Dear Partners:

Fall 2021

Welcome to the NYC Youth Leadership Council network! Whether you are an adult facilitator or a youth starting your own YLC, we’re excited to have you with us. This guide provides practical information to help run your council and make meaningful connections between youth and their communities.

The YLC program was founded in 2015 to bring youth voice to the forefront of decision-making in NYC. Youth are disproportionally affected by issues in their communities—from housing to education to safety and much more—but often have the least say in city policies and practices that influence these factors in their lives.

It is our intent to change this by supporting new YLCs in all five boroughs, as well as connecting existing youth programs working for community change to the network. The YLC framework detailed in this guide gives step-by-step guidance to engage youth in identifying assets and needs in our communities, and discovering ways to impact NYC by addressing policy, practice, and advocacy.

The Youth Civic Action Guide walks you through a process to develop action steps and carry out a plan to create transformative change both in communities and in the relationships between the youth and adults who partner in the YLC. Our network is designed to support you by providing resources, coaching, and events to ensure you’re connecting with others who have the same passions and drive to amplify youth voice and youth leadership.

I’ll end with a reminder that each and every one of us has the potential for leadership. Leadership is often portrayed as belonging to someone who seems born to drive things forward. But true leadership is how you show up in time of need. I see this most often in everyday people stepping forward because they see something and feel driven to act.

Our network is made of youth and adults who are stepping forward, and NYC Service looks forward to supporting you in this journey.

Yours in service,

Laura Rog

NYC Chief Service Officer
About NYC Service

NYC Service is a division of the Mayor’s Office focused on expanding civic engagement through volunteerism and service.

**Mission**

We build partnerships to deepen and expand civic engagement through volunteer and service programs, creating sustainable change for our city’s greatest needs.

**Vision**

We unite New Yorkers in service to advance lifelong civic engagement for a more equitable and inclusive city.

**Youth Leadership Council Program**

Since 2014, NYC Service, administrator of the Youth Leadership Council (YLC) Program, has guided partner organizations through the process of forming and growing their Youth Leadership Council. Through Information and Orientation sessions, NYC Service and their partners review the process of forming a YLC, recruiting youth members, and identifying meaningful issues that inspire youth to take civic action. Guidance continues throughout the program with events that bring together YLC advisors for a series of workshops to build co-facilitation skills that strengthen youth-adult collaboration. Youth also come together from across the city to become more knowledgeable about how the City works, and experience the amplification and power of youth voice.
Acknowledgments

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Getting Started
Engage Your Organization

As you prepare to launch your YLC, consider ways to engage others at your organization for ongoing support and participation.

Mapping Staff Connections — How can your colleagues support your organization’s YLC?

Make a “Mind Map” of ways to connect staff with the YLC.

- Put the name of your organization in the center.
- Think of how individuals or departments can participate or contribute. Add to the map.
- Extend the map to others in the community you know or work with. What skills could they bring?

The more participation from people within your organization, the greater the buy-in.

Get Organizational Participation in your YLC

- Involve all staff in recruiting youth to join the YLC; suggest they share with family members and neighbors.
- Invite one to two staff members to join each YLC meeting to tell about their role and engage with youth.
- Encourage youth to maintain connections with each staff member who visits the YLC; keep them involved as resources for the YLCs investigation, preparation, and action.
- Form a YLC Liaison sub-committee with staff to ensure consistent organization participation and buy-in.

Identifying Action Issues with Your Organization

- Before selecting an issue with your YLC, consult with staff to determine which current policies or practices would have the greatest impact on the site, YLC youth, and the community.
- Have two or three issues ready to present to YLC youth and how the site would benefit from their voice.
- Check with organization staff before preparing that any action would be well received by the organization and community. It is important all YLCs engage in work that results in meaningful action to effect real change.

Making Your YLC Visible within Your Organization

- **Website:** Put information about your YLC on your organization’s website.
- **Signage:** Use signage from NYC Service so staff members and visitors see the value your organization places on youth-adult partnerships and service within the city and your community.
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Recruitment: **Starting a New YLC**

When initially recruiting members to join your YLC, use a range of resources and strategies to reach and include diverse youth representative of your community. Seek to engage young people who will thrive and grow with this opportunity, not just youth already identified as leaders.

**Keep in mind:**
1. Use the YLC Youth Application provided by NYC Service to attract youth beyond your existing network.
2. Involve adults in your organization who have relationships with diverse youth populations.
3. Outreach to schools, youth serving organizations, faith-based groups, and community members to promote your YLC and encourage youth to sign up.

**Who can assist you?**
Building a YLC is not a solo act. Draw upon peers in your organization. Invite a few colleagues to sit with you and map out a recruitment plan. Consider your neighborhood. Who are people who seem to easily connect with youth? Where do youth congregate? Which youth may not have an easy opportunity to express their ideas? Who are youth in your community that adults can learn from? Together, create an Elevator Speech (see page 12) that gets everyone ready to share the excitement and value of the YLC program as they reach out to others and spread the word.

**Getting the Word Out about Your YLC!**

1. **Use Social Media** to spread the word about your YLC and recruit new members.
2. **Tap into your own Social Networks;** talk to friends, colleagues, peers, and acquaintances about the benefits of your YLC.
3. **Outreach to your Local Community:** organizations, businesses, schools, faith-based institutions, libraries, and other youth serving organizations to directly identify youth and get support from adults in reaching other youth.
4. **Approach youth directly that you see in the community.** Let them know about the YLC program and provide the link to the Common Application for learning more.

Your YLC is an opportunity for youth to join a youth-adult partnership, express their concerns, share their ideas, participate in a changemaking process, connect with youth all over the city, grow as leaders, and be part of making NYC an INCLUSIVE CITY where every voice counts!
Recruitment: For an Already Established YLC

With a YLC in place, you can expand how you recruit. You have a foundation and a story to tell, and youth to take the lead. Rely on peer-to-peer connections; social media; social networks; local community organizations; and digital and promotional materials (flyers, posters, or brochures) documenting your work with photos and videos.

Discuss how to outreach to youth who will represent the diverse populations who make up NYC.

**Ongoing Recruitment Tips**

- Ask youth to bring one to two new people with them to each meeting.
- Create a recruitment team of youth who generate recruitment materials, for example, sample social media text/photos/video, flyers/brochures for distribution, and ideas for people to contact. Everyone can contribute ideas and participate in outreach.
- Contact adults within your organization and in the community to assist with recruitment.

**When Recruiting for the Next Year**

- Confirm which current members commit to participating next year.
- Consider recruiting year-round to add rising sophomores and juniors who can participate for two or three years.
- Get everyone’s input on generating a list of who would be targets for recruitment. In addition to common ideas (schools, youth groups), think about who knows youth in the community. This could be someone who organizes an informal sports activity at the park, or who keeps an eye on the neighborhood, or a person who runs a local shop. Everyone knows someone who can help connect with youth in the community.

**Elevator Speech for Recruitment**

- Review the Elevator Speech process on the next page.
- Suggest youth work in pairs or threes to develop a speech; allow about ten minutes for a first draft.
- Deliver, get feedback, revise, and deliver again! READY to USE!

**TIPS!** An Elevator Speech is more effective when you . . .

- are brief in each statement
- appeal to both thoughts and feelings — this makes your speech memorable
- sometimes use props
- enjoy the process!

Just imagine all the different ways you can use the Elevator Speech process! Here is a starter list . . .

- Recruitment
- Inviting someone to complete a YLC survey
- Initial conversation with a possible community partner
- Explaining to a member of your host organization what your YLC aims to accomplish
- Presenting about your YLC at the end-of-year Summit
Recruitment Strategy: Prepare an Elevator Speech

The Elevator Speech has a variety of applications. Use an Elevator Speech to tell others what your YLC is about and recruit youth. When YLC members want to engage community leaders in what they are doing, again, an elevator speech works! Follow this approach – floor-by-floor – to maximize the benefits of an elevator speech.

Who Can Use an Elevator Speech to Recruit?
Youth Members, Adult Facilitators, and Colleagues

Who is Being Recruited?
High School age youth ages 14-21 who want and need their voice heard

How Does an Elevator Speech Work?
Whether you use an Elevator Speech for Recruitment or to be persuasive about your YLC Action Plan, it’s the same process:

Imagine you step into an elevator. A person you want to influence is there; it may be someone you want to join your YLC or a person who can aide in recruitment. What you say will keep this person on the elevator or they will get off on the next floor. As you “ride the elevator,” you have about five seconds and 10-18 words before the elevator stops at the next floor. What message will you say about your YLC and why they should join? That’s your “elevator speech.”

Get on the elevator at the 1st floor and ride to the top!

5th Floor
Now, the “ask”! Invite the person to become a member or explain how they can support your YLC: be welcoming, be specific, be ready to follow-up.

4th Floor
Tell what your YLC is doing to include more youth and your vision for youth voice in NYC.

3rd Floor
Appeal to their emotions! Pull a bit on their heartstrings to get them to care and want to participate – perhaps why you decided to join or support a YLC to make meaningful impact.

2nd Floor
Provide compelling information – appeal to their minds! Tell what you hope to accomplish with an inclusive, active YLC.

1st Floor
Introductions (HI!) and grab the person’s attention with an exciting statement about your YLC.

Elevator Speeches are used all over the world as a method for effective communication. Knowing how to create an elevator speech is helpful in presentations, job interviews, and recruiting YLC members – any situation where you want to communicate concisely and effectively.
Starting Your YLC Program Year

Starting your YLC from scratch or beginning a new year requires thoughtful decisions to ensure you set the tone and create an environment where youth want to come and participate throughout the year. This includes: thinking about the size of the group; what meeting space is ideal to use that you have access to consistently; what knowledge, skills, perspectives, and dispositions you want to develop throughout the year; and what you want to do in your initial meetings to create a strong YLC culture that is prepared to take action together.

Size of Your YLC

- The recommended size is between 15-25 youth.
- Smaller agencies or nonprofits may have a council as small as 8.
- If you have more than 25 youth, additional adult/staff support is recommended.

Meeting Space

- Select a dedicated space with access to technology and Wi-Fi.
- Aim for a meeting location with visibility and access to key personnel for ongoing interactions with staff for continued learning about the organization.
- Ensure the size and room layout is ideal for group work, creativity, and safety.
- Sometimes materials or artifacts of the work are created during meetings; ensure a place to keep these materials for future meetings and for the end-of-year YLC Summit.

Meeting Virtually?

Even when your YLC can meet in person, having ways to stay in touch between meetings is helpful.

- Determine an online platform that is workable for your organization.
- Survey the youth to ensure they can connect online.
- Become familiar with the features of the platform for “chat,” breakout rooms, and shared virtual whiteboards like Jamboard.
- If online connectivity is new for you, find people within the organization or NYC Service to be of assistance, and remember youth often bring expertise in all things online!
Developing Leadership

• In a Youth Leadership Council, be on the lookout for opportunities to strengthen leadership abilities. This is at the heart of the program with youth-adult partnerships as the foundation. Consider that leadership development can be looked at as expanding knowledge, skills, perspectives, and dispositions.

• Determine with the youth what they want to develop in each of these categories.

• Draw upon the expertise of others in your organization and among the youth.

• Utilize resources and take part in events held by NYC Service.

Clarifying Terms

• **Knowledge** — Understanding of important ideas, interrelated concepts, and context (ex. How do we consider justice and equity when developing a policy proposal?)

• **Skills** — Abilities youth have or are developing (ex. Public speaking, proposal writing to change policy)

• **Perspectives** — Awareness of point of view – self and others (ex. How do our different life experiences impact how we react to a policy?)

• **Dispositions** — Attitude, temperament, common behaviors (ex. Maintaining a positive outlook in the face of discouragement)

Getting Started: Bronx High School for the Visual Arts

This YLC started in Fall 2018. The Council represented a diverse student body. The members were involved in a range of school activities and clubs and could speak on behalf of other students’ interests. The YLC focused on peer-to-peer relationships in the school and co-designed events and workshops that would allow students and teachers to interact with and learn from each other.
Making the Best of Youth-Adult Partnerships

YLCs are based in the belief that youth-adult partnerships improve our communities. What makes a difference in building effective youth-adult partnerships?

Strength in Partnerships

1. **Mutual respect.** Ideas, suggestions, and decisions are welcome and valued and respected from everyone. Youth and adults are looking for genuine ways to contribute.

2. **Everyone learns.** Successful YLC partnerships have ongoing opportunities to develop each person’s leadership skills and abilities.

3. **Shared power and responsibility.** Once the YLC is established, youth and adults collaborate in all aspects of the program from running meetings to developing initiatives to being a program spokesperson.

4. **Commitment to change.** Successful partnerships balance urgency with steadiness. The work of a YLC is a patient undertaking. While striving to improve our city, the skills and relationships built along the way are valuable in their own right, for youth and adults alike.

More Tips

☀️ **Make time for collaborative feedback.** How are we doing as a YLC? Use Check-Ins and the Plus-Delta Process (see page 18).

☀️ **Actively ask youths’ opinions.** Listen without judgment. Welcome insights and suggestions.

☀️ **Keep expectations high and realistic.** Strive together.

☀️ **Recognize what youth bring.** By doing Personal Inventory (page 21) find out everyone’s interests, skills, and talents and get everyone engaged. Keep the involvement fun, challenging, interactive, and meaningful.

Ideas for Meetings

☀️ **Building the meeting agenda** – Develop the plans as a Y-A partnership; typically, a committee meets beforehand to develop the agenda. Rotating this responsibility shares leadership.

☀️ **Running the meetings** – Aim for youth-centered and youth-run meetings by explicitly knowing who will lead which topics.

☀️ **Staying connected between meetings** – When appropriate, include ways youth can stay in touch to move plans forward.

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Talk with us. Hear us out. Take us seriously. — Saaneah, 15

Some people, they hear you, but they don’t listen to you. They’re like, ‘Oh, yeah, I heard what that young person had to say.’ But did they listen, really listen, to what was said? — Desiree, 16

Our [youth development group] has this bumper sticker that says, ‘Listen to Their Stories.’ That’s one of the key things, just listening to what young people have to say. Go in with an open mind. And let them finish before you burst in with your ideas.— Marcus, 17

Young people are capable of doing anything that they want. All they need is the opportunity, and that’s what adults can give. That is their best gift. — Sean, 17
Engaging Strategies to Use During YLC Meetings

Check-Ins and Check-Outs

Check-ins and check-outs are rituals you can do at each meeting to establish open, trusting conversation and create a sense of community. A Check-In occurs at the beginning of or during the meeting while a Check-Out occurs at the conclusion. These are dedicated times for youth to share what’s going on for them—feelings, thoughts, needs, and questions.

Tips

- **Keep it short**—5 to 10 minutes at the start of the meeting for Check-Ins.
- **Opting Out, Opting In**—Youth may opt out of a check-in; if done repeatedly, follow up 1-on-1.
- **Include Non-Verbal Check-Ins**—This encourages students who don’t want to talk a chance to participate. Have youth write a response to a prompt on a sticky note and put on the wall, or lead a silent reflective moment.
- **Avoid non-descriptive adjectives** like “cool,” “fine,” or “okay.” If said, ask what is meant by that descriptor.
- Initially, there may be skepticism about how much to reveal. **Trust builds over time.**
- **Take a moment to think about or write before speaking allowing for processing answers before sharing.**
- **Have youth** eventually come up with ways to lead check-ins and check-outs.

Sample Check-Ins and Check-Outs

- **Share & Support Check-In/Out**—Write on a piece of paper ten words or less that sums up how you are feeling, something on your mind, or generally how your day (week) is going. Share with the group.
- **Mindful Moment**—Deep breaths, self-check in, then speak and share with the group.
- **Internal Weather Report**—Compare how you are to the weather (e.g. foggy with a chance of clearing).
- **Current Playlist**—“What song best represents your feeling right now?”
- **Silent Expression**—“I feel . . .”—draw an emoji on a piece of paper, make a facial expression, or stand and pose.
- **Collective Support**—Offer the prompt “I need help with . . .”; members write before speaking. Model for group.

Meeting Virtually?

- **Use the Chat!** Provide a prompt or a question and invite youth to write their response in the chat—but wait to send it. Allow time to think for a moment and write, then count “1, 2, 3, go” and have youth hit “enter” at the same time. All the responses appear at once and every response is authentic to the person. Discuss altogether.
- **Try a Padlet or Jamboard.** For a collaborative thinking and sharing process, use a whiteboard like Padlet or Jamboard. Youth can add virtual sticky notes, photos, links to websites, and more to these shared platforms. If not familiar, ask for tech assistance. Youth often know how to use these.
Engaging Strategies

Keep YLC members engaged with strategies that increase interaction and participation by all. Idea developers rarely work alone; instead, they have a series of conversations to advance their concepts. Similarly, YLC members need time to talk and listen to others.

One Minute Think Tank

For one minute, everyone works with a partner to discuss an issue or concept, come up with a question or answer, or generate an idea or solve a problem. This is simply the best strategy to get everyone immediately involved and thinking. Use frequently to ignite individual and collective engagement and discussions. Add more energy by having the group stand up, find partners, and have one minute on their feet.

Meeting Virtually?

• **Screen Relief:** Being on the computer for hours at a time can be tiring. Build in three-minute screen breaks. Can be a real “break” or an off-camera time to think about an idea, solve a problem, or create a visual to share when everyone returns. Set a timer and play music. When the song ends, invite youth back to the meeting.

• **Breakout Rooms:** Extend the One Minute Think Tank to several minutes and have youth join virtual breakout rooms (if available) to discuss an issue, generate ideas, define new terms, or design a survey. A smaller group ensures everyone participates. Afterwards, each group reports out or can share a visual created.

Under-Direct

Give directions that are clear and brief. Over-directing squashes creativity, thinking, and problem solving. After offering directions, if you are asked, What do you want me to do?, repeat the directions. This approach develops independent thinking and leadership. If someone is really confused, you will know, and then take time to clarify.

**Plus-Delta**
This strategy can be used in many ways.

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<th>+Plus</th>
<th>△ Delta (Greek symbol for “Change”)</th>
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<td>List what is going well</td>
<td>List what you want to change</td>
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The Plus means “what is going well;” Delta is what can be changed. Once you have determined what you want to change, you can then:

- Come up with a plan – things you can do
- Identify support – the people who can help
- Take action – put the plan with support into action for a set amount of time; then revisit and review
- Look for evidence – what might you expect to happen? This sets your intention.

At the end the time you have set, review the actual findings and readjust your plan if needed.

**Use a Plus-Delta to:**

- Review how group agreements and meetings are going.
- Offer suggestions to elevator speeches.
- Personal development for growth.
- Reflect on feedback from stakeholders about your proposed action.
The Five Stages of Youth Leadership Councils

Youth Leadership Councils across New York City use Five Stages to get things done.

A quick intro to the Five Stages of YLC, a dynamic, engaging process that builds on your ideas and choices.

During Investigation, find out the interests, skills, and talents of your YLC, and learn about community assets and needs by asking questions and conducting action research. Identify an important issue to address.

During Preparation, continue to learn more about the issue from different perspectives as you work towards possible solutions. Clarify roles and responsibilities, organize a plan, build a timeline, and gain skills to carry out the plan. Collaboration is key!

During Action, you carry out your plan through proposing changes in policy or practice, and/or engaging in advocacy.

During Reflection, pause at significant moments to consider what is happening and notice how you feel. This shared awareness strengthens your Council and leads to greater clarity about what is working well and how to draw upon your abilities to determine next steps.

During Demonstration, capture the YLC experience – what you have learned, how you have developed leadership, and what has been accomplished. Keep track of each stage through photos, writings, video, and articles so at the end of the process or anywhere along the way, you have a story to tell.

The Five Stages of a YLC are adapted from The Complete Guide to Service Learning, by Cathryn Berger Kaye, M.A., copyright 2010 Free Spirit Publishing by CBK Assocites; used with permission.

Meeting In-Person or Virtually?

- **Get the Word Out!** Use social media to crownsourcere responses to questions, share reflections and progress, and demonstrate how your YLC is creating positive change. Post on your host site and /or individual social media, and tag NYC Service (@NYCServe on IG, Facebook and Twitter). This can be a role and responsibility identified and taken on by members.

- **Keep NYC Service Informed.** Share your stories, challenges, and achievements with NYC Service. This builds communication between all the YLCs through newsletters and gatherings. Who among the group likes to be a “communicator”? Form a team to document and share info.
Getting to Know Each Other
Topic One: Getting to Know the Organization and the YLC Members

Set the tone for your YLC by identifying your collective interests, skills, and talents, by setting group agreements, and by youth becoming more knowledgeable about the organization.

Personal Inventory

Every member comes to your group with their own background, experiences, interests, skills, and talents. Learning about one another informs the roles and responsibilities members take on during your YLC experience.

1. Form pairs. Let them know they will interview each other to find out their partner’s interests, skills, talents, and areas for growth.
2. Before starting, review the importance of listening in an interview. Ask for any listening suggestions or tips to keep in mind.
3. Mention it could be possible for their partner, when asked, “What are your interests?” to answer “I don’t know” or “nothing.” Start by giving your own example of a response and then ask a follow up question (e.g. “I like sports, do you?”).
4. During the interview, write down partner responses. This interview process should take about six minutes (three minutes per person).
5. Gather as a group and create a chart of Interests, Skills, Talents, Areas of Growth. Use these to determine self-selected roles and responsibilities within the group. Keep this chart and add to it throughout the year.

Meeting Virtually?

- **Use Breakout Rooms for Interviews or Separate Phone Calls.** Depending on the available technology, use the breakout rooms or phone calls for interviewing with two or three people in a room. Allow extra time when doing this for getting settled and organized.
- **Create your Inventory.** If you have the technology, use a shared whiteboard, Google Slide, Google Document, Padlet, or Jamboard to gather and record the findings of personal inventories in one place. Low tech? Have each person tell what they learned about their partner. Someone records the info on paper, types it up, and sends to all.

**Group Agreements**

Create YLC Groups Agreements collaboratively so each member can participate in a safe and trusting environment where good things happen.

1. Discuss how “agreements” differ from “rules” set by others.

2. In groups of three, each group comes up with two agreements they think will benefit the entire group. Are there any exceptions? For example, an exception to “One person talks while others listen,” could be “If someone is hurt – interrupt!”

3. Consider these sample agreements often used within NYC Service:

   - **Honor Our Identities** – every person brings many aspects of diversity into the YLC
   - **Ask for Literacy Moments** – if you don’t understand something or it’s unclear, ask
   - **Step Up, Step Back** – take turns to ensure everyone contributes
   - **Acknowledge Intent as Distinct from Impact** – be aware that what we mean to do may have unexpected consequences; be open to learn
   - **Join In and Take Risks** – Go for it!

4. Review all ideas and suggest the youth select five or six as their agreements. Any volunteers to create an engaging visual of the final agreements? Post them during meetings. Use the Plus-Delta Process occasionally to review the agreements and make revisions.

**Meeting Virtually?**

**Remembering Our Agreements**

The agreements only work if they are referred to and updated as needed. Refer to the agreements as meetings get started. If you are using a slide deck like Powerpoint or Google Slides, add a slide with a reminder of the group agreements at the start of each meeting. Or ask YLC members for best ways to make sure these are kept in mind.
Get to Know Your Organization

Your organization is an integral part of your YLC experience. Therefore, take time during your first meeting for youth to get to know the organization. Interactive options include:

• Discuss YLC members’ current knowledge and perception of the organization. Any personal experience?
• Set up a scavenger hunt where youth can tour your organization and uncover information.
• Do a “Meet and Greet” to learn from coworkers with different roles and perspectives at the organization.
• Have your YLC review materials that explain the mission, vision, and priorities of your organization. Divide the material up so the YLC can work in pairs or groups to see what they can learn and report out.

Meeting Virtually?

On-Screen Connecting and Learning
Learn online! Have members of the organization join the virtual session for a Q & A. YLC members can also review the organization’s website or send info electronically for review.

Create Rituals!
Check out the “Check-In/Check Out Ideas” in “Engaging Strategies” on page 16.

Remember! Document your first meeting – photos, videos, artifacts!
Topic Two:
Defining Who You Are as a Group

Defining Our YLC

What is a Youth Leadership Council? Follow these steps to clarify the meaning and purpose of a YLC.

1. Form small groups, each with easel paper and markers. Each group makes a simple table that looks like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Youth</th>
<th>Leadership</th>
<th>Council</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

2. Start with the lower part. Have the youth come up with all the words that come to mind when they hear youth, leadership, and council. Allow about 3 minutes total.

3. Next, in the upper blank space, have them come up with a definition of “Youth Leadership Council” in ten words or less and include an image. Allow four minutes. After four minutes, ask who needs more time, and adjust as needed.

4. Post the papers and first look at the word list. Have the youth discuss what they see that is common and what is unique. Then discuss each definition and the image. Can the definitions combine? Do they see an emerging logo from the images?

5. Ask: “What was it like to create this definition?” The response can add further understanding of how they are learning to collaborate as a Youth Leadership Council.

Meeting Virtually?

- **Shared Screen or Low Tech:** If you have access to a virtual whiteboard, youth can participate in this same sequence to define their YLC. Another option is to work on paper with each person coming up with their list of words and then sharing to a master list. Then each constructs a definition and image that are shared and combined. This “low tech” version takes more time, but the process is worthwhile, and everyone is participating.

- **Breakout Rooms:** If an option, breakout rooms allow youth to work collaboratively. One person can scribe the ideas and then report out to all after the allotted time.
**Build-A-YLC Member**

For this highly engaging and interactive experience, let youth know they are going to increase membership by **building a YLC Member**. Follow these steps:

1. Divide students into groups of three to five depending on group size. Provide each group with a sheet of easel paper and one marker per person. Aim for three or more small groups.

2. Draw a body shape on easel paper as a model of the YLC Member they will draw on their paper. Ask, “What is missing?” Often the reply is “heart” or “eyes.”

3. For the first two items mentioned, have the respondent come up and draw the items on the outline. With each drawing ask, “How will this YLC member use a heart (or eyes)?” Write the response near the body part with a line connecting the drawing with the explanation. After two examples let the students get started. If there are two body parts, for example, “ears,” add two different reasons.

4. Important! Every group member works simultaneously; all ideas are welcome. Always add words to accompany images.

5. After about five minutes, each group names their YLC member and select attributes, one per person, to share when introducing their new YLC member. Let the introductions begin!

6. Ask, “What was the process like?” The group may mention collaboration, fun, everyone had a voice, creative. Then ask, “How does this experience inform us about being YLC members?”

7. Reference back to the Group Agreements—will our agreements let this new member participate fully?

8. Bonus: Keep the “YLC members” for the end of the year; then ask, with all they now know at the end of the year, what they would add?

Demonstration: Documenting Your YLC

Meeting Virtually?

Keep Documenting
Screenshots of meetings, photos taken of work being done, screen captures of agreements—be sure every YLC member is part of developing a full and complete story of what happens during the year. Whether the End of Year Summit is in person or virtual, your YLC will have a story to tell.

- Decide as a group how you will record/document what your YLC does during the year including interactions with the organization, conversations, group work, tasks between meetings. How will you collect photos, data, videos, and artifacts? Possible options:
  - Google Docs (any written work, which can be done collaboratively)
  - Shared Photos (Google Photos, iPhoto, other)
  - Filing System in your meeting space
- Determine who will be responsible for documenting. Will it be collaborative or a sub-committee? Will everyone have a role since most people do like to take photos?
- Share documentation with NYC Service and your organization.

Capture your story all year long!

A Note About the Year End Summit - Why Capturing Your Story Matters

Every spring, the YLCs gather to learn about the various work being accomplished across the city and in all five boroughs. For several hours, YLCs showcase their contributions and learn about the work of their peers. The Summit includes interactive surveys about the YLC process, speakers who attest to the important work being done through the YLCs, and good food and fun.