

Mayor's Youth Commission- Proposed Ordinance Changes

Context

The Mayor's Youth Commission (MYC) serves the City and County of Denver as the primary advisory board for youth. The commission consists of high school students who live and/or attend school in Denver who provide valuable insight, perspectives, and recommendations on the decisions the City makes that impact youth. For decades, the MYC has provided youth with opportunities to engage in the City and have their voices heard and learn firsthand how the City can propel change for Denver's youth. At the same time, the City benefits from the expertise of young people, gaining real understanding of the needs faced by the commissioners and their peers. As the City and County of Denver moves towards designation as a UNICEF Child Friendly City, it is imperative that the Mayor's Youth Commission truly represents the diversity of the City so that the policy and program recommendations that come from this group are speaking to the needs of all Denver youth. These potential ordinance changes are aimed at making a more equitable and impactful commission by providing structural support to ensure every eligible young Denverite has the ability to participate and has the space to be a partner in the work to make Denver the best place to grow up.

Proposed Changes

Proposed Change	Purpose
Increase the number of youth commissioners from 20 to 30.	• More youth able to participate • Support more work across the City and County of Denver • Allow for greater diversity among commissioners
Include specific appointment criteria to ensure geographic diversity of youth commissioners	• Require at least two (2) youth from each Council District • Support deeper connections with members of City Council • Support more localized outreach to students
Clarify the age of eligibility to be ages 14-18 at the time of appointment	• Allow youth to serve full terms rather than graduation ending term • Capture youth transitioning from K-12 system to postsecondary education and workforce
Clarify the role of the MYC as an advisory board beyond OCA	• Situate MYC as a hub for youth participation in the City • Situates OCA to facilitate positive youth engagement among City partners
Remove the prohibition on compensation for youth commissioners	• Removes a barrier to participation for many youth • Supports more diversity on the commission

Shorten the term length from 3 years to 2 years	• Easier commitment for students to make • Provides opportunity for students to be reappointed and carry work over several years
Restructure vacant and expiring terms	• Allows youth to serve full terms when appointed rather than serving remainder of vacated term • Lessens administrative burden for OCA and MO
Remove the role of “chairperson”	• Removal allows for more flexibility in program design

Additional Information

For additional questions or to request a briefing on the proposed changes, please contact Rhett Gutierrez with OCA at ricardo.gutierrez@denvergov.org or 720-331-3616.