

Hampton's Model of Youth Civic Engagement



Three key pathways create a system that increases a community's social capital. This approach — investing in youth — offers countless benefits. It taps their energy and ideas, creates a youth focus in public decision-making, ensures more inclusive results, trains them for increasingly responsible and meaningful positions, creates productive citizens and cultivates pro-social attitudes in the next generation of taxpayers and policy-makers. Most important, it builds a better community.

For more information, contact:

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To obtain additional pamphlets in this series covering more specific topics of Youth Civic Engagement and Creating a Youth-Friendly City, email foryouth@hampton.gov.



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Youth as Advisors, Youth with Influence



Photography by Lisa M. Zunzanyika
Additional photos courtesy of Alternatives, Inc. and City of Hampton

YOUNG VOICES, NEW VISIONS:
**The Power of Youth
to Improve Communities**

**A series based on Hampton, Virginia's
model of Youth Civic Engagement**

Youth as Advisors, Youth with Influence

The Youth Civic Engagement pathway of “Influence” gives youth a voice, a chance to serve in informal and formal advisory roles. Young people bring a fresh perspective and enthusiasm. Including them in decision-making results in better, more representative decisions.

● SHORT-TERM ROLES

Speakouts — a youth-friendly version of public hearings on topics teens care about

Summits — organized events designed to raise and deliberate key youth issues

Planning charettes — meetings that elicit creative input into designs of facilities and public spaces

● LONG-TERM ROLES

Advisory groups — youth-only or youth-adult groups that debate policy or proposals and form recommendations for a larger neighborhood, school or governmental body

Advocacy — youth-led activism around social issues



SOME HAMPTON OPPORTUNITIES

- The Parks and Recreation Department engages youth to help design new parks and programs. Young people have successfully lobbied for a multi-purpose facility for high school-aged youth.
- The Neighborhood Office includes youth recommendations when developing community plans. A youth advisory board keeps the adult Neighborhood Commission current on teen concerns.
- Partnerships between teens and police officers led to reductions in youth-related crime when the two parties learned to trust and share information with one another.
- The Superintendent of Schools and all secondary principals have advisory groups to help craft policies and gather student input before important decisions are made.
- With each iteration of the city's Community Plan, a group of teens works as advisors for the entire process.
- Young people regularly speak to City Council and the School Board to present a youth perspective on budget and programming, and the chair of the Youth Commission presents an annual State of the Youth report to the city.