



Racine County Youth in Governance
1072 Milwaukee Avenue
Burlington, WI 53105
262-767-2929
(FAX) 262-767-8775

WHY YOUTH IN GOVERNANCE?

Youth leadership development is critical in building civic capacity and long-term community sustainability in Racine County. Programs that teach useful skills and build the self-confidence of young people ensure capable, effective leaders for the next generation. In addition, recent national trends including an increase in youth civic service and a new emphasis on civic education in schools indicate a growing need for leadership training to ensure young people are prepared to participate in political and civic life.

Racine County and Racine County government value the youth of our community. In response to the lack of leadership opportunities for Racine County youth, the Racine County Board of Supervisors developed and continue to support the Youth in Governance program.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Youth in Governance program is to create a model of youth empowerment within Racine County, through direct participation in local government. The overall goal is to bring the youth voice to community issues and concerns while fostering the development of confident, independent, and motivated youth leaders. Youth participating in Youth in Governance will be selected to sit on each of the following five Racine County Board Committees:

- ***Economic Development and Land Use Planning*** – Oversight of all matters relating to economic development, zoning, soil and land conservation, planning, lake shore protections, industrial development, real estate descriptions, surveying, solid waste, sanitation, air monitoring, code administration, land information officer, housing authority, economic development, environment, and primary workforce development.
- ***Finance and Human Resources*** – Oversight of matters related to finance, taxes, insurance, tax titles, licenses, equalization, claims, purchasing, bonds, personnel, employee benefits, veterans, finance director, information systems, county clerk, human resources, civil service, corporation counsel, county treasurer, and any other related items.
- ***Government Services*** – Shall have referred to it matters related to changes in rules or ordinances associated with the constitutional offices and their departments (clerk of courts, county treasurer, register of deeds, county clerk, sheriff, district attorney), and with all matters related to circuit courts, the criminal justice system, the circuit court judges of the county, dispatch, the jail, alternatives to incarceration/rehabilitation, water patrol, the public defender, the medical examiner, emergency management, the family court commissioner, the judicial court commissioners, probate court, traffic safety, jail diversion, Youth in Governance, and other issues related to the legal system and public safety.
- ***Health and Human Development*** – Addresses all matters related to the delivery of human services including public assistance, the detention of juveniles, nursing care, nursing home care or chronically mentally ill persons in need of care, county health commission, county health officer, women's commission, child support, family support advisory committee, veteran's service, community action agency, housing authority, long term support planning committee, commission on aging, and prevention and workforce development (secondary).
- ***Public Works, Parks, and Facilities*** – Oversees matters related to parks, recreations, highways, roads, dams, museums, county fairs, harbor/marina development, all grounds maintenance and existing buildings, new construction, and engineering.

LENGTH OF TERM

Youth members will serve a one-year term (April-April each year). There are no term limits, but returning members must re-apply.

MEMBERSHIP

The Youth in Governance program consists of a maximum of 10 youth participants. No more than two youth will

serve on a committee. The requirements to participate in the Youth in Governance are:

- Must be a high school freshman, sophomore, or junior at the time of application
- Must have a GPA of 2.5 or greater on a 4.0 scale
- Must be a Racine County resident
- Must be able to attend the committee meetings, typically occurring once or twice a month
- Attend the Orientation in April, Mentor/Mentee Orientation in May, and the two Bus Tours of Racine County Departments in June
- We encourage each Youth in Governance group to do a project; it will be decided if and to what extent by the group at a later date.
- Youth must be willing to serve as youth ambassadors for the Youth in Governance program by supporting with outreach to area schools and organizations.

Committee meetings are held in a professional, formal manner, based on Robert's Rules of Order. Each youth member will have a non-binding advisory vote on the committee. The youth members will be included in all open session discussions and votes at the committee level, but will not participate in portions of a meeting which are held in closed session. Youth will not participate in debate during a full County Board meeting; however, they may participate in the public comment period, as any citizen would. Youth members will not be paid a stipend or mileage for attending meetings.

APPLICATION PROCESS

After being nominated, youth applicants will be required to:

- Complete an application. The application consists of basic contact information, school, GPA, and questions about their intended objectives for the Youth in Governance program and how the program will increase their civic awareness and leadership skills.
- The Racine County Youth in Governance Committee will interview selected youth applicants and make final recommendations to the Racine County Board Chairman for official appointment.
- This is a competitive process where an interview is not guaranteed.

2026-2027 ADDITIONAL INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITY

During program year 2026-2027, youth applying to the Youth in Governance program may also have the opportunity to apply for the Wisconsin Community Youth Corps offered through UW-Extension and UW-Madison. If selected for this additional opportunity, youth would participate in paid internships related to participatory action research, video production, and project development. Youth must communicate interest in this additional opportunity in their application.

MENTORS

One adult member from each committee will serve as a mentor to the youth representatives. The mentor's role is to offer support and guidance to youth participants throughout their tenure on the committee.

RECOGNITION

Youth in Governance representatives who complete the program will be recognized for their contributions at a Racine County Board meeting in May 2027. The Racine County Government Services Committee will recognize youth and their mentors and provide Youth in Governance representatives with a certificate of appreciation.



Racine County Youth in Governance

UW-Madison, Division of Extension-Racine County
1072 Milwaukee Avenue, Burlington, WI 53105

262-767-2929 | 711 Wisconsin Relay

racine.extension.wisc.edu

<http://racine.uwex.edu/>



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
RACINE COUNTY

Racine County Youth in Governance is a program of Racine County Board of Supervisors in partnership with Racine County UW-Extension.

An EEO/AA employer, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Division of Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title VI, Title IX and ADA requirements.



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APPLICATION

**Please hand write (print) this form or use the fillable form found on the Extension website.
No additional pages are allowed.
This application is due by Friday, January 16, 2026.**

Last Name: _____ First: _____ M.I. _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____ County: _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Birthdate: ____ / ____ / ____ Gender: ____ School: _____ Current Grade: _____ GPA (4.0 Scale): _____

1. Why are you interested in participating in Youth in Governance?

2. Rank your interest in Racine County Board Committees (1= greatest interest – 5= least interest). Next to each committee is the night it typically meets on, usually once or twice a month. *For more information about Racine County Board Committees, please visit: <http://racinecounty.com/government/county-board> or reference descriptions on page one.*
 - _____ Economic Development and Land Use Planning (Monday)
 - _____ Finance and Human Resources (Wednesday)
 - _____ Government Services (Thursday)
 - _____ Health and Human Development (Monday)
 - _____ Public Works, Parks, and Facilities (Thursday)

3. What qualities do you possess that would benefit the Youth in Governance program?

4. How would you benefit from serving on a Racine County Board committee?

5. Who is your Racine County Board Supervisor?
For more information about the Racine County Board, please visit: <http://racinecounty.com/government/county-board>.

6. Please note any leadership positions you have held **OR** leadership skills that you hope to develop.
7. If selected, will you be able to serve for one year and commit your time and energy to this important role?
☐ Yes ☐ No
8. The Youth in Governance program requires regular committee meeting attendance to be successful. In the context of your other activities and commitments, please describe how you would be able to commit to at least two committee meetings per month (usually Monday – Thursday evenings).
9. If selected, can you attend the required orientation on **April 14, 2026 (4-8 p.m.)**, mentor/mentee meeting on **May 12, 2026(5-6 p.m.)**, and the required bus tours on June 23 and June 25, 2026 (8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.)?
☐ Yes ☐ No
 Comments:
10. Is there any information you would like to add?

11. Race and Ethnicity (*While voluntary, responses are used for government reporting requirements for Extension programs.*)

Race (check one): ☐ American Indian or Alaskan Native ☐ Native American or Other Pacific Islander
☐ Asian ☐ Undetermined
☐ Black or African American ☐ White
☐ More than One Race

Ethnicity (check one): ☐ Hispanic/Latino ☐ Non-Hispanic/Latino

2026-2027 Additional Internship Opportunity- Wisconsin Community Youth Corps (OPTIONAL)

During program year 2026-2027, Youth in Governance applicants may have the opportunity to apply for the Wisconsin Community Youth Corps offered through UW-Extension and UW-Madison. Thanks to funding from the UW-Madison Reilly Baldwin Endowment, some of the youth selected into the Wisconsin Community Youth Corps will participate in paid internships related to participatory action research, video production, and project development. These internships are an additional opportunity to provide service to the community in addition to their role in the Youth in Governance program, allowing youth to work alongside professionals from UW-Madison and the local community. This opportunity is not guaranteed and dependent on funding availability.

- **Research Internship:** The Community Youth Corps Research Internship offers a unique opportunity to gain hands-on experience in research and community advocacy. You will work alongside researchers from your local community and the University of Wisconsin-Madison to investigate an issue you care about. This internship is designed to give you the skills to collect data, analyze what you find, and use your voice to advocate for positive change.
- **Video Internship:** The Community Youth Corps Video Internship is your chance to use video and social media to document projects that are making a positive difference in your community. You will get hands-on experience in video production by capturing compelling footage, conducting interviews, and learning basic editing and marketing skills. This internship is designed for young people passionate about telling stories and showcasing the important work of your local Community Youth Corps.
- **Project Interns:** The project interns will use data collected from Research Interns and Video Production Interns and create a community project to address local need.

1. Are you interested in being considered for an additional internship opportunity with the Wisconsin Community Youth Corps?

☐ Yes ☐ No

***If you answered "No", please skip this section (questions 2-4 below).**

2. If answered "Yes" above, please select all internships you are interested in:
 - ☐ Research Internship
 - ☐ Video Production Internship
 - ☐ Project Intern

3. Please explain why you are interested in becoming an intern for the Wisconsin Community Youth Corps. Discuss how the internship aligns with your college and career goals and/or your interests.

4. As an intern, you will continue your role as a Youth in Governance Representative (if selected), while gaining additional experience and responsibilities through the internship. How do you plan to use what you learn in the internship to support and collaborate with your Youth in Governance cohort?

****If you require reasonable accommodation to participate in the program and/or meetings due to a disability, please contact the Racine County UW-Extension office in advance of the interviews. Please note that transportation will not be provided.**

****Please note that photographers/videographers will be taking videos and pictures of Youth in Governance representatives. Extension Racine County will use these videos and pictures in a manner consistent with Extension's mission. Your attendance at these events indicates your consent for your image to be recorded and used in this manner.**

Applicant Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

I, Parent/Guardian (Print Name): _____ approve participation for the youth stated above, if selected, in all components of the Youth in Governance program, including their participation in the completion of an evaluation at the conclusion of the program.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

**PLEASE SEND COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM BY
FRIDAY, JANUARY 16, 2026 TO:**

Racine County Youth in Governance
UW-Madison, Division of Extension-Racine County
1072 Milwaukee Avenue, Burlington, WI 53105

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

- ☐ Application was filled out completely.
- ☐ Application was received by the deadline.
- ☐ GPA is a 2.5 or above
- ☐ Racine County resident
- ☐ Freshman, Sophomore, or Junior
- ☐ Signatures

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