



# **How to Start a YLA Chapter**

**[www.ylaleads.org](http://www.ylaleads.org)**



**Leadership Character Service Entrepreneurship Philanthropy**

## **How to Start a YLA Chapter**

### **First how to start your chapter:**

- If you are a school, it is important to have the support of your administration.
- Get together those who want to be a charter member of a new YLA. Share with them the benefits YLA provides for each person. What are those benefits:
  - ♦ Action, Fun, Friends, Good Things to Do, Connections and Skills for a Lifetime! All things resulting in a good purpose.
  - ♦ Schools require community service to graduate. YLA helps with that by doing service projects such as visiting shut-ins, activities at nursing homes, food banks, assisting at homeless centers, environmental cleanups, community beautification projects, help at animal shelters, and so much more. All making life better for everyone.
  - ♦ Build skills in teamwork, communication, and leadership.
  - ♦ Connect with teens from across West Virginia and Ohio.
  - ♦ Personal growth – you don't know what you can accomplish if you don't try.
  - ♦ Career opportunities.
- Share YLA's Purpose and Values:
  - ♦ Caring commitment to common good.
  - ♦ Respect for the dignity of every person.
  - ♦ Personal integrity and honesty.
  - ♦ Trustworthiness and mutual trust as a foundation of community life.
  - ♦ Making responsible choices, being responsible, and taking responsibility.
  - ♦ Active citizenship building better futures for all.
- Share the Opportunities YLA Provides in Addition to Local Chapters:
  - ♦ **Fall Conference** takes place each November and is the first gathering of the new school year for Chapters in Ohio and West Virginia to come together. After the weekend is up, you return to your communities with the tools, inspiration, and excitement to change the world.
  - ♦ **Model United Nations** is an opportunity for new perspectives on world issues as students "become" citizens of other countries to take on international issues.

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#### **Ohio-West Virginia Youth Leadership Association**

YLA Chapters, Youth in Government, Youth & Government Seminars, Model United Nations, Horseshoe, Cave Lake  
[www.ylaleads.org](http://www.ylaleads.org)

Youth Leadership Association  
522 Sandhill Road  
Pt. Pleasant, WV 25550  
P: (304) 675-5899 F: (304) 675-5977

Cave Lake Leadership Center  
1132 Bell Hollow Road  
Latham, OH 45646  
P: (937) 588-3252 F: (937) 588-3252

Horseshoe Leadership Center  
3309 Horseshoe Run Road  
Parsons, WV 26287  
P: (304) 478-2481 F: (304) 478-4446

- ♦ **Youth in Government** lets students “takeover” the Statehouse in Ohio or the Capitol in West Virginia for a three-day mock simulation of the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial Branches of our state government. These branches are led by elected youth officials such as the Youth Governor, Chief Justice, Speaker of the House and President of the Senate along with student legislators, justices, press, pages and lobbyist.
- ♦ **Youth in Government Seminars** offers 8<sup>th</sup> grade students in West Virginia the opportunity to learn about state government by observing and interacting with state officials during the annual legislative session.
- ♦ **Summer Camps** at Camp Horseshoe in West Virginia and soon at Cave Lake in Ohio is the setting for Entrepreneurship and Teen Leadership Summits. Learn how to build your own company from the ground up at Entrepreneurship Summit. Teen Leadership Summit is just that...learning leadership skills, teamwork, personal growth all while having a great time with friends from all over Ohio and WV. You return home with a new vision, commitment and the skills to strengthen your YLA Chapter, community, and family.
- ♦ Get started. Do something. Action attracts membership.

### **Building Lasting Success:**

- Recruit an adult(s) to be your Advisor. Advisor(s) do NOT need to know “how to do it.” They just need to be willing to learn with you. We are here to help every step of the way. Contact us at 304-675-5899, 304-478-2481 or email [yla@ylaleads.org](mailto:yla@ylaleads.org).
- We will provide your advisor(s) with an Advisor Kit that has everything needed for a successful Chapter. Information will also be available on our website [www.ylaleads.org](http://www.ylaleads.org).
- Follow the YLA Membership Policy and Standards (chapter 8 in the WV Advisor Kit and chapter 7 in the OH Advisor Kit).
- If your Chapter is sponsored by a local organization (school, church, business, community group, town council, etc.) meet or exceed the standards they have set.
- Develop a constitution. We have provided a sample in this packet.
- Elect officers and send names, titles, and contact information to YLA. The form may be found in chapter 9 of the WV Advisor Kit, Chapter 8 in the OH Advisor Kit, or an electronic submission option is on our website.
- Affiliate (chapter 2 in both kits) by paying a group affiliation fee and then each individual must also affiliate. Both are to be done online at <https://givebutter.com/YLAAFF>

- Involve everyone in creating your written goals for the year and action plan to achieve them. Success combines local and state YLA activities plus a variety of leadership, service, recreational, and special programs. Set time aside for reflection and evaluation. A good guide in all Chapter activities is “plan, do, review.”

**Now you are on your way to a successful YLA Chapter!**

**Nothing helps a Chapter succeed more than being an active YLA where everyone is valued, needed and involved.**

Don't forget, you aren't in this alone. YLA staff is here to help. Reach out to us. Invite us to a meeting, ask questions, give suggestions...we want to be helpful in your success.

Besides the Advisor Kit and staff, we also have a YLA Handbook that will explain the duties of the officers and other helpful information. It may be found on our website or you may request a hard copy.

**STAFF:**

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## YLA Constitution and By-Laws

Constitution and By-Laws generally state the purpose of the organization, establish the officers and committees, and list the procedures for the organization to continue. The Constitution is the document that gives authority and responsibility to officers, outlines the obligations and responsibilities of members, and protects the rights of its members. It is a permanent document that extends beyond any set of officers and endures for the life of the organization.

The Constitution and By-Laws keep your YLA chapter on target and work to prevent the adoption of spur-of-the-moment legislation that is not in keeping with the purpose and objectives of YLA chapter.

Every YLA chapter is to have a constitution. A committee can be appointed to draft one.

Once drafted by the committee, it is to be thoroughly discussed by the total membership. All need to understand it, and the group needs to support it. The discussion is not for the sake of parliamentary maneuvering or technical bickering . . . the goal is to create a document that helps your YLA chapter succeed.

If your YLA is in a school, the Constitution may need to have the approval of the school administration. One copy is to be filed with the school, one copy filed with the YLA Leadership Center, and copies kept with your YLA's chapter records. Every member is to have a copy.

By-Laws are minor rules and regulations governing the inner practices and workings of the group. Do not include these within the framework of the Constitution.

The sample Constitution that follows is only a guide. Develop your own to meet the needs of your situation.

## SAMPLE YLA CONSTITUTION

### **Article I - Name**

The name of this organization shall be the \_\_\_\_\_(school or town) YLA. This YLA and its members annually affiliate with the YLA Leadership Center.

### **Article II - Purpose**

To involve members in developing Leadership, Character, and Service while increasing an awareness of oneself and the world.

### **Article III - Membership**

Section 1. Active Membership includes men and women in the (name of school, community, or area you cover) who accepts the purpose of our YLA chapter and who are willing to give of their time, work, effort, and money to make this YLA chapter purposeful, and are eligible to active membership

Section 2. Transfers of membership of an active YLA chapter member in good standing from another school or community will be recognized and accepted by this YLA upon application for membership.

Section 3. Equal Opportunity is the basis of this YLA's chapter membership policy. This YLA chapter welcomes into membership students who are interested, who support, and are willing to work to carry out the YLA chapter's purpose and program. This YLA chapter does not discriminate in our membership on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, national origin, disability, gender or gender identity, or economic status.

Section 4. Advisory or Sponsoring Committee is selected in consultation with the YLA Leadership Center and our local sponsor (i.e. school). The Advisory Committee includes local leaders in business, government, education, and civic affairs.

Section 5. Advisor of this YLA chapter is a mature person who believes in the YLA purpose, who will work with the YLA organization, who will work to help develop this YLA chapter into a valuable experience for all, and who will regularly meet with the chapter.

Section 6. Membership Dues, including the annual YLA Affiliation paid to the YLA Leadership Center, are set in the By-Laws. The annual YLA Affiliation fee is forwarded to YLA by October 20 each year.

### **Article IV - Officers**

The officers shall be a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Historian, Chaplain, and any other necessary for the operation of this YLA. They are elected in the spring and enter into office either before school ends or at the beginning of the new school year (state when). Officers are expected to attend the YLA Leadership Camp at Horseshoe in June.

The officers perform the duties usual to their position in their YLA chapter.

The officers, advisor, and chair of standing committees are the Executive Committee. This committee is responsible for the general direction of the organization

## **Article V - Election and Meetings**

Section 1. The president shall appoint a Nominating Committee of three active members, who after consultation with the Advisor and the Advisory Committee Chair, shall make and announce nomination of all officers no later than one week before the election. Those nominated must have committed to do the work required of their position if elected.

Section 2. The election shall be by ballot at an annual business meeting.

Section 3. Each meeting shall open and close with the YLA Chapter Ceremony.

Section 4. Special meetings may be called by the president or by the written request of three active members.

Section 5. One-third of the active members shall constitute a quorum.

Section 6. No regular or special meeting shall be held without the advisor or their representative.

## **Article VI - Committees**

Committees are only appointed because there is a need for their service.

Section 1. The president, upon entering office and after consulting with the Executive Committee and Advisor, shall appoint the necessary committees. They may include:

Membership (Secretary is the Chair) - Responsible for implementing the YLA Chapter Membership Policy to recruit, orient, induct, and develop a quality membership.

Purpose (Chaplain is Chair) - Responsible to create and develop Induction of new members, Officer Installation, Rededication of Current Members, and Visions for each meeting. The committee is, in the course of a year, to involve every member in creating and presenting Visions at YLA chapter meetings.

Program (Vice President is Chair) - Responsible to have a program for each YLA chapter meeting.

Publicity (Publicity Chair) - Responsible for having the YLA chapter before the public with news, articles, displays, bulletin boards, etc.

Social (appoint as needed) - Responsible for arranging appropriate social activities that help members achieve YLA's purpose. Social includes remembering persons who are ill or need special help.

Finance (Treasurer is Chair) - Responsible for developing a budget, collect dues, raise money, see that all funds are properly deposited and accounted for, keep membership fully informed and involved.

Service (Co Chairs are the School and Community Service Chairpersons) - Responsible to involve members in the identification, selection, planning, and implementation of meaningful service that makes a difference for good for others.

Missions (appoint chair) - Responsible for informing members of YLA Missions (Project Horseshoe, YLA Extension, World Service) and to cause this YLA chapter to participate in each.

### **Article VII- Amendments**

At least two weeks' notice of proposed amendments to this Constitution shall be given all members and written notice given to each Advisory Committee member. An amendment must be approved by two-thirds majority of affiliated members to pass.

#### Examples of By-Laws That May Be Included

(These are only examples. Develop your own for your situation).

Our annual YLA club dues will be \$\_\_\_\_\_. They include the annual YLA Leadership Center Affiliation Fee.

Members with three unexcused absences will be dropped from membership provided: The Secretary or an appointed member of the Membership Committee interviews the absent member after each absence.

After the second unexcused absence, the member is again interviewed and reminded of their responsibility to attend.

After the third unexcused absence the President or appointed member of the Executive Committee shall interview the person, remind them of their responsibility and commitment, and decide if they are dropped from membership.

If they want to continue membership and participate, those dropped may re-apply for new membership.

This YLA chapter shall participate in service projects and will support YLA Camp Horseshoe and/or Cave Lake projects.

Officers must meet any school requirements for holding office.

A member who does not carry out the purpose of this YLA chapter shall be interviewed by the President or other person appointed by the President to:

- Discuss the commitment they made when becoming a member,
- The expectations of members,
- The need to reflect the YLA chapter purpose.

The interview is to provide an opportunity for the person to reaffirm their interest in our YLA chapter or to resign. If the person resigns, they may re-apply for membership later when they are able to carry out the member responsibilities.

Once a year, current members are asked to renew their membership commitment as part of the New Member Induction/Officer Installation Ceremony.

New members are inducted into membership and officers installed in a special ceremony.