



Program Description

“Youth need both educational and rhetorical spaces (see Roberts et al. 2008) that give them the ability to engage in critical, creative analyses of their lived experiences, while also resisting others’ constructions of who they are. These spaces, we think, are educational opportunity zones and we can find them in conversation on sidewalks, in public parks, really anywhere youth are engaged in discussions about what they value and where they find inspiration and truth.”

The purpose of the Engaging Youth, Engaging Neighborhoods (EYEN) Youth Council of South Bend is to build strong youth civic leaders (grades 9-12) prepared to effectively organize, lead and catalyze change in their community. Youth have a tremendous amount of convening power and the unique ability to engage and impact persons cross-generationally, as well as, across other identity and socio-political barriers that hamper diverse representations of civic voice. We believe our youth can inspire and promote impactful civic engagement across the city.

Primary Objectives

1. Prepare the next generation of servant and civic leaders
2. Incentivize youth participation in meaningful civic leadership activities
3. Champion the conveying power of youth to increase city-wide participation in civic engagement activity and neighborhood association capacity building

Curriculum Content

Over the course of the school year, EYEN Youth Advisory Council meetings will be structured into five curriculum modules: Civic Leadership, Arts in Civic Voice & Activism, Community Organizing & Civic Engagement, Policy Research & Writing, and finally, Leadership Exploration. The EYEN Youth Advisory Council will engage in self-reflection activities, arts and community-based research to identify concerns, assets or opportunities related to a community issue. Then, advisory council participants engage directly with Council, other elected officials, city employees and other community stakeholders to learn and implement the policy-making process.

1. Civic Leadership
2. Arts & Civic Voice in Activism
3. Community Organizing, Civic Engagement and & Consensus Building
4. Policy Research & Writing, and Consensus Building

Program Resources

- A SharePoint collaborative platform will be used to communicate between facilitator and council members. You are expected to check the course announcements before meetings and events for relevant updates.
- Additional information regarding meeting times, special events/announcements, etc. will be posted on the Youth Advisory Council SharePoint website. (Resource Tab)
- Point of Contact: TBD, NRC Program Coordinator (grant provided)

Curriculum Outline

Module 1: Civic Leadership

Meetings 1-3

Overview

This unit begins by introducing civic leadership and addressing the importance of civic values and code of ethics. Activities in self-awareness and self-efficacy are central to this unit in helping each individual Youth Councilmember recognize the individual strengths that they can contribute to community change. The unit examines the structure and process of municipal government by exposing members to various operations in city hall. Members will begin community-based research while seeing how it is directly affected by decisions made through municipal power.

Big question: What components, values make a good community? Define community challenges.

Recommended In-Class Activities

- a. Youth Advisory Council Introduction & Orientation
- b. Leadership & Teambuilding Training

Module 2: Arts in Civic Voice & Activism

Meeting 4-6

Overview

The Arts in Civic Voice & Activism module will explore how the arts amplify civic voice, as well as, how local artists and communities are engaging the arts to tell stories, activate neighborhood spaces, and promote social and political change.

Big question: How can the arts break barriers and serve as an expression of civic voice?

Recommended In-Class Activities

- a. Introduction to Arts & Activism

- b. Arts & Placemaking
- c. Photography & Digital Arts class

Module 3: Community Organizing & Civic Engagement

Meeting 7-9

Overview

This unit will analyze the concepts and contexts of social and political action and policy. Members will be exposed to various theories and perspectives of public narrative and community organizing explore their impact on civic work and social policy. The unit will emphasize the relationship of civic engagement and community resources. The unit will address: 1) consensus among resident stakeholders 2) the process of organizing participation of a stakeholder with a service event/action and 3) how co-created services and political action events highlight assets and opportunity.

Big Question: How do we collaborate to impact collective community change?

Recommended In-Class Activities

- a. University of Notre Dame Partners on Reframing the Rust Belt & Realities of Race
- a. Public Narrative Training with LaSalle Park
- b. Youth Task Force & Joint Service Activity

Module 4: Policy Research & Writing, and Consensus Building

Meeting 10-12

Overview

This module explores mapping community assets and opportunities and issue identification. The Youth Advisory Council will decide upon a final community asset or opportunity to highlight. The legislative power of the Youth Council is central to this unit by examining the fundamental elements of policy and best practices research, bill writing, and consensus building.

Big Questions: What are the community needs and assets? What issue can we impact?

Recommended In-Class Activities

- a. Community needs assessments
- b. Policy research, best practices & writing
- c. Storytelling through the Art

