by considering the following questions:

- 1** What happens to youth after their membership concludes?
- 2** How can you retain and re-transmit all the previously gained knowledge, experience, skills, and objectives for new members?

Answering these questions will help you decide how to engage alumni, prepare new members, and frame ongoing feedback and evaluation.

**Personally, I have gained a lot of knowledge from this experience that I think would be very valuable to the next generation On YAC. One idea is to match up previous YAC members with new YAC members as mentors so they have someone they can bounce ideas off of, or ask questions to. — Rachel L.**

## New Membership

The number of members in your council will change depending on capacity and need. You may have lost members during the term due to graduation, relocation, decisions to move on to other things, or because they are busy with school.

Ask your members to update the handbook and to also write a guide for the new council with stories and advice that can help prepare them for their new roles. Consider retaining a few members to help aid the transition, and remember that different groups will bring your organization new strengths and creative ideas. No council will ever be identical.



## Council Alumni

Members who are unable to join for an additional year can still be great sources of information. They may decide to form new youth councils or they may become leaders at college organizations. It can be extremely helpful to have alumni continue to be formal or informal advisors from afar.

**In the YAC, I learned more about networking in different nonprofit organizations, the effectiveness of using media to promote a project, and that many people in the country are doing good in their community. I am sure that I will continue to take initiative to create new service ideas after I have gone to college. — Liu Zhen C.**

# Evaluation and Feedback

**Throughout the year,** your council should be engaged in informal feedback and evaluation methods to reflect on their experiences. They should comment on their achievements and make suggestions for improvement. Keep a record of feedback, as well as what changes were made to improve programming and approaches.

## SIDE NOTE

An example of a council feedback form can be found in the appendix.

As the end of the first year approaches, set up an evaluation form for members to discuss their perspectives on the council, and on youth service. What did they gain from being on the council? Do they want to continue their service and volunteering? What have they learned? Overall, did they have a positive experience—why or why not? You may even have members contribute ideas for the evaluation to really give it a youth voice, and to see how they define their achievements in their own terms.



# Summary

## UNIT 6

- ▶ When your council's first term is coming to a close, you and the council members will have to make decisions about the council's future.
- ▶ Decide if current members will be able to stay for an additional term, and if they should have a separate application process.
- ▶ Consider how members who are leaving the council can continue to be involved.
- ▶ Have current members inform decisions regarding what the council needs from its future members. Have current members do evaluation through a questionnaire or a special meeting.

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# SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

*[Insert Contact Info]*

## CALLING ALL PASSIONATE YOUTH WHO ARE LEADERS IN SERVICE AND VOLUNTEERING

### National Search for [Insert your organization] Youth Advisory Council gets Underway

[Insert location of organization] [Insert date] – [Insert your organization] is searching for [#] inspiring youth leaders from middle and high schools across the nation to form the [Insert your organization] Youth Advisory Council. Applications are being accepted now through [Insert date and time] at [Insert your organization’s website].

The [Insert your organization] Youth Advisory Council will offer [#] youth from diverse backgrounds a chance to participate in a national leadership development program, while acting as ambassadors for [Insert your organization] and serving as leaders in their own communities. The Council is being created to elevate youth voice and contribute to [Insert your organization] programming, while providing young people with a unique opportunity to be drivers of their own ideas from conceptualization to implementation and reflection.

[Insert quote(s) from the CEO of your organization or an expert in the field about the benefits of this program--] [For example--“The [Insert your organization] Youth Advisory Council offers a remarkable opportunity for young people to demonstrate their strong commitment to service and volunteerism, and inspire other kids to take action,”] said [Insert full name of quoted person], [Insert title of quoted person] of [Insert your organization].

[Insert your organization] is looking for young people between the ages of [Insert age range] who are interested in partnering with other youth from around the country who are passionate about making a difference. Council members will be required to demonstrate a strong commitment to volunteerism, philanthropy and [Insert your organization’s mission statement, for example--which is “to inspire, equip, and mobilize youth to take action that changes the world and themselves through service.”] Members will also be encouraged to represent [Insert your organization] at conferences and special events.

# SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE *Continued*

Students interested in applying should be *[Insert qualifying criteria for program, for example: enrolled in middle or high school, live in the United States and be available to travel [Insert travel dates].* Community, youth, and faith-based organizations and educators are invited to encourage youth who are interested in applying to fill out an online application which can be found at *[Insert your organization's website].* The *[Insert your organization]* Youth Advisory Council members will be announced in late February, 2011.

For more information about the *[Insert your organization]* Advisory Council and *[Insert your organization]*, please visit *[Insert your organization's website].*

## **About *[Insert your organization]***

*[Insert information about your organization]*

## **About *[Insert organizations that contributed to the start or continuation of this program]***

*[Insert information about every organization that contributed to the start or continuation of this program]*

# # #



# SAMPLE YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL APPLICATION

Please be sure to complete the entire application. When you are finished, please submit to *[Insert your organization]* by *[Insert date and time]*.

***Please Print Clearly***

***[INSERT DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM, ORGANIZATION,  
ELIGIBILITY, SELECTION PROCESS, ETC.]***

## **APPLICANT INFORMATION**

Applicant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade in [MONTH, YEAR]: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdate (mm/dd/yyyy): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## **PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMATION**

Parent/Guardian 1 Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_ Place of Business: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian 2 Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_ Place of Business: \_\_\_\_\_

Is at least one parent/guardian aware that you are applying for this council? [Yes / No]

# SAMPLE YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL APPLICATION *Continued*

## SCHOOL INFORMATION

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Principal's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

School Website (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

## RESPONSE QUESTIONS

1. What are the top three social issues from the list below that you consider yourself passionate about?  
(Circle three):

- Animals (homeless pets, endangered animals, abused animals)
- Community revitalization
- Disaster relief
- Domestic abuse
- Education/tutoring/mentoring
- Unemployment
- Environment/conservation
- Healthcare
- Health-related issues (cancer, HIV/AIDS, obesity, etc.)
- Homelessness
- Housing (building, renovation)
- Human Rights
- Hunger
- People with disabilities
- Poverty
- Recreation/sports
- Seniors
- Technology
- Female empowerment
- Youth Leadership

# SAMPLE YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL APPLICATION *Continued*

2. Are you a member of your school's student council or student government? [YES/NO]

3. Are you a member of another local youth council? [YES/NO]

If 'Yes' to the previous question, what is the name of the group(s) and what is your role:

4. Are you a member of a national youth council? [YES/NO]

If 'Yes' to the previous question, what is the name of the group(s) and what is your role:

5. Approximately how many hours of community service did you complete in [Insert current year]?

[Less than 5] [5-25] [25-75] [More than 75]

6. Can you commit to being an active member of the council through [Insert month and year]? [YES/NO]

7. How did you hear about us?

8. Using bullet points, please list any additional national leadership roles/positions you have held or national service awards you have received. (include dates, names of awards, and your role titles):

9. If you have created your own website for your service work, please give the URL here:

# SAMPLE YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL APPLICATION *Continued*

## **NARRATIVE QUESTIONS**

1. Describe a project initiative, service group, or nonprofit organization of your own that is currently making a difference in your community. Please be specific in describing your mission and how you have involved others with your work. [250 words maximum]

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2. List 3 skills or traits that an exemplary leader possesses and illustrate how you have demonstrated these skills or traits in your own volunteer work. [250 words maximum]

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3. Choose one social issue that you are passionate about. What inspired your commitment to this issue? [250 words maximum]

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# SAMPLE YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL APPLICATION *Continued*

4. Name someone who has been an inspiration to you. What about them inspires you? [250 words maximum]
5. Given the theme of literacy, describe a service project you would implement. Make sure to demonstrate your creativity and originality. [300 words maximum]

**Provide details, such as:**

- What organization(s) you could partner with
- Who the service project would benefit
- Your budget for the event
- Where you would go for volunteers
- What supplies you would need
- How you would promote your service project

# SAMPLE YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE

*[Insert Date]*

Dear *[Insert youth's name]*,

Congratulations! On behalf of *[insert your organization,]* I am pleased to inform you that you have been selected to be a member of the *[Insert your organization]* Youth Advisory Council. The application process was incredibly competitive with a high volume of applicants for the *[#]* available spaces. Given your dedication to service and demonstrated leadership skills, we are thrilled to count you among this select group.

**While this is very exciting, we ask that you do not share the news of your selection with news outlets or online social media outlets (this includes posting on Facebook or Twitter) at this time. Both a national press release and local media advisory are being prepared and will be sent to you for official communications in the next two weeks.**

Attached you will find your acceptance packet, which includes several important documents you will need to complete:

- (1) Youth Advisory Council Letter of Agreement***
- (2) Parent/ Guardian Agreement Form***
- (3) Parent/ Guardian Permission Slip, Medical & Media Consent Form***

***Also, please:***

- (4) Submit 2 photos of yourself that can act as headshots (cropped around your neck and head with face clearly visible) and 2-3 photos of you engaging in service.***
- (5) Please mark your calendar! Our first orientation call will take place at [Insert date and time].***

We ask that you return the above items ALL TOGETHER by email to *[Insert contact person's email address]* or fax *[Insert your organization's fax number]* on or before *[Insert date and time]*.

If you have any concerns regarding your participation in the council, please let us know as soon as possible.

Congratulations again! We look forward to having you represent our organization in this prestigious capacity!

Best,

***[Insert your name]***

***[Insert your title]***

# SAMPLE YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL LETTER OF DECLINATION

*[Insert Date]*

Dear *[Insert youth's name]*,

Thank you for taking the time to submit an application for the Youth Advisory Council. The application process was incredibly competitive with a high volume of applicants for the [#] available spaces. This made the selection process tremendously difficult, and unfortunately we are unable to offer you a space on the council this year.

We hope that you will apply for other related upcoming youth service opportunities that you can find on our website at *[Insert your organization's website.]*

We applaud your commitment to service and wish you continued success!

Warm regards,

*[Insert your name]*

*[Insert your title]*

# SAMPLE YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE

*[Insert youth's full name]*

*[Insert youth's street address]*

*[Insert youth's city, state and zip code]*

*[Insert date]*

Dear *[Insert youth's name]*,

I am pleased to inform you that you have been selected to be a member of the *[Insert your organization]* Youth Advisory Council! As a Youth Advisory Council member, you will meet and engage with like-minded youth in the *[Insert your city/town]* area to plan and implement a service project in your community. Orientation will occur on *[Insert date and time]*, and all subsequent sessions will take place on the *[Insert day of the week]* of every month at the *[Insert location of your organization's offices]* from *[Insert time and time zone]*. The dates are as follows:

*[Insert day of the week, date, and time]*

*[Insert day of the week, date, and time]*

*[Insert day of the week, date, and time]*

*[Insert day of the week, date, and time]*

Attendance for ALL sessions is required.

**For official acceptance into the program, be sure to complete the following forms and submit them by email at *[Insert contact person's email]* or fax to (XXX) XXX-XXXX by *[Insert date and time]*.**

- (1) Youth Advisory Council Letter of Agreement**
- (2) Parent/ Guardian Agreement Form**
- (3) Parent/Guardian Youth Advisory Council Waiver**

Also, please:

- (4) Submit 2 color photos of yourself that can act as headshots (cropped around your neck and head with face clearly visible) and 2-3 photos of you engaging in service.**
- (5) Please mark your calendar! Our first orientation call will take place at *[Insert date and time]*.**

We look forward to having you as part of our team!

Sincerely,

*[Insert your name]*

*[Insert your title]*



# SAMPLE YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL LETTER OF AGREEMENT

**As a [Youth Advisory Council] member you will learn to:**

- Research and identify needs, assets, and interests in your community and possible service projects needed.
- Work effectively with youth from unique perspectives and backgrounds.
- Budget, address an audience, and delegate responsibilities.
- Engage youth and your peers effectively.
- Partner with a thriving nonprofit organization focused on youth and service.

**As part of this group you will:**

- Attend all [#] sessions at [Insert your organization] offices listed on the previous page.
- Play a leadership role in the planning and implementation of a service project in your community.
- Provide feedback on program efficacy and goals upon completion of the program.
- Serve as an overall ambassador of the [Insert your organization] mission.
- Represent [Insert your organization] at various national, state and local conferences as well as press/media functions.

The [Insert your organization] Youth Advisory Council is at-will and participants may be dismissed at the supervisor's discretion due to failure to meet responsibilities.

By signing below you affirm that you have read the above expectations and guidelines, and agree to work toward achieving these expectations and responsibilities for the duration of your participation in the Youth Advisory Council. You also grant full permission to use photographs, portraits, films and video of you and quotations made by you in [Insert your organization] materials and in accounts of volunteering by or about [Insert your organization] and its programs.

---

[Youth Advisory Council member] (you!)

**Printed Name**

---

Date

---

[Youth Advisory Council member] (you!)

**Signature**

---

Date

# SAMPLE YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL PARENT/GUARDIAN EMERGENCY CONTACT FORM

Youth Participant Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
(First) (Last)

Youth Birthday (mm/dd/yyyy): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(First) (Last)

Youth Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Youth Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Home) (Work/Cell)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact (1) - Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact (2) - Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Allergies/Medical Conditions: \_\_\_\_\_

Dietary Restrictions: \_\_\_\_\_

# SAMPLE YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL WAIVER

I, the undersigned Parent/Legal Guardian of (Insert youth's name)  
(hereinafter referred to as the "Member"), hereby consent to and give my permission for the following:

1. That the Member has my consent and permission to participate as a member of the *[Insert your organization]* Youth Advisory Council.
2. That the Member has my consent and permission to participate in all Youth Advisory Council activities, which may also include activities held at other locations.
3. On behalf of the Member and myself, I acknowledge that the Member will be participating at his/her own risk and I, on his/her and my own behalf, hereby release, discharge and indemnify *[Insert your organization]* and its subsidiaries from all liability for injury to person or damage to property of myself and the Member arising out of participation in, and transportation associated with, Youth Advisory Council.
4. In permitting the Member to participate, I am specifically granting permission to *[Insert your organization]* and the Youth Advisory Council to use the likeness, voice and words of the Member in television, radio, films, newspapers, magazines and other media, and in any form not heretofore described, for the purpose of advertising or communicating the purposes and activities of the Youth Advisory Council and appealing for funds to support such activities.
5. In the event of an accident or illness during Council activities, I understand that reasonable effort will be made to contact the parent/guardian or emergency contact immediately. However, I am aware that if the injury or illness appears serious and the parent/guardian or emergency contact cannot be reached, the adult in charge will secure emergency medical care as needed.

By signing below you affirm that you have read and agree to the expectations and guidelines of the *[Insert your organization]* Youth Advisory Council.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/ Guardian Name (Please Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**NOTE: Waivers should always be reviewed by your organization's human resources department or legal counsel.**

# SAMPLE RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES OF A YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBER

As a Youth Advisory Council member, you are a representative of your home community as well as your organization. You have been selected because your ideas and your hard work embody our mission to [Insert your organization's mission]. As a result, it is also important to be aware that your actions also reflect on [Insert your organization.]

The development and success of the organization's programs and initiatives is affected by your performance in completing duties. As a result, it is extremely important to attend all meetings, to let us know in advance if you are unable to attend meetings and to be punctual. Your fellow Youth Advisory Council members will also rely on you to provide help and support.

As a Youth Advisory Council member, you are a role model to other youth who want to be leaders in their communities, just like you. This is an opportunity and a challenge to practice important leadership skills, and to guide and inspire other future leaders. The example that you set, through your motivation, your energy, and your commitment, will affect not only your fellow Youth Advisory Council members, but also our engagement with youth around the country.

- Be ambassadors of service
- Each Council member will be responsible for planning and organizing their service projects, and for documenting these events
- Council members are required to attend regular meetings, as outlined in the Youth Leadership Council Agreement
- Council members are encouraged to keep in touch with each other, and to provide encouragement and support
- Keep a written journal (preferably in a word document or blog) of all activities completed during their time as a Council member
- Communicate with the Council Supervisor, and other appropriate parties on a regular basis

# SAMPLE YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL CODE OF CONDUCT

Youth Advisory Council Members understand that the Council requires the highest standards of behavior. The Youth Advisory Council member agrees to conduct him/herself in a manner that contributes to a sense of community among all students and forum staff and foster an atmosphere of mutual respect.

The Youth Advisory Council member agrees to the following code of conduct:

1. Behavior at all times should be such that it respectfully reflects [Insert your organization]
2. Council Members are expected to exhibit trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness and citizenship.
3. As such, uses of tobacco, alcohol, or other illegal substances are not acceptable for Council members. Participation in any of the above may result in automatic termination from the Council.
4. If a Council Member is found responsible for any criminal or legal offenses, such as stealing, vandalism, harassment, or assault, the member may face automatic termination from the Council.
5. Accidents, injuries, or illnesses that affect attendance for Council-related activities should be reported to the Council Supervisor as quickly as possible.
6. Inappropriate physical contact with other officers or members is unacceptable.

**NOTE: Code of Conduct should be aligned with organizational HR policies.**

# SAMPLE RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS

## Our Goals for You:

- For you to gain some highly usable and sell-able skills—and an insight into the world of nonprofits
- For you to be truly proud of your experience—so you'll tell someone about it without them asking

## Your Goals for Yourself:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Council Member Responsibilities:

- Regular attendance at meetings
- Contributing ideas to the group
- Being an ambassador and the organization's mission
- Exhibiting strong traits of leadership and professionalism

## You Are Accountable for:

- Timely communication of successes, concerns, and questions
- Managing your schedule
- Working as a team, sharing responsibilities, and working through challenges
- Identifying and working with differing styles of leadership and collaboration

# SAMPLE YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL SERVICE PROJECT PLAN

*\*Ideally, this would be filled out by the Council member  
and turned in 2-3 months BEFORE project takes place.\**

**Project Name:** [Type Project Name]

**Date:** [Type Date]

**Time:** [Type Time]

**Location:** [Type Location]

## Project Information

**Describe your project.**

[Replace this text with a description of what is involved in executing the project.]

- [Task/Process/Change]
- [Task/Process/Change]
- [Task/Process/Change]

**What community need or issue does your project address?**

[Replace this text with a description of the background context of the project and why it is necessary.]

- [Issue/Opportunity]
- [Issue/Opportunity]
- [Issue/Opportunity]

**What resources are needed for this project?**

[Replace this text with a description of resources needed for this project: people, sponsors, money, expertise, groups.]

- [Resource]
- [Resource]
- [Resource]

# SAMPLE YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL SERVICE PROJECT OVERVIEW

*\*Ideally, this would be filled out by the Council member 1 month BEFORE the project takes place and would be used to create content for your organization's website.*

*For example, see [www.generationon.org/teens/yac](http://www.generationon.org/teens/yac)*

Name of project: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Description: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Optional:**

Project Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_

School/Group Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Why is this project important to you?**

- **Where and when** will your project take place? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- **Through what outlet(s)** will you publicize your project? Submit \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- **How will you recruit volunteers** for your project? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- **Did you receive any funding or grants** from a business or organization? Please give contact info and how-to apply information, if applicable. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*Submit any flyers or advertisements for your project along with this form.\*\***





# SAMPLE YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL SERVICE PROJECT EVALUATION

*\*Ideally, this would be filled out and turned in 1 month AFTER project takes place.\**

## Contact Information:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) of Project: \_\_\_\_\_

## Project Information:

1. Did your project address any of the following issues?

- a) Animals
- b) Environment
- c) Literacy
- d) Homelessness
- e) Hunger
- f) Other: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Did your project address any other critical issues? *Please describe them.* \_\_\_\_\_

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## Programming:

1. Please share a description of your project. *Provide as much detail as possible.* \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Where did your project take place? \_\_\_\_\_

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# SAMPLE YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL SERVICE PROJECT EVALUATION *Continued*

3. Who were the recipients of your service? Who did you help? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How many hours did you spend planning your project? \_\_\_\_\_
5. How many hours did your project event last? \_\_\_\_\_

## **Project Impact:**

1. How many people were involved in your project? (*Use numbers ONLY, not a range or description, such as “a whole school/club/troop”, etc.*) \_\_\_\_\_

- a) Indicate total number of young people under 18 involved in the event. \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Indicate total number of youth who helped plan and organize. \_\_\_\_\_
- c) Indicate total number of adult-leaders who helped plan and organize. \_\_\_\_\_
- d) Indicate total number of adult volunteers who participated in the project. \_\_\_\_\_
- e) Indicate total number of people served or benefitted by the project. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Please note any additional information that you would like to share about the project's impact. This may include the number of products created or collected (Example: 100 first aid kits; 200 cans of food) or the amount of money raised). \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Budget:**

1. How much money did you spend on your project? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Were you given a grant to help with the project? If so, from who and how much? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Describe your supplies and tell us how much they cost. \_\_\_\_\_

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# SAMPLE YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL SERVICE PROJECT EVALUATION *Continued*

4. Describe any other costs or donations (food, space, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **Publicity:**

1. How did you get the word out for your project? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Please share any newspapers, TV channels and/or other media sources that covered your project. You may also include online and school media. Please provide links or scan your media coverage and attach to your email. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **Quotes:**

1. Please share any quotes from participating kids. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Please share any quotes from recipients of the service project (those you helped). \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **Final Feedback and Pictures:**

1. Is there any other additional information about your project that you'd like to share? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

***\*\*Please remember to attach any pictures or publicity documents to this form,  
and make sure they have signed the photo waiver.\*\****

# SAMPLE ADULT VOLUNTEER WAIVER FORM

*Please Print Legibly*

Name of Organization of Project: \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(First) (Last)

Please sign me up for the *[Insert your organization]* Newsletter and other updates!

E-mail Address (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

## **Waiver:**

I acknowledge that I will be participating at my own risk and hereby agree to release, discharge, indemnify, and hold harmless *[Insert your organization]* and its parent organizations, agents, affiliates, and sponsors from any and all claims and liability for any and all expenses, personal injury, loss or damages incurred or caused directly or indirectly to me during or in connection with or arising out of my participation. I understand that I am a volunteer for *[Insert your organization]* and will not receive any payment for my services. I grant full permission to use photographs, portraits, films and video of me, and quotations made by me to *[Insert your organization]* and its agents, affiliates, and sponsors in materials including television, radio, films, newspapers, online, magazines, and other media, and in any form not heretofore described, and in accounts of volunteering by or about *[Insert your organization]* and its programs.

Volunteer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE: Waivers should always be reviewed by your organization's human resources department or legal counsel.**

# SAMPLE YOUTH VOLUNTEER WAIVER FORM

*Please Print Legibly*

Youth Volunteer Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(First) (Last)

Parent/Guardian(s) Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
(First) (Last)

**Waiver:**

I acknowledge that the above named children have my consent and permission to participate in *[Insert your organization]* and that we/they will be participating at our/their own risk and I hereby agree to release, discharge, indemnify, and hold harmless *[Insert your organization]*, and its parent organizations, agents, affiliates, and sponsors from any and all claims and liability for any and all expenses, personal injury, loss, or damages incurred or caused directly or indirectly to us/them during or in connection with or arising out of our/their participation. I understand that we/they are volunteers for *[Insert your organization]* and will not receive any payment for our/their services. I grant full permission to use photographs, portraits, films and video of me and my children, and quotations made by me or my children to *[Insert your organization]* and its agents, affiliates, and sponsors in materials including television, radio, films, newspapers, online, magazines, and other media, and in any form not heretofore described and in accounts of volunteering by or about *[Insert your organization]* and its programs.

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE: Waivers should always be reviewed by your organization's human resources department or legal counsel.**

# TIPS FOR SPEAKING AT FORMAL EVENTS

- DO talk to attendees. You are an ambassador with an inspiring story. People want to hear from you so DO NOT be shy!
- DO work the floor by actively walking around, shaking hands, smiling, and making eye contact.
- DO NOT clump together. You already know your fellow youth council members. Take this opportunity to make new connections.
- DO remember to use the talking points below and focus on your own service story.
- DO NOT become star struck. You might run into VIPS while you're walking around (another good reason to walk around) but if you do, stay cool. Talk about *[insert your organization]* using your talking points and story just like you would for everyone else.
- DO have fun, but DO NOT forget that you represent *[Insert your organization]*. Make us proud.

## TALKING POINTS

- I am a member of the *[Insert your organization]* Youth Advisory Council because of my commitment to service and volunteerism in my community
- I plan to inspire and empower other kids to give back to their community by encouraging them to participate in local service and volunteer programs
- I want to continue to bring the power of service to young people like me across the country and being chosen to serve on the advisory council will help me achieve this goal
- I want to change the world by *(Insert personal example here of one thing you want to do that will help improve your neighborhood, city and/or the world)*
- I am a part of *[Insert your organization]* because I *(Insert example of one of the community service projects you've been involved in)*

# SAMPLE YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL FEEDBACK FORM

As the Youth Advisory Council term comes to a close, it makes sense that we spend time thinking about this year and applying our thoughts/reflections/ideas to making next year's program the most productive, successful, and youth-led thus far.

Please think carefully and take your time to answer the below questions as they will help us shape which issues will receive the most attention during focus groups. Please be specific and honest.

Name: (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Next year, you will be a:

freshman    sophomore    junior    senior    college student

Which of the following influenced your decision to apply for the Youth Advisory Council?

- The chance to learn about issues in my community
- The opportunity to participate in youth-led community service
- The opportunity to meet new people and make new friends
- A community service requirement for school
- A desire to change my community and school environment
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What was the biggest obstacle or challenge you faced? How were you able to conquer it? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What is your favorite memory from the program so far? Describe it in detail – What was happening? How did you feel? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



# SAMPLE YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL FEEDBACK FORM *Continued*

How do you feel that being a member of this program has impacted your engagement in school? \_\_\_\_\_

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Do you feel you've met people and become friends with people you most likely wouldn't have become friends with if it weren't for the Youth Advisory Council? Explain. \_\_\_\_\_

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What did you think was good, or effective in the way the program was designed? \_\_\_\_\_

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What do you WISH you would have seen or been exposed to during the program? \_\_\_\_\_

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What did you think was ineffective, or could have been made better? \_\_\_\_\_

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Regarding balancing a very busy school and social schedule, how can [Insert your organization] staff be more accommodating and help create a sensible balance between all of your commitments? \_\_\_\_\_

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# HELPFUL LINKS

There are plenty of online resources that can help you come up with ideas and inspiration for your council. Here are a few great places to start:

## **generationOn: [www.generationOn.org](http://www.generationOn.org)**

The generationOn website is an excellent one-stop shop to find service projects, inspirational stories from youth leaders, and tools for youth volunteers, educators, parents, and adult facilitators. Stop by to find all kinds of ideas and resources to help you start up your youth council.

## **Points of Light: [www.pointsoflight.org](http://www.pointsoflight.org)**

Points of Light is the leading volunteer organization, with more than 20 years of history, a bipartisan presidential legacy and the largest volunteer footprint in the nation. It seeks to inspire, equip and mobilize people to take action that changes the world.

## **HandsOn Network: [www.handsonnetwork.org](http://www.handsonnetwork.org)**

HandsOn Network, an enterprise of Points of Light, is the largest network of 250 volunteer action centers that extend to 16 countries around the world. These centers help people find and engage in volunteer opportunities in their local communities.

## **Learning to Give: [www.learningtogive.org](http://www.learningtogive.org)**

Learning to Give, a program of generationOn, is the world's leading developer of lessons and resources that teach giving and volunteerism, civic engagement, and character through service. If you want to incorporate service-learning into your council values and goals, this will be a great place for you and your council to learn about the importance of philanthropy and citizen action.

## **generationOn Youth Advisory Council: [www.generationon.org/teens/yac](http://www.generationon.org/teens/yac)**

This page has information on the current generationOn Youth Advisory Council and their recent service projects

★  
*generationOn.org*  
★



**generationOn**

A POINTS OF LIGHT ENTERPRISE