



KENOSHA COUNTY YOUTH IN GOVERNANCE ANNUAL REPORT (2021-2022)

BACKGROUND

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. Data from a 2006 Kenosha County *Search Institute* survey documented that only 23% 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 and were lower than similar assets measured at a national level. In direct response to these survey results, the Kenosha County Board of Supervisors created the Kenosha County Youth in Governance (YIG) program in 2007. 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.

NOMINATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

Nomination forms for the 2021–2022 Youth in Governance program were distributed to all public and private high schools in Kenosha County. A total of 166 youth were nominated to participate in the program. Of the 166 nominees that were mailed an application, 37 completed the application, and 25 were invited to interview. Of the 25 interviewees, the names of 14 individuals were forwarded to Kenosha County Board Chair John O’Day for official appointment to a Kenosha County Board Committee in addition to two alternates. See TABLE A for specific nomination and selection statistics.

Name of High School	Nominations	Applications	Interviews	Selected
Bradford High School	47	5	4	1
Harborside Academy	28	6	6	3
Hillcrest School	1	0	0	0
Indian Trail High School and Academy	17	7	5	2
Lakeview Technology Academy	8	5	1	1
The Prairie School	2	2	2	2
St. Joseph Catholic Academy	2	1	1	1
Shoreland Lutheran High School	2	1	1	1
Tremper High School	11	2	1	1
Westosha Central High School	39	3	3	3
Wilmot Union High School	9	5	1	1
TOTAL	166	37	25	14 + 2

TABLE A

Kenosha County Youth in Governance Representatives 2021-22



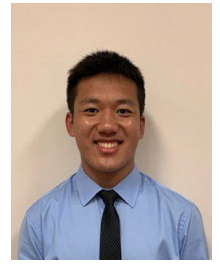
Samuel Arnold
Judiciary & Law



Reya Babu
Judiciary & Law



Mackenzie Belletini
Planning, Development,
& Extension Education



Joshua Cao
Legislative



John Cargille
Finance & Admin



Austin Dawson
Alternate



Srisupraja Kandrakota
Joint Services



Meredith Kaufmann
Alternate



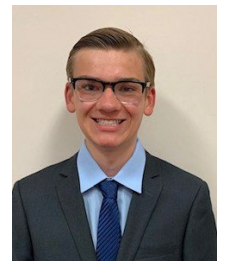
Arjun Kumar
Human Services



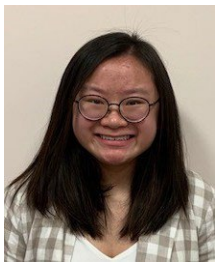
Carly Lois
Finance & Admin



Kayla Mitchell
Human Services



Benjamin Rothove
Legislative



Shu Lan Schaut
Public Works & Facilities



Andrew Setter
Public Works & Facilities



Brooke Smith
Planning, Development,
& Extension Education



Trinity Williams
Joint Services

EVALUATION AND IMPACT

At the end of their term, all Youth In Governance members were given the opportunity to complete a retrospective evaluation. The results below, which probed for changes in the civic engagement and leadership skills of the youth, are based on a five-point Likert scale, which ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Quantitative information about civic engagement and leadership skill development are highlighted in TABLE B and TABLE C. Qualitative information is also shared through direct quotes from youth in response to three questions.

N = 9 of 14 CIVIC ENGAGEMENT	# of Youth Reporting No Change	# of Youth Reporting 1 Unit of Positive Change	# of Youth Reporting 2 or > Units of Positive Change
I am knowledgeable about Kenosha County Government.	0	1	8
I am aware of local issues that affect Kenosha County.	1	5	3
My opinion can make a difference in the community.	1	4	4
I am interested in politics.	4	4	1
I have a useful role in the community.	2	4	5
I feel a strong connection to Kenosha County.	2	3	4

TABLE B

N = 9 of 14 LEADERSHIP SKILLS	# of Youth Reporting No Change	# of Youth Reporting 1 Unit of Positive Change	# of Youth Reporting 2 or > Units of Positive Change
I can participate in group discussions with adults.	1	7	1
I can speak confidently before a group of adults.	0	7	2
I can see issues from multiple perspectives.	3	5	1
I can share new ideas with others.	2	6	1
I can talk knowledgeably with others about local issues.	1	5	3
I can be a resource to people in Kenosha County.	1	2	6

TABLE C

QUESTION #1

One goal of the Kenosha County Youth In Governance program is to create an environment that is conducive to the positive development of youth voice and youth engagement. Do you feel the Youth In Governance program accomplished this goal?

“Yes, because it creates youth leaders who can pass on the impact on them to their schools and carry their peers’ opinions into committee.”

“Yes, because adults value the youth’s opinions and respect them. Pus, I was given many resources to engage myself.”

“Yes, I believe it did accomplish this goal by providing important experience involving leadership and diversity and in general is a good experience for young people to participate in.”

QUESTION #2

Another goal of the Kenosha County Youth In Governance program is that the program would provide youth with skills, knowledge, and experiences to prepare them for future leadership opportunities. Do you feel the Youth In Governance program accomplished this goal?

“Yes This experience allows us to take leadership, be formal, and take pride in our own agency. I feel much more sure in my own ability to contribute ideas of value, even when encountering opposition.”

“Yes, In particular, I learned how to conduct myself in formal meetings as well as how to be respectful and eloquent when I talk.”

“Yes, I left with much more knowledge of county government, better public speaking skills, and improved self-esteem”.

“Absolutely. I am now significantly more confident in voicing my opinion and in serving as a leader to many. By having a mentor, I also gained leadership abilities through observation.”

QUESTION #3

What has been the most important thing you have gained from participation in the Kenosha County Youth In Governance program?

“I gained a new insight into the political process.”

“Knowledge and professional experience I can use in my day-to-day life.”

“Knowledge about Kenosha County as a whole.”

“Growth in crucial skills from leadership to communication. I also gained many connections and friendships with youth I was able to work with.”

“A better understanding of county government’s function and relationship to other levels of government and its citizens”

“I learned about all the different extension programs and learned that I’d be interested in going into a career that works similarly to that.”

“An understanding about the importance of government on all levels.”

“Communication and giving my opinions out to others who may disagree with me.”



For more information about Kenosha County Youth In Governance, please contact:

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