



Kenosha County Youth in Governance

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WHY YOUTH IN GOVERNANCE?

Youth leadership development is critical in building civic capacity and long-term community sustainability in Kenosha County. Programs that teach useful skills and build the self-confidence of young people ensure capable, effective leaders for the next generation. In addition, recent national trends including an increase in youth civic service and new emphasis on civic education in schools indicate a growing need for leadership training to ensure young people are prepared to participate in political and civic life.

Data from a Kenosha County Search Institute survey in 2010 documented that only 25% of youth perceive that their community values youth and only 27% believe that youth are given useful roles in the community. These results were among the lowest of all the assets measured in the survey and were lower than similar assets measured at the national level.

Kenosha County and Kenosha County government value the youth of our community. In response to the lack of leadership opportunities for Kenosha County youth, as reported in the 2010 Search Institute survey, the Kenosha County Board of Supervisors developed and continue to support the Youth In Governance program.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Youth In Governance program is to create a model of youth empowerment within Kenosha County, through direct participation in local government. The overall goal is to bring the youth voice to community issues and concerns while fostering the development of confident, independent, and motivated youth leaders. Youth participating in Youth In Governance will be selected to sit on each of six Kenosha County Board committees and the one joint committee between Kenosha County and the City of Kenosha:

- **Finance & Administration** – Oversees matters related to personnel, finances, purchasing, budgets, taxes, assessments, audits, and the Department of Administration.
- **Human Services** – Oversees matters relating to community health, aging services, Brookside Care Center, public welfare, child support, the office of the Medical Examiner, and the Department of Human Services.
- **Judiciary & Law** – Oversight of matters related to law enforcement, the jail, the house of corrections, court system, the Sheriff's Department, the Office of Juvenile Intake, Emergency Services, Clerk of Courts, and the District Attorney.
- **Joint Services** – Joint Services is a separate government agency that provides safety support services for the Kenosha City Police and Fire Departments, Kenosha County Sheriff's Department, and various other law enforcement and emergency services agencies.
- **Legislative** – Oversight of matters relating to the policies and rules of procedure of the County Board, intergovernmental relations and communications, proposed legislation, and Corporation Counsel Office.
- **Planning, Development, & Extension Education** – Addresses matters related to land use planning, zoning, shore land and floodplain issues, subdivision control, sanitation and the Department of Planning & Development. Also, oversees matters relating to the University of Wisconsin-Extension office.
- **Public Works & Facilities** – Oversight of matters related to highways, roads, dams, parks, recreation, golf operations, all matters related to county-owned buildings and grounds, and the Department of Public Works.

LENGTH OF TERM

Youth members will serve a one-year term (May-May each year). There are no term limits, but returning members must re-apply.

MEMBERSHIP

The Youth In Governance program consists of a maximum of 12 youth members. No more than two youth members will serve on a committee. The requirements to participate in the Youth In Governance are:

- ♦ Youth must be a high school student in 10th or 11th grade
- ♦ Youth must have a GPA of 2.5 or greater
- ♦ Youth must be a Kenosha County resident
- ♦ Youth must be able to attend the monthly meetings of their committee
- ♦ Youth must attend at least one Kenosha County Board meeting during their term
- ♦ Youth must participate in the YIG Bus Tour held last Wednesday in June
- ♦ Youth must be able to attend additional committee meetings that are combined with other committees

Committee meetings are held in a professional, formal manner, based on Robert's Rules of Order. Each youth member will have a non-binding advisory vote on the committee. The youth members will be included in all open session discussions and votes at the committee level; however, they will not be provided an opportunity for participation in the debate on the County Board floor. Youth members will not be paid a stipend or mileage for attending meetings.

APPLICATION PROCESS

After being nominated, prospective youth members will be required to complete a written application along with a written recommendation. The application consists of basic contact information, school, GPA, and short answer questions about their intended objectives for the Youth In Governance program and how the program will increase their civic awareness and leadership skills. The Planning, Development, & Extension Education Committee will interview selected youth applicants and make final recommendations to the Kenosha County Board Chairman for official appointment.

MENTORS

One adult member from each of the committees will serve as a mentor to the Youth In Governance youth committee member(s). The mentor's role is to offer support and guidance to Youth In Governance youth member throughout their tenure on the committee.

RECOGNITION

Youth In Governance members who complete the program will be recognized for their contributions at a Kenosha County Board meeting in May. The Planning, Development, & Extension Education Committee will recognize both youth and mentors by hosting a reception and provide Youth In Governance members a certificate of appreciation.



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Kenosha County Youth In Governance is a program of Kenosha County UW-Extension in partnership with the Kenosha County Board of Supervisors.

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