



NJ DIVISION ON
CIVIL RIGHTS
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Division on Civil Rights’ Youth Ambassador Program

The [New Jersey Division on Civil Rights](#) is the state agency charged with enforcing the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (“LAD”), the first state civil rights statute to go into effect in the country. The LAD protects all people in NJ from discrimination and bias-based harassment in employment, housing, and places of public accommodation based on actual or perceived race, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, and other protected characteristics. DCR also enforces the New Jersey Family Leave Act (NJFLA), and the Fair Chance in Housing Act (FCHA). The mission of DCR is to prevent, eliminate and remedy discrimination and bias-based harassment in employment, housing, and places of public accommodation throughout New Jersey. DCR’s vision is a New Jersey free from discrimination and bias, where all people are treated with equal dignity and equal respect and have access to equal opportunity.

In October 2020, New Jersey’s Interagency Task Force to Combat Youth Bias released a report that recommended, among other things, that the State launch “a public campaign to take a strong stance that hate has no place in New Jersey” by allowing students to create art “about standing up to hate and prejudice in New Jersey.” In its first year, the student competition received over 175 submissions that showed the next generation’s empowering anti-bias vision. Many pieces became part of statewide art exhibits, and several students became part of the inaugural cohort of DCR’s Youth Ambassador Program.

Program Purpose

All youth ambassadors will be able to participate in DCR programs and projects. In addition, students will attend special youth ambassador monthly meetings and workshops. The workshops will be tailored to student’s civil rights-related interests. The purpose of the program is for students to develop a rich understanding of civil rights in order to enhance their communities; participate in civil rights-related conversations; learn how to amplify their voices; serve as a community liaison to DCR; and work on projects that can be added to their portfolios/resumes.

The Youth Ambassador Program prioritizes youth empowerment by focusing on skill building in various areas; creating opportunities for project development; enhancing personal growth; promoting diversity and self-awareness; generating opportunities to establish additional support networks; and encouraging students to act as community change agents through education on the Law Against Discrimination.

Youth ambassadors can reapply every year, and those who participate for two or more consecutive years can serve as mentors to newer youth ambassadors to promote connections within their respective communities, counties, and across the State.

Eligibility

The New Jersey Division on Civil Rights Youth Ambassador Program is open to all youth ages 13 to 21 who are interested in exploring civil rights issues. There are no academic or grade-point-average requirements for participation in the program. Up to 40 youth ambassadors will be admitted into the program.

Ambassador Selection Criteria

- Interest in civil rights
- Passion to make a positive change on a community level
- Interest in personal and leadership development
- Availability to attend monthly meetings and workshops

Application Process

- Interested applicants and their parent/legal guardian, if a minor, must complete the [Youth Ambassador Application form](#).
- Youth Ambassador Applications must be submitted by August 31, 2022.
- Students who are admitted to the program will be notified on September 15, 2022.

Ambassador Responsibilities

- Attend monthly meetings and workshops. Students will not be able to participate if they need to miss more than 2 meetings workshops.
- Utilize GroupMe messaging app to stay abreast of program meeting days and updates.
- Participate in and promote DCR's public-facing programs as opportunities present themselves.
- Participate in very brief mid-year and end-of-year program survey.

Parent/Legal Guardian Responsibilities

- Utilize GroupMe messaging app or email to stay abreast of program meeting days and updates.
- Participate in a very brief mid-year and end-of-year program survey.

Program Framework

I. Program Objectives

The program seeks to:

- Develop youth ambassador's organizational skills and communication skills.
- Hold monthly meetings and workshops from October-June that allow youth ambassadors to learn from different speakers on a wide range of topics including, but not limited to, the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination, peer-to-peer mediation, and how to develop a project or event.
- Help youth ambassadors affirm and utilize their lived experiences to inform the work they do in order to empower and best support the communities they are working with.

- Consistently keep track of program results and input by surveying participants/parents at the mid-point and end of their program experience via Constant Contact.

II. Program Outcomes

By participating in this program, youth ambassadors will:

- Gain a foundational understanding of the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination.
- Develop a strong sense of civic responsibility, awareness of civil rights, and leadership skills to take on new challenges.
- Develop an understanding of how to plan events, participate in research, and productively work as a part of a team.
- Develop the confidence and skills to effectively communicate their ideas and collaborate within diverse groups of peers to achieve optimal project outcomes.
- Be informed about opportunities such as college scholarships, internship opportunities, career development programs, and mentoring opportunities.
- Have the opportunity to serve as a mentor for another youth ambassador upon completion of the program.

III. Centralized Communication Methods

DCR youth ambassadors and their parents/legal guardians will be invited into [GroupMe](#) Closed Chats as a method of centralized communication for to circulate reminders for monthly meetings and workshops. Parents/legal guardians will also receive monthly emails with upcoming program dates, times and links so they are kept up-to-date on their children's activities.

IV. Youth Ambassador Project Requirements

Youth ambassadors will be broken into small groups and together identify a topic related to the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination about which they will create a project as a culmination of their participation in the program.

The project can consist of a youth panel discussion, a pre-recorded video, a PowerPoint presentation, or a presentation in a different medium. During the course of the program, youth ambassadors will learn critical skills that will be necessary in developing their project, as detailed in the timeline below.

Each youth ambassador must contribute to the group project and participate in the final project presentation. Youth ambassadors will be introduced to online tools based on their needs such as a free version of [Canva](#).

V. Timeline

Each student who participates in the Youth Ambassador Program must be part of the program for at least one academic year (October through June). Monthly meetings and monthly workshops will last 60-90 minutes, depending on the topic. All monthly meetings and workshops will be held virtually via Zoom.

Meeting and Workshop Descriptions

Monday, October 3rd at 6pm

Meeting: **Youth Ambassador Program Orientation**

Orientation to program, icebreaker for youth ambassadors and introduction to time management.

Monday, October 17th at 6pm

Workshop: **LAD Overview Presentation**

This month's meeting will introduce ambassadors to the NJ Law Against Discrimination as well as introduce students to what the workshops will consist of moving forward.

Monday, November 7th at 6pm

Meeting: **Social Media & Activism**

This month's meeting will introduce ambassadors to the importance of social media and its ability to foster activism, exposing students to key social media skills and how to effectively use them to advocate for themselves and their passions.

Monday, November 14th at 6pm

Workshop: **Project Development (The Brainstorm)**

Ambassadors will begin thinking of ideas for their public-facing projects.

Monday, December 5th at 6pm

Meeting: **Introduction to Implicit Bias**

This month's meeting will introduce ambassadors to the concept of implicit bias and discuss strategies on how to effectively address it.

Monday, December 19th at 6pm

Workshop: **Project Development (The Pitch)**

Ambassadors will work on effectively communicating their project ideas to others in an engaging way.

Monday, January 9th at 6pm

Meeting: **Introduction to Peer-to-Peer Mediation**

This month's meeting will introduce ambassadors to the concept of peer-to-peer mediation. This introduction will begin to shift the focus from understanding the individual to understanding their role as a member of the community.

Monday, January 23rd at 6pm

Workshop: **Project Development (Logistics)**

Ambassadors will develop the logistics for their DCR public-facing project.

Monday, February 6th at 6pm

Meeting: **Introduction to Community Mediation**

This month's meeting will introduce ambassadors to community mediation. Here, we begin to apply the understanding of the individual and interpersonal skills to community involvement and activism.

Monday, February 27th at 6pm

Workshop: Project Development (Marketing)

Ambassadors will learn how to market their project, including learning community outreach and creative advertising skills

Monday, March 13th at 6pm

Meeting: Engaging in Meaningful Public Speaking & Presentations

This month's meeting will introduce ambassadors to effective public speaking strategies, with the hope that this will help them to better present their project with accuracy and confidence.

Monday, March 27th at 6pm

Workshop: Project Development Step III (Run Through)

A run-through of the project will help students prepare their ideas and apply what they learned from the introduction to public speaking.

Monday, April 10th at 6pm

Meeting: Final Program Development Step IV Final Run Through

This month's meeting will provide ambassadors with one final opportunity to sharpen and present their projects, culminating in the presentation of the projects.

Monday, April 24th at 6pm

Workshop: Project Presentations

DCR Youth Ambassadors will present their projects virtually.

Monday, May 8th at 6pm

Meeting: Conversation with DCR Interns

This month's meeting will provide ambassadors the opportunity to speak with current and former DCR interns about their experiences. The objective of this conversation is to connect and network with the interns in addition to preparing ambassadors to begin thinking about how to best access internship, job, and career opportunities.

Monday, May 22nd at 6pm

Workshop: Project Development Step V (Constructive Debrief)

Youth Ambassadors will participate on a constructive debrief of the project presentation (what they liked best, could do differently, what they learned, etc.)

Monday, June 5th at 6pm

Meeting: Career goals & how to create a resume

This month's meeting will focus on preparing ambassadors for career and internship opportunities. Ambassadors will learn how to craft a resume, ask for letters of recommendation, and access resources like academic scholarships.