

OHIO-WEST VIRGINIA STATE YMCA

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Youth in Government Student Manual

# Overview

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## Introduction and Purpose

Both Ohio and West Virginia's Youth in Government programs grew out of and continue to extend HI-Y's impact in both our two states. Ohio's program began in 1952 and West Virginia's in 1958.

HI-Y Youth in Government reflects the idea that *"democracy must be learned by each generation"* and is based on Thomas Jefferson's belief that, *"the purpose of education is to create good citizens of the community"*.



C. William O'Neill, 1952  
founder of Ohio HI-Y  
Youth in Government.

Our founders, the late C. William O'Neill, the only person in Ohio history to serve as Attorney General, Speaker of the House, Governor and Chief Justice, and the late Governor Cecil Underwood, West Virginia's youngest and then oldest Governor, worked with HI-Y students and State YMCA staff to create Youth in Government in each state. Both leaders recognized HI-Y's unique role engaging teenagers in improving their homes, schools and communities. They responded to teenagers who wanted to extend HI-Y's influence and leadership statewide.

*"HI-Y is truly a seedbed of leadership,"* said O'Neill. *"HI-Y produces much needed local and state leadership,"* Governor Underwood stated when helping launch West Virginia's Youth in Government. He went on to say, *"The future of our nation depends upon the caliber of young people who will soon assume positions of leadership in our country. HI-Y Youth in Government will provide a year-round laboratory experience in practical politics. The youth of West Virginia will be able to study public issues, debate public policies, write legislation, and actually participate in the process of government."*



WVYG Founder  
Governor Cecil  
Underwood,  
40th Youth  
Governor Laurel  
Lackey Basil and  
1st  
Youth Governor  
Rebecca Colebank  
Duckworth at  
YG's 50th  
anniversary.

Both founders wanted Youth in Government to be more than just passing legislation. In fact, both thought the last thing needed to solve a problem was more legislation. What was needed were young people seeing what needs done to make their communities better, figuring out what to do

and then doing it. Legislation is a last resort. Student legislation proposed to Youth in Government would come out of a student's real life and HI-Y volunteer experience.

O'Neill and Underwood believed in and supported HI-Y's approach to leadership development. They saw HI-Y change lives as teens changed their world. HI-Y's time-tested learn by doing model of leadership development works as HI-Y members identify the kind of school and community they want, create and carry out initiatives to achieve their vision and reflect on their work to strengthen future action. Both our Youth in Governments continue to build on this foundation.

### **Citizenship is our Purpose**

Simply put, HI-Y Youth in Government is about citizenship, not politics or political careers. Everyone's job is citizen. After that comes our life's work. From presidents to governors and janitors, we all have the same job – citizen. Youth in Government brings together students of all backgrounds, interests and experience. Together we broaden our understanding of democratic citizenship by engaging in the process of state government.

### **Student Positions**

#### Legislators

- Members of the House
- Member of the Senate

#### Supreme Court

- Justice
- Chief Justice
- Associate Justice
- Attorneys

#### Legislative Officer

- President of the Senate
- Speaker of the House
- Clerk
- Chaplain
- Governor
- Lt. Governor

#### Other Positions

- Lobbyist
- Press
- Page
- Governor's Cabinet

## **Student Officer Leadership Corps**

Student officers elected at the end of one program provide program leadership from June thru the next April's YG. Officers do the public part of their responsibility at the HI-Y Summit at Horseshoe in June, at the November HI-Y Building Leader's Conference, at Bill/Case Rating Day in February and at the April Youth in Government.

### **Officer Leadership Corps Strengthening, Improving, Building HI-Y's Impact in our Schools, Communities and our Two States**

The Ohio-West Virginia YMCA Board counts on officers to lead HI-Y, YG and UN to success. Officers with the commitment, vision and time are needed. We need officers who want to make a difference! Our work begins at our HI-Y Leadership Summits each June at YMCA Camp Horseshoe.

#### **HI-Y Officer Corps**

HI-Y is a real-life laboratory of citizenship where students learn how to organize and tackle issues confronting families, their schools and communities by creating, leading and governing local HI-Ys. Students apply classroom and life lessons to identify, plan and take volunteer actions to improve family, school and community life. HI-Y's build better futures by making differences for good!

- 1. Every year secure your new HI-Y officers for the next school year by May 20<sup>th</sup>. Submit their names and contact information to the HI-Y Leadership Center.**
- 2. Have as many officers as possible – and for sure your new President – represent your HI-Y at the June HI-Y Leadership Summit at Horseshoe.**

Assure your HI-Y's success by getting your officers trained and on board as part of the two-state HI-Y Officer Corps.

#### **Youth in Government Officer Corps**

YG officers review the just completed program, identify ways to improve YG for the new year, establish goals for the year and lay out a plan of action. Officers engage other students in YG sessions to motivate them to participate and to return home ready to recruit their peers.

YG officers challenge everyone at the Summit to identify issues that need solved by the volunteer actions HI-Ys take back home. Out of tackling issues

like hunger, homelessness, the environment, needs of seniors, and other problems, students propose Legislation to YG's Student Legislature. YG is the legislative action arm of HI-Y.

Officer positions elected by students at YG are Governor, Lt. Governor (Ohio only), Speaker of the House, President of the Senate, Clerks of the House and Senate, Chaplains of the House and Senate, and Chief Justice. Appointment positions are Governor's Cabinet, Associate Justices, Press Editor and Committee Chairs.

### **Model United Nations Officer Corps**

UN officers review the just completed program, identify ways to improve UN for the new year, establish goals for the year and lay out a plan of action. Officers engage other students in UN sessions to motivate them to participate and to return home ready to recruit their peers. HI-Y offers separate high school and middle school UN Assemblies.

UN officers challenge everyone at the Assembly to identify international issues that need solutions and gain understanding how world issues impact their communities and future. Resolutions presented by students to the HI-Y Model UN extend HI-Y's impact beyond the community and state to the world. Hunger, the environment, illiteracy, health and energy are just some world issues confronting our communities that HI-Y students tackle.

Officer positions elected by students at UN are President of the General Assembly, Secretary General, and Council Presidents. Appointment positions are Vice President of Councils.

### **Student Leadership**

HI-Y members and other interested students begin the program year with participation in June's HI-Y Leadership-Service Summit at Horseshoe. Training, goal setting, effective organizations, team building, creating a multi-state peer network and practice sessions help everyone learn how to more effectively contribute, participate and lead.

### **Here's what Students say about their HI-Y Summit at Horseshoe**

*Horseshoe changes the way you think, act and live. When you go home you are a completely different person. You learn to trust people and see the good in them. You step out of your boundaries.*

*Horseshoe is leadership plain and simple. But the leadership is in disguise. Between group activities, games, meet and greet, the people you meet become family and soon you're stepping out and accomplishing things you never dreamed possible.*

*This is one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. I met new people, learned about myself, and most of all this camp really changed my life. I have grown from a shy girl into a more confident woman.*

*HI-Y is a lot different. Midway through the week you don't miss your cell phone, your own room, your own computer or anything like that. The only thing I regret is I should have come to Horseshoe sooner.*

*This is a good camp for boosting confidence, breaking barriers, and meeting so many interesting people. This is the only time where there's no judgment, no distractions and it is a wonderful experience.*

*Horseshoe changed my life. I have more confidence and learned so many life lessons from those here.*

*If you want a camp to test your abilities and help you create a better and more independent you, go to Horseshoe. The absence of electronics and everyday life lets you see life in a different light.*

*Horseshoe lets you find who you are deep inside you.*

*HI-Y shows me that everyone has something to offer and when you have different ideas you can combine them to create something better. This week changed me.*

*Horseshoe is a remarkable experience. It will make you think things you've never truly seen. It will give you the resources you need in one week to become the best possible version of you.*

## **HI-Y Leadership Center**

Youth in Government is one of the HI-Y programs offered in every school and community by the Ohio-West Virginia YMCA's HI-Y Leadership Center.

The Center is a national resource for HI-Y providing technical assistance, program development, manuals, materials, training, newsletters, idea exchanges, state and national youth leadership conferences and camps and the HI-Y Council representing local HI-Y's.

## **HI-Y Philosophy of Leadership**

HI-Y believes that each person is responsible for the life of their community and to help others as well as the community achieve their potential.

HI-Y believes that civic leadership has little to do with power and everything to do with responsibility. What counts is individual and group character. HI-Y promotes *Respect - Responsibility - Caring - Trustworthiness - Honesty - Fairness - Citizenship*.

## **Learning Style**

HI-Y's service-learning approach enables students to connect classroom lessons, life experience and HI-Y's active engagement in community building to their service as Legislators, Supreme Court Justices, Officers, Lobbyists, Press or Page delegates to the Model Legislature or Supreme Court. The American governmental process unfolds with deeper understanding as students seek to solve pressing issues through the Student Legislature and Supreme Court.

## **Board and Committee**

The Ohio-West Virginia YMCA Board appoints Committees for Ohio and West Virginia Youth in Government. Each Committee is responsible to secure the resources the programs require to succeed, to give directional emphasis so the programs support the mission and goals of the Ohio-West Virginia YMCA and to extend the program into every interested community.

## **Staff**

The Ohio-West Virginia YMCA Board employs the Executive who is responsible to employ other staff and engage volunteers to carry out Board policies and the work of the Committees.

## **U.S. Constitution Preamble**

We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

## **Ohio State Constitution Preamble**

We, the people of the State of Ohio, grateful to Almighty God for our freedom, to secure its blessings and promote our common welfare, do establish this Constitution.

## **West Virginia State Constitution Preamble**

Since through Divine Providence we enjoy the blessings of civil, political and religious liberty, we, the people of West Virginia, in and through the provisions of this Constitution, reaffirm our faith in and constant reliance upon God and seek diligently to promote, preserve and perpetuate good government in the state of West Virginia for the common welfare, freedom and security of ourselves and our posterity.