

NEVADA YOUTH LEGISLATURE (NYL)
HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE



The NYL, which was created in 2007 ([Senate Bill 247](#)), is a unique statewide youth leadership program. The NYL provides a distinctive opportunity for Nevada youth to have a powerful voice in representative government and policy making. To maximize this experience, the NYL program teaches and inspires young people how to lead and how to serve. Since its creation, approximately 230 Nevada students have participated in the NYL program.

Each of the 21 youth legislators is appointed by their state senator to represent the youth of that senatorial district. The number of under-18-year-old constituents per district ranges from 27,000 to 42,000 people. Youth legislators engage these young people through town hall meetings and other constituent outreach opportunities. Youth legislators also testify before public decision-making bodies and prepare and present ideas for legislation.

Youth legislators are educated and supported at the highest level during their two-year terms with an inaugural full-day training in Las Vegas, a midterm two-day training in Carson City, and monthly half-day trainings during each school year. The NYL also has the distinct opportunity to introduce a bill, which addresses an issue affecting Nevada youth, during each biannual legislative session. Six of eight measures the NYL has introduced have been signed into law; another six measures were carried by individual state legislators, at the request of their youth legislators (five of these became law); and another measure was passed as a senate concurrent resolution. Additionally, NYL alumni have worked with their legislators to advance measures that they proposed during their NYL terms, such as a measure on financial literacy, which was introduced and passed in the 2017 Legislative Session.

NYL alumni involvement, as trainers, facilitators, and mentors consistently enriches the program. Also, Nevada legislators, representing the four caucuses, provide essential perspectives as group discussion leaders at most of the training sessions.

In 2011, the Legislature created the Board of Directors for Corporation for Public Benefit to Administer the NYL (NYL Board) ([Senate Bill 237](#)). The NYL Board oversees the policies, practices, and finances of the NYL. Members of this seven-member board are appointed by the Legislative Commission and serve two-year terms. Typically, this membership comprises representatives from each house of the Legislature, NYL alumni, and the public. Since 2011, the NYL Board has awarded more than 40 annual scholarships to graduating youth legislators and NYL alumni.

The success of the NYL program emanates from the strong collaborative support from the Legislative Counsel Bureau, which involves human resources from the Research Division, the Legal Division, Broadcast and Production Services, and others. Demonstrating its distinction among leadership programs, the NYL has earned nearly 60 state, national, and international awards.