







CREATING A VERMONT YOUTH COUNCIL

Throughout the summer and fall of 2020, approximately 50 young people from across Vermont came together to form the Youth Advisory Group (now called the Youth Advocacy Group) with the support of Vermont Afterschool to create recommendations for formation of a Vermont Youth Council. The legislature had considered a youth council bill in the 2020 session (H.775), but progress was stalled under the COVID pandemic. This group of thoughtful, dedicated, young leaders picked up that mantle and continued the work. The recommendations below come directly from the youth and are the result of their careful deliberations and ongoing collaboration.

Youth Recommendations for the Proposed Vermont Youth Council

-  Establish a Vermont Youth Council to advise the Governor and General Assembly on issues affecting young people living in Vermont. The Vermont Youth Council should have members between the ages of 11 and 18.
-  Members should be selected through an application process that emphasizes diversity. Inclusion, commitment to the youth of our state, and the ability to work with and listen to others are necessary requirements. The Youth Services Advisory Committee (YSAC) should be responsible for the application and selection process. Youth participation in the selection process is a must—either from the existing Youth Advocacy Group or from outgoing members of the future Vermont Youth Council.
-  The Vermont Youth Council should have an Executive Committee, ad hoc committees as needed, and the following Standing Committees: Youth Voice, Education, Equity and Anti-Racism, Climate Change, and Youth Mental Health.
-  The Vermont Youth Council should meet monthly (either virtually or in-person as conditions allow). In addition to gathering input through surveys and polls, the Vermont Youth Council should be authorized to hold at least four public meetings to hear from young people across the state. Members of the Vermont Youth Council should be entitled to per diem compensation, support for technology, and reimbursement of expenses for meetings.
-  The Agency of Administration and the Youth Services Advisory Council should support the Vermont Youth Council with training on government operations, public speaking, meeting etiquette, and leadership. The Agency of Administration should also be asked to provide meeting and logistical support for the Vermont Youth Council.
-  The Governor and the General Assembly should meet with the Vermont Youth Council at least once per year to hear and receive the Council's advice and recommendations on policies that impact VT.

For more info, please email: VTyouth@vermontafterschool.org

Having youth be active, engaged, connected, and heard benefits all Vermonters.

Youth make a better Vermont. Vermont values youth as they are; just by being young people living here, they enrich our communities. Young people are also problem-solvers who are eager to be engaged in making our state a stronger, healthier, and happier place to live. As Vermonters we have a collective responsibility to ensure that all young Vermonters are safe, healthy, supported, educated, and engaged. This means recognizing that young people need what we all need: community connection; opportunities to learn; access to jobs, recreation, and other activities; and the right to have a say in policies that affect them.

Young People as a Resource

Young Vermonters are one of our state's most important resources. Youth represent 23% of the Vermont population (ages 9-26) and reflect Vermont's diversity (based on American Community Survey 2017). They are a group of dynamic, vibrant, and innovative individuals who are finding new ways to have their voices heard and effect the change they wish to see in the world.



Innovation and Inclusion

Multiple perspectives strengthen decision-making and policy development by encouraging innovation, creativity and change. Including the unique perspectives of young people improves state policies and programs, including youth-specific services.



Economic Vitality

Vermont's economy depends on the participation of young people and empowering them to take part will help to keep young Vermonters here. It will also diversify our economy, making it more competitive and sustainable.



Strong Democracy

Young people have the right to be heard and respected. Almost all government policies and decisions have an impact on young people's lives and youth have the right to influence those decisions, both individually and collectively. Furthermore, involving young people in political processes helps build trust in democratic institutions, in turn protecting Vermont's democracy.



For more info, email: VTyouth@vermontafterschool.org

Members of the Youth Advisory Group:

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