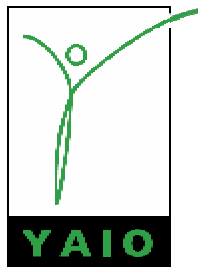


AN ORGANIZATIONAL MANUAL FOR NORTH CAROLINA YOUTH COUNCILS

STEPS TO ORGANIZING A YOUTH COUNCIL



An Organizational Manual for Youth Councils

Steps to Organize a Youth Council

Revised June 2006

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INTRODUCTION

What if the youth in your community made a difference? What if they brought about change to make your area a better place to live? What if they addressed problems that youth just like them are confronted with every day, and realized solutions? What if they had a voice?

With a local Youth Council, all of this is possible! In Youth Councils, dedicated youth work with local government agencies and concerned adults to address the needs of their local peers. These young leaders organize programs and projects to enhance their communities and the well-being of other youth in their communities.

Members of Youth Councils learn the value of teamwork, respect for self and others, a strong work ethic and what it means to be a responsible citizen. Youth Councils provide a creative outlet for the youth of the community. The focus is not to replace any existing youth group, but to allow collaboration and serve as one united voice for all local youth.

This packet was created by the North Carolina State Youth Council, and is intended to be a guide for those wishing to establish a Youth Council in their area. We offer this information as a suggestion, and it's important to remember that the circumstances in your community may require variation on these procedures. Some Youth Councils will be started on a county level; others for the city or town. Whatever the community, and at whichever level, we trust that the youth and adults will make the organization a great success! Please contact us if you have any questions or suggestions.

SECTION I: WHAT IS A YOUTH COUNCIL?

Purpose & Goals

The purpose of a Youth Council is to meet the needs of area youth. To meet these needs, Youth Councils have five main goals:

- To be the voice of youth in the community and serve as a line of communication between youth and adults of the area.
- To provide an organization in which youth can organize and supervise programs for the benefit of area youth and the community. These programs are open to all and should not duplicate or overlap existing programs in the area. The object is not to compete with constituent groups, but to provide a central planning body.
- To serve as an advisory committee on youth affairs to the local government. This goal is generally met by staying in touch with elected and governmental officials, bringing them ideas and concerns of youth that are within their realms of operation.
- To provide an opportunity for youth to share in local government matters and to learn to become responsible citizens.
- To encourage city and county planning agencies to invite youth to serve on city and county committees and contribute to community planning.

Membership

Many states have Youth Councils; but unfortunately these groups are often comprised mostly of adults. In North Carolina, the concept is different: Youth Councils are comprised of youth, who organize projects to benefit local youth, while adults provide assistance where needed.

Different Youth Councils have different ways of selecting members. Some have an open enrollment, while others may have a selective application process. When structuring the enrollment process, the chosen method should be clear, consistent and sensitive to the needs of the community. The size of the group should also suit the needs of the community. Consider these points about membership in Youth Council:

1. The members of Youth Council should be dedicated to the group.
2. A Youth Council is an open organization; activities must be open to any interested youth.
3. The size of the group should not affect its efficiency. Some Youth Councils have restrictions on the number of members and others do not; consider what is best for your community.
4. Acceptance of members is on an equal-opportunity basis. We strongly suggest an emphasis on ensuring diversity among the group; if multiple schools are involved, attention should also be given to balanced school representation.

Affiliation & Support

One distinction between Youth Council and other youth groups is its affiliation with city and/or county governments. We strongly urge your council to become affiliated with the local government. Affiliation with local government can have the following benefits:

- § The Youth Council is less likely to be confused with other youth groups.
- § Government affiliation can occasion the position as the official youth group of the city/county; the Youth Council can be seen as a group that collaborates with and assists other groups, instead of a competitor.
- § The Youth Council may be seen as the voice of local youth.
- § Depending on the size of the area, the government may offer financial support to the group. (In smaller areas, the government may simply provide an endorsement. In larger areas, the government may wish to sponsor a Youth Council by providing a full-time coordinator, office space, etc.)

Financially, individual citizens, civic groups, businesses, foundations and other similar sources support most Youth Council programs. A council may also undertake a venture designed to be self-supporting, such as an event supported through ticket sales. A Youth Council may also consider a mini-grant (see Section IV) or a fund-raising project for funding.

SECTION II: STEPS TO ORGANIZE A YOUTH COUNCIL

STEP 1 – Preliminary Meeting

** The purpose of this meeting is to discuss Youth Councils with those interested and to effectively plan a community Interest Meeting. **

- q Meet with those interested in starting a Youth Council to discuss plans for an Interest Meeting (to solicit community youth to be apart of Youth Council).
- q At the beginning of the meeting, designate someone to take notes and the mode by which the notes will be distributed to attendees (email, photocopies, etc.).
- q Consider time, location, supplies needed for the meeting (chalkboard, chalk, sign-up sheet, pens, LCD display, screen, etc.), refreshments, advertising/invitations, agenda, speakers, etc.
- q Invite someone who is knowledgeable about the work of Youth Councils to speak about the impact the Youth Council will have on the community (if needed, contact the State Youth Council Coordinator).
- q Define what needs to be done in order to have a successful Interest Meeting with good attendance.
- q Decide who will handle each responsibility and set deadlines for each task.
- q Develop a timeline of the Youth Council for at least the following six weeks, being optimistic and realistic.
- q Brainstorm about and list the existing youth organizations in the community, and designate people to invite the president and adult advisor of each group to attend the Interest Meeting.
- q Have each person write down at least five people s/he thinks would be interested in becoming a member of the Youth Council and personally invite them to the Interest Meeting.
- q If the current group of interested youth (attending the Preliminary Meeting) does not have a sufficient number of adult participants already, brainstorm about which adults could assist with the Youth Council, and personally invite them to the Interest Meeting.
- q Remember to invite local government officials such as the city mayor, the chairman of the county commissioners and others. You also may want to invite representatives from local business that may be able to sponsor the group financially, or in some other way. Decide how they will be contacted (telephone, letter, email, etc.) and by whom.
- q This may also be a good time to brainstorm about the activities and projects that the group would like to organize (or you may want to wait until a more definite group is established).

TIPS:

* Carefully consider how to publicize the meeting: fliers, invitations, word-of-mouth, email/Internet invitations, etc. Try going to classes and briefly speaking about the Youth Council and inviting interested students to the Interest Meeting (this can take as little time as two minutes, but don't exceed ten minutes). Be Creative!

* If your group plans to hang fliers, where will they be posted? School hallways, cafeterias, bathrooms (maybe even the stalls), bulletin boards, administrative offices, community centers,

outdoors? In which schools or centers will they be posted? Always seek permission from schools and businesses before posting materials.

- * When planning the Interest Meeting, it may help to mentally walk through the meeting (considering also pre- and post-meeting needs).
 - * At the preliminary meeting, make sure that everyone is providing input equally and be careful not to show favoritism or partiality to anyone.
 - * When brainstorming, do not immediately deny anyone's idea; write down all ideas first, and then go back and edit if necessary, communicating with everyone equally.
 - * Remember that the first few meetings will set the tone for the entire program; continuously maintain a positive attitude, no matter what! **J**
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STEP 2 – Advertising & Contact

- * The purpose of this step is to inform the community about the Youth Council Interest Meeting and to attract people to attending the meeting. **
 - q Now it's time to implement the advertising ideas the group came up with at the Preliminary Meeting. Begin posting fliers, sending emails and invitations or whatever the group has decided to do.
 - q Be creative and effective, again, considering how people will know about the Interest Meeting.
 - q Make sure your audience knows who, what, when, where and the basic purpose of the meeting.
-

STEP 3 – Interest Meeting

- * The purpose of this meeting is to explain Youth Councils to the community and to arouse interest to participate or to support. **
- q At least one week before the meeting date, confirm attendance with the local government officials, speakers (if invited), business owners (if invited) and any other important individuals.
- q A few days before the meeting you may want to simply ask people, "Are you coming to the Interest Meeting?" A friendly reminder never hurts.
- q On the day of meeting arrive early to make last-minute preparations and in case people show up early.
- q Before the meeting, designate someone to take notes and the mode by which the notes will be distributed to attendees (email, photocopies, etc.).
- q At the beginning of the meeting circulate an information sheet that collects attendees' names and contact information (or have attendees sign it upon arrival).
- q Follow the agenda and the plans that were set forth in the Preliminary Meeting, stay enthusiastic, keep the meeting moving, and it will be great!

- q This may also be a good time to brainstorm with the community about the activities and projects that the group should organize (or you may want to wait until a more definite group is established).
- q At the end of the meeting give the information sheet to someone that can type it in a neat format and email or copy it to at least one more person (as a back-up).

TIPS:

- * Before the end of the Interest Meeting be sure to mention the date of the next meeting (the First Official Meeting).
 - * It may be helpful to have the following meeting at the same time as the interest meeting, as this is likely an available time for all that attended.
-

STEP 4 – First Official Meeting

** The purpose of this meeting is to become acquainted with the current group and discuss bylaws. **

- q At the beginning of the meeting, designate someone to take notes and the mode by which the notes will be distributed to attendees (email, photocopies, etc.).
 - q At the beginning of the meeting circulate an attendance sheet on which attendees can write their phone numbers or email addresses (in case there are some whose contact information you do not have).
 - q Because this will be the first meeting, it will be a good idea for everyone to introduce him/herself.
 - q Briefly explain the need to establish bylaws and ask the group to review the current bylaws to provide suggestions about them at the following meeting (see the Section V for sample bylaws).
 - q This may also be a good time to brainstorm with the group about the activities and projects that should be organized.
 - q Discuss/brainstorm about funding and how activities will be financed (see Section IV for information about a mini-grants).
 - q Discuss other relevant business.
-

STEP 5 – Second Official Meeting

** The purpose of this meeting is to become further acquainted with the current group, vote on bylaws and nominate Youth Council officers. **

- q At the beginning of the meeting, designate someone to take notes and the mode by which the notes will be distributed to attendees (email, photocopies, etc.).
- q Briefly go over bylaws with the group and make necessary changes based on the group's suggestions, then take a vote to institute them.

- q Review the duties and expectations of each office as outlined in the bylaws, and accept nominations for offices (including committee chairs). Emphasize that officers should be dependable and motivated individuals. Some Youth Councils may appoint officers.
- q Ask each one that accepts nomination to prepare a brief (maybe 1 – 2 minute) speech about why s/he would like to serve in the office for which s/he's nominated.
- q Discuss the notion of the group becoming a part of the State Youth Council, by which the community youth would have an impact on state government (see Section IV for information about the State Youth Council).
- q Discuss other relevant business.

	Suggested Committee	Function
a)	By-laws Committee	To facilitate any changes needed in the bylaws.
b)	Recreation/Entertainment	To provide constructive/beneficial recreation for area youth, attend/represent council on local parks and recreation board.
c)	Legislative Issues	Serve as the legislative representative in all aspects of the Youth Council. Attend city or town meetings.
d)	Publications	Handle publicity and serve as media contact, and market council events.
e)	Environmental Actions	To discuss and facilitate change (if needed) in area environment, organize highway cleanup events.
f)	Employment Projects	Research and recommend jobs for area youth.
g)	Training Projects	Leadership training for youth.
h)	Service Projects	Research community service projects.
i)	Fundraising	Generate ideas and plan projects to bring funding to the group.

TIPS:

* Tailor the bylaws to fit your youth council. Be sure to consider suggestions and changes from those in attendance.

STEP 6 – Third Official Meeting

** The purpose of this meeting is to become further acquainted with the current group and elect Youth Council officers. **

- q At the beginning of the meeting, designate someone to take notes and the mode by which the notes will be distributed to attendees (email, photocopies, etc.).
- q Hear the short speeches from each nominee and vote on each office according to the bylaws.
- q Begin to discuss the plans for the first project(s) and finalize the timeline if it is not already finalized.
- q Discuss other relevant business.

TIPS:

* Acknowledge everyone that runs for offices by thanking them for the desire to serve in positions of leadership.

* When the officers are elected, remember to congratulate them.

STEP 7 – Keep the Community Informed

** The purpose of this step is to ensure that the community is aware of and can participate in or support the newly formed Youth Council. **

- q Write a press release including information explaining the Youth Council, newly elected officers (and perhaps other members), upcoming events and contact information.
- q Send the press release to the local media (radio, television, newspapers, school publications, etc.), the local government, local business and organizations and schools and follow up to confirm that it has been received.
- q Construct a Web site and obtain an email address for the Youth Council. If the council doesn't have enough money for professional Internet services, try free agents like Angelfire.com, Tripod.com, Yahoo groups for sites and Hotmail, Yahoo or Lycos for email.

SECTION III: COMMITTEES AND PROJECTS

Committees

Youth Councils establish committees in order to focus on specific areas of community need more effectively. Each committee assumes the jurisdiction over its area, studies its area in relation to local youth, becomes knowledgeable about the needs of the area, makes recommendations to the council, gets approval and enacts necessary programs. The committee also follows through on direct assignments from the council.

Members of the Youth Council sign up to be on committees or the Youth Council executive board assigns members to committees (members desiring to change committees should submit a written request to the executive board). Each committee has a chairperson and secretary. The committee officers and members, evaluate the needs of their area, review current endeavors, recommend actions, etc. All committee members should gather information in order to remain knowledgeable in their field (example: assigning one person as information director) and share the work responsibly. A committee may need to designate subcommittees for certain events and projects.

Committee chairs oversee the committees, are responsible for ensuring that it progresses and maintain proper communication between the committee and the council. Chairs submit an organization chart and a monthly progress report to the vice chair and the adult advisor and ensure that meeting minutes are submitted on time. Usually, the committee chairs comprise the executive board.

Steps for New Project Clearance

1. Any new idea must be presented, discussed and voted on in a committee meeting.
2. An accepted project is then written up as a project proposal.
3. The committee chairperson notifies the Youth Council vice chair about the proposed project and requests to have the proposal entered as an item of business on the next executive board agenda.
4. The committee chair attends the executive board meeting to present the project and answer questions about it.
5. The executive board either rejects the project with an explanation or recommends it to the Youth Council for acceptance.
6. An executive board project recommendation is put on the next Youth Council meeting agenda for the council's consideration and action.
7. The designated committee then implements the council-accepted project.

Here are some projects that several Youth Councils in North Carolina have planned and implemented:

A. Recreation/Entertainment

1. Recreational Sports – Summer volleyball leagues, bicycling program, basketball tournament, and golf tournament.
2. Youth Concert Series – A fall and spring concert featuring well-known artists.

B. Legislative Issues

1. Legislative Liaison – To familiarize youth with the city government and to create greater interest in its development, three Youth Council members are recognized by the mayor at each city council meeting. It is up to the committee to be sure that these members attend these meetings.
2. Youth Representatives (City/Town Council) – This committee is comprised of the Youth Council members placed on the various boards, committees and commissions of the city government. They meet before each regular city council meeting to study the agenda and attachments from the newspaper and notices pertaining to city affairs. They are prepared to conduct surveys of the area high school population on matters concerning the youth and to present the results to the proper officials. Members of the committee attend the regular city council meetings and are to report on the meetings to the Youth Council.
3. Youth Week – This special week is primarily set as a week in the spring of each year. It consists of a series of separate committees that plan week-long celebrations pertaining to and involving youth. The chairman designates a separate chair for each of the youth week committees.
4. Teen Court – In Teen Court, a group of trained young people, acting as court officials, recommend sentences for juvenile offenders. Selected teenagers participate in the court under a legal clause “Amicus Curiae” or “Friends of the Court” and take part in its activities as aides to the court, under the supervision of adult professionals. Teen Court is a program of the NC Department of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention. View the Web site at: <http://www.ncdjjdp.org/>.
5. Legislative Page Programs
House and Senate Page Programs: The NC General Assembly Page Program affords state youth the opportunity to see firsthand how laws are made by participating in the legislative process. Young people assist in Representatives' and Senators' offices, in committee meetings, and during daily Sessions for one-week terms during General Assembly's session. Legislators are encouraged to sponsor students from diverse backgrounds. View the Web site at: <http://www.ncleg.net/>.

The Governor's Page Program: This year-round program provides an opportunity for high school students to spend a week in Raleigh and learn about the roles and functions of state government. Each week, pages are assigned to a cabinet level agency or Council of State office within the state government complex to assist employees with various tasks. In addition to their daily responsibilities, pages have the

opportunity to attend press conferences, tour several historic landmarks including the State Capitol, the Legislative Building, the Executive Mansion, the Supreme Court and the NC Correctional Institute for Women. They also participate in service projects and meet the governor. View the Web site at:

<http://www.volunteernc.org/code/govpage.htm>.

C. PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

1. Monthly Literary Magazine – The literary magazine is a monthly publication for all Youth Council members and other interested teenagers. The purpose of the magazine is to give the youth of the area an opportunity to express their ideas and thoughts through creative work. Original poems, short stories, essays, articles and artwork are presented.
2. Newsletter – The newsletter is a monthly publication for all Youth Council members and other local citizens, both teenage and adult, interested in council activities. This newsletter is both informative and entertaining, including reports on committee progress, a message from the chair, items on youth happenings around the city, other news of interest and feature items. Members on the publications committee involved in the newsletter research news, write and edit the stories and headlines, and create the general layout.
3. Scrapbook – The publicity committee is responsible for keeping a yearly scrapbook of Youth Council activities. The committee designs the scrapbook, creates artwork and arranges the newspaper clippings and photographs. The scrapbook is kept updated at meetings held at least once a month. When completed, the scrapbook is stored in the Youth Council office.
4. Youth Council Activities – “Youth Council Activities” is a weekly article written by a Youth Council member in the Sunday newspaper. The column contains news of Youth Council projects and activities. The article is designed to:
 - a. Inform the reading public of youth-related happenings.
 - b. Give the youth an opportunity to express their feelings on pertinent matters.
 - c. Inform youth of opportunities available to them.

D. ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION

1. Beautification – Coordinate and clean up a park, school campus or district, etc.
2. Health – Conduct a forum concerning toxic waste, resulting in the development and submission of a resolution to local government.

E. EMPLOYMENT

1. Employment opportunities may be offered through the city, town, or county youth employment programs. Research and make contacts with these agencies.

F. TRAINING

1. Journalism Workshop – An area workshop on journalism for high school students in cooperation with the local newspaper. Registration fees can be charged to cover lunch.
2. Leadership Workshop – A workshop to give local youth leadership training. Registration fees can be charged to cover lunch.
3. Junior City Council – Annual one-month program to train youth in city government and to allow them to play roles of city positions.
4. Team Building – A workshop that focuses on youth essentials skills: cooperation, communication and teamwork. These concepts are usually taught through Adventure Learning Programs. Team building programs show how organizations function and how individuals contribute to group success. The dynamics of group process are modeled through challenge course activities to create educational, motivating experience with real impact.

G. SERVICE

1. Toys for Tots – A Christmas project done in cooperation with other community groups to collect and distribute toys to youth from low income or disadvantaged families.
2. Youth Mart – October project to allow youth groups to sell collected and donated items to raise money for worthy causes.
3. Safe Halloween – Organize local civic groups to meet at a local auditorium or park and give out free candy to children.
4. Food Drive –Collect donated non-perishable foods. Donations can be given to the local food bank, homeless shelter or soup kitchen. This project is traditionally held in November.
5. Adopt a Family – A holiday project in which the Youth Council collaborates with other community organizations to provide assistance to families in need. Collect items such as clothes, food, toys, or other items that the selected families request to be donated.
6. Read-In – Invite pre-school or elementary school students to an event at the local library. Youth Council members read stories, play games, and interact with other youth in the community.

H. FUNDRAISING

1. Bake Sale – Sell freshly baked cookies, cupcakes, cake slices, and more at reasonable prices. Set up a table in a popular area.

2. Carwash – Wash patrons' cars on a hot day in an area with a lot of traffic. Tell your customers what you're raising money for and let them know that you'll accept donations. Be sure to make visible signs that drivers can see from the road.
3. Donations – Set up a table outside of a grocery store and ask customers to give donations. Create a visible sign to post at the table, be prepared with literature about the council and remember to smile!
4. Letter Writing Campaign – Write letters to area businesses asking them to donate money for an event or for the council in general. Be sure to include how their contributions will impact the community, and that you will publicly recognize them as a sponsor/donor. Remember to provide visible public recognition at events and to send a thank you note to those who donate.

SECTION IV: THE NORTH CAROLINA STATE YOUTH COUNCIL

About the SYC

The SYC, a program of the NC Youth Advocacy and Involvement Office, is the statewide coordinating agency interested in the development of Youth Councils. It works to foster the development of responsible leadership among youth through involvement in community affairs and in decision-making processes at all levels of government and to provide a voice for the youth of North Carolina.

The SYC coordinates local Youth Councils across the state, assists newly-organized councils, and sponsors a number of activities, including four yearly youth leadership conferences: Mini-Grant, Leadership and Service, Youth Legislative Assembly and Teambuilding (for information about these conferences, contact the SYC Coordinator). The advisory body for SYC, the Youth Advisory Council, is made up of high school students and adults appointed by the governor, as well as youth members elected by SYC.

Opportunities

For more than 40 years, the State Youth Council has provided opportunities for youth to learn leadership skills through participation in local government matters. Here are some opportunities available to members of the State Youth Council:

- ◇ Apply for Mini-Grant and receive funding for projects
- ◇ Participate in the Legislative and Governor Page Programs
- ◇ Attend leadership conferences
- ◇ Host leadership conferences (receive financial assistance & bring publicity to your council)
- ◇ Serve on State Boards and Commissions (Juvenile Justice, Education, etc.)
- ◇ Serve on the Youth Advisory Council (appointed by the Governor)
- ◇ Participate in the Youth Legislative Assembly

To become a chartered member of the North Carolina State Youth Council or for more information about the SYC, contact the SYC Coordinator:

Coordinator / State Youth Council
Youth Advocacy & Involvement Office
217 W. Jones St
Raleigh, NC 27699-1319

Phone: 919.733.9296

Fax: 919.733.1461

<http://www.ncyao.com>

SECTION V: SUPPLEMENT SECTION

TIPS FOR MARKETING YOUR YOUTH COUNCIL

- ✓ Create a newspaper insert
- ✓ Start a Youth Festival Day in your community
- ✓ Present a youth forum in your community
- ✓ Organize a “Youth Council” day with the churches in your community
- ✓ Create and display a street banners in your area
- ✓ Check with local companies to insert a Youth Council sheet in their billing statements
- ✓ Hang posters
- ✓ Check with local merchants about programming a Youth Council on their cash register/point-of-sale receipts
- ✓ Have all Youth Council members to wear t-shirts to school on a specific day
- ✓ Create Youth Council liners or table-top tent cards for use by local restaurants or fast-food chains
- ✓ Create a Youth Council exhibit to display in your local mall/shopping center. Have Youth Council members give out brochures and information at the display
- ✓ Send a list of Youth Council related bulletin board suggestions to local schools
- ✓ Adopt a Highway
- ✓ Send out a press-release to local newspapers
- ✓ Create window store front displays
- ✓ Make a creative and youth friendly web page and link it to community sites
- ✓ Encourage stores, churches, and schools to put information on their marquee, or include in their newsletter, or include in the church announcements.
- ✓ Schedule to go to middle school assemblies and talk to 8th graders.
- ✓ Give out balloon bouquets to community leaders and donors, thanking them for their support.
- ✓ Be knowledgeable about the council programs and have brochures.
- ✓ Be visible, Be visible, **BE VISIBLE**

SAMPLE BYLAWS

_____ YOUTH COUNCIL

Article 1: Name and Address

Section 1. The name of this body shall be the _____ Youth Council.

Section 2. The principal office of this body shall be located at _____.

Article 2: Purposes

Section 1. The Youth Council is to serve, listen to and represent local youth in all matters of civic interest and need.

Section 2. The Youth Council is to initiate, organize and supervise programs and projects which shall benefit the youth of _____; and to work with and aid in the coordination of existing youth programs in order to create better total youth programming. These programs shall be open to all youth of _____.

Article 3: Council Jurisdiction

The jurisdiction of the _____ Youth Council shall be the youth population of _____ who are registered members of the Youth Council. The council shall represent and shall be ultimately responsible to this population.

Article 4: Membership

Section 1. Representation: The council shall consist of representatives from the youth population of _____ over which it has jurisdiction.

Article 5: Officers

Section 1. Executive Officers

- a. Chair: (council member from a rising high school junior or senior class who has served on Youth Council for at least one year). Shall be responsible for all council activities. Shall preside over council meetings and meetings of the executive board. The chair is responsible for keeping the council views focused to meet its purpose and shall be the official representative of the council.

- b. Vice Chair: Shall preside over all council functions in the absence of the chair. A person may succeed him-/herself as vice chair.
- c. Secretary: Shall be responsible for all records and communication with assistance from the chair or advisor.
- d. Treasurer: Shall be responsible for all funds raised, spent or given to the Youth Council with assistance from the advisor.
- e. Other: The council may create any and all positions it may deem necessary with a two-thirds approval of the council.

Section 2. Election of Officers: To be held by secret ballot at a time and place directed by the Council in a manner the council desires. Elections are won by a simple majority of a quorum of council members present at the full council meeting.

Article 6: General Provisions

Section 1. Quorum: In order to carry out the formal business, the council must have a quorum present. A quorum shall consist of a majority of the membership of the group that is meeting. A quorum may be obtained by recognizing proxy votes, but persons relinquishing votes must indicate so in writing to the chair.

Section 2. Parliamentary Authority: The rules contained in Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the Youth Council to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the bylaws or the special laws of order of the Youth Council.

Section 3. Fiscal Year: Past council members shall relinquish all power and responsibility by the end of their year with new members taking over at that time.

Section 4: Amendments

These bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting of the _____ Youth Council by two-thirds vote of the board membership.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE NORTH CAROLINA STATE YOUTH COUNCIL

The first youth council in North Carolina started in Greensboro in 1962. There the mayor, concerned about the community's youth, established a youth council comprised of interested students and adults who would work with each other and with the executive director of the Recreation and Parks Department to create projects to benefit youth. The projects in the Greensboro Youth Council were effective because they were initiated and organized by youth. One of the Greensboro Youth Council's first contributors was the Sears Foundation.

The enthusiasm sparked by the Greensboro Youth Council spread to High Point and Raleigh, and in 1965 the City Councils in these cities started youth councils and began conducting programs to benefit youth. It became clear that a state organization composed of youth councils would be beneficial to the established councils and for establishing new ones. In December 1966, the councils assembled and established the Youth Councils of North Carolina, Inc. (YCNC), later named North Carolina State Youth Council.

Shortly after one year councils were founded in Fayetteville, Asheville and Wilmington, making progress towards effective youth representation. Also in its first year, the council developed a plan to establish a youth commission as a state advisory agency in North Carolina. The Smith Richardson Foundation donated a generous grant to found the Youth Commission in May 1968.

After hiring a project director for the youth Commission Project, and with assistance from individuals like State Senator Skipper Bowles and members of the North Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs, the organization developed a proposal for a bill "to establish a system of Youth Councils" under state government. And in 1969, the Youth Council Act of 1969 was enacted, making the concept a part of North Carolina's state government. (Also see NC General Statutes 143B-387 and 143B-388.)

In the mid-1970s, the Youth Advisory Council was formed, also a part of state government (see NC General Statutes 143B-385 and 143B-386) with five core functions: to advise the youth councils of North Carolina; to encourage state and local councils to take active parts in governmental and civic affairs; to promote and participate in leadership and citizenship programs, and cooperate with other youth-oriented groups; to receive on behalf of the Department of Administration and recommend expenditure of gifts and grants from public and private donors; and to establish procedures for the election of its youth representatives by the State Youth Council.

Today, the State Youth Council continues in the same enthusiasm as when it first began. Now a part of the NC Youth Advocacy & Involvement Office, the SYC works to assist local Youth Councils, foster the development of responsible leadership among youth, to promote involvement in community affairs and in decision-making processes at all levels of government and to provide a voice for the youth of North Carolina.