



ENGAGING OUR YOUTH: BUILDING A COUNTY YOUTH COMMISSION



PRESENTATION OUTLINE

- The Revival of the Milwaukee County Youth Commission
- Activities
- Support
- Recruitment
- Community Engagement & Service
- Legislation
- Testimonials





The Revival of the Milwaukee County Youth Commission

- The Youth Commission exists to:
 - Serve and advance the interests of Milwaukee County youth;
 - Make advisory recommendations about policy and budgetary decisions to the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors; and
 - Advance Milwaukee County's mission of achieving racial equity.
- The Commission is required to promote an annual "Take A Child to Work Day" event in Milwaukee County and spend a day in Madison



STRUCTURE



- The Commission has two standing committees:
 - Committee on Governance, Finance, & Evaluation
 - Committee on Community Engagement & Racial Justice
- Both standing committees have action plans through which they advance the Commission's three priority issues:
 - Youth homelessness
 - Youth health and wellness
 - Youth civic engagement

SUPPORT: ADULT ADVISORS, ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF, & OPERATING PARTNER

- Adult Advisors are volunteers or Milwaukee County employees who provide support and guidance to the Commissioners on parliamentary procedure, policymaking, and general governance.
- Adult Advisors are appointed by the County Executive (2), Board Chair (2), and the Youth Commission (1).
- Administrative staff work for the Project Management Office (PMO) in the Office of Strategy, Budget, and Performance.
- The Commission's operating partner is responsible for day-to-day operations and communication.





RECRUITMENT

- Every year, approximately half of the Commission seats become open. Commissioners can serve one or two-year terms.
- We recruit applicants through schools, community organizations, libraries, social media, news media, and Milwaukee County programs and services.
- Eligible youth must be a Milwaukee County resident, age 14-18, and actively enrolled in high school.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & SERVICE





AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION

In 2022, the County Executive and Board Chairwoman co-authored a resolution that was unanimously adopted by the Board of Supervisors to re-establish the Milwaukee County Youth Commission.

HOW DID WE GET HERE?



MKE COUNTY

Crowley, Nicholson Seek To Revive Youth Commission

Crowley served on it as a teen. Commission will review county policies, programs for youth.

By Graham Kilmer - May 17th, 2022 05:16 pm

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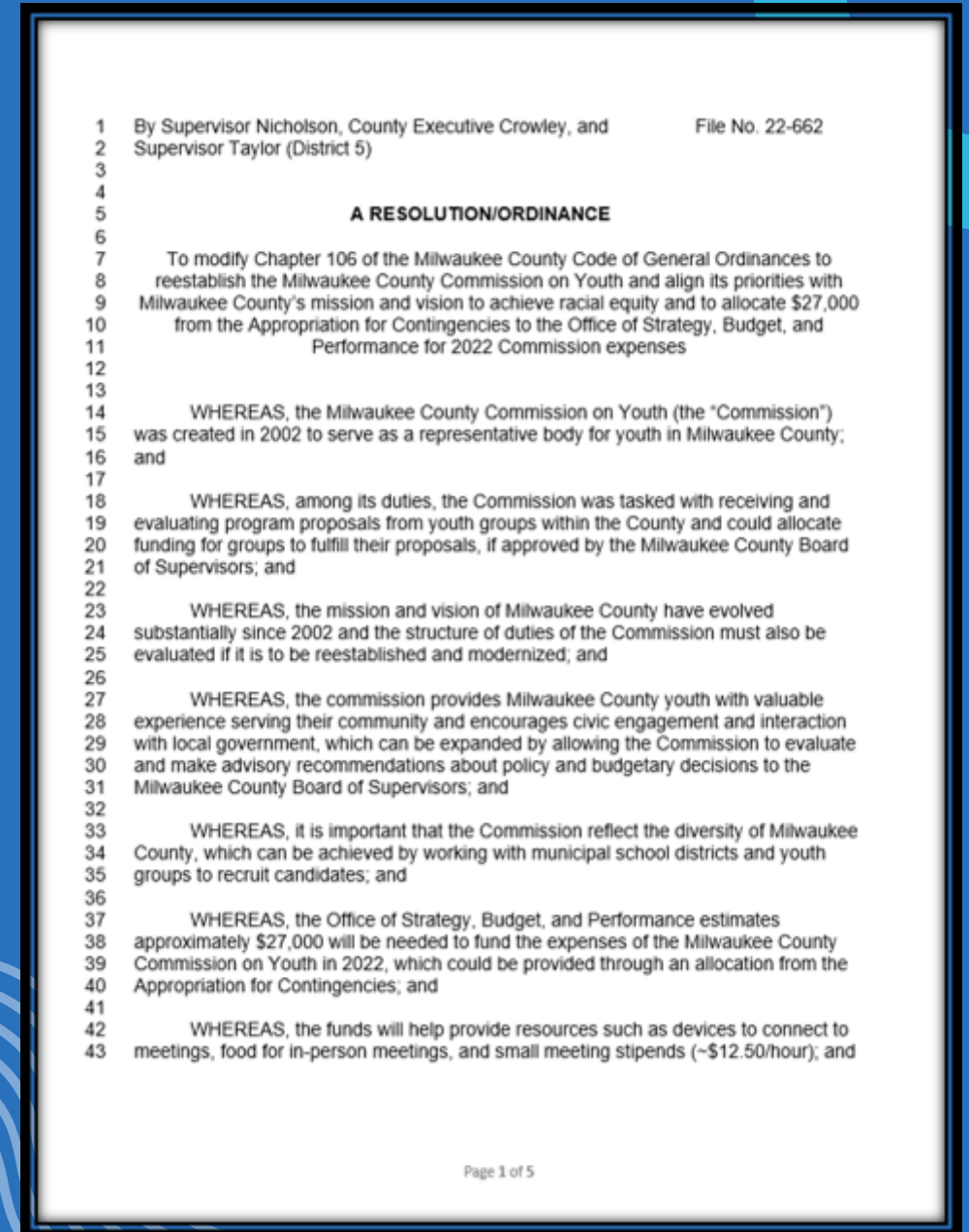
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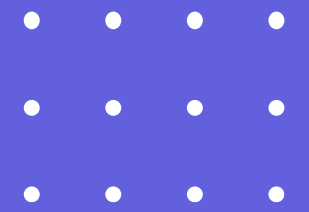


- Regular meetings with the Chairwoman and County Executive to discuss vision and think through the strategy to see the commission to fruition.
- Discussions with Board members and community members to ensure we had the political will and support

THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN BUILDING YOUR LEGISLATION

- Authoring the resolution
- Why do you want to establish a commission?
- Being intentional
- Activities and programs
- Budget
- Structure/ Process
- Assessment/evaluation

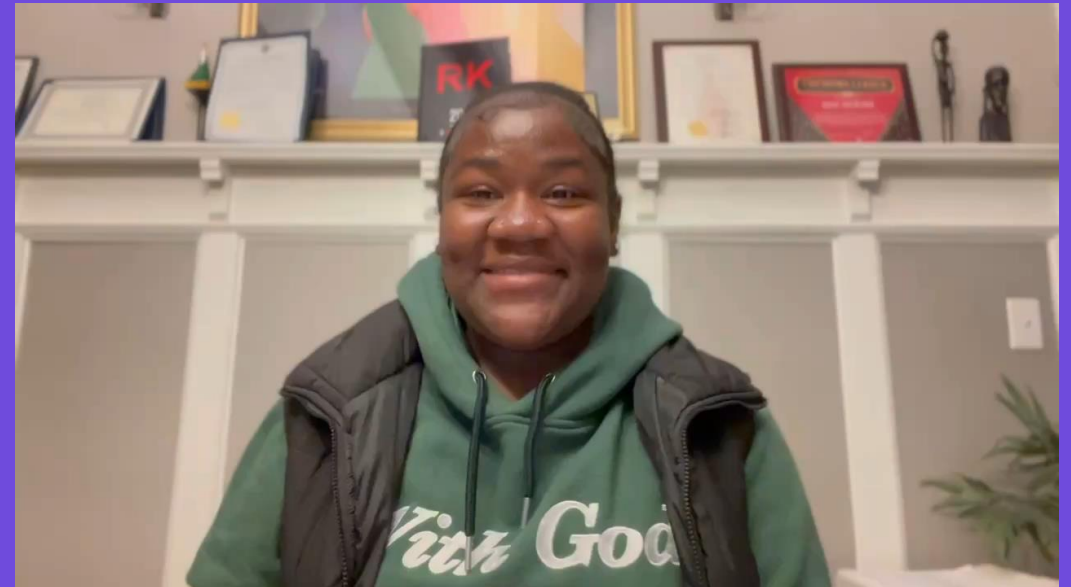




TESTIMONIALS: HEAR FROM OUR COMMISSIONERS

- ❖ My name is Mia Moore. I was appointed Co-Chair my junior year of high school.
- ❖ I joined the commission because it's important for young people to have a say in policies and decisions that impact us, which are often made without our input. "Nothing about us without us." I also wanted to amplify the voices of young people, specifically Black youth and other youth of color, whose voices are often overlooked.
- ❖ My experience will benefit me because I want to go into politics. Learning about different types of government and how I can give back to my community has been incredibly valuable, and it's something I don't take for granted.
- ❖ Youth commissions are important because they give young people a platform to be heard and involved in decision-making processes that directly affect them. We have unique perspectives that can drive innovative solutions, and it's essential that counties tap into that potential.
- ❖ My advice would be to go for it if you're passionate about making a difference. It is a learning experience but don't underestimate the impact your voice can have, especially when it comes to policy decisions that affect you and your community.

CO-CHAIR MIA MOORE



CO-CHAIR LOREN MUWONGE

I firmly believe that Youth Commissioners are supported strongly by Milwaukee County. We are exposed to numerous departments and partners of Milwaukee County entities which are helpful as we consider connections that may be of benefit to endeavors we pursue. Additionally, our advisors are highly knowledgeable of Milwaukee County resources, which helps us as we continue thoughtful planning that will help advance the interests of racial equity and social justice for young people in Milwaukee.



SARAH BRUETT, DISTRICT 1

My name is Sarah Bruett and I represent District One. I chose to serve because it is important to me that the young people of Milwaukee get a voice to accurately represent our peers. The Youth Commission is a unique chance for high school aged students to make a difference. In the Youth Commission our voice is heard and valued.

One of my favorite things I have done is volunteering at The Gathering. We bagged to-go lunches and assembled hot lunches for individuals facing housing insecurity. I had a great time handing them out as well! This is just one example of ways we get involved with Milwaukee through Youth Commission.

Finally, the county supports us in numerous ways. For example, they provide laptops to each Commissioner, dinner before every meeting, door-to-door transportation if you don't have a ride, gas vouchers, etc. Additionally, our adult advisors are patient, hardworking, and flexible. They keep the Commission running smoothly and coordinate volunteer opportunities, socials, and so much more.





MARIANNA TAYLOR, DISTRICT 2

I have served on the Youth Commission for five months. I chose to join because I am passionate about empowering young voices in my community because I believe that when youth voices are heard, real and meaningful change can happen.

Youth Commissioners are greatly supported by Milwaukee County. It always feels nice to know that my advisors care so much about us, motivating me to strive for excellence every day.

Being on the Youth Commission gives me the platform to impact my community more directly compared to other leadership opportunities that I've had. I get to not only listen to specific concerns impacting my community, but I get to work to solve them.



SHAKIYA SNOW, DISTRICT 4



I choose to serve on the youth because I have always believed that the youth is the next generation and should have a voice on what happens. Being apart of the Youth Commission takes dedication and being able to come out of your comfort zone.



RAMARO HOPKINS, DISTRICT 5

What I love most about serving on the Youth Commission is being able to make decisions that impact our youth. I joined the Youth Commission because I want to let youth in my community and city know that they can do whatever they set their mind to. I want to change the narrative about youth in Milwaukee County.

If you are like me and want to change the narrative to show the promise and potential of investing in young people, please don't hesitate to reach out so we can do this together.

BRODY KAMINSKI, DISTRICT 6



My name is Brody Kaminski, and I represent District 6, which is Wauwatosa-Milwaukee. I chose to represent my district in the Youth Commission due to the immense public engagement and political opportunities that this position entails. Being on the Youth Commission is truly a rewarding opportunity, as it provides you an unparalleled access into Milwaukee County policy, community engagement, and the opportunity to make meaningful change representing youth in your district.

The Milwaukee County Youth Commission has given me multiple opportunities to engage with the public and learn more about what goes into the policies that make up Milwaukee County as we know it. Out of all the experiences that I've been offered, I'd say the most meaningful was undoubtedly the Juneteenth parade. Being in such a celebratory parade and event was truly one of the coolest experiences I've ever participated in. Seeing the community come together, to celebrate such an important holiday was quite a sight to see.

Of course, experiences are just one part of being on the Youth Commission. Milwaukee County also goes above-and-beyond to support us in our role as a Youth Commissioner. We are provided high-quality technology that allows us to communicate with constituents, connect to hybrid meetings, and engage with County staff. We're also compensated for our time, and provided with resources through our wonderful Adult Advisors, and peers, which makes the experience smooth and well-communicated.

To any youth who may be considering joining the Milwaukee County Youth Commission, I'd say if you're looking for an opportunity that gives you experience in public engagement, community service, and professionalism - look no further.



KASSIDY GINDT, DISTRICT 9

Hi, my name is Kassidy Gindt, and I have served on the Commission since it was reestablished in January 2023. I truly love representing District 9 and my role on the Youth Commission where I can help create a community where all people are respected and all voices are heard. I always look forward to attending Youth Commission meetings as it allows me an opportunity to learn more about Milwaukee County from different departments and perspectives. My favorite part is when guest presenters ask for the Youth Commission's input on issues they are facing or goals they hope to achieve.

During my time as a Commissioner, I have been proud to help lead the Community Engagement and Racial Equity Committee as Chair in identifying our priority areas of eliminating youth homelessness, improving youth health and wellness, and increasing youth civic engagement. I have witnessed firsthand the importance of using your voice to stand up for what you believe in.

Youth Commissions should be an essential component of all county governments as they ensure that all constituents are represented, even those that cannot yet vote. By instilling political efficacy early on in youths' lives, they are more likely to become involved in their community and democracy later in life. Youth Commissions also provide the perfect opportunity for community involvement and leadership for those who are interested and passionate about making a difference.



EZRAN ANASTAS, DISTRICT 7

I represent the 7th district of Milwaukee County. In District 7 there are 5 different parks containing various recreational opportunities, green spaces, and community gathering spots. One of the highlights of Milwaukee County are our various public 150+ parks. By serving on the Youth Commission, I have been able to gain insight into the work, not only by the Parks Department but also our Milwaukee County community, to maintain our parks. Being on the Commission I have been able to actively partake in and make decisions to keep our parks healthy by doing clean-ups and community events.

These efforts are only one branch of the outreach the Youth Commission has in the County, including but not limited to advancing racial equity and amplifying youth voices. By meeting with various organizations throughout the county, gaining insight, and discussing where the short comings lie, we are giving the bricks to pave the way to successful, realistic, and tangible change.

To quote one of the all-time greats, Bill Withers, "We all need someone to lean on." In this position I have put myself in the ultimate position a young person can have to impact their community. Taking active strides to maintain and improve what makes Milwaukee County, Milwaukee County has been my favorite part of working on the Commission.

JAYDEN MAHOLMES, DISTRICT 8



WHAT I'VE LEARNED, FAVORITE EXPERIENCES, AND BENEFITS OF THE COMMISSION

I've learned how seriously the youths' ideas are listened to and taken into consideration to make Milwaukee a better county.

Even though I'm just starting my term as a Commissioner, one of my favorite memories so far has been meeting other people around my age from different areas of Milwaukee as well as attending my first meeting of the committee on Governance, Finance, and Evaluation.

The Youth Commission has helped me develop leadership skills by challenging me to open up and put myself out there. It's also helping me reach my goal of becoming the best version of myself!

DANIEL DAMON, DISTRICT 10



I chose to serve on the Youth Commission to represent the views and needs of my community, more specifically highlighting the needs of people of color.

It is important to show representation and diversity throughout all aspects of government, and the Commission is doing that! Through community involvement or taking trips to the State Capitol in Madison, we are taking steps to better our community and ourselves!



GENEVIEVE (EVIE) SKIBICKI, DISTRICT 11

Hi, I am Evie Skibicki. I represent District 11 on the Milwaukee County Youth Commission. I love using my voice to make change. Being a youth in Milwaukee, it is exciting to get the opportunity to make change on issues that I truly care about while serving on the Youth Commission. Additionally, I love meeting other youth from all around Milwaukee County that all share a common interest in making our county a better place for the youth. Along with that, I have been able to connect with various organizations within the Milwaukee County that aid with issues that other youth and I are passionate about, like the Milwaukee County Parks and WaterMarks.

In the Youth Commission I have been passionate about working on issues such as Mental Health and Wellbeing, using the outdoors as a mental health management technique, and increasing the awareness about the Commission to other youth. In the future, I would love to focus more on STEM education opportunities and increase access to STEAM for underrepresented students throughout Milwaukee County. I believe STEM is for everyone!



BEN ELKO, DISTRICT 14



I am proud to represent District 14 on the Milwaukee County Youth Commission. This is my second year on the Commission. Serving on the Commission has taught me the processes of local government from Robert's Rules to writing and passing action items. My favorite part about the Youth Commission is its welcoming atmosphere and the ability to make mistakes and it being a group learning experience. One of my proudest moments with the commission is the passing by of our bylaws. With the support of experienced people like County Executive David Crowley, Chairwoman Marcelia Nicholson, and the great supervisors who help advise us Youth Commissioners, the Youth Commission has been able to thrive and operate smoothly. Being apart of the Milwaukee County Youth Commission truly has been a special privilege.

D'MARIO COCKFIELD, DISTRICT 13



Greetings! My name is D'Mario Cockfield, and I represent district 13 on the Milwaukee County Youth Commission. I have been a part of the Youth Commission since January 2023. I joined at a time of political dismay. I wanted to have a voice in my community, and the Youth Commission gave me that voice. While being on the Youth Commission, I've learned that diversity is crucial when making important policy decisions.

That same belief about diversity and inclusion is also shared by the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors. Since the Youth Commission's revival, the Board of Supervisors has given us a strong support system to rely on. Whether it is a simple resolution to amend term lengths or a resolution to amend a County Ordinance, the County Board gives great insight and advice on what it takes to efficiently become tomorrow's leaders.

The Youth Commission is such an amazing opportunity for youth in Milwaukee to not only be in the room where decision making and policies happen, but it is an opportunity for youth to sit at the table where those decisions are made as well.

SEAN LIBAL, DISTRICT 15



I've been a part of the Milwaukee County Youth Commission since it's been reinstated. I joined the Youth Commission because it was proposed to me by my mother, and I believed it was a great opportunity to help my community. I have learned the valuable skill of leadership and through the Youth Commission, and I've been able to improve my communication skills, my networking skills, and have learned many new things that I would never would've learned without the Commission. One of my favorite memories on the Youth Commission is when we traveled down to Madison for the WCA Legislative Conference and got to meet the Governor and or the aviation event that we had recently. My fellow Commission members have been very supportive in my dreams, and I've been very uplifting to every idea said. They are very productive and are willing to listen to you and help you work on things that you want to do. My time on the Youth Commission has benefited me greatly; as I said before, it has taught me leadership skills and social skills that are invaluable.

It is a very important for the Youth Commission to be a part of the community because it allows the youth to have a voice. Some advice I would give to people looking to join the Youth Commission is to be outgoing and take risks. That's in my opinion. That's the only way you learn through something like this, and everyone on the Commission is willing and helpful and will support you. There is no such thing as a wrong answer.

BRADLEY RHODE, DISTRICT 16



I have been a member of the Milwaukee County Youth Commission for less than a year, but it has already had a significant impact on me. I joined because the opportunity felt too valuable to pass up, and it has since offered me a unique perspective on Milwaukee that I would not have encountered otherwise. My involvement has allowed me to engage in meaningful volunteer work, which stands out as one of my most rewarding experiences. Through this role, I have gained a deeper understanding of the importance of youth engagement in civic matters, and I take pride in the positive contributions we have made to the community.

Youth commissions play an essential role in empowering the next generation, providing young people with a platform to influence decisions and shape the future of their communities. Youth voices bring fresh perspectives and innovative ideas, and it is vital that counties offer this space for their input. To any young person considering applying, my advice is to take the leap. Do not be hesitant; the experience is both enriching and impactful, and the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to your community is one you will not regret.



ZENIA SHAKER, DISTRICT 17

WHY I CHOSE TO SERVE, WHY YOUTH COMMISSIONS ARE HELPFUL FOR COUNTIES, AND COUNTY SUPPORT

I joined the Youth Commission because I wanted to have the opportunity to advocate for initiatives that support and empower younger people, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to live in an environment where they can reach their full potential.

Youth Commissions have proven to be helpful, as they allow teens to have a say in shaping the community we live in. It's a unique opportunity to work with local leaders, make a difference, and build leadership skills. Also, it's a great way to connect with other motivated teens.

If you're considering joining the Youth Commission, know that you will be fully supported every step of the way. The adult advisors are incredibly understanding and committed to keeping things organized, helping to make it easier when it comes to balancing school and these new responsibilities.



NATHAN ACOSTA, DISTRICT 18

Hello, I'm Nathan Acosta and I chose to be on the Youth Commission because I wanted to speak up for my peers and act on problems preventing our youth from having successful lives.

While I have been on the Youth Commission for two years, one of the things I'm proud of doing is getting engaged with the communities and making an impact. All this has been done with the help of Milwaukee County. With the vision to become the healthiest county in Wisconsin, we have been constantly supported by Milwaukee County and its residents.





Q&A

Please fill out our post-meeting survey