



YOUTH & GOVERNMENT HANDBOOK 2026-27

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WELCOME TO YMCA YOUTH & GOVERNMENT

Y MISSION

The Southeast Ventura County YMCA builds relationships, impacts lives and strengthens our community through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility.

To achieve this purpose, the program staff and volunteers have adopted the following goals:

- Develop facilities and staff that ensure a safe, supportive and caring environment.
- Create an organized curriculum that addresses the physical, mental and social development of each child in a balanced, age-appropriate format.
- Involve families in program activities, planning and evaluation as much as possible.

VALUES

The YMCA is deeply rooted in its core values of:

- Caring
- Honesty
- Respect
- Responsibility

These universal values unite us as a cause driven movement and guide our behavior and decisions.

VISION/IMPACT

Our community is stronger and healthier because of the Y's focus on nurturing:

- Impactful relationships
- The potential of every individual and family
- A commitment to one another

GENERAL INFORMATION

WHAT IS YOUTH & GOVERNMENT

Since 1948, the YMCA's Youth & Government (Y&G) program has provided an unmatched experience-based opportunity for high school students. By modeling California's legislature and courts, participants have the opportunity to build skills such as critical thinking, persuasive speech and writing, project management and collaboration. Our program is rooted in the YMCA's core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility with beliefs in the importance of servant leadership and media literacy to a healthy democracy.

[California YMCA Youth & Government 75th Anniversary Video](#)

Our goal is to grow the next generation of civically-engaged Californians who recognize the importance of:

- **Civic Knowledge:** They understand the structure and function of government.
- **Civic Awareness:** They can identify the major issues facing their communities.
- **Civic Action:** They are equipped with the tools they will need to make change in their community.

The program begins in September when teens and volunteers meet as individual delegations to discuss issues facing California, as well as ways to implement their solutions through the legislative and judicial processes. During a six-month period, the teen delegates write bills, prepare briefs, select governmental positions to role-play, attend statewide training conferences and run for various elected offices. The program reaches its peak in Sacramento at the State Capitol, with a four-day Model Legislature & Court conference each February. There, the real government moves over and the teen delegates "take over," using its historic halls: The Senate and Assembly chambers, offices of our State Capitol, Supreme Court and Governor's Office.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Present student-created Bills to a panel of Community Leaders at Bill Night
- Attend a regional conference to practice debate skills and prepare resources for statewide conferences
- Participate in one, four-day conference in Camp Roberts, CA for role training and officer elections for Model Legislature & Court conference in Sacramento
- Experience four days in Sacramento working within the State Capitol Building, including the Senate, Assembly and Supreme Court chambers
- Opportunity to meet high school students from all over the state of California
- Opportunity to debate bills on the most controversial issues currently facing the state, both in committees and on the Assembly and Senate floors
- Opportunity to participate in court proceedings to decide challenging issues facing the state.
- Participate in numerous social activities including dances, fun games and the Governor's Banquet and Ball, followed by a midnight Friendship Service.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

PROGRAM FEES

The program costs \$1,625 per delegate. **(Transportation included)**. This money is used towards paying the registration fees for all 4 conferences, Bill Hearing Night, lodging and transportation to and from the Statewide conferences, meals at the training conference, hotel accommodations for the Model Legislature & Court conference, a delegation sweatshirt, selected meals in Sacramento and other miscellaneous costs incurred by the YMCA while running the program.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

The following payment breakdown for the program fee will be scheduled upon registration. Cards should be kept up to date on file to avoid a potential hold on your child's participation.

1st Payment	Due Upon Registration	\$50
2nd Payment	October 9, 2026	\$315
3rd Payment	November 9, 2026	\$315
4th Payment	December 9, 2027	\$315
5th Payment	January 9, 2027	\$315
6th Payment	February 9, 2027	\$315

TRANSPORTATION TO CONFERENCES

We will ride in Charter Busses to both Training & Elections in November and MLC Sacramento in February. Transportation to both statewide conferences is included in your price.

PAYMENT POLICY

We require all participants to put a billing method on file for the scheduled payments. We offer two billing options, electronic funds bank draft (EFT) or a credit/debit card. If preferred, payments can be made by check prior to the scheduled payment due date, but any payments not received by the listed due date will be automatically drafted using the billing method on file. The billing method will be removed from a participant's account following the conclusion of the program and will not be used for anything other than Youth & Government program fees.

REFUND POLICY

Fees paid are non-refundable after the payment due date outlined therein, as the monies are almost immediately paid out by the YMCA to cover costs and make reservations. Delegates who do not complete the program year are not issued a refund.

SUPERVISION

On a local level, the delegation is administered and led by an elected group of delegate officers. With the assistance of several volunteer advisors, these officers conduct the weekly delegation meetings, coordinate events, activities and lead the delegation as a whole. The volunteer advisors of the Conejo/Simi, Miller and Yarrow delegations supervise the program directly. All our advisors are over the age of 21 and have extensive experience with both the YMCA and the Youth & Government program. They also receive training at the Advisor Development Conference. When the delegation attends statewide conferences, it is supervised by over 200 volunteer advisors and professional staff, who are supplemented strongly by local authorities. As always, the safety of our participants is our top priority.

DELEGATION CRITERIA

Members of the YMCA Youth & Government Delegation shall be committed to the program Code of Conduct (included in this handbook) and the delegation criteria, which outline the basic principles that we will display. Our code of conduct models how delegates of such a prestigious program shall conduct themselves at all times. While demonstrating our commitment to integrity and self-control, we will symbolize leadership traits that are deeply grounded in YMCA tradition.

ATTENDANCE

- All weekly delegation meetings are mandatory. Unexcused absences shall have a bearing on role selection priority and overall eligibility for participation.
- All conferences are mandatory for participation.
- As stated in the Code of Conduct, all conference sessions are mandatory for all attendees. An unexcused absence from a conference session can result in dismissal from the program.

CONDUCT

- As stated within the Code of Conduct, delegates shall display accountable behavior at all YMCA related events.
- Delegates shall uphold the four core YMCA values: Caring, Respect, Responsibility and Honesty.

VOLUNTEER

- The YMCA will have multiple opportunities to volunteer throughout the program year!

SPIRIT

- Delegates shall display a positive mental attitude towards the program, delegation and all participants.
- Delegates shall understand that as a member of this delegation, they represent the SEVC YMCA at every Youth & Government activity. Behavior has a lasting effect on the impression of our YMCA.

WEEKLY DELEGATION MEETINGS

Beginning the first week of September and running through the end of February each delegation will meet weekly. Delegation meetings are facilitated by the Youth Officers with advisor support. Meetings consist of preparation for the statewide conferences, debates, elections, public speaking exercises, bill writing and role specific training.

CONEJO/SIMI DELEGATION of SIMI VALLEY FAMILY YMCA

- Meetings are held on Tuesdays from 6:30pm–8pm at the Simi Valley Family YMCA in Simi Valley.

[Conejo/Simi Delegation Calendar 26–27](#)

MILLER DELEGATION of SEV YMCA

- Meetings are held on Wednesdays from 6:30pm–8pm at Art Trek in Newbury Park.

[Miller Delegation Calendar 26–27](#)

YARROW DELEGATION of YARROW FAMILY YMCA

- Meetings are held on Thursdays from 6:45pm–8:15pm pm at the Yarrow Family YMCA in Westlake Village.

[Yarrow Delegation Calendar](#)

CODE OF CONDUCT

DELEGATE CONDUCT

The Code of Conduct will be enforced from the time we leave the YMCA until the time that we return. NO EXCEPTIONS. Any delegate found violating the Code of Conduct is subject to the penalties described, including being sent home at their parent's expense. Please remember, there will be no alcohol, drugs, tobacco products, sex or weapons at the conference. In addition, any action that breaks a state law or a hotel regulation, such as vandalism, theft, assault, etc. is also considered a breach of the Code of Conduct. Finally, please be sure to adhere to the "No Innocent Bystanders" rule in the Code of Conduct. For more in-depth descriptions, please review the Code of Conduct that all delegates and parents were required to sign as a condition of participation. Remember, participating in this program is a privilege, and we need to adhere to its' rules.

CODE OF CONDUCT 2026-2027

DRESS CODE FOR THE 78TH MODEL LEGISLATURE & COURT

Youth & Government will strictly enforce the dress code at this conference. Y&G seeks to prepare participants for future professions. Our dress code is designed to help participants fully immerse themselves in their roles as participants in the California State Government. When you dress the part, you will act the part.

DRESS CODE 2026-2027

IMPORTANT DATES/ CONFERENCES

BILL HEARING NIGHT

Each Delegation will present the Legislative Bills to a panel of Community Leaders. The panel will choose a bill for the Delegation to represent in Sacramento. Delegates spend several weeks researching topics and current laws, writing and debating these topics.

REGIONAL CONFERENCES



SEVC Role Exposure

Sunday, October 4, 2026

Conejo Valley YMCA in Thousand Oaks, CA

10:30AM–2PM

All SEVC Delegates will come together for a half day conference to learn about potential roles. This is a half day experiential event meant to help the delegates choose a Role for Sacramento.

SEVC Training Conference (Mini Bob)

Saturday, October 17, 2026

Conejo Valley YMCA in Thousand Oaks, CA

2pm–9pm

[SEVC YMCA Regional Conference Info](#)

Within the Southeast Ventura County YMCA Association are three delegations; Miller, Conejo/Simi and Yarrow. We have an annual SEVC Conference to give delegates the chance to prepare for the statewide conference with our sister delegations, learn more about the program roles, practice debating a variety of bills and have fun.

STATEWIDE CONFERENCES

**October 30– November 2, 2026,
Training & Elections Conference**

This Friday – Monday conference takes place at the Camp Roberts National Guard Base in San Miguel, CA. Students will depart for conference Friday after School The conference combines the election of many statewide officers, role specific training and a general introduction to the program. Delegates will be offered interesting leadership and group building experiences [Statewide Training & Elections Info](#)



February 11–15, 2026

79th Model Legislature & Court

This 4–day conference is the pinnacle of the Youth & Government Program. Students will depart for conference Thursday after school. The delegates take over the actual government chambers and offices to put on the Model Legislature & Court. They will hear judicial cases, bills, and elect the governor of next year’s program. The program is housed at the Sacramento Hyatt Regency and the Sheraton Grand, while students will be active in the Capitol Building, Supreme Courthouse, and the Downtown Convention Center. The dress code for this conference is Professional Business attire. The dress code is strictly enforced. Dress code details are below.

[Preliminary 79th MLC](#)

School Absences:

Please communicate with your student's school directly about the absences for our Training & Elections conference and the MLC Sacramento Conference. Absence letter stating the California State law excusing your delegate's absence can we found [HERE](#)

PROGRAM COMMUNICATION

Our program will use the BAND app for all official program communication, including updates, announcements, schedules, and important reminders. As part of the registration process, each student and at least one parent/guardian are required to join the delegation's BAND group. This ensures everyone receives timely and important program information throughout the season. Your lead advisor will share instructions on how to join the group. **The Y will NOT send email reminders throughout the year!**

CONTACT INFORMATION

For additional information about Youth & Government, please contact the Delegation Lead Advisors:

- Conejo/Simi Delegation – Katie Oberman at conejoyandg@sevymca.org
- Miller Delegation – Veronica Rodarte at milleryouthgov@sevymca.org
- Yarrow Delegation – Vivian Rodarte at yarrowyouthgov@sevymca.org

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

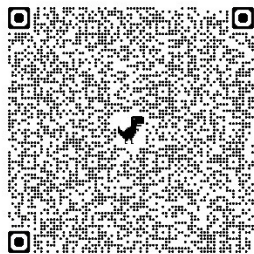
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE is available for families who demonstrate a need for support to cover all or part of the program costs. This assistance is made possible through our generous Annual Support Campaign. A \$50 deposit will be charged once a student has registered and is awaiting their financial assistance award amount, so

a credit card will be needed to finalize registration. Families can complete the Financial Assistance (FA) application form prior to registering for the program, which can help the process go faster.

The link to the [SEV YMCA Financial Scholarship Application](#) is provided in this handbook and on our website. We encourage families to apply as soon as possible to ensure that you receive your financial aid offer in time to meet the registration deadline. After submitting the FA form, the Y will review your application and contact you with an offer of financial assistance. If you choose to accept the offer, our team will communicate the payment plan for the remaining total.

Registration link below use your phone camera to open the QR Code or visit www.sevymca.org/youth-government

Program Registration



Financial Scholarship Application



For Financial Assistance or Payment questions please contact CONEJO/SIMI DELEGATION

Katie Oberman

koberman@sevymca.org

YARROW OR MILLER DELEGATION

Tori Cusack

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