

# ENGAGING YOUTH IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT THROUGH THE DANE COUNTY YOUTH GOVERNANCE PROGRAM





# WELCOME!

We're here to discuss the Dane County Youth Governance Program (YGP), its development, successes, challenges, with a focus on engaging youth in local government...and we'll hear from some of our YGP alumni!



# PRESENTATION **SPEAKERS**



**ELY MOYA**

**AARIYA GOPAL**

**HANNAH MACHLEIDT**



**Positive Youth  
Development Educator**  
UW Extension | YGP

**YGP Youth Representative  
2023-24**  
Dane County Food Council

**YGP Youth Representative  
2023-24**  
Dane County Food Council



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# YOUTH GOVERNANCE PROGRAM **OVERVIEW**



# WHAT IS THE **YOUTH GOVERNANCE PROGRAM?**

The Dane County Youth Governance Program (**YGP**) offers unique opportunities for youth leadership development and empowerment through direct participation in county government.

It provides real-life learning experiences about the functioning of local government.

Allows youth to contribute to community issues.

Helps youth develop into confident, capable, and independent leaders.



# FOUR COMPONENTS OF YGP

## YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Develop essential skills for success within and beyond the program.

## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Meaningful and long-term engagement platform with local government.



## COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT

Youth positively contribute to their communities.

## YOUTH VOICE

Needs and interests of youth are heard and understood.

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# BACKGROUND OF YGP



**The Youth Governance Program is part of  
UW-Extension's partnership with county boards and  
city councils and their committees to include youth  
representation in several Wisconsin counties.**







A few YGP  
alumni!

## OUR HISTORY

This initiative was created to cultivate youth leadership, which is crucial for building strong communities. National trends emphasizing youth civic service and education underscored the need for such programs and in response to the lack of leadership opportunities for youth in local communities, several counties in Wisconsin developed and implemented the Youth in Governance program, starting with Kenosha in 2007.

# DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROGRAM IN DANE COUNTY

## SPECIAL STUDY COMMITTEE ON YOUTH GOVERNANCE

To develop the program with  
community input.

## APPROVAL AND LAUNCH

Program was approved by the Dane County  
Board of Supervisors in January 2012, with the  
first cohort inducted in June 2012

2010

2011

2011

2012

## EARLY STAGES

Informal conversations between Board  
Supervisors, Extension Staff, and Youth  
Commission staff and research into  
existing youth governance models.

## YOUTH SUMMIT

At the Wisconsin Association of County  
Extension Committees garnered positive  
feedback and significant interest from  
youth and adult

# DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROGRAM IN DANE COUNTY

RES. 188, 11-12

## CREATING A DANE COUNTY BOARD YOUTH GOVERNANCE PROGRAM

Earlier this year, the Dane County Board created a study committee to consider creation of a youth governance program. The committee has made a report to the County Board, recommending creation of a youth governance program within the Dane County Board's legislative structure. The committee envisions active youth participation in the County Board's standing committee matters and specified an implementation approach including eligibility criteria, selection processes, mentoring opportunities, and outreach to ensure participation.

The study committee agreed to begin the youth governance program on a smaller scale at the outset, limiting youth participation on the standing committees of the Dane County Board, except the Executive Committee. Study committee members also agreed to support and seek provisions for mileage reimbursement for youth participants.

The Youth Governance Program would be created in the Dane County Extension Department, with assistance provided by the Department of Human Services' Youth Commission Coordinator. Program parameters follow:

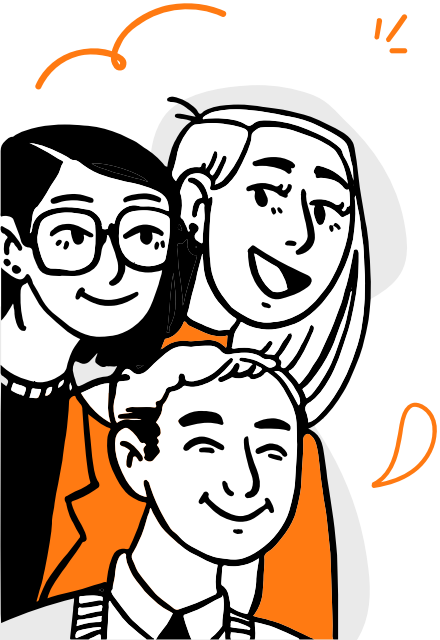
- Youth members will have a non-binding advisory vote on all County Board standing committees, but will be given the same opportunities for committee participation and involvement as elected county supervisors. Committee closed sessions may include youth members at the call of the chair. Youth members are expected to sign confidentiality agreements to apply to these situations. Youth members will not be counted for purpose of quorum, and committee minutes should record their votes separately as advisory.
- Two youth representatives will be selected to serve on each of the following standing committees, or their counterparts should the standing committee structure change in future years:
  - Personnel & Finance
  - Health & Human Needs
  - Public Protection & Judiciary
  - Public Works & Transportation
  - Environment, Agriculture & Natural Resources
  - Zoning & Land Regulation
- Youth will serve one-year terms from June to June. Program applicants may reapply for a second term. Eligible youths include those in grades 9-12, and participants must be Dane County residents. Applications for the one-year term shall be sent to the Dane County Extension Department by March 1.
- County Extension staff will conduct an initial screening of the applications. The County Extension Committee will conduct brief interviews of the screened applicants, and make final recommendations. Finalists will be forwarded to the County Board Chair for official appointment. Youth members will be notified of their appointment in May.
- Information dissemination and the youth candidate selection process will be administered by the Dane County Extension Department. County Extension staff will develop and disseminate program materials to area high schools, alternative schools, youth organizations, and home school networks, with the anticipation of youth participation on County Board standing committees beginning with the 2012-2014 County Board term.

The Resolution  
introduced to the  
Dane County Board

03



# THE DANE COUNTY YOUTH GOVERNANCE PROGRAM



The program aims to empower youth through direct participation in local government, bringing their voices to the forefront of community issues, and fostering the development of future leaders.

**MISSION & GOAL**





# **PROGRAM STRUCTURE: ENGAGING YOUTH IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT**



## **SELECTION PROCESS**

- Eligible Dane County youth in grades 10-12 apply for a one-year term starting in September.
- They are appointed to various Dane County Board committees and commissions.
- Each year, up to 12-18 youth are selected for YGP and each youth is matched with a supervisor-mentor who provides guidance and support throughout their term.

## **MENTORSHIP & SUPPORT**

- They provide resources, advocate for the youth, and ensure a safe, welcoming environment.
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# **PROGRAM STRUCTURE: ENGAGING YOUTH IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT**



## **COMMITTEE PARTICIPATION**

- YGP youth have the same opportunities for committee participation and involvement as elected county supervisors, except that they have a non-binding advisory vote.

## **EDUCATIONAL MEETINGS**

- Youth representatives attend bimonthly cohort education meetings to connect with peers, deepen their learning, and enhance their leadership and civic engagement skills.
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# SUCCESSES OF YGP



YGP members in  
D.C. for National  
4-H Conference!



# CHALLENGES IN ENGAGING YOUTH

**01**

## **Recruitment that representative of the County**

*Solution:* Implement targeted outreach strategies to schools, community centers, and youth organizations that serve diverse populations. Engage with community leaders and influencers to help spread the word and encourage participation

**02**

## **Retention**

*Solution:* Create a supportive and inclusive environment that values youth input and ideas. Provide ongoing opportunities to keep participants motivated and engaged. Offer leadership roles within the program to encourage continued involvement and ownership.

**03**

## **Adapting to changing interest and needs of youth**

*Solution:* Stay in tune with current trends and issues affecting youth by conducting regular surveys and feedback sessions.

# ENGAGING YOUTH IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

## HOW DOES YGP SUCCESSFULLY ENGAGES YOUTH?

### MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION

- Real opportunity to participate in local government decision-making
- Hands-on experience gives them a sense of ownership and responsibility

### YOUTH-CENTERED APPROACH

- Program is designed with the needs and interests of youth in mind.
- Provides a platform for youth to express their opinions, share their perspectives, and contribute their ideas.

### MENTORSHIP & SUPPORT

- A supervisor-mentor who provides guidance, support, and encouragement throughout their term

### SKILL DEVELOPMENT

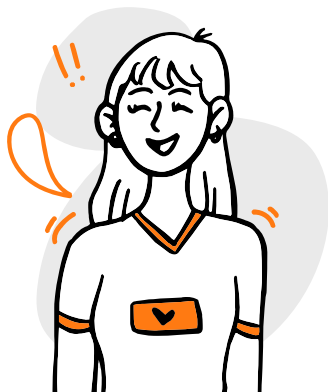
- YGP focuses on developing essential skills in youth, such as communication, teamwork, critical thinking, and problem-solving

### COMMUNITY IMPACT

- Youth have the opportunity to make a tangible impact on their communities

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# YGP ALUMNI EXPERIENCES



**THANK YOU!**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Dane County YGP Website:

<https://dane.extension.wisc.edu/14085-2/>

Contact Ely Moya:

[moya.ely@countyofdane.gov](mailto:moya.ely@countyofdane.gov)



Scan for more  
information!

**DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS?**

We're happy to answer any questions you may have!