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.

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 2028. 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 WISCONSIN

Racine County Youth in Governance
Racine County UW-Extension
1072 Milwaukee Avenue, Burlington, WI 53105
262-767-2929 | https://racine.extension.wisc.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 Extension Racine County.

The University of Wisconsin–Madison Division of Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming in compliance with state and federal law.