

YLA YOUTH IN GOVERNMENT

Officer Manual

*Preparing the Next Generation
of Civic Leaders*



In This Manual

- **Officer Responsibilities and Qualifications**
- **Local YLA Nominations**
- **Leadership Team**
- **Election Procedures**
- **Committee Chair & Vice Chair Qualifications & Responsibilities**
- **Youth Governor & Cabinet**
- **Youth Chief Justice & Associate Justices**

Ohio-West Virginia Youth Leadership Association
Horseshoe Leadership Center
3309 Horseshoe Run Rd
Parsons, WV 26287-9029



If you have additional questions after reviewing this manual, please contact us.

We are here to help you!

David King, Executive Director, Horseshoe & Program Director

david@ylaleads.org

Alicia Ridenour, Fiscal Officer, YGS and School Year Program Coordinator

alicia@ylaleads.org

304-675-5899 (o) or 304-675-0055 (c)

Leslie Howell, Horseshoe Administrator

leslie@ylaleads.org

304-478-2481(o)



BEFORE YOU SEEK OFFICE ASK YOURSELF ~



DO I HAVE THE TIME?

Officers serve the ALL YEAR. Officers are to prepare, to lead, and strengthen YLA by your service, example, and commitment.

WHAT IS REQUIRED OF ME?

- You begin your service and are required to actively participate in YLA's annual **Leadership Summit** at Camp Horseshoe in **June**. If you cannot participate the entire 6-days, your position will be revoked.
- **Bill/Case Rating** in **February**. All officers including cabinet members, committee chairs, and associate justices are required to participate in Bill/Case Rating. This is where the calendar for YG is established and officer training happens. Lobbyist are encouraged to attend so you can chose the bills you want to lobby. Members of the press are encouraged to attend.
- **YOUTH IN GOVERNMENT** in **April**. If you cannot fulfill your duties at YG, do not apply. Give that opportunity to someone who can.

Officers are ENCOURAGED to participate in YLA's annual Fall Conference in November.

TOGETHER we build a stronger YG engaging more students strengthening our schools, communities, and state.

CONTACT:

1-304-675-5899
yla@ylaleads.org

www.ylaleads.org



Officer Responsibilities and Qualifications

YG officers are members of a YLA currently affiliated with the YLA Leadership Center. Officers are elected at the end of a YG session to serve through the next YG. The year of service is an opportunity to develop and use one's skills, improve YG, help other students have a positive YG experience, involve new schools and students, and advance YLA's youth leadership program.

Local YLA Nomination

Before a YLA holds its nominating meeting, be sure every candidate has the competence, commitment, time, people and social skills as well as attitudes required to develop and lead others. Officers must be at ease in diverse places including Horseshoe, YLA conferences and retreats, Bill/Case Rating and YG.

Candidates must win the nomination of their local YLA for the office sought.

In other words, a person cannot just decide to run for an office. The person must secure the nomination of their local YLA.

Delegations may nominate no more than one (1) candidate per office.

The local YLA must have an officer nominating meeting. Every candidate is to have a chance to seek a nomination. If there is more than one candidate seeking the nomination for an office, their local YLA will take a vote. The winner of that vote becomes the nominee.

Delegations submit their official nomination(s) on the Officer Candidate Nomination form in the Legislative manual by the deadline in the YG Calendar.

Potential Candidates

Before seeking the nomination for an office, make sure –

- Officers lead YG for a year in diverse places and programs. An officer must be at ease in YLA Summits, conferences and retreats, Bill/Case Rating, and YG. These places are intentionally chosen for the unique ways each calls people to engage with people in community building. YG is much more than parliamentary procedure, passing laws and debate.

Governor and Cabinet, Speaker, President, Chief Justice and Associate Justices participate in the Sr. Leadership Summit at Horseshoe. All other officers including Server/syp/manuals-un and yg/2025 yg manuals/officer

the appointed Press Editor are invited and welcome to join them at the Summit!

YG is about being a citizen with others . . . and this takes place in real places where people must act to build community. Because these places and programs are reality – not a virtual reality – they require real people (officers) whose positive attitudes and actions build responsible and engaged citizens.

- One can commit the time, work and money the position requires. Check one's calendar, check with parents and be sure the family's calendar will allow the commitment of the significant time the office requires. Check one's financial position – that of the family and the local YLA to be sure the money is available. If both time and money are available, lock them in to ensure they will still be available if the office is won.

Do not seek the office, get it, and later ask to be excused from any of the position's responsibilities. Other defeated candidates were fully prepared to carry out their duties at these four programs and there were others who did not run because they could not.

- An officer who does not fulfill their responsibilities may resign or may be removed from office. If that happens, another person will be appointed or elected to the position. The new officer will complete the term of office through April YG.

Responsibility of the Nominating Delegation (YLA)

Nominate candidates with the competence to do the job. Please see Officer Duties, Local Nomination and Potential Candidates information above and Officer Responsibilities below.

Hold any winning candidate you nominated to office accountable to do their job. If the officer does not do their job, insist they resign their position.

In other words, you nominated them; you make them do their job.

Officer Responsibilities

Lead from the bottom up – not the top down

Set the example;

- Do what one asks and/or expects others to do;
- Help others do and become their best;
- Assert the purpose of YLA Youth In Government to peers;
- Insist peers achieve the highest levels of competence, personal and group

Server/syp/manuals-un and yg/2025 yg manuals/officer

conduct, respect for others, Youth in Government and in facilities our program uses;

- Practice our core values of Respect – Responsibility – Caring – Trustworthiness – Honesty – Fairness – Citizenship.

Attitude

- Positive, likes people, welcomes and involves others, helps others succeed.
- At ease in diverse places including Summit at Horseshoe, YLA conferences and retreats, Bill / Case Rating and at YG – each place is different, and all are deliberately chosen to engage people with people building understanding and community building – wants to be in these places to enjoy the experience.
- Puts others first, thinks and acts based on what is best for the group.

Responsible

- Accept and carry out responsibility;
- Recognize that Youth in Government is youth led and adult supported;
- Insist peers be responsible for their attitudes, decisions and actions and that they all support the purpose, procedures and conduct expected by YLA and its Youth in Government;
- Act responsibly – it is not acceptable to say “that is the Advisor’s job”;
- Capable and willing to carry out the responsibilities listed in this section of the manual.

Competence

- Know and understand your job;
- Know the procedures, carry them out and insist peers do too;
- Select others for leadership positions based on their competence;
- Teach peers how to use the procedures;
- Mature in attitudes and actions.

Involvement

- Involve others, encourage others, bring more schools and students into YG;
- Model the involvement expected by others

Term of Office - From election or appointment to the adjournment of the next YG; the job is done all year, not just at the spring YG session.

Officers at the Summer Leadership Summit

- Train for and practice one’s responsibilities
- Review YG Exit Surveys
- Determine how to strengthen the program

Server/syp/manuals-un and yg/2025 yg manuals/officer

- Present YG to all participants, encourage their participation, train students to return home ready to prepare their members
- Learn how to connect YLA's service civic engagement and values to Youth in Government
- Build a statewide network of peers practicing YLA's core values, advancing YG, and building better futures for all.

Officers at YLA Conferences and Retreats

- Be prepared in procedure, responsibility, how to do your job and do it so your example of competence sends the message everyone is to achieve the highest standards of conduct, competence, and participation.
- Involve and engage others—encourage new schools and students to participate.

At Bill/Case Rating

- Know your job so well and be able to perform it with competence that the level of performance by everyone is raised to the highest levels.

Leadership Team

Governor

Select Cabinet

- 4 - 6 persons
- Only one from a school
- Ideally no one from the governor's home school
- Cabinet Applications accepted at YG and the week after YG
- YLA sends applications to Youth Governor two days after due date
- Youth governor's selections made and YLA informed one week after receipt of applications from YLA
- YLA office sends letters of appointment or not appointed
- Governor and Cabinet begin work at Horseshoe Summer Leadership Summit in June

Officers at Summit

- Governor and Cabinet review Exit Surveys to determine how to improve for next year
- With the assistance of the Cabinet, develop a legislative platform
- By week's end, Governor determines Cabinet assignments
- Assist in training peers to participate and to train their members back home
- Recruit new schools and students to participate

Public

- Serve as a member of the Youth in Government Committee
- Speak on behalf of the program at events as requested by YLA

President of the Senate and Speaker of the House

- At Sr. Leadership Summit review Exit Surveys to determine ways to improve the Student Legislature, prepare the Legislative training portion of summit, conduct the training, identify students not in YG and recruit their participation
- Lead other legislative officers present
- Preside over legislative sessions, insist all participate on an intellectual and productive level
- Involve and engage other students, encourage new schools and students to participate in YG
- Sign all legislation

Lt. Governor (Ohio only)

- Assist and support the Governor
- Preside over the Cabinet for the Governor and lead the Cabinet in its work
- Assist other students to have a successful YG experience. Encourage new school and student participation.

Clerks

- Know and practice your duties
- At the Sr. Leadership Summit, YLA conferences and retreats, Bill Rating, and YG perform your duties to assist in the operation of your House or Senate
- Assist your Speaker or President
- At YG, pick up the folders with the Bills and the Order of the Day, attendance and seating chart, and floor procedures from the Bill Coordinator before each legislative sessions
- Keep attendance at each session
- Read the Bills including amendments as directed by the Presiding Officer
- Count votes, report vote to Presiding Officer
- Record and sign all legislation
- Return Bills to Bill Coordinator, submit completed Bill Disposition and verbally report action taken on each Bill
- On the last day, pick up the election ballots and exit surveys from the Bill Coordinator for your Chamber's officers.

Chaplains

- Prepare messages with an impact calling participants to YG's purpose

- Share your leadership at Sr. Leadership Summit, YLA conferences and retreats, Bill Rating and of course YG
- Assist your Speaker or President

Press Editor

- Take the opportunity to join the officers at the Sr. Teen Leadership Summit, YLA conferences and retreats, Bill / Case Rating to make connections helpful to you at YG and to be in on “the ground floor” of YG preparations and operations
- Take a lead in creating outstanding YG Press Corps
- Encourage, lead, involve and insist all Press Corps members perform with competence

Cabinet

- Support and represent the Governor’s view on proposed legislation
- Encourage new schools and students to participate in YG
- Help all participants succeed
- Report to the Governor legislative views of Committees, Legislature and members

Competence

An important goal is to raise the level of competence of Legislators, Committee Chairs and all Officers. Success requires a joint effort by Officers, Staff and Advisors. Officers must accept their responsibility to lead their peers in directions required for a successful YG. Officers must take on responsibility to stand up to their peers when needed to correct or re-direct them and must always stand up to lead in positive ways. Any officer who cannot do this is expected to resign so that a person who can do the job with the right attitude can be appointed to get the job done.

Before Seeking Office

Potential candidates are to be sure they have the attitudes to positively participate in and provide the leadership needed throughout the year. Candidates must be sure they can commit to the time the position requires. Do not seek the office, get it and then later ask to be excused from any of the position’s responsibilities. Others who ran and were defeated were fully prepared to carry out their duties and there were others who did not run because they knew they could not.

One year of previous Youth in Government experience required for Speaker and President. Governor Candidates must have two years of YG experience. Governor Candidates may count the current year participation as one of

those two years.

It is not just to get the office – it is to carry out the commitments of the office.

Election Procedure at Youth in Government

Candidates demonstrate their ability to do the responsibilities of the position they seek. There is no campaigning, campaign speech, campaign material, electronic or phone campaigns.

Delegates are responsible to vote for the best candidate and are not to be influenced by their Advisor or other adults seeking to determine the outcome of an election.

Candidates Follow This Procedure

Chaplain candidates give a three (3) minute presentation that calls (challenges) the Legislature to its purpose.

Clerk candidates sight read a Bill selected by the Presiding Officer.

Lt. Governor (Ohio only) candidates speak for 2 minutes on the "Role of the Lt. Governor in the Student Legislature." In WV, the President of the Senate is also Lt. Governor.

President and Speaker candidates preside over a session of the Legislature using a Bill before the Legislature as determined by the Legislative Calendar or a Bill of their choice. The candidate selects the Bill, a person to be Clerk, Authors, Minority and Majority Reporters and Legislators to speak for and against the Bill. Candidates exhibit their knowledge of the procedure by conducting the session that lasts no more than five (5) minutes. The procedure used is:

"The Student Legislature is in session." (gavel to order)

"This being an extraordinary session, we will dispense with the Chaplain's message, the reading of and the Order of the Day."

"Is the Author of the Bill present?" (Recognize the Author for a 30 second presentation of the Bill)

"Is there a Majority Report?" (no more than 30 seconds)

"Is there a Minority Report?" (no more than 30 seconds)

Server/syp/manuals-un and yg/2025 yg manuals/officer

“The question is, shall the Bill pass?”

After 3 to 5 minutes of discussion and debate, the candidate will call for the question and proceed with the vote. *“The question is, shall the Bill pass? Those in favor say “aye.” Those opposed, say “nay.” (The candidate then declares the Bill passed or defeated.)*

Governor candidates speak for 3 minutes on their “Legislative Agenda for the Student Legislature.”

A word of advice to Governor candidates – Avoid making “deals” with other Governor candidates to appoint each other to the Governor’s Cabinet. Upon election, one may find that defeated officer candidates may not be the best person(s) to appoint. Don’t get boxed in.

There is always an opportunity during the appointment period to appoint one or more defeated candidates if they apply and appear the best person(s) for the job.

Voting Procedure

A simple majority of these eligible votes determine the winning candidate.

Officer

Eligible Votes

Governor

Legislators, Supreme Court Justices, Press Lobbyist, Pages, Officers

Lt. Governor (Ohio only)

Legislators, Supreme Court Justices, Press, Lobbyist, Pages, Officers

Clerk & Chaplain

Legislators

Speaker of the House

Members of the House

President of the Senate

Members of the Senate

Chief Justice

Justices & Members of the Judicial Program

Note – In the case of an office with only one candidate, voters mark their ballot for the candidate or write no. Write in and unmarked ballots are not counted.

Committee Chair & Vice Chair Qualifications & Responsibilities

Committee Chairs

Qualifications

1. Ideally, one year experience as a Legislative Delegate;
2. Know the procedure, implement, and engage all committee members;
3. Effective facilitating groups;
4. Participates on an intellectual and productive level;
5. Organized, keeps accurate records, works with Bill Coordinator and Committee Advisor, has excellent verbal and writing skills.

Can Not be a Bill Partner with another Committee Chair or Vice Chair candidate.

Selection Procedure

1. Candidates submit an application that is endorsed by their Advisor.
2. The Speaker and President may begin Committee Chair appointments during the Summer Summit, at YLA conferences and retreats. If Chair positions are open after these times, YLA staff may make appointments.

Opportunities to Learn and to Gain Leadership Experience as a Committee Chair

Committee Chairs are invited and welcome to participate in the Sr. Leadership Summit as well as YLA conferences and retreats for training, practice, relationship building with other students, and experience leading including leading committees.

Bill Rating/Officer Training/Committee Chair Training in February needs the active participation of Committee Chairs. This is the first time Committee Chairs get to see the student legislation proposed for the April YG. Committee Chairs also play a key role in setting the Legislative Calendar.

Responsibilities

1. Prior to Youth in Government, study all Bills assigned to the committee and review all Bills presented to YG. It is also helpful to contact the bill authors who will appear before the committee, the lobbyists, cabinet members and officers.
 2. Represent the committee to the Bill Coordinator.
 3. Pick up the required folders from the Bill Coordinator before each committee meeting.
 4. Return the required folders to the Bill Coordinator after each committee meeting
- Server/syp/manuals-un and yg/2025 yg manuals/officer

- and give a verbal report on the actions taken on each bill.
5. Review the committee procedures before YG and carry them out during YG.
 6. At the beginning of the first Committee meeting of YG, do an ice-breaker exercise to introduce all of the members of the committee to each other. Also at the first meeting, do one practice bill to make sure every member understands the proper procedure.
 7. Take attendance at the beginning of each committee meeting.
 8. Be mindful of the bill schedule and follow it. No time may be added to any committee session except by YLA staff.
 9. Make sure your committee members follow the proper decorum. There should be no remarks made after a bill author or lobbyist leaves the room concerning their presentation, demeanor, personality, etc. Only constructive comments on the passing or failing of a bill is acceptable.
 10. Lead the committee in active participation on the Floor in the debate on Bills referred on by committee. Get your committee members to make the committee's views known to all members during Floor sessions.
 11. On the last morning of YG, pick up your committee's election ballots and exit surveys from the Bill Coordinator. Surveys may be completed during the last committee meeting. However, NO election voting may be done until the committee Members assemble back in the Chamber for the final time.

Committee Vice Chairs

Qualifications - Able to preside in the absence of the Chair.

Selection

Vice Chairs may be appointed prior to YG or may be appointed by a Committee Chair at YG if their committee needs a Vice Chair. Not all Committees may have a Vice Chair. Chairs who may be away from their committee may ask a committee member to preside in their absence.

Responsibilities

1. Serve as Clerk of the Committee.
2. Assist the Committee Chair.
3. Preside in the absence of the Chair. The Chair, Clerk or Vice Chair cannot be legislative partners. Both cannot be absent from the committee at the same time.

Youth Governor and Cabinet

Governor's Cabinet

The Governor appoints cabinet members from those who meet the requirements for the office and who apply. Applications are accepted through the week after Youth in Government and must be submitted to the YLA office on or before the deadline.

Cabinet members join the Governor and other officers at the June Sr. Leadership Summit at Horseshoe. The Officer Leadership Corps reviews the just completed Youth in Government, identifies improvements for the new year, train for their responsibilities and engage other students at the Summit in Youth in Government sessions so they will want to participate in YG as well as return home to encourage others to participate.

The Governor seeks the advice of the Cabinet as the Governor creates a Platform. At the end of the Summit the Governor assigns Cabinet members to head a department and/or area of interest (environment, economic development, safety, education, etc.). Cabinet members are then responsible for becoming experts in their area.

During the year, at YLA conferences and retreats and at Bill/Case Rating the Cabinet serves as resource persons in those interest areas plus advance the position of the Governor on the issues.

At Youth in Government the Cabinet represents the Governor's interests in committees and with legislators. Cabinet members listen to committee hearings and floor debates in their area of interest, act as the Governor's advocate on related legislation, and report to and advise the Governor on legislation that reaches the Governor's desk.

Successful Cabinet members –

- Are informed in the areas they represent
- Understand the legislative process
- Have excellent people skills
- Can work on their own and as part of a team
- Are good listeners and good communicators
- Help student legislators, lobbyists, press, page, and others succeed

Youth Chief Justice and Associate Justices

Associate Justices

The Chief Justice appoints Associate Justices from those who meet the

Server/syp/manuals-un and yg/2025 yg manuals/officer

requirements for the office and who apply. Applications are accepted through the week after Youth in Government. Applications must be sent to the YLA office on or before the deadline date.

Associate Justices join the Chief Justice and other officers at the June Sr. Leadership Summit at Horseshoe. The Chief Justice and Associate Justices review the just completed Student Supreme Court, identify improvements for the new year, train for their responsibilities and engage other students at the Summit in a Supreme Court session so they will want to participate in the Student Supreme Court at YG as well as return home to encourage others to participate in the YG Judicial program.

During the year at Fall Conference, they assist the Chief Justice in preparing for YG. At the Case Rating in February, the Associate Justices assist the Chief Justice in rating the cases for consideration at YG.

Successful Associate Justices –

- Understand the YG Judicial process
- Have excellent people skills
- Can work on their own and as part of a team
- Are good listeners and good communicators
- Help others succeed