

# Youth in City Government

## Purpose

● Youth in City Government is a program designed to get junior high and middle school students involved in local governments issues. This program is sponsored by the Mankato Family YMCA and supported by the City of Mankato. the project is currently being run at Fitzgerald Middle School in Mankato.

● [Healthy Community Youth Assets](#) are accepted by the City of Mankato as a model.

● Through Youth in City Government, students gain an understanding of the issues, research process, politics and media influence that goes into city government involvement. During the 12 week program, participants study and prepare reports on local issues that concern local citizens. Through the process, students play different roles to be able to identify the various functions community people play. At the end of the course, the students put on a mock city council meeting to decide the fate of their issues.

## Student Roles

● During the mock city council meeting, students play one of four roles for each issue discussed. These roles include: decision maker, city staff personnel, citizen participant, and member of the media. Each role plays a crucial part in the mock council meeting.

● Decision makers play the part of a city council member. They listen to the facts presented to them and make final decision on the issues.

● City staff personnel research various issues. Their role includes putting on a presentation to the city council and making a recommendation. If their presentation is thorough and well presented, the council will have an easier job making a decision.

● Students who take on the role of citizen participants voice the views of the local citizens who are involved in the issue. Some are in favor of the city staff recommendations and some are opposed.

● The students in the media role are objective bystanders. Their job is to report what happens on each issue. They share their point of view with outsiders.

## Activities

● Although the culminating event in the Youth in City Government program is the mock city council meeting, there are many activities that lead up to that goal. Students get a chance to meet with and interview local government staff personnel so they will better understand their role. When possible, students shadow these officials at their job sites. They also talk with city council members to become familiar with their function within the city.

● One of the most interesting activities includes a tour of city facilities. Transported on a city bus, students are given a tour of the city to gain a better understanding of the various areas in which the city is responsible. Whenever possible, students are taken directly to the sites that are related to the issues they are researching.

## What are People Saying about Youth in City Government?

● "Our son, Andrew, learned a great deal from this excellent program. He became very involved in and

excited about the issue he studied - always checking the newspaper to read about any new developments. It promoted many family conversations about how city governments meet the needs of their residents."

*Sue and Dave Cole, parents*

● "Youth in City Government has given me a great opportunity to learn about Mankato's government. It helps you to meet and learn about the people who represent your community. It also helps us to be aware of different issues and helps us form ideas about what we can do to help our community."

*Amy Stocker, students*

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For more information, contact the [City of Mankato Public Relations Office](#), Phone: (507) 387-8692 or write:

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Web weaver: [Internet Connections, Inc.](#)