

# Youth Advisory Commissions

## Updated January 2017

### What is a YAC?

Every city, regardless of its size or location, shares a common resource—arguably its greatest resource—its youth. Creating safe and enriching environments that our children can thrive in is really what it is all about. Moving beyond satisfying these core needs, your city can also tap in to youth perspective, creativity, and energy by creating a youth advisory commission (YAC).

There are dozens of YACs operating across the state, each with their own personality. Some focus on community service, others concentrate on peer involvement, and some operate as mini-city councils that deliberate issues and make recommendations. All give youth a voice and a stake in their city government. YACs provide cities with energetic volunteers for civic projects, give city leaders a fresh viewpoint on issues challenging our cities, and create a sense of accomplishment for our youth.



Borger Youth Advisory Council, February 2014

From City of Muleshoe Youth Advisory Council Commitment Pledge:

*The goal of the Muleshoe Youth Advisory Council is to develop a group of youth leaders who are committed to learning about local government and the roles youth can have in it. Muleshoe YAC will also learn to make a difference in our community and the lives of other youth, recognizing their voice and using it and representing other youth in the City of Muleshoe. Time, effort, and commitment are involved.*

From the Lake Jackson Youth Advisory Commission flyer:

*Why should I join YAC?*

- *Be a voice for the youth of Lake Jackson*
- *Meet new people*
- *Have fun*
- *Volunteer in the community*
- *Be involved in city activities by being a part of the city*

## Benefits

The benefit of YACs works both ways. Youth have an outlet to affect change in their community and have a place to interact with their peers and adults on issues of importance to their community. On the flip side, the city creates an outlet to not only engage youth but to harness their energy and ideas.



Rockwall Youth Advisory Council, February 2014

## YAC Projects

YACs are involved in a number of projects in their communities. Below is a short sampling of successful projects that YACs have performed. We encourage you to get creative and help us add to this list.

- Advise the city council on teen-related issues (Bryan, Burleson, Flower Mound, Kyle)
- Movie in the park (Muleshoe)
- School supply give away program (Port Arthur)
- Family fun night (Cedar Hill)
- Hip hop summit (DeSoto)
- 5K run to support a charity (Muleshoe)
- Fun and educational lock-in (Arlington)
- Learn about all areas of city government (North Richland Hills, Rockwall, Borger, Muleshoe)
- Create luminaries for Relay for Life (Killeen)
- Fundraising and item drive for those in need (Belton, Killeen, Pearland)

- Adopt-a-roadway (Killeen)
- Teens in the drivers seat campaign (Garland)
- Partner with the city's local chapter of Keep Texas Beautiful (Lake Jackson, Killeen)
- Holiday events (Easter Hunt, Tree Lighting, Christmas Carnival, etc.) (Cedar Killeen, Lake Jackson, University Park)
- Reports/presentations to city council (Borger, Burleson, Rockwall, University Park)
- Intern with city officials (Borger)
- Four community service projects a year (Arlington)
- Annual teen talk event (Garland)
- Black history talent show (Abilene)
- Mock city council meetings (Muleshoe)
- Youth engagement awards program (Grand Prairie)
- Photo projects (DeSoto)
- Annual youth conference (Killeen)
- Teen survey (Baytown)
- Advocate a municipal issue before state legislative leaders (Borger)
- Assist at city festivals/events (University Park)
- Provide training to YAC members (college prep, leadership, teamwork, diversity training, healthy habits, professional image) (Port Arthur, Rockwall)
- Career fest (Austin)
- Host a prom for senior citizens or a father-daughter dance (Copperas Cove)
- Civic literacy event (Fort Worth)
- Assist with city-wide clean-up and/or recycling efforts (University Park)

- Volunteer at various local organization (Killeen, University Park)
- Join forces with local schools on projects (Hutto)
- Improve speaking and presentation skills (Borger)
- Network with other youth (Bryan)
- Develop public service announcements on issues of importance to youth (Garland)
- Host the Texas Youth Advisory Commission Summit (Garland, Killeen, DeSoto, Port Arthur, Rockwall, Pearland)

### How to Form a YAC

**Get buy in and feedback from your youth.** Talk with the youth in your community. Ask them if a youth commission would be an appropriate forum for their participation.

**Back it up on paper.** Work with your youth to develop YAC bylaws. These bylaws should outline the duties and responsibilities of the commission. Several YACs have also been established by city ordinance as well.

**Keep it going.** Maintaining your YAC requires an enthusiastic champion within city hall and a plan for recruiting new members. Your adult leader/cheerleader will need to take an active role in recruitment—whether it is reaching out to local schools, holding an open house at city hall, or tapping current members to recruit their peers.



Abilene's Carver Youth Council, February 2014

## How TML Can Help

The formation of youth advisory commissions in cities across the state is a priority of the Texas Municipal League (TML) Board of Directors. In 2003, then-TML President Jackie Levingston championed the issue, and today more than 45 Texas cities have programs that involve youth. This initiative provides cities with energetic volunteers for civic projects, gives city leaders a fresh perspective on issues challenging our cities, and creates a sense of accomplishment for our youth.

The sky is the limit in regards to the types of projects your YAC can undertake. A great way for adult leaders and youth to connect to new ideas and spark innovation is to meet with other youth groups. TML has two terrific outlets to do just that.

1. Join the YouthNet Listserv at [www.netqa.org/youthnet](http://www.netqa.org/youthnet).

The YouthNet listserv is an easy way to collaborate on youth-focused city initiatives, projects, and issues. YouthNet is a complimentary service open to all TML member city officials.

2. Attend the annual Texas Youth Advisory Commission Summit. TML is proud to sponsor an annual youth summit. The first Texas Youth Advisory Commission Summit was held in Woodway in 2001. Nearly 50 city officials and youth leaders attended the summit.

In 2003, the TML board approved the sponsorship of the YAC summit. This commitment continues today as well as the summit's success. More recently, the 2014 summit in Rockwall attracted 302 participants from 29 cities, and the 2015 summit in Killeen attracted 305 participants from 22 cities.

Over the years, participants have been exposed to exciting careers (from lawmakers to film-makers), have heard from inspiring speakers, have forged lasting friendships, have exchanged ideas, have served those in need through a variety of community service projects, and have had fun.

For more information about the upcoming annual summit (which is usually held in February), go to [www.yacsummit.org](http://www.yacsummit.org).

## YACs in Texas

Why reinvent the wheel? Reach out to existing YACs for example mission statements, recruitment materials, guidelines, applications, meeting agendas, meeting minutes, and project descriptions.

[Abilene's Carver Youth Council](#)

[Arlington Mayor's Youth Commission](#)

[Austin Youth Council](#)  
[Baytown Youth Advisory Commission](#)  
[Belton Youth Advisory Commission](#)  
[Borger Youth Advisory Council](#)  
[Bryan Youth Advisory Commission](#)  
[Burleson Mayor's Youth Council](#)  
[Cedar Hill Mayor's Youth Council](#)  
[Cibolo Youth Council](#)  
[Copperas Cove Youth Advisory Council](#)  
[DeSoto Youth Advisory Council](#)  
[Flower Mound Youth Action Council](#)  
[Fort Worth Youth Advisory Board](#)  
[Frisco Mayor's Youth Council](#)  
[Garland Youth Council](#)  
[Georgetown Youth Advisory Board](#)  
[Grand Prairie Youth Council](#)  
[Houston Mayor's Youth Council](#)  
[Hutto Youth Advisory Task Force](#)  
[Irving Youth Council](#)  
[Jacinto City's Youth Council](#)  
[Kennedale Youth Advisory Council](#)  
[Killeen Youth Advisory Commission](#)  
[Kyle Area Youth Advisory Council](#)  
[Lake Jackson Youth Advisory Commission](#)  
[Lancaster Youth Advisory Committee](#)  
[Laredo Youth Council](#)  
[Missouri City Mayor's Youth Commission](#)  
[Muleshoe Youth Advisory Council](#)  
[North Richland Hills Youth Advisory Committee](#)  
[Pearland Youth Action Council](#)  
[Port Arthur Youth Advisory Council](#)

[Rockwall Youth Advisory Council](#)

[San Antonio Youth Commission](#)

[San Marcos Youth Commission](#)

[Sugar Land Mayor's Youth Advisory Council](#)

[University Park Youth Advisory Commission](#)

[Waco Youth Council](#)

[Wylie Youth Council](#)

[National League of Cities Youth Education and Families](#)

**For more information about YACs and the YAC Summit, contact Gray Bulman ([gray@tml.org](mailto:gray@tml.org), 512-231-7406) or Rachael Pitts ([rpitts@tml.org](mailto:rpitts@tml.org), 512-231-7472).**