

National Strategy Announced to Found A New Era of Youth Service in America

Youth Service America celebrates America250 by launching a new national plan to double youth participation in American civic life over the next 10 years.

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, July 1, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As we celebrate America's Semiquincentennial on July 4, 2026, we know that only 1 in 4 young people are regularly involved in the civic life of their communities. That means 64 million young Americans are left out of

participating in our democracy. This is especially true for young people from low-income families and neighborhoods, young people of color, young people in rural communities, and groups of young people who are often served, but not usually asked to serve.

Youth Service America (YSA) is leading a national alliance of organizations working to build [A New Era of Youth Service in America](#). We believe that for young people, communities, and democracy to thrive, every young person needs to be connected to and contribute to their community. Our goal is to double youth participation in volunteering and service; voting and civic engagement; youth voice and leadership; and joining and philanthropy in the United States over the next 10 years on the way to universal youth participation.

Launching during America250, the [New Era of Youth Service National Strategy](#) leverages the opportunities of this once-in-a-lifetime civic moment to focus the Nation's K-12 schools and higher education institutions, afterschool and youth development programs, community-based and faith-based organizations, and state and local governments on creating a civic culture that builds on the progress of the last 250 years and strengthens our democracy for the next 250 years.

Our "Declaration of Participation" begins: "250 years ago, America was founded with a Declaration that each of us has the right to Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness. We know that young people are crucial to the Common Good, both now and in the future. Therefore, we



hold these truths to be self-evident: That all young people are created equal and that our unalienable rights come with inherent responsibilities to participate and work together for the Common Good; and That to support young people in meeting these responsibilities, the Nation's institutions must be organized to eliminate the barriers to youth participation."

This strategy is the result of a year-long national listening tour and collaborative strategic planning process that gathered input from over 3,000 people and organizations across the country. With a focus on addressing the four most common barriers to youth participation (lack of opportunities and expectation, lack of knowledge and skills, lack of equitable access and resources, and lack of trust in the efficacy of participation), the strategy proposes activation, funding, training, and recognition strategies to address these barriers:

Activation Campaigns

1. Build more systemic opportunities for youth voice, leadership, and decision-making.
2. Collaborate with national youth development organizations to expand their existing youth service programs and help more youth join local chapters.
3. Support youth who are already involved to engage their peers who are not.

Funding and Resourcing

4. Develop a Common Grant Application system to allow partners and youth leaders to apply for funding from multiple sources.
5. Secure funding for partners to support new full-time or part-time staff and program capacity grants.
6. Secure funding for partners and youth leaders to support project implementation costs, including transportation.

Training and Skill Building

7. Support an online/hybrid professional learning community with peer mentorship and networking.
8. Offer training or professional development specific to adults in schools, afterschool, and youth development programs.
9. Offer training for youth project and program leaders.

Recognition and Storytelling

10. Help youth to tell their own stories and adults to tell stories about youth.
11. Provide recognition, honor rolls, awards, scholarships, or graduation honors.
12. Provide academic credit and skill certifications for service or service-learning.

Learn more about YSA's mission to make working together for the common good the common expectation and common experience of every young person in America at [YSA.org/NewEra](https://www.ysa.org/newera).

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