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## Forum Overview

This program introduces 9<sup>th</sup> grade students to the legislative process. Your official role is that of a Forum Legislator. The biggest difference between your role and that of Senator/Representative is that you will not submit bills in November. Rather, your experience will guide you through trainings meant to teach the fundamentals of bill research, writing, and participation; parliamentary procedure; and debate skills. Your efforts will culminate with the conference in February where you will work alongside more than 200 of your peers. On a larger scale, you will be a key player in a conference that houses over 1,100 participants.

For now, you will work within your club to really nail down parliamentary procedure, bill writing, and debate skills. Once we get to the Pre-Conference in December, you will work on a team of 4 students. In your group, you will pick a topic area, begin to brainstorm, and draft your bill.

Between the Pre-Conference and Conference, you will finalize your bill and prepare opening/closing statements and talking points. Once at the Conference, you will present in front of committees and the Forum Chambers.

Working with the model above, there are some clear steps to becoming a proficient Legislator at the YMCA NC Youth Legislature.

- Step 1: Sign up for the conference for Forum*
- Step 2: Learn Parliamentary Procedure. This is going to be important for the conference. If you are familiar with it, then the conference will move smoothly and you will make an impact*
- Step 3: Practice debating bills using Parliamentary Procedure. Not only will this make your Parli Pro skills stronger, but it will also help you firm up your public speaking and debate techniques*
- Step 4: Familiarize yourself with the format of a bill and basic steps on how to write one. All freshmen will write their bills in groups leading up to the conference in February but it is important to have basic knowledge so this process will move more smoothly*
- Step 5: Brainstorm potential topic areas (i.e. animal rights, energy issues, education) you'd like to talk about with your team once you are placed in December*
- Step 6: Attend the Pre-Conference in December (your delegation advisor will give you an exact date). Here, you will choose one topic area and brainstorm bill ideas within it. By the end of the day you will have chosen a bill topic. You will also choose a role within your team (2-3 bill authors, 1 budget analyst, 1 lobbyist)*
- Step 7: After the Pre-Conference, all students on your team will work together to draft your bill, budget analysis, and position paper*
- Step 8: Look into the various officer positions available to Forum. In January, you will learn more about the roles for which you can run and campaign. Available positions include: Speaker of the Forum (presides over Forum) and Forum Presiding Officer (assists the Speaker of the Forum with presiding). If interested in either of these positions, you will submit a Candidate Interest Form at the Conference and then give a speech. Elected students will serve at next year's Conference*
- Step 9: Attend the YMCA NC Youth Legislature in Raleigh held the 2<sup>nd</sup> week in February. Once at the Conference, you will present your bill and supplements, first in committees and then in the Forum. If your bill passes in the Freshman Forum, you will present your bill in front of the Youth Governor and Cabinet, potentially having your bill signed into Youth & Government law.*



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## Media Overview

As a media member, you will document and report on the events that take place before and during the Youth & Government Conference. Your job as a media member is to understand the role of media in government, and to simulate the role of a professional news corporation. In order to be a successful media participant, here is an outline of the media corps and each role's expectations:

- **Print**
  - Responsible for producing daily articles for the online newspaper *Point of Information*
  - Reporters will report on bills, events, candidates, and more at the conference
- **Photography**
  - Responsible for all photography for *Point of Information*
  - Responsible for Closing Session conference slideshow
- **Broadcast**
  - Responsible for Closing Session conference broadcast, as well as capturing important moments on film throughout the conference
  - Also required to help produce a 2-3 minute highlights at daily morning broadcast
- **Social Media**
  - Responsible for updating and maintaining conference Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, SnapChat, etc.

There are a few requirements for media participants:

- Submit your media application
- Attend Pre- Conference and State Conference, bringing along any assignments required by your specific branch of media
- Work your hardest and have lots of fun!
- Extreme amount of maturity as there is a lot of responsibility involved in participating in Media

By the time conference rolls around, you should be familiar with the following:

- The role of the media in government, as well as media ethics and values
- Writing an effective news article, as well as some knowledge of AP Style (Print and Social Media)
- The importance of strictly adhering to deadlines

At the conference, you will participate in your specific program area simulating the media. You will be identified as press and allowed to travel throughout the conference to report on events, and it is imperative that you respect this privilege given to media members. Meanwhile, it is very important that you stick to deadlines, which will largely depend on your role.



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## **Legislator- Representatives & Senators**

The goal of a Legislator within YMCA NC Youth & Government is to create laws that you think are important and will benefit the citizens of North Carolina. As such, you will be given lots of opportunities to speak up and engage with over 1,100 of your peers from around the state.

With that in mind, there are some clear steps to becoming a proficient Legislator at the 2015 YMCA NC Youth Legislator.

*Step 1: Brainstorm topics and choose the one that best meets the criteria*

*Step 2: Research your topic and write a first draft*

*Step 3: Get feedback on your first draft. So many people make the mistake of thinking their way is the best. It never hurts to get a second opinion. Only 96 bills are chosen so make sure that your's is the best written, not just the most debatable*

*Step 4: Submit the final draft online. No bills will be accepted after this date*

*Step 5: Learn Parliamentary Procedure. This is going to be important for the conference. If you are familiar with it, then the conference will move smoothly and you will make an impact*

*Step 6: Practice debating bills using Parliamentary Procedure. Not only will this make your Parli Pro skills stronger, but it will also help you firm up your public speaking and debate techniques*

*Step 7: Find out if your bill was chosen for the conference. Not everyone's bill makes it into the bill book. However, you are still needed to provide strong debate*

*Step 8: If your bill made it in, then you will need to start debating your bill at your local delegation meetings. You will also need to prepare an opening statement, concise talking points, and a closing statement. If your bill did not make it then you will want to continue practicing debate, while also assisting others from your delegation who may have had their bills selected*

*Step 9: Attend the Pre-Conference in December (your delegation advisor will give you an exact date)*

*Step 10: Attend the YMCA NC Youth Legislature in Raleigh*



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## Lobbyist Overview – The Art of Persuasion

As a participant in the Lobbyist Program, you will have the opportunity to persuade Senators and Representatives to pass or defeat legislation that serves your client's interests.

During your journey as a lobbyist, you will have the chance to become a better speaker and as an added benefit, you may even find out a little more about what is going on in the world around you.

Your job as a lobbyist revolves around discussing bills and influencing the passage or failure in either the House of Representatives or the Senate. By the time you're done, you will know how to conduct research on a client, work as a team with your fellow lobbyists and legislators, write and speak persuasively and be able to identify the pros and cons of various issues.

A lobbyist must grasp both the written and unwritten rules of legislative procedure in order to follow and to influence legislation. They must know the chances a bill has of being passed in order to determine which bill takes priority, especially focusing on the new Governor's Agenda (provided at PreCon). At different stages of the process, the lobbyist should be in contact with the bill's author(s). Each is a potential ally or can provide a special vantage point

Lobbyists use their power and influence to mold and guide individual bills and ensure that they are passed or defeated in accordance with their client's interests. They do this by providing information, testimony and research materials that will influence legislators to support their position. They are incredibly important to the legislative process as the information they provide often helps shape votes.

As a Lobbyist, your calendar for the year will look like this:

*Step 1: Register online for the YMCA NC Youth Legislature as a "Lobbyist" and apply online for this program*

*Step 2: Attend, the Pre-Conference event either December depending upon where you are located. You will receive an actual bill assignments, team assignments, Position Paper writing training and most importantly public speaking training. Upon leaving the Pre-Conference, you will be expected to write and turn in speeches or fact sheets about the bills assigned to you*

*Step 3: As a lobbyist you will also be required to create propaganda (in the form of flyers, poster, petitions, etc.) to sway legislators opinions outside of chambers.*

*Step 4: Attend the YMCA NC Youth Legislature from February. While there, you will lobby to legislators and present in committees.*



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## Budget Analyst Overview

As a Budget Analyst, you will analyze the fiscal aspects of bills, determine their responsibility as part of a budget committee, and present in chambers, informing the delegates of the fiscal information relevant to your assigned bills.

By the time the conference rolls around, you should have experience with the following:

- Understanding how to read a bill and research relevant figures
- Using available data to make a budget analysis and estimate cost/revenue
- Writing and presenting your analysis
- Basic parliamentary procedure

While at the YMCA NC Youth Legislature you will give each of your presentations in the chamber or committee where it is being debated. The time allotted for your budget analysis is 1 minute per body. This is guaranteed talking time on top of which you will be able to participate as a regular delegate, debating bills, though not ones you've analyzed.

Analysts will be assigned bills at Pre-Conference and have until Conference to complete their Analyses. On top of presenting at Conference Analysts will work analyzing additional bills.

## Judicial: Mock Trial Overview

Teens in the YMCA Mock Trial program acquire the leadership, team building and public speaking skills that lead to the development of active and engaged citizenship. Mock Trial provides an opportunity for students to participate in a competitive, high drama courtroom showdown between teams from around the state. Through researching case law, working with team members and arguing legal issues in front of real judges and lawyers, teens are provided hands-on learning opportunities that will assist in the development of the confidence, knowledge and skills needed to lead the next generation.

### Program Overview:

- As a Mock Trial participant, you are assigned a team with other students from the same school or region.
- Teams are given an actual case with different roles. You and your teammates will assume these roles at conference during the trial.
- A lot of work will be assigned prior to conference by reviewing the case and arguments.
- Each team must use at least three witnesses and two attorneys in each trial. Different students must play each of these roles during each trial.
- Teams must be prepared to present both sides of the case (Prosecution and Defense), and will present each side at least once during the conference.
- All student attorneys must participate with case presentation.
- At conference there are adult volunteers rating and judging your preparation and performance.



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## Judicial: Court of Appeals Overview

To be successful as a judicial participant, there are some basic things you need to know.

- There are 3 requirements for each Judicial team:
  - Submit a brief for both cases and both sides of each case (total of 4 briefs) online
  - Attend the Pre-Conference Event December (Find out from your delegation advisor about which Pre-Conference your delegation will attend)
  - Attend the YMCA NC Youth Legislature in February
- As a Judicial participant, you will serve in three different roles at the conference
  - As an **Attorney**, you will work solo or with a partner to write briefs and make oral arguments before an appellate court. (A brief is simply a written argument) Each attorney or attorney team will also make oral arguments where you will represent a party that is either appealing a decision (seeking a reversal of a previously made decision) or opposing an appeal (seeking affirmation of a previously made decision).
  - As a **Guest Judge**, you will serve on a panel with the Associate Justice presiding over the court room and one additional guest judge. Each judge will be responsible for reading the parties' briefs, preparing for and participating in an oral arguments, deliberating, and helping to issue a final decision.
  - As a **Clerk**, you will keep time in your assigned court room and help to maintain order in your assigned courtroom
- By the time the conference rolls around, you should have experience with the following procedures:
  - Understanding how to read a case (October/November)
  - Using case law to support or refute arguments (November/December)
  - Writing briefs (December)
  - Presenting an argument (December/January)

While at the conference, you will argue each of your cases in assigned courtrooms according to the courtroom schedule. Each case will last no more than 20 minutes. Each presentation is considered part of an on-going tournament. Win-loss records will be maintained by Associate Justices. By mid-afternoon on Saturday, Associate Justices, with support from the Chief Justice, will make decisions on which are the top attorneys are for each case. Once the decision is made, the selected attorneys will present one final time either on Saturday late afternoon. The winning attorneys will be announced at the Closing Session on Sunday morning