



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®**  
**FOR HEALTHY LIVING**  
**FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**



# **SPEAK YOUR MIND**

## **MINNESOTA YMCA YOUTH IN GOVERNMENT Model Assembly Session**

Minnesota YMCA Youth in Government (YIG) is a youth development program emphasizing the Y's four core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility. All are welcome and financial assistance is available.

**Democracy Must Be Learned By Each Generation**

# LEARN LEAD SERVE

## ABOUT YIG

The Model Assembly Session is an experience like no other. Each year, students come together and are inspired, connected and empowered. They get involved with the processes of Minnesota government. They learn about issues, meet new friends from all over the state and have fun the whole time.

### Why should YOU do YIG now?

- ◆ Build skills for the real world
- ◆ Learn things you can't learn from a test – critical thinking, professional skills and leadership
- ◆ Get exposed to students from other parts of the state who have different viewpoints
- ◆ Have powerful conversations on, important issues in respectful and mind-opening ways
- ◆ Meet new people and make friendships that will last a lifetime
- ◆ Looks good on resumes and college applications

## EVENING ACTIVITIES

YIG delegates work hard each day of the program – and they get to play each evening.

Examples of some of the free-time activities:

- ◆ Delegate Talent Show
- ◆ Dance
- ◆ Carnival
- ◆ Movies
- ◆ Candidate Forums
- ◆ Karaoke
- ◆ Arts & Crafts
- ◆ Game Space
- ◆ Quiet Space for Schoolwork and Socializing

## OUR MISSION

YIG encourages life-long citizenship by providing experiential learning for teens.

## WHAT STUDENTS HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THEIR YIG EXPERIENCES

"You learn things here that you can't learn anywhere else or without experiencing them for yourself. The advisors are always there when you need them but they also help us learn things on our own."

"YIG makes me feel like I belong somewhere. It has given me self-confidence. It gives me something I can be truly passionate about. I have met my best friends through the program. It has taught me how to be a leader and a good follower."

"I've gained confidence in my abilities, developed my leadership skills and opened my eyes to all that there is outside my little bubble. My life has changed for the better because of YIG. It gave me friends and a purpose."

"I've become much more comfortable speaking up about my thoughts and opinions, especially when they differ from those around me. I have become much more self-sufficient and confident in my abilities."

"There is a place for everyone in YIG. It is not just for "government geeks." YIG is a program that encourages students to take what they learned and apply it to their communities. It is a program that is more than self-improvement."

"YIG is my family. Over my years in the program I have met people who I will stay in touch with my entire life. I have created bonds that are unbreakable. YIG is such a crucial program – the learning and the connections you make will affect the rest of your life."



Minnesota YMCA Youth in Government brings together 1,600 teens from around the state to discuss today's important issues.

**WAYS TO PARTICIPATE AT MODEL ASSEMBLY**



**LEGISLATIVE BRANCH**

Youth Representatives and Senators identify state issues important to them, their families, their schools or their communities and write legislation to improve Minnesota. Delegates present their bills in committee hearings and on the respective House or Senate floor.

- Humphrey House & Stassen Senate                      Grades 9, 10
- Ramsey Senate & Sibley House                              Grades 9, 10
- Sanford House & Knutson Senate                              Grades 11, 12



**JUDICIAL BRANCH**

Court members prepare for hearings and make arguments before Youth Judges or Justices. Each student has the opportunity to argue both sides of their assigned case and most will have an opportunity to serve on the bench.

- Trial Court    Grade 9
- Court of Appeals    Grades 10
- Supreme Court    Grades 11, 12
- District Court    Grades 10, 11, 12



**NATIONAL ISSUES FORUM**

Delegates prepare, present and debate proposals on ideas that can improve the nation. Discussions in NIF are focused on big picture ideas, rather than legislation.

- National Issues Forum    Grades 10, 11, 12



**LEADERSHIP CORPS**

Students are introduced to each aspect of Model Assembly, have a chance to learn about the workings of state government and participate in skill-building and leadership development activities. Students work in small groups and learn a little about "everything YIG".

- Leadership Corps    Grade 8



**LOBBYISTS**

Lobbyists provide testimony, draft bills to assist Youth Legislators and choose specific groups for which they concentrate their lobbying efforts – working together to support or oppose potential laws.

- Lobbyists    Chosen by Elected Officers



**MEDIA**

Media participants are responsible for reporting, producing or publishing several news programs each day – via TV Station, Radio Station, Newspaper and Digital Media. They interact with all areas of Model Assembly and report their findings to all students and advisors at the conference – along with parents, donors and alumni outside the conference.

- Media Program Areas    Chosen by Elected Officers



**EXECUTIVE BRANCH**

The Youth Governor and Lt. Governor have staff members and Cabinet officials to help advance their legislative and leadership agendas. The Youth Secretary of State's staff tracks pending legislation and conducts youth elections.

- Governor/Lt. Governor Staff    Chosen by Elected Officers
- Governor/Lt. Governor Cabinet    Chosen by Elected Officers
- Secretary of State Staff    Chosen by Elected Officers

"My favorite parts of YIG are watching people grow, being treated like an adult, having people listen to my viewpoints, and being independent."  
- YIG STUDENT

## DISCOVER OTHER YIG OPPORTUNITIES

### MODEL ASSEMBLY LEADERSHIP ROLES

- ◆ Elected Officers – These leaders make a serious commitment to YIG and to the students they serve. Students stand for election for one of about 20 leadership roles for the following year’s conference. Those who are elected participate in retreats and planning sessions to prepare to lead the 1,600 other students at the conference.
- ◆ Appointed Officials – These students are selected by the Elected Officers to assist in leading the various program areas and attend a few prep sessions to meet their peers and learn about their specific roles.
- ◆ Application for these roles takes place during Model Assembly.

### MODEL UNITED NATIONS (MUN)

- ◆ Delegates in grades 7 – 12 “adopt” a country, with a small group of other students, and exercise the art of compromise and diplomacy to attempt to address pressing global issues. Model United Nations teaches students to be responsible “world citizens” in our global community and work to find solutions to common problems. Model UN takes place in late March/Early April each year.
- ◆ Registration begins in January – Contact your local Delegation Director for more information.

### CONFERENCE ON NATIONAL AFFAIRS (CONA)

- ◆ More than 600 Youth in Government participants from about 30 states are selected to attend the conference where they debate issues of national and international importance. The 12-day trip happens in early July at the YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly. The Minnesota delegation traditionally takes an exciting post-conference trip to various east coast cities, which have included Washington DC and New York City.
- ◆ Applications for National Affairs are due in February. The conference is open to 10th – 12th graders.

### NATIONAL JUDICIAL COMPETITION (NJC)

- ◆ NJC is a chance for YIG participants to expand on the legal issues they explore in Minnesota’s state session and to meet fantastic delegates from other state YIG programs. Delegates have a chance to choose between involvement in a Mock Trial (criminal court) or a Model US Supreme Court (appellate court) – both of which will involve intense preparation for exciting legal cases. This five day conference takes place during late July in Chicago and includes time for fun group activities before the actual trials begin.
- ◆ Applications for NJC are due in February. The conference is open to 10th – 12th graders.



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## Who runs Youth in Government?

- ◆ YIG is run by student officers who are elected during the previous program year. YMCA staff members, teachers and volunteers are always present to guide from the side and help things run effectively.
- ◆ Students are involved in the leadership of YIG programs in meaningful and hands-on ways.

## How does conference preparation happen?

- ◆ Local delegation meetings are the place where students write preparation materials for their program area, listen to speakers and practice their presentation skills.
- ◆ Each November, delegates from all over the state come together for intensive training to get ready for the January conference.

## Where is Model Assembly held?

- ◆ Delegates live and work in our conference hotel throughout the conference, and many meetings happen at the hotel.
- ◆ The conference also utilizes the State Capitol Complex – including the State Capitol Building, Minnesota Judicial Center and Legislative Office Buildings.

## What is included in the state program fees?

- ◆ Training and program preparation leading up to the conference.
- ◆ At the conference — 3 nights lodging, program transportation, security, meeting space rental, evening activities, supplies, program resources, and advisor costs.

## What is included in the local delegation fees?

- ◆ Local delegation expenses - these vary by group.
- ◆ Transportation to and from the training conference in November.
- ◆ Transportation to and from Model Assembly.

## How do hotel rooms work?

- ◆ Students make roommate requests and are assigned to rooms with two double beds and up to three other students of the same gender.
- ◆ Groups of more than four per room are not allowed.

## What about food?

- ◆ All meals are “on your own”.
- ◆ Students will have access to a variety of fast food options for meals in the Minneapolis skyway system or near the Capitol Complex.
- ◆ Many bring snacks and light breakfast items to eat in their hotel rooms.

## What is the role of adults?

- ◆ Dedicated adult advisors help each local delegation organize, conduct trainings, raise funds and prepare for Model Assembly.
- ◆ At the conference, adults are responsible for supervision, safety and security.

## What if I have more questions?

- ◆ Contact your local Delegation Director to get your questions answered and to learn more about how to participate.
- ◆ Call the YIG state office at (612) 823.1381 or (800) 372.0002.
- ◆ Check out the YIG website – [mnyig.org](http://mnyig.org) – to find more info, as well.



SCAN TO REGISTER

## GET INVOLVED!

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(800) 372.0002  
(612) 823.1381

Email the YIG State Office:  
[yig@ymcatwincities.org](mailto:yig@ymcatwincities.org)

Visit us at:  
[mnyig.org](http://mnyig.org)



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