2019 Conference Delegate Guide

Background

The New York State YMCA Youth & Government Conference in Albany is the culmination of months of preparation on legislative pieces and other work by participants in their local clubs. It is a time to debate issues, discover new information, and make new friends…we are the oldest Youth & Government Program in the United States, and as we progress, we will only get bigger, stronger, and better!

**YMCA OF THE USA MISSION STATEMENT**

To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.

**YMCA DIVERSITY MISSION STATEMENT**

The Y is made up of people of all ages and from every walk of life working side by side to strengthen communities. Together we work to ensure that everyone, regardless of ability, age, cultural background, ethnicity, faith, gender, gender identity, ideology, income, national origin, race or sexual orientation has the opportunity to reach their full potential with dignity. Our core values are caring, honesty, respect and responsibility—they guide everything we do.

## National & State Overview

**National YMCA Youth & Government**

YMCA Youth and Government is a Teen Leadership program established in 1936 with the motto of "Democracy Must be Learned by Each Generation.”

Currently, the program is held in 40+ States involving more than 55,000 each year.

* The program's goal is to help young people gain a greater appreciation and understanding of the democratic process while teaching vital leadership skills.
* The National YMCA conducts a Youth Governor's Conference each year in Washington, DC where Youth Governors from around the country actually meet with governmental officials where they cultivate their understanding of servant leadership during the second week in June.
* The Montgomery YMCA also hosts a Conference On National Affairs (CONA) in North Carolina

where over 600 of the brightest and the best Youth and Government delegates from each state come together the first week in July for a week to discuss proposals of national and international concerns.

* The YMCA of the USA also hosts a National Judicial Conference program in Chicago the third week in July bringing together both appellant and Mock Trial teens in a competitive three day program.

**New York State YMCA Youth and Government**

* The New York program began in 1936 founded by the Albany YMCA Director Clement P. Duran with the intention “that if we can get them into the capitol we could teach them about government in a big way.”
* Leadership teens meet four times in advance of the Conference nurturing the programs growth during the year.
* Spring Conference is held in April to prepare our CONA delegates and provide each with copies of our work over the past year where teens lobby legislators for the major issues they would like to see addressed.
* The State Conference is held annually at the State Capitol in March. Delegates and advisors stay at the Desmond Hotel and spend the majority of their stay performing their governmental responsibilities.

## Purpose of the Conference

This program offers unusual opportunities for young people to do research in the area of statewide concerns; to organize this information into legislation or other forms; to engage in intensive discussions; and to debate these pieces of legislation with other outstanding young people from all over New York State. The experience of the Albany conference makes a vital contribution to helping young people and adults learn more about the democratic form of government. In addition to the above, goals for the program include:

+ To provide training and experience in understanding the legislative process

+ To provide active participation in the legislative process

+ To provide awareness of social issues and their possible resolution

+ To foster the development of leadership and communication skills

+ To provide opportunities to hear and respect varying viewpoints

+ Develop public speaking, reading comprehension, and analytical skills

+ Character development including the drive to complete long term projects

Delegate goals should include:

+ To understand the American/New York State heritage of civil and personal liberties

+ To search for the facts and truth of public questions

+ To vote with intelligence and conscience

+ To participate actively in political and public affairs

+ To practice tolerance, cooperation and goodwill in making democracy work

Qualifications

Each young person desiring to participate in the Albany conference must have participated in their local New York State YMCA Youth & Government program and attend their local District conference.

## Ground Rules

All advisors and delegates participating in New York State YMCA Youth & Government must be willing to take the YMCA challenge:

To accept and demonstrate values such as caring, honesty, respect and responsibility.

This does not mean that YMCA Youth & Government delegates must be perfect in their behavior. An important aspect of the YMCA challenge is always to strive to improve, regardless of past attitudes and actions.

**CARING RESPECT**

- Accept others as they are - Treat others as you would have them treat you

- Choose positive rather than negative - Do try to keep the “under current to a minimum

- Avoid put-downs - Respect others and yourself

**HONESTY RESPONSIBILITY**

- Tell the truth - Do what you know is right

- Speak for yourself - Meet deadlines and commitments

- Be responsible for your own learning

## Awards

## Premier District

Those Districts who have met the following criteria will be recognized as Premier District during the Closing Banquet at the close of the State Conference. All Premier District winners will receive a pin.

Criteria for selection are:

1. Be present and on time at all sessions.
2. Adhere to Code of Conduct at all times (in and out of sessions).
3. Have all Bills. Briefs, Press Articles, Lobbyist Statements, submitted on-time and in proper form.
4. Have all money, registration material and papers submitted on time
5. All district delegates must demonstrate behavior reflective of professional young adults, one delegate may adversely influence their opportunity for selection.

In recognition of outstanding participation, various delegates are recognized by the State and their peers through awards. The awards given during the conference are:

Outstanding Debater (Senate and Assembly)

Outstanding Bill (Senate and Assembly)

Outstanding Press

Outstanding Attorney

Outstanding Lobbyist

Outstanding Statesperson

Outstanding Brief

Outstanding Attorney

Outstanding Firm

Gold Team

Silver Team

Bronze Team

# Committee Procedures

Time limits are recommended to ensure each bill a fair hearing. The committee chair should take the total allotted time and determine the approximate amount of time that can be spent on each bill (e.g.: if you have 4 bills to cover in one hour, each bill can be discussed in approximately 15 minutes). Total time must include ranking after each bill.

If running behind schedule, it is the responsibility of the Chair to interrupt: (“time for discussion of the bill has expired. We will now proceed to the ranking of this bill.”), and set new time limits

After the Chair calls the meeting to order the members of the committee introduce themselves. After all introductions are complete, it may be necessary for the Chair to explain any procedures (ranking…etc.)

* The chair will appoint one member of the committee to serve as clerk. The clerk is responsible for reading bills and recording the outcome on the bill.
* The bill sponsor is asked to speak on the purpose and major provisions of his/her bill (OPENING STATEMENT)
* Committee members in turn question the bill sponsor about the bill asking for specific information, background information and any other pertinent information necessary to make a decision. (TECHNICAL QUESTIONS)
* The Chair asks if there is anyone present wishing to speak against (con) the bill and if there is, invites him or her to speak. Chair asks if there is anyone present wishing to speak for (pro) the bill. (This goes back and forth - for and against until all speakers wishing to speak have spoken or the Chair rules the time allotted has expired) Chair calls on bill sponsor to give a summation speech. (After author’s summation, committee may consider the bill for Consent calendar) [CLOSING STATEMENT]
* After its sponsors have presented each bill, committee members will go into a period of ranking the bill they have just heard. Once ranking is complete, the next bill will be presented
* Procedure repeats itself until each bill has been heard.

Flow of Committee Hearing

1. Bill is read by Clerk
2. Sponsor’s Opening Remarks
3. Technical Questions\*
4. Period of Pro/Con Debate
5. Sponsor’s Closing Remarks
6. Possible consideration for Consent Calendar\*\*
7. Bill ranking form is completed. Ranking sheets for this bill are distributed.\*\*\*
8. All ranking sheets are collected
9. REPEAT STEPS 1-9 until all bills are heard

###### TECHNICAL QUESTIONS

Technical questions are a series of questions requested of the Bill sponsors for clarification of their bill presented. The Bill sponsor is given a period to answer all the questions.

Our current format will have questions being asked, and then an immediate response from the bill sponsor. So the flow will be a quick question/answer series. The proposed format will confine the question to more factual questioning by the legislators, and force the bill sponsors to give a factual immediate answer to their questions, as opposed to answering all questions in an almost monologue fashion. This type of questioning will illustrate the bill sponsor's actual knowledge of his/her material, and not just a "re-hashing" of their opening statement.

The Bill sponsor should respond if they do not know the answer to a question ("I am unable to answer that question at this time) or they can reserve to answer a question in their closing statement.

### YMCA Youth Conference On National Affairs (CONA)

Purpose

The purpose of sending a delegation of teens from the New York State YMCA Youth & Government program to National Affairs is to allow outstanding student leaders from New York to share in an extraordinary national teen leadership experience.

Philosophy

The State office of the New York State YMCA Youth & Government program believes it is a great honor to attend the National Affairs conference. The committee of advisors that choose the delegates strive to send from New York only the most committed teen leaders who exemplify the values upon which the New York YMCA Youth & Government program is based. It is the intention to send delegates to National Affairs who want to be there and who are willing to put forth the effort necessary to demonstrate their leadership abilities at the North Carolina conference.

Selection Committee

The National Affairs selection committee shall select the New York State delegation to the YMCA Youth Conference on National Affairs held in North Carolina. The delegates will be observed at the State conference and recommendations are received from all youth committee chairpersons, adult committee advisors, chamber participants and Presiding Officers in the selection consideration process. District Coordinaotrs will make the final decisions for their district. The delegation, in addition to the alternates will be announced at the Closing Banquet. And all National Affairs delegates must be able to attend a **MANDATORY** training April at Camp Greenkill.

Criteria for selection

1. Completed the CONA Application before the Conference.
2. State Conference Participation: knowledge of topics, decorum during sessions, ability to speak in public.
3. Knowledge and use of parliamentary procedure.
4. Contribution to the political process and interaction with other delegates.
5. Evidence of preparation for the conference.
6. Ability to quickly assimilate as a team member with a commitment to personal responsibility and integrity.
7. Strict adherence to the Code of Conduct during the entire conference. (Youth who cannot conduct themselves properly during social hours will not be considered).

[CONA Application](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NYS2019CONA)  
This must be filled out by March 13th if you wish to be considered for selection to the CONA team. You can go to www.ymcacona.org to learn more about the Conference on National Affairs, but it is the highest level of participation in the YMCA Youth and Government program, and a huge honor for all who are selected. The selection process is anonymous and the only thing you can do to be considered is complete the application. Application Link: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NYS2019CONA

Conference Packing and Dress Code

Suggested Clothing Packing Checklist (Including what may be worn to the conference)

1. 3 Professional Outfits, business suits or equivalent
2. Appropriate Sleepwear for a shared room
3. 4+ sets of appropriate and underclothes and socks
4. 1 Childhood Character themed outfit or casual outfit (no masks or non-religious headwear)
5. Cold Weather gear (Coat, Gloves, Hat)
6. Dress Shoes

Hygiene and Toiletries

Soap and Shampoo are provided by the hotel, but with multiple students in each room it is a good idea to pack some of your own. Delegates should schedule showers with their roommates so no one is rushing in the mornings. Please be advised that wearing body spray is not a substitute for a shower or deodorant. With many people in a small space delegates are encouraged to go above and beyond in the area of hygiene while at the conference.

**DAILY CLOTHING NEEDS**

Friday March 15th

Delegates will need one professional outfit for this day and should plan to wear that outfit the entire night. The clothes you travel to and from the conference in are decided by your local group.

Saturday March 16th

Delegates will need one professional outfit for this day that they will be wearing to the State Capitol. This should be a business suit or appropriate substitute.

Shoes should be appropriate for the outfit, not sneakers or other casual shoes. There will be a lot of walking throughout the day, so delegates should refrain from wearing uncomfortable shoes for the sake of appearance.

Delegates will be allowed to change into casual clothes for the social activities Saturday evening. Each year an optional theme is set forth, and this year it is childhood characters. Dressing as one or wearing clothes featuring them is encouraged. Please no masks, non-religious headwear, or anything else that obscures the face.

Sunday March 17th

Delegates will need one professional outfit for this day that they will be wearing to the State Capitol. This should be a business suit or appropriate substitute.

The clothes you travel to and from the conference in are decided by your local group.