

Youth County — Program Rules

Adopted by the Board under Article XI, Section 1 of the Bylaws. These rules govern every Youth County and Youth Capitol. They exist to make the program educational, safe, and nonpartisan in fact as well as in name.

1. Purpose

Youth County teaches 16- to 18-year-olds how local government is filled and run by having them fill and run one for a day: file, campaign, answer identical questions, vote, take the oath, govern.

2. Eligibility and selection

- Rising high-school juniors and seniors, ages 16–18 on the program date.
- Nominated by a teacher, counselor, or youth-organization leader, **or self-nominated**. No applicant is rejected for lack of a nominator.
- Selection, if the program is oversubscribed, is by lottery within each school, not by essay, interview, or any measure of viewpoint.
- The sponsoring chapter pays registration, lunch, and materials. A family may contribute but is never asked to.
- Parent or guardian consent and an emergency contact are required for every delegate.

3. Nonpartisanship in the program

- No real political party, platform, slogan, or issue position is used, displayed, or discussed as program content. Delegates draw into two invented caucuses — **Cascade** and **Salish** — named for geography.
- Caucus platforms are limited to the mock county's budget and operations (roads, the library, the mock port). Staff strike any plank that mirrors a real public controversy.
- No candidate for any public office, and no paid campaign staff, serves as faculty, judge, counselor, or volunteer during the calendar year of the candidacy or employment.
- Faculty are selected for office held and are balanced across parties on every panel; party is never stated on stage.
- The mock meet-and-greet is run by a certified League moderator to the Equal-Treatment Standard.
- No political material of any kind may be distributed on site by anyone.

4. Staffing and safety

- A program director (Basic Training and Moderator Certification current) and at least one adult per ten delegates, all with a completed background check under the League's youth-protection policy.
- Two-adult rule at all times; no adult alone with a delegate.

- Delegates' names and images are not published without written parent consent; delegate data is never shared.

5. The day

Check-in and assignment · office briefings ("What This Office Does") · mock filing week with a mock Empty Ballot List · caucus and campaign period · meet-and-greet to the Standard · election with public count · oath administered by a judge or court clerk · first meeting of the new commission (a budget with real county figures) · closing.

6. What every delegate receives

A pocket Constitution (U.S., plus Washington Articles I and XI) · a free one-year League membership · a Future Voter sign-up opportunity · a named chapter role offered within 90 days · eligibility for the Founders' Scholarship and for Youth Capitol.

7. Youth Capitol

Two delegates per Youth County, chosen by lottery among those who filed for an office and attended the full day. One day, statewide (virtual in year one): a mock state filing week and a mock committee hearing on a bill written for the program and not pending anywhere. Same rules as above.

8. Records and review

The chapter files a program report (attendance, faculty, incidents, costs) with the Secretary within 30 days. The Board reviews these rules annually.