

## **Youth Development: Growing Youth & Government Programs in NC – You Can Help!**

North Carolina is one of only 11 states in the country that has received grant funding from YUSA to expand the state's [Youth & Government \(Y&G\) program](#). A nationwide civic program that prepares high school students for moral and political leadership, Y&G is a year-long program providing the opportunity to learn about and experience government policies first-hand. This helps youth understand how they can be changemakers and improve their communities, and develops their critical thinking, public speaking and writing skills as well.

This [video](#) highlights how teens involved both value and benefit from the experience. We invite all NC Ys to consider launching a Y&G delegation at your Y, or to provide a virtual connection between administrators and/or teachers in your local high schools. New delegations will be launching this fall; the deadline for signing up for the conference is November 30, but delegations will be getting underway in September. Connect with [Amber McClure](#), Y&G State Director, for more information and to support this unique leadership opportunity for teens in your community.

The YMCA of the Triangle, which houses the statewide program, and YMCA of Northwest North Carolina both received \$20,000 in funding to expand the program. "We can provide the resources and tools for delegations to launch, and we provide training through monthly calls for student and adult leaders," McClure said. She also welcomes Y staff to volunteer at the conference in February to learn more about the program.

Grant funds provided by YUSA and partner [Mission Square](#) will enable NC youth to attend the February Y&G conference in Raleigh at no partial or no cost. That cost can be a barrier for participation or even for launching delegations, but with the new Mission Square partnership, scholarships will be available and operational capacity in the state will be greater.

McClure is working with Jenn Cleary at YMCA of Northwest North Carolina to expand the focus beyond the conference and increase programming. "We want to get delegates involved in civic engagement activities in their communities throughout the year," Cleary said. "We want to keep them connected all year."

August 8, 2023