

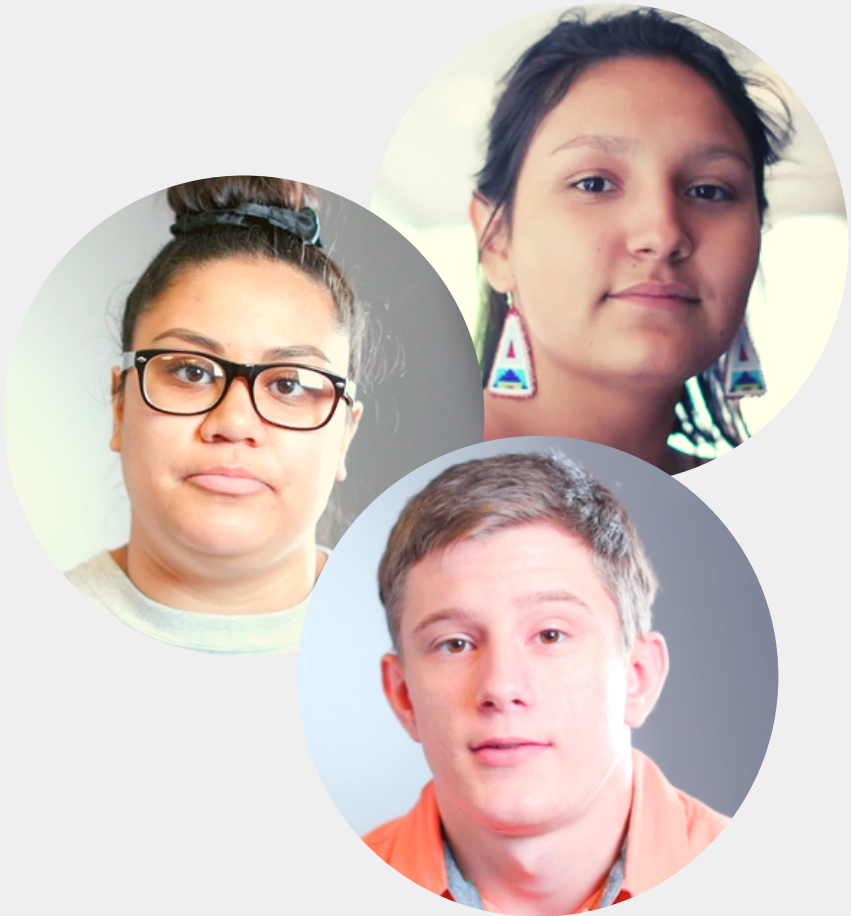
YOUTH LEADERSHIP ACADEMY



**A GUIDE FOR SCHOOLS &
STUDENTS**



WELCOME TO



THE ACADEMY!

WHAT IS THE YLA?

YLA stands for Youth Leadership Academy, It is a unique opportunity for GEAR UP (GU) students to learn and explore leadership concepts and how to apply them at school in a tangible way through service learning projects. In YLA students will (1) form relationships with other GEAR UP students from across the state, (2) attend annual leadership training, (3) participate in monthly webinars, and (4) implement a service-learning project at school! Interested participants make a 1-year extra-curricular commitment to the YLA learning community. Service projects will take place throughout students' junior and senior years.



Application Process

Students must complete a (1) short application, (2) writing sample, and (3) letter of recommendation and submit to their GU liaison.

- GU will work with schools to identify student applicants.
- Applications due - April 15.
- GU will review completed applications and make final selections - April 30.
- GU will provide enrollment paperwork for each student selected for the Academy - due March 30th

ELIGIBLE STUDENTS

Eligible students include current 10th and 11th graders. Students must commit to building a service-learning project in the spring of their junior or senior year. All students should be involved in GEAR UP programming, excited to fully participate, able to behave appropriately in an adult conference setting, and display leadership qualities inside and outside the classroom.

Why Participate in YLA

1. You have school pride and want to leave a legacy.
2. Use your peer influence to bring about positive change.
3. Get direct access to GEAR UP leadership.
4. Build a supportive community of peers and professionals.
5. Looks great on college applications or resumes.
6. Opportunity to be nominated to the Youth Leadership Summit and travel to Washington D.C. or San Francisco.



PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES

Student

Make a 1 year extra-curricular commitment to the YLA learning community. Participate in all parts of the academy including monthly online chats, monthly meetings with your liaison and team member, training (date and location TBD), and a service learning project. Be respectful and have fun. Engage other students at school in your project.



Liaison

The GEAR UP liaison is responsible for (1) selecting two students, (2) submitting forms and registering students, (3) securing a dedicated chaperone in the case of student travel, and (4) guiding students in service projects throughout the school year. Liaisons should work with students to submit final approval of service-learning projects to GU. Schools are required to enroll two students in the Academy.

PROJECT IDEAS

Service Learning Project

Ideally service learning projects tie in with academic curriculum. Liaisons may enlist teachers to give students feedback and supervision needed for their service learning project. Service learning allows students to communicate, plan, and implement personally-meaningful projects that strengthen the community. The connection between academic and real life engages student growth. Upon completion of a project, students need time to reflect on learning. Youth.gov provides information on best practices and ways to make service learning meaningful.

Internship

Invite YLA student(s) do an internship with your GEAR UP program. They can help with social media posts, outreach to students and parents, help with event planning, and serve as the student member of your local GEAR UP team (keeping in mind FERPA).

YLA students' peer influence can help create college-going discussions and expectations. Internships are powerful on resumes or college applications. Get approval from your local administration. Train the students with basic information like the importance of confidentiality, expected conduct on and off-campus, social media guidelines, expectations around punctuality and other business etiquette. Help them use smart goals to plan what they want to accomplish during the internship. Use your time with them to mentor and teach job skills. Give positive feedback and guidance.

STUDENT COUNCIL

Give Feedback. Let Your Voice Be Heard

The YLA Student Council group is responsible for providing the GEAR UP program feedback. Help share ideas, interests, and concerns with GEAR UP state staff and your liaison. The Council can also help raise funds for service projects and plan media outreach.



If you are interested in answering...

- Do you want to hear from other passionate students?
- What do you like about GEAR UP or the YLA?
- What can be improved?
- What should the theme of next year's YLA be?
- Do you want to set YLA norms and dynamics?
- Do you have an idea for a YLA sweatshirt design?
- Do you take awesome photos?

...We want to hear from you

Interested and have the time? Simply volunteer yourself during the first statewide Leadership call in the Fall.

NATIONAL YOUTH LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

Travel to San Francisco or Washington D.C.!

YLS stands for Youth Leadership Summit. It may get a little confusing with all of these three-letter acronyms. Just remember that the YLS is the national version of the Youth Leadership Academy (YLA). The YLS brings together student leaders from across the nation.

The Youth Leadership Summit helps GEAR UP high school students identify and maximize their leadership skills, create a national network of peers, and obtain the tools and training to make positive change happen in their communities and around the world. Over 3.5 days, students will learn to speak confidently, work effectively in teams, and build their capacity to lead. The program culminates with a student-led presentation to over 1,000 GEAR UP professionals.

Nomination Process

Montana YLA provides up to 4 students the opportunity to attend the YLS



Conference each summer. By participating fully in the YLA you are automatically eligible for nomination to the YLS. All students wishing to attend must submit a nomination form. They will use leadership skills to make a case for why they should be nominated. YLA participants will vote on their student representatives.

TELLING YOUR STORY

A good story is essential for making a successful life transition. Explaining what happened to you and the impact those experiences had will help you transition to life after high school. Your participation in the YLA will change your life and your community for the better - We Want to Capture It! So use the power of storytelling in pursuit of your cause.

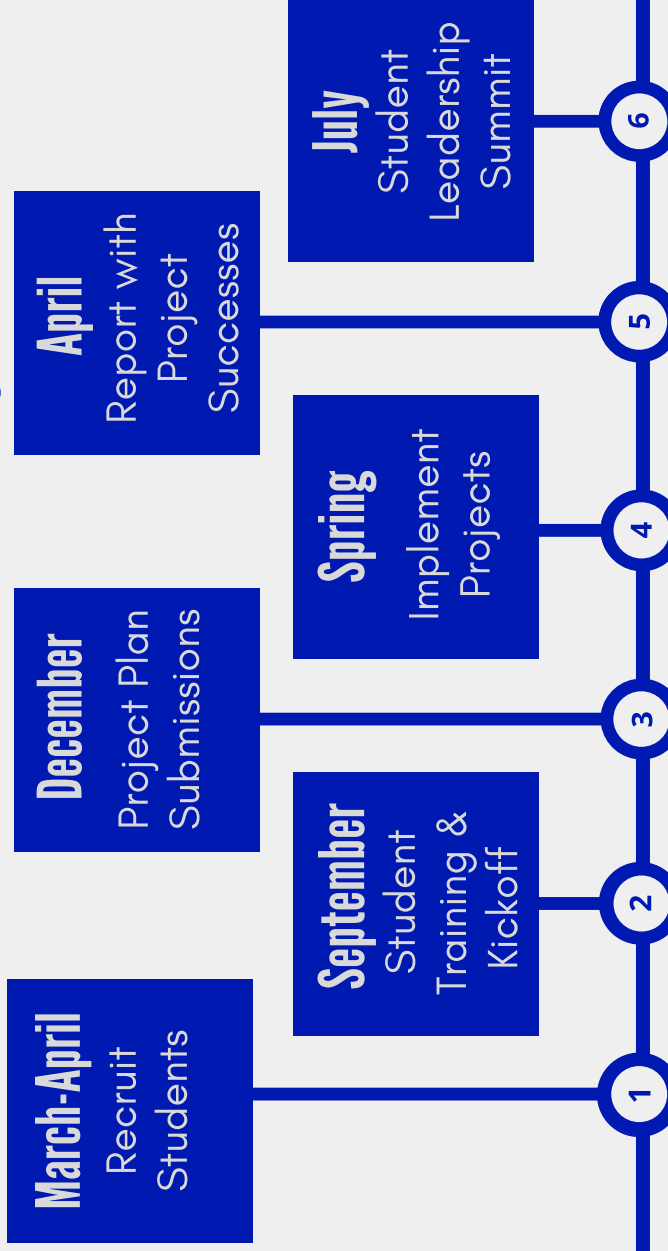
"The goal is to create a media buzz around your projects."



The YLA has a person on staff dedicated to helping you tell your story. This person will work with you to collect images, stories, and videos to use in our media outreach.



Youth Leadership Academy Timeline



Throughout the

School Year:

School Project Meetings:

- Once monthly
September - April

Statewide Leadership Calls:

- September
- November
- January
- April

CONNECT

FACEBOOK



Join the official Montana YLA Facebook Group. Use Facebook to quickly connect with other students in the program. Use the message board to get program updates, deadlines, and more. This group is a combination of students, trainers, facilitators, and GEAR UP coordinators.

INSTAGRAM



Post pictures to Instagram of your service projects or internships and tag #MTGEARUPYLA. Share and like photos with your peers from across the state.

GOOGLE CLASSROOM



The Montana YLA has a dedicated space for your learning! The YLA facilitator will provide students with an access code to join our virtual classroom. The YLA classroom will be filled with additional assignments, questions or ideas related to the program!

STATE COORDINATOR



Your YLA leader and coordinator from the start of the application process through selection on to training and project implementation is Sam Garetson (GEAR UP - Program Manager). Sam is your ultimate resource for questions concerning program paperwork, timelines, schedules, and project ideas.

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