



KENOSHA COUNTY YOUTH IN GOVERNANCE ANNUAL REPORT (2023-2024)

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 2023–2024 Youth in Governance program were distributed to all public and private high schools in Kenosha County. A total of 78 youth were uniquely nominated to participate in the program. Of the 78 nominees that were mailed an application, 24 completed the application and were invited to interview. One applicant declined an interview. Of the 23 interviewees, the names of 18 individuals were forwarded to Kenosha County Board Chair Gabe Nudo for official appointment to a Kenosha County Board Committee. See TABLE A for specific nomination and selection statistics.

Name of High School	Nominations	Applications	Interviews	Selected
Bradford High School	15	1	1	1
Harborside Academy	7	2	2	2
Indian Trail High School and Academy	7	6	5	5
Kenosha School of Technology Enhanced Curriculum	0	0	0	0
Lakeview Technology Academy	9	6	6	6
The Prairie School	1	1	1	1
Reuther Central High School	1	1	1	1
Shoreland Lutheran High School	2	1	1	1
St. Joseph Catholic Academy	2	0	0	0
Tremper High School	16	6	6	1
Westosha Central High School	9	0	0	0
Wilmot Union High School	9	0	0	0
TOTAL	78	24	23	18

TABLE A

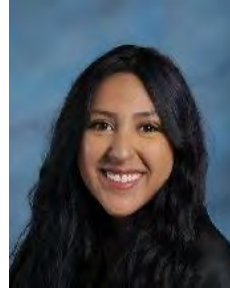
Kenosha County Youth in Governance Representatives 2023-24



Enze Price
Executive



Alec Schires
Executive



Daniela Banda- Hernandez
Finance & Administration



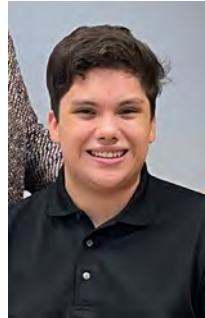
Ignacio Perez
Finance & Administration



Sona Hawkins
Human Services



Madi Tongco
Human Services



JJ Castro
Joint Services



Rylee Chamberlin
Joint Services



Michael Babu
Judiciary & Law



Angelina Lagunas
Judiciary & Law



Garrison Bryant
Legislative



Patrick Sterling
Legislative

Olivia Parrish
PDEEC



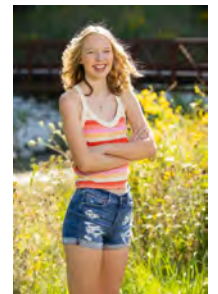
Aqsa Saad Qadri
PDEEC



Evangeline Hernandez
Public Works &
Facilities



Jake Thomas
Public Works &
Facilities



Vanessa Copado
Alternate

Anna Wilson
Alternate

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 = 15 of 18 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.	1	0	14
I am aware of local issues that affect Kenosha County.	5	3	7
My opinion can make a difference in the community.	3	9	3
I am interested in politics.	5*	5	3
I have a useful role in the community.	3	4	8
I feel a strong connection to Kenosha County.	1	9	5

TABLE B

*Two youth did not report on the “Before Participating in YIG” question and are outliers on the “I am interested in politics” evaluation.

N = 15 of 18 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.	4	8	3
I can speak confidently before a group of adults.	4	9	2
I can see issues from multiple perspectives.	3	10	2
I can share new ideas with others.	6	5	4
I can talk knowledgeably with others about local issues.	2	8	5
I can be a resource to people in Kenosha County.	2*	9	3

TABLE C

*One youth reported “No Ability” in “I can be a resource to people in Kenosha County” before participating in YIG. After participating in YIG, the youth reported “uncertain.”

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, I believe this program did this really well. I learned a ton about government and how to have a voice in decision making.”

“Yes I do, [it] allows the kids in the program to gain leadership skills.”

“Yes, I strongly feel the YIG Program has accomplished an environment to positive development of youth voice. I believe it has because the meetings allow youth voices to be heard and allows youth to be more active & have a large role in the community.”

“I do feel that YIG has accomplished the goal of developing youth voice and youth engagement. This is because I feel that I was largely able to grow and become more confident as a person through going to meetings and building positive relations with adults.”

“I believe it did. I feel that in my time during Youth In Governance, I became more connected to Kenosha and issues within it. I was felt my voice could be more heard and expressed while serving.”

“Yes- the YIG program did a great job of allowing me to speak and gain critical leadership skills. My mentor also did a fantastic job helping- shoutout Supervisor Yuhas. 😊”

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, having professional conversations with adults helped me be comfortable with complex conversations.”

“Yes, I believe it helped me extremely. I learned how to be better at public speaking and engaging in conversations. Overall, this we’ll allow me to be a better leader in the future.”

“Yes, I feel more confident running for leadership positions.”

“Yes, I became a better public speaker, presenter, and listener. I feel that these qualities will be useful for future leadership opportunities.”

“Yes, throughout the program, I feel I learned many valuable information regarding the County and its processes, but I also feel I learned to use my voice and raise questions. In all, I feel YIG helped me independize [sic] myself and talk to others.

QUESTION #3

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

“I think the most important thing I’ve taken from the program is the importance of county government and the importance of being a part of decisions and discussions as their decisions affect us more directly!”

“I’ve learned a ton about Kenosha County and I’m really involved in current events in the area!”

“Civic knowledge, connections and fun.”

“To not be afraid to ask questions.”

“A nuanced & holistic knowledge of Kenosha County operations and functions. This will be incredibly useful in the future if I decide to pursue a career in county government.”

“The most important thing I have gained from participating in YIG is confidence & leadership. I feel more confident to speak my voice & share my opinions to be a good leader.”

“I have learned how to argue/debate without anger. I also gained insight into local politics.”

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

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kenosha.extension.wisc.edu/youth/yig



Kenosha County Youth In Governance is a program of Extension Kenosha County in partnership with the Kenosha County Board of Supervisors. University of Wisconsin, U.S. Department of Agriculture and Wisconsin counties cooperating. An EEO/AA employer, University of Wisconsin Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title IX and American with Disabilities (ADA) requirements.