



CITY OF COLUMBIA  
SOUTH CAROLINA  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

## COLUMBIA YOUTH COMMISSION

**TO:** Mayor Benjamin  
**FROM:** Lauren Harper  
**CC:** Columbia City Council, Ariel Cathcart, Heyward Harvin  
**DATE:** Sept. 7, 2018  
**RE:** Columbia Youth Commission

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This memo outlines the framework and expectations for the Columbia Youth Commission.

### **Why is it important to more deeply engage with the youth in our community?**

Over the past few years, the activism and civic engagement in Generation Z (people born from the mid-1990s to the early 2000s) has been evident, particularly in movements such as The March for our Lives. To better leverage the energy, ideas and voices of young people in our community, programs like a Youth Commission are not only beneficial but are imperative for cities that want to more intentionally engage with youth and understand their needs as a demographic.

Aspects of this proposal are modeled after the Philadelphia Youth Commission program.

### **SPECIFICS FOR THE YOUTH COMMISSION:**

The City of Columbia Youth Commission is a program for local students to provide leadership and improve services for youth in the City of Columbia. The group of young leaders will work to bridge the gap between adults and youth, fostering a greater sense of unity, communication and partnership throughout the city. The City extends a warm welcome to students between the ages of 14 to 18 to become actively involved in their community.

**Purpose:** To encourage youth involvement in the community, enhance leadership skills and voice policy ideas and concerns of our City's youth.

**Mission:** To provide civic participation and involvement in the community while promoting positive activities and opportunities for youth in Columbia.

### **Components of the Columbia Youth Commission:**

**Policy -** It is vital for our youth to be involved in their government. To create a new avenue for their active leadership, the City of Columbia Youth Commission will meet with the Mayor, City Council and key city staff to discuss how various issues affect the youth in our community.

Networking - Members of the Columbia Youth Commission are provided an opportunity to dialogue directly with members of City Council, key senior staff within the City of Columbia and community leaders that work directly in areas that are critical to the community's quality of life.

Education - The Commissioners receive an education on how local government operates and responds to the needs of a community.

Roles and responsibilities of the Youth Commission will include:

- Commenting on legislation and policies that impact youth
- Creating public service programs that improve the lives of youth
- Monitoring and measuring the effectiveness of youth programs and policies
  - Coming up with program evaluation measures that consider aspects of a program that matter most to youth.
- Partnering with other youth organizations on shared issues
- Preparing peers for leadership roles, postsecondary education and career.

### **SELECTION PROCESS OF THE YOUTH COMMISSIONERS:**

The City of Columbia and Richland County will hold a city and county-wide election, similar to how typical municipal and county elections are held. One youth commissioner will be elected from each city district, with three at-large representatives from the County. There will be a total of seven (7) people on the Youth Commission.

Eligible candidates are students ages 14-18, born between January 1, 2000 and December 31, 2004.

This election will be unique in that all 14-18-year-olds in the county will be eligible voters. Youth commissioners will campaign to voters just as an adult candidate for elected office does.

### **Term + term limits:**

Each youth commissioner will serve a one (1)-year term. Commissioners may serve up to two (2) terms as long as they are younger than or exactly 18 at the time of the election and/or still enrolled in high school.

### **SUGGESTED CURRICULUM + TIMELINE FOR THE YOUTH COMMISSION:**

The Youth Commissioners will meet at least monthly.

Members of the public will be notified of all Youth Commission meetings at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting. Meetings will be open to the public with allotted time at the end of each meeting for public comment.

#### **Month One –**

- Youth Commissioners will get to know one another and will plan a meet-and-greet with City/County staff and elected officials.
- Youth Commissioners will identify at least three (3) policy areas they would like to address throughout their term. For example: extracurricular programming for 14-18 year-old residents.
- Youth Commissioners will discuss the design of the current logo and make suggestions for a new one.

#### **Month Two –**

- Youth Commissioners will strategize programming and/or events that involve the previously-outlined policy areas.

- Youth Commissioners will discuss holding listening sessions or town halls (virtual and/or in-person) to better understand the needs and desires of their peers city and county-wide.
- Youth Commissioners will develop subcommittees and make subcommittee assignments.
- Youth Commissioners will create a timeline for the remainder of their term.

**APPLICATION:**

The application for the Columbia Youth Commission is below. The full application and submission permission can be found at: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf5\\_DhSlAMkYO-zTJWbQPp2Jg\\_F\\_K0WaN1tIV1hAMwBMoVsdg/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf5_DhSlAMkYO-zTJWbQPp2Jg_F_K0WaN1tIV1hAMwBMoVsdg/viewform)

Columbia Youth Commission application

Please complete this form if you are interested in becoming a candidate for the Columbia Youth Commission. For more information about the Columbia Youth Commission, please visit <https://columbiasc.gov/mayor/get-involved/youth-commission>.

\* Required

First Name \*

Last Name \*

Middle Initial

Preferred Name

Home Mailing Address \*

Your mailing address MUST include street, unit number (if applicable), city, state and zip code.

Your Cell Phone Number \*

If you do not have a cell phone, please put N/A.

Your Parent or Legal Guardian's Cell Phone Number \*

Your school-issued email address \*

Please note that all correspondence will go to this email address, so you will need to check it regularly.

Emergency Contact Name \*

Emergency Contact Phone Number \*

Have you applied or served on the Columbia Youth Commission before? \*

Yes

No

Name of Your High School \*

Address of Your High School \*

Cumulative GPA \*

Expected Graduation Year \*

Please attach your resume \*

If you are having trouble attaching your resume here, please email it to Lauren at [lauren.harper@columbiasc.gov](mailto:lauren.harper@columbiasc.gov).

If you need help writing your resume, please check out this link <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/resume-writing>. Be sure to include work experience, volunteer experience, extracurricular activities (like sport teams and clubs), career interests and any honors or rewards you've earned.

Digital Signature \*

I certify that the information provided above is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I understand that giving a false answer to any question, or withholding or omitting any information requested, may be grounds for the denial of this application and/or dismissal from the Youth Commission program.