



Youth in governance in Wisconsin

Making room at the table for young citizens

Youth who get involved in their communities make significant contributions to the quality of life and are more likely to be active, productive citizens as adults. When adults and young people cooperate on civic work, youth develop citizenship skills and both youth and adults gain an appreciation for the contributions of youth.

Extension's Response

In communities throughout the state, Extension agents and specialists work to expand the role of youth community leaders and active citizens. This includes providing training and experiences with democratic practices, engaging youth in community decision-making and community governance, working with elected officials to establish youth positions on public boards and councils, and training adults on effectively working with youth as partners.

Outcomes

- Youth now serve on local government boards and committees in seven Wisconsin counties. Statutes and policies have been changed in these counties to permit young people under the age of 18 to be seated on local government committees.
- Youth in at least 10 Wisconsin counties are working alongside adults to facilitate dialogues about community development, diversity, and many other topics. Youth and adults in schools and communities provide input and become more engaged citizens through these dialogues.
- 4-H provides many venues for youth to work with adults in responsible positions. Experienced club members join youth-adult committees and Extension staff build the capacity of youth and adults to work together to strengthen youth development environments in hundreds of communities.

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March 2006+