

MERCED YOUTH COUNCIL

General Guidelines



Background

The Merced City Council established a task force in 2013 to research and get youth input on whether or not a Youth Council was needed in Merced and if so what it should consist of. In 2014 Council officially established the Merced Youth Council at the recommendation of the Youth Task Force.

Mission

We, the Merced Youth Council, are here to represent the youth of Merced by communicating with the City Council in order to promote youth involvement, their general welfare and to improve the overall quality of life for the youth of Merced.

General Functions

- ❖ *Both social and policy oriented*
- ❖ *Communicate with City's youth to gauge needs and desires of youth*
- ❖ *Work with City Council to meet youth needs and wants*
- ❖ *Act as a liaison between the youth and the City Council*
- ❖ *Collaborate and/or engage with other community agencies, advisory bodies or youth groups in areas of mutual concern and benefit*
- ❖ *Identify concerns, interests and needs of youth and make recommendations to Parks and Recreation staff and City Council*

Membership

The Youth Council is made up of 7 members and may appoint non-voting junior high or high school members to help achieve their goals. Two members from each of the three Measure C districts and one member at large will be appointed. Applicants are interviewed by existing Youth Council members after completion of an application and will then be reviewed by staff.

Qualifications

- ❖ *13-19 years old (members may carry out their term if they age out during their term)*
- ❖ *City resident*

Length of Term

Members will be appointed to a two year term, with a maximum of two terms being served. After the first year of service, Youth Council members will be reviewed by the Youth Council to determine their suitability for continued service.

Meeting Schedule

Public Youth Council meetings will be held the second Thursday of every month in the City Council Chambers at 7PM. Fewer meetings may be held during the summer months if decided by the Youth Council. Additional closed planning sessions will be held when needed.

Attendance Policy

Youth Council members are expected to attend all meetings. In the case that a meeting has to be missed, Youth Council members should give at least 24hrs notice to staff that he/she will not be in attendance. Members are allowed two unexcused absences from public and planning meetings per year before being terminated.

Time Involved

Youth Council members should expect to devote a minimum of 8 hours per month on Council related activities. Additional time may be required for special events.

Communication

Communication with other Youth Council members and staff is extremely important to the success of the Council. Youth Council members are expected to communicate regularly with regards to meetings, events and other Council activities. Members are expected to respond to emails or texts from City staff in a timely manner. Failure to communicate regularly with staff will be grounds for termination from Council.

Positions

When a Youth Council member is appointed and accepts a positions (Secretary, Historian, Chairperson, Treasurer, Vice Chairperson, Public Coordinator, Sergeant at Arms Task Manager) he/she accepts responsibility of understanding and fulfilling the roles and duties of that position. At any time if members are unable to carry out their duties, they are responsible for finding a temporary replacement within the Youth Council.

Parent/Member Agreement

Council members and their parent or guardian will review and sign a Parent/Member Agreement. The purpose of this agreement is to ensure that the Youth Council member and his or her parent fully understand and accept the responsibility placed upon she or he by being a part of the Council.

Mandatory Activities

There will be mandatory activities, trainings, excursions and trips that Youth Council members will be expected to attend. If members have more than two unexcused absences, or are regularly tardy for these events, they can be dismissed from the Youth Council.

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Positions and Duties



CHAIRPERSON

- ❖ Spokesperson for the group
- ❖ Reports future plans and ideas to the City Council
- ❖ Appoints committees when necessary to research issues
- ❖ Provides leadership and direction
- ❖ The last approval or tie breaker of the group
- ❖ Attends as many of the committee meetings as possible

VICE CHAIRPERSON

- ❖ Assumes the duties of the Chairperson during the Chairperson's absence
- ❖ May serve in a variety of positions
- ❖ Works closely with the Chairperson

SECRETARY

- ❖ Records and maintains the minutes of all Youth Council meetings
- ❖ Maintains a roster of officers and other board members with current address, email, and telephone information
- ❖ Maintains complete and up to date copies of organizational documents
- ❖ Maintains all membership records
- ❖ Records all member attendance
- ❖ Sends correspondence and thank you letters

TREASURER

- ❖ Oversees finances
- ❖ Assists in preparing budget for future projects
- ❖ Keeps records up to date
- ❖ Always obtains a receipt for any expenditures

SEARGEANT AT ARMS, TASK MANAGER

- ❖ Keeps the group on task
- ❖ Maintains order in the meetings

HISTORIAN

- ❖ Keep record or history of achievement and/or activities
- ❖ Take pictures as a record keeping for future references

PUBLIC COORDINATOR

- ❖ Publicizes activities through email, social media, newspaper, etc.
- ❖ Develops and maintains emails, websites, and social media for the Youth Council

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Parent/Member Agreement



PURPOSE

The purpose of this agreement is to establish criteria for members of the Merced Youth Council. This agreement will assist members and their parents in understanding acceptable standards of behavior in order to remain in good standing within the Council.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance at Youth Council meetings is mandatory. It is a major part of being a Youth Council member.

- ❖ The Youth Council currently meets the second Thursday of each month at 7PM., unless otherwise stated. The meetings are one of the avenues used to conduct official Youth Council business and receive and disseminate other information to the members of the Council. Closed sessions are held prior to the public meeting at 6 PM. Special meetings may be called when necessary.
 - More than 2 unexcused absences is grounds for recommendation that a member be removed from the Youth Council.
- ❖ Youth Council members shall notify staff if he/she is unable to attend a required meeting, special meeting or assigned Youth Council event, at least, when possible, 24 hours in advance. If a 24-hour notice is not possible, then notification should be done as soon as possible. Failure to contact anyone regarding an absence may be grounds for an Unexcused Absence.

CONDUCT

Youth Council members must conduct themselves in a respectful, professional and appropriate manner at all times and will treat fellow members with respect at all times.

- ❖ Use of profanity or offensive expressions, as well as fighting and verbal confrontations are strictly prohibited.
- ❖ No Youth Council member shall display affection beyond general or common courtesy while acting in the capacity of a Youth Council member.
- ❖ When at City Hall or other city facilities for conducting business, Youth Council members shall exhibit professional behavior.
- ❖ Youth Council members shall address city personnel appropriately (Mayor Thurston, Councilman Pedrozo, Ms. Segura, etc.), being courteous and respectful at all times.

- ❖ During meetings cell phones and computers will be turned off except for official business unless given permission by staff.

PERSONAL GROOMING

Youth Council members shall maintain excellent grooming standards at all times.

- ❖ Each Council member shall wear his or her Youth Council shirt at meetings and other functions in the community when they are representing the Council.
- ❖ Whatever style of clothing Youth Council members wear, it should be clean, pressed and presentable.
- ❖ Youth Council members must dress appropriately for the occasion. When attending or making presentations at City Council meetings, shorts, pants with holes, beach sandals, tank tops, etc. would not be appropriate attire and should not be worn by Youth Council members.

DUTIES

It is the responsibility of each Youth Council member to understand and perform his/her charge of duty as a Youth Council member.

- ❖ Each Youth Council member shall familiarize him/herself with the Youth Council's purpose, current goals and objectives and any other city information (i.e., resolutions, ordinances, charter).
- ❖ Each Youth Council member shall make an effort to become familiar with parliamentary procedures and Robert's Rules of Order. Periodic training will be provided.
- ❖ When assigned to a sub-committee, it shall be the responsibility of each Youth Council member to follow-up on his/her assignments and take an active part in carrying out the goals of the sub-committee.
- ❖ It is the duty of each Youth Council member to participate in all Youth Council activities and events outside of Youth Council meetings.
- ❖ Youth Council members will respond to communications with City staff and fellow Youth Council members' business communications in a timely manner. Repeated failure to communicate can be grounds for termination from the Youth Council.

TRAVEL

Youth Council members, when privileged to travel on behalf of the City, shall conduct themselves in a respectful, professional, and appropriate manner.

All travel shall be for the purpose of conducting City/Youth Council business.

- ❖ When traveling as a representative for the City of Merced’s Youth Council, each member must abide by all City standards and must conduct themselves per guidelines as here stated.
 - When there is overnight travel, each Youth Council member is expected to respect all hotel property and premises. No Youth Council member shall deface, vandalize or remove any hotel items or property.
 - Each Youth Council member shall keep assigned rooms throughout the travel stay unless prior approval is received from the adult supervisor.
 - No Youth Council member shall leave the premises without prior knowledge and approval from the adult supervisor.
 - Curfews are enforced during travel. Youth Council members generally must be in their assigned rooms by 10:00 p.m. The adult supervisor has the authority to extend or shorten that curfew hour as circumstances allow.
 - These guidelines apply to *all* Youth Council members regardless of age while traveling as a representative of the City of Merced’s Youth Council.
 - Any abuse of these travel guidelines may result in suspension from travel for one year and/or other appropriate action.

- ❖ All Youth Council members are required to submit a parent permission slip prior to any and all travel out of the City.

TRANSPORTATION

While effort will be made to provide transportation for various Youth Council events, it is the responsibility of each Council member to coordinate transportation to and from Youth Council meetings, special events and other activities.

- ❖ It is the personal responsibility of the Youth Council member to secure all appropriate and legal driving requirements (i.e., driver’s license, insurance).
- ❖ Each Youth Council member shall make appropriate arrangement to be picked up in a reasonable amount of time after any Youth Council activity.

CONSEQUENCES

- ❖ Any disregard of these guidelines may result in a recommendation from staff and/or other Youth Council members that said violator be removed as a Youth Council member.
- ❖ Any Youth Council member who has two or more unexcused absences or who fails to participate and/or attend special events without prior approval, may result in a recommendation that said Council member be removed from the Youth Council.

AMENDMENTS

Additions or deletions may be made to these guidelines as warranted.

I certify that we have read the above guidelines and consequences regarding my son/daughter's performance as a member of the City of Merced Youth Council.

_____ Date: _____
Parent/Guardian Signature

I certify that we have read the above guidelines and consequences regarding my performance as a member of the City of Merced Youth Council.

_____ Date: _____
Council Member Signature