



CITY OF COLUMBIA
SOUTH CAROLINA
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Columbia Youth Commission Election Process

The Columbia Youth Commission is a program that will give teenagers (ages 14-18) in Columbia and Richland County the opportunity to serve as a liaison between local government and the region's youth. 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.

Students at public high schools and select private high schools in Richland and Lexington counties will have the opportunity to elect nine of their peers to the Columbia Youth Commission. There will be four representing the City (for each of the four city districts), three at-large Richland County representatives and two at-large Lexington County representatives. Youth commission candidates will campaign among their peers for a seat, just as an adult candidate for elected office does.

The election process:

1. Each school district (or private school) sends the Office of the Mayor a file with all of its high school students' school email addresses. The file will not be shared with any external parties.
2. The Office of the Mayor will send an email message to all students regarding the Youth Commission via their school email address, which will include information about the program, the program application and information about the election itself, which will be hosted through a form created on Cognito Forms. We believe to be effective and garner the most students registering for the program, the email will need to be repeated at least three times to ensure all students see it and have an opportunity to respond.
3. The students who apply to be candidates for the youth commission election will be selected, and ALL students will be notified by the Office of the Mayor via email who the candidates are.
4. The Office of the Mayor will contact the students via email about how they can vote and on what day(s).
5. The winners will be contacted by the Office of the Mayor via email, and ALL students will be notified regarding who the winners are.