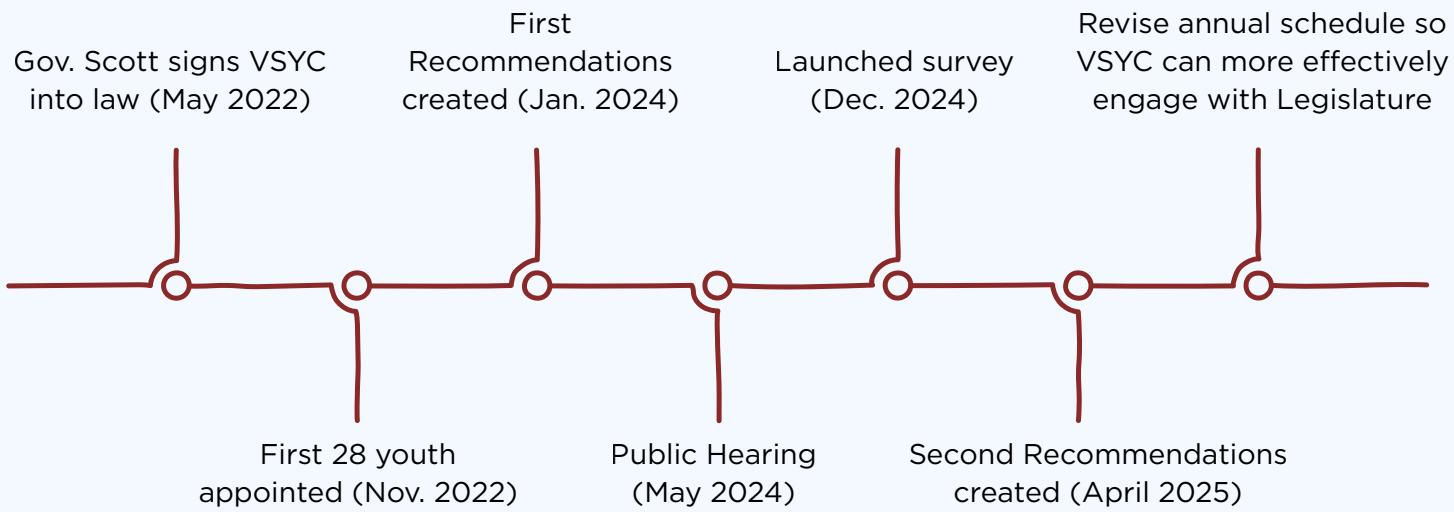




The Vermont State Youth Council (VSYC)—a diverse group of 28 youth from each county responsible for annually advising the Governor and the Vermont General Assembly on the policies that impact young persons today—**requests that its federal funding be replaced by an appropriation of \$140,000 in State funds for FY27.**

The VSYC was established by H.293 (Act 109: *An act relating to creating the State Youth Council*), a bill signed into law by Governor Phil Scott on May 11, 2022. The Council and its five committees (Climate Change; Education; Equity and Anti-Racism; Youth Mental Health; and Youth Voice) meet bi-monthly during 90-minute virtual meetings, and may gather input from Vermont youth through surveys, polls, and public hearings. Thus far, the Council has presented two sets of recommendations, testified several times, held one public hearing, and shared one survey for youth.



There is an increasing concern of censorship and funding reductions for initiatives receiving federal funding. VSYC members must be able to discuss issues using the terms of their choosing, and they must be able to speak freely to each other, their peers in the community, and to policymakers. **The current dependence on federal funding for the VSYC is causing concerns for the council members. Dedicated state funding will ensure youth council members have the right to fully express their identity and experiences, so they can truly represent the diversity and perspectives of young Vermonters.**



VERMONT

STATE YOUTH COUNCIL

Young people make a better Vermont. Youth are affected by all policy decisions, but youth voice is often limited without the ability to vote. The VSYC provides youth a direct avenue to have a voice in policymaking, creating a more inclusive democracy in Vermont. The VSYC also provides the Governor's administration and the Legislature with input from youth; a sought-after perspective that may be challenging for policymakers to otherwise receive.



“ The Vermont State Youth Council allows youth and legislators to impact one another, bridging the gap between generations of leaders. ”
—Harmony Devoe

The actual cost of the State Youth Council for FY27 is \$140,000. This total includes \$47,000 in youth stipends; venue expenses and mileage reimbursement for in-person meetings; and costs associated with the administrative and technical assistance of Vermont Afterschool in support of the VSYC, which include staff time to coordinate Council and Committee meetings, logistical support, being a liaison for the Council, processing stipend payments, fringe benefits, and more.