

ANNUAL REPORT

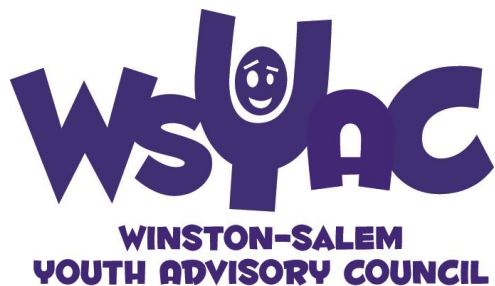
Fiscal Year 2025-2026



Winston-Salem



CITY OF WINSTON-SALEM YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL



Staff Administrator:

Jelani Biggs

Human Relations Director

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Attachment A: Winter Newsletter

Attachment B: Highlights from National League of Cities City Summit – Salt Lake City, UT and
Congressional Cities Conference – Washington, DC

Attachment C: State Youth Council Conference Overview and Calendar

Attachment D: State Youth Council Spring Convention Flyer and Agenda

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Council is to give the youth an opportunity to become more aware of local government and become involved in the community by participating in community activities a minimum of 40 hours each year.

MISSION

Serve as a conduit between city government and younger constituents. The Youth Council's core focus is youth civic engagement by way of community programming, youth-oriented activities, contribution of at least 40 volunteer hours per school year to government-related initiatives, projects, and programs, dissemination of information to the community regarding topics that are important and relevant to the youth in our community, and to advise the City Council and the Human Relations/Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Department on matters that relate to the community's youth population.

HISTORY

In March of 1989, the former Winston-Salem City Council unanimously approved a resolution to establish a Youth Advisory Council. The purpose of the Youth Advisory Council, as outlined in 1989, is to provide the City Council with recommendations on a variety of subjects and to give youth the opportunity to become more aware of local government. At that time, the City Council stated that the Youth Advisory Council should be diverse, inclusive, and representative of the Winston-Salem high school student population.

In May of 1989, nineteen members began a one-year term of service as the original Youth Advisory Council under the direction of the Recreation and Parks Department. In June of 2010, the Youth Advisory Council was reorganized under the Human Relations Department by resolution of the City Council.

DUTIES

- (1) Actively promoting the participation of the youth in city government programs and activities;
- (2) Promoting positive human relations among all youth;
- (3) Providing channels of communication among all populations;
- (4) Encouraging youth to become better trained and qualified for employment opportunities;
- (5) Performing duties consistent with general law as may be assigned it from time to time by the City Council; and
- (6) Performing such other duties as necessary to enforce the powers assigned to it.

THE COUNCIL'S RELATIONSHIP TO CITY GOVERNMENT

The government of the City of Winston-Salem and the general management and control of all its affairs are vested in the City Council and the Mayor. The City Council appoints the City Manager who is the administrative head of City government and is responsible for the administration of all departments of City government. The City Council is also the appointing authority for members of the Youth Advisory Council.

The Council keeps the City Manager and the City Council informed of its activities. To further that communication, the chairperson or a designated member of the Council shall appear annually before the City Council to provide them with information on the pulse of the youth community and a yearly progress report on Council programs and projects.

The Council makes recommendations to the City Council concerning projects and programs relevant to the youth of Winston-Salem.

THE COUNCIL'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE STAFF

The Council's relationship with the Human Relations staff involves advising staff regarding youth-oriented and youth-developed programs, concerns, and issues. During the process of initiating programs and conducting youth outreach, the Youth Advisory Council calls on the staff for technical assistance and research into matters.

THE COUNCIL'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE COMMUNITY

The Youth Advisory Council is the body through which youth concerns can be relayed to City officials. The Youth Advisory Council brings information to its peers on the happenings of city government that pertain to the youth.

YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL 2025-2026 MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

School	First Name	Last Name
Atkins High School	Veda	Sanka
Atkins High School	Maddisun	Davis
Early College	Cristofer	Gallardo-Acevedo
Early College	Athena	Perez-Perez
Early College	Jada	Taylor
East Forsyth High School	Kennedy	Wicker
East Forsyth High School	Andrew	Wyatt
Kennedy High School	Logan	Johnson
Mount Tabor High School	Shaunice	Butler
Mount Tabor High School	Abby	Wildman
Middle College of Forsyth	Emma	Guerrero Feliz
Middle College of Forsyth	Isabella	Guerrero Feliz
NC Leadership Academy	Wenda	McLaurin
Parkland High School	Daryll	Cherry
Reagan High	Reginald	Hartzfeldt
West Forsyth	Cooper	Chambers

MANAGEMENT'S COMMENTS

JELANI BIGGS, DIRECTOR - HUMAN RELATIONS

The Human Relations Department is proud to support the Winston-Salem Youth Advisory Council (YAC) as a key platform for youth engagement in local government. The YAC provides students with meaningful opportunities to contribute to their community, build civic awareness, and advise City leadership on issues impacting young people.

Through a combination of community service, structured learning, and direct engagement with City officials, YAC members develop practical leadership skills while gaining exposure to government processes. The Council's expectation of annual service hours, participation in civic activities, and involvement in community-based projects reinforces both accountability and impact.

This year, the YAC continued to demonstrate strong engagement through service initiatives, participation in state and national conferences, and collaboration with local partners. These experiences not only strengthen the Council's visibility but also ensure that youth perspectives remain connected to broader community priorities.

The Department remains focused on sustaining a program model that emphasizes leadership development, community impact, and consistent engagement. We look forward to continuing

to strengthen the YAC’s role as a reliable and informed youth voice within the City of Winston-Salem.

PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

I. Goal: Community Education

- Gain better knowledge of community issues, organizations, and services.

MONTHLY FOCUS/PRESENTATIONS	
August/September – Orientation and Planning Focus: Annual Service Project Planning	February –Human Relations
October – Civic Engagement	March/April- Community Partnerships Office of Sustainability – Community Impact Challenge
November – Local Government	May – Expression Wall Painting and Wrap-Up
December/January – Homelessness Awareness	

II. Goal: Community Service and Volunteerism

- Participate in 40 hours each of community activities and service.
 - Estimated total: 600
- Connect to youth population by planning, creating, and disseminating a quarterly written publication.
 - See attachment A.
- Produce annual project that is a benefit to the community.
 - The Council received a \$500 grant from the State Youth Council to help fund the planning of the State Youth Council Spring Convention.

III. Goal: City Government Participation: Gain knowledge of city government processes by interfacing with city government officials.

MEETING PURPOSE	CITY OFFICIAL(S)
Annual Report Presentation	CDHGG Committee of City Council April 12, 2026)
Attend a City Council Meeting	City Council
Attend National League of Cities City Summit	City Council

2025-2026 MAJOR PROGRAM /PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- **Annual Project:** The 2025-2026 Annual project was centered around the Winston-Salem Youth Violent Crime Summit. Sponsored by the Mayor's Office, the City of Winston-Salem launched Youth Violent Crime Summit series in October, bringing together community voices to address one of the city's most pressing issues. The summit created a space for agency partners, families, local government, community leaders, and youth to begin meaningful conversations about youth violence and explore solutions for safer neighborhoods.

Following the initial session, the Youth Advisory Council took an active leadership role by facilitating discussions with young people across the community. Through these conversations, youth shared valuable insights about their needs, including access to arts, sports, and leadership opportunities, as well as the challenges and barriers they face in their daily lives.

At the February summit, the Youth Advisory Council presented a powerful summary of these discussions to community members. Their recommendations highlighted the importance of expanding safe community spaces, increasing access to positive programming, and creating innovative, youth-driven approaches to conflict resolution.

As the initiative moves forward, the Youth Advisory Council remains deeply committed to shaping its future. By continuing to collaborate with community partners, they aim to ensure that all young people in Winston-Salem have the support and opportunities they need to thrive, while helping to build safer, stronger neighborhoods for everyone.

- **State Youth Council Involvement:** The Youth Advisory Council applied for a State Youth Council state grant and was awarded \$500 to use towards hosting the State Youth Council Spring Convention. Council members also attended 3 of the 4 SYC conferences: Leadership Day Conference in Raleigh, NC, Mini-grant Conference in Fayetteville, NC, and Team Building Conference in Fuquay-Varina and Raleigh. Hosting the final conference of the year will be a chance for members of the council to learn valuable skills including time management, event planning and conflict resolution.



- **City Officials:** Youth Advisory Council members attend and observe two City Council meetings each year. They were also youth delegates at the National League of Cities City Summit held in Salt Lake City, UT and the Congressional Cities Conference held in Washington, DC. Additionally, one youth delegate was appointed to the Council on Youth Education and Families and another youth delegate was chosen to be on the planning committee for the youth delegate workshops.

WINSTON-SALEM YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL 2026-2027 OUTLINE OF GOALS

For the fiscal year of 2026-2027, the goals of the Winston-Salem Youth Advisory Council will focus on the following goals:

1. To maintain and encourage use of the Youth Expression Wall;
2. To meet requirements of the State Youth Council as a chartered member and to increase the YAC's presence on the state level;
3. To continue learning about the community through presentations at monthly meetings;
4. To find ways to connect to students outside of YAC through social media and in person;
5. To continue the YAC newsletter; and
6. To complete an end-of-year project for the 2026-2027 school year.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE CITY COUNCIL

The Youth Advisory Council recognizes the need to continue fostering an environment that initiates and supports multiracial and multi-ethnic dialogue and understanding in the youth community. We respectfully request your support of the following recommendations:

1. The Youth Advisory Council recognizes the importance of building and maintaining effective lines of communication between city government and the youth community. By improving the dialogue with our diverse community groups, city government can ensure that the City of Winston-Salem fosters an environment that is conducive for an atmosphere in which the youth voice is heard. In carrying out its strategic goals, the Youth Advisory Council will **increase its outreach efforts in all areas of the community and will seek input from the City Council on issues or concerns in their respective wards.**
2. We ask that the City Council **support the Youth Advisory Council's goal of building a stronger relationship with City officials.**

The Youth Advisory Council greatly appreciates the continual support it has received from the City Council.