



2020 Youth Leadership Ambassador Pilot

Background: We Raise New Jersey (WRNJ) is a diverse coalition of New Jersey organizations and associations that are united in the belief that New Jersey students need and deserve a world-class education to effectively compete and succeed in our rapidly changing world. Since the beginning of this year, WRNJ and partners have dedicated time to researching the best ways to create an authentic student voice group to work with our coalition. Based on this youth-informed research, we have launched a pilot program to integrate New Jersey students into our coalition activities. Our goal is to recruit six diverse high school students, from various regions of the state (northern, central, and southern), to share the voice of students regarding educational and civic engagement issues in New Jersey.

This group of students will be known as the WRNJ Youth Leadership Ambassadors (YLAs). YLAs will receive training and mentorship in civic engagement and education policy and will provide input and ideas to inform the coalition's advocacy agenda. They will also have the opportunity to take on an extended role as an advisor to the coalition, which includes participating in a two-way exchange with our coalition and our networks. At the end of the program, contingent on funding, YLAs will have the opportunity to continue their work with the coalition and act as ongoing advisors.

Details:

- **Commitment:** Meeting at least one hour per week for instruction or group discussion with time dedicated to independent tasks in between; total anticipated time approximately 30 hours across the program
- **Compensation:** \$500 stipend for YLAs; \$750 stipend for YLAs who also serve as WRNJ advisors
- **Anticipated Timeframe:** Sept. 16, 2020 – Dec. 16, 2020
- **Capacity:** 6 students (pilot program)
- **Location:** Online (in-person as permitted by COVID-19 guidelines)
- **Candidates:** New Jersey high school students
- **Resume worthy competencies:**
 - Practice effective human relations
 - Demonstrate time management
 - Comprehend verbal and written communications
 - Communicate verbally and in writing
 - Demonstrate team membership and leadership
 - Deliver presentations to a group
 - Demonstrate commitment to an organization
 - Identify a self-value system and how it affects life
 - Base decisions on values and goals
 - Identify process of decision-making
 - Demonstrate ability to assume responsibility for actions and decisions
 - Demonstrate a positive attitude

Roles and Expectations:

Youth Leadership Ambassadors (\$500 stipend) will:

- Understand the WRNJ vision, mission, and current advocacy priorities so that they can bring their perspective and input to the work of building a new vision for public education;

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- Learn about and weigh in on education policy issues pertaining to high school graduation requirements, college and career preparedness, and the overall school experience across the state, especially in the face of COVID-19;
- Explore and practice employment enhancing soft skills development through activities such as mock interviews; resume writing; teamwork and collaboration in co-creating surveys, campaigns, and other materials; and time management;
- Have the opportunity to be paired with a mentor who serves as a WRNJ member or advisor;
- Devote a minimum of 8 hours/month to work with WRNJ from September-December;
- Inform, design, complete, and/or distribute surveys and campaigns and provide expertise and constructive recommendations to help inform the work of WRNJ; and
- Complete short assignments based on the content provided by WRNJ (i.e.: create a short survey for peers to gather more feedback; work with WRNJ to develop a blog post or op-ed on a topic of interest).

Youth Leadership Ambassadors with an extended advisor role (\$750 stipend) will also:

- Devote an additional 10 hours across the program to work with WRNJ;
- Support WRNJ agenda development and represent youth voice on various social media platforms; and
- Provide YLA input and updates to the coalition during meetings (if schedules permit) or via email.

Anticipated Program Scope and Sequence (14 weeks/one hour per week):

September- Program Overview and Engagement Tactics

- Week of Sep 16th
 - WRNJ Mission & Vision: The Role of a YLA
 - Managing Time and Expectation
- Week of Sep 21st
 - New Jersey Governance and Policy Landscape w/ Guest Speaker
 - Tactics for Engaging Youth (Social Media)
- Week of Sep 28th
 - Skills Assessment & Development I

October- YLA In Action: Student Issues and Building Civic Capacities

- Week of Oct 5th
 - COVID-19 Survey
- Week of Oct 12th
 - Underserved Communities & Limited Access to Resources
- Week of Oct 19th
 - 2020 Election Cycle: Voter Registration & US Census
- Week of Oct 26th
 - Skills Assessment & Development II

November- Leadership & Communication

- Week of Nov 2nd
 - Oral Communication (Public Speaking and Discussion Groups)
- Nov of Nov 9th
 - Written Communication (Resume Writing and Op-Eds)
- Week of Nov 16th

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- Organizing & Marketing (Networking & Professional Social Media Presence)
- Week of Nov 23
 - Skills Assessment & Development III

End of November/December- Mentorship Opportunities & Program Conclusion

- Week of Nov 30th
 - Mentorship Survey & Matching
- Week of Dec 7th
 - Program Review (Survey & Discussion)
- Week of Dec 14th
 - Closing Ceremony & Certificates

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