



Youth Advisory Council, YMCA SWO 2026-2027

(YAC)

Terms of Reference

Purpose

The Youth Advisory Council's focus is preparing a new generation of YMCA leaders who are ready and able to connect to people, organizations and opportunities that advance the YMCA's vision, mission, and values. The program's overall goals are to develop leaders who can help create inclusive communities through advocating for and supporting the incorporation of youth voice in decision-making within the YMCA of Southwestern Ontario.

Function

Youth Advisory Council members and co-chairs will:

- Provide youth voice and perspectives to the YMCA of SWO as input on emerging issues, opportunities, programs, priorities and strategies
- Advocate for and increase the representation of youth/young leaders
- Develop and build their leadership skills and self-awareness
- Lead an internal youth-focused initiative supporting the YMCA of SWO's Strategic plan
- Act as an ambassador for the YMCA in their community

Composition

- The council is comprised of ten to twelve members and 2 Co-Chairs between the ages of 15 and 30 based in Southwestern Ontario
- Members are selected based on a review of submitted applications by existing YAC members together with the Youth Engagement Coordinator. Consideration is given to ensure broad geographic representation within the Council as well as other dimensions of diversity including race, Indigeneity, gender, sexual orientation, disability status, and religious beliefs
- Members are YMCA staff, volunteers, participants or YMCA community leaders
- YAC members:
 - are passionate about youth voice, engagement and leadership
 - are committed to the on-going vision and mission of the YMCA
 - have general knowledge of how their local YMCA Association operates
 - support and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion across the YMCA; and have an interest in, experience with, and/or willingness to gain a broader understanding of the YMCA

Commitment

- YAC meets virtually (and if possible in person periodically) biweekly for 1 hour. More frequent meetings are sometimes required depending on projects and initiatives.
 - Meetings are held on two Thursdays each month, one 3-4pm and another 6-7pm
 - Council members must be able to attend evening meetings and are expected to make attendance at all meetings a priority. There is a minimum attendance requirement of 80% of meetings (19 meetings throughout the year)
- Individual and/or group work may be required between meetings
- Each member is encouraged to share their own opinions and perspectives on issues, opportunities and challenges, inside and outside the YMCA
- Members will also be responsible for facilitating opportunities for local youth and/or other young leaders to share their own opinions and their perspectives on issues, topics of interest, and initiatives YAC is working on
- Each member serves a minimum of a one-year term, to be revisited on an annual basis (Members may serve a maximum of 3 consecutive terms.)
- YAC members participate on a voluntary basis and are not compensated financially for their involvement on the council