

Youth To The Table

A Guide to Engaging Youth Constituents

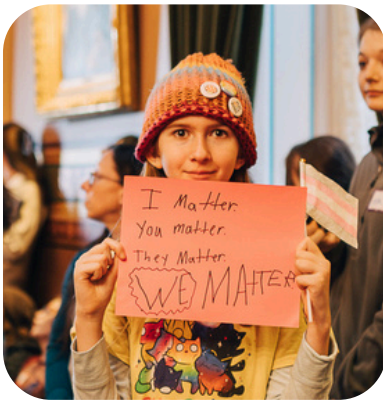


Youth are not involved in most decisions made about them – from their personal lives to policies and laws that govern their lived experiences.

LGBTQ+ youth deserve a seat at the table. It is critical that Vermont's decision makers hear directly from young constituents to understand their unique perspectives and build a better future together!

"When it comes to school environment, and communities, priorities, and decisions being made that affect you, you don't need a degree to tell you what is important, you need your own experience, you need to have lived it."

– Students Isa Harrington and Libby Gabel



"Being the change in my own school was really exciting. I worked with our schools' gender equality school association and we wrote a letter to our health teacher to change the sex ed curriculum to be more inclusive, and they DID IT! They added a bunch of LGBTQ+ content! That felt amazing." – Anonymous Youth

"[Youth] are the ones experiencing the everyday effects that the decisions around education create and no one knows better what the student body needs than those who are a part of it."

– Students Isa Harrington and Libby Gabel





Strategies to Bring Youth to the Table

1. Meet in person with youth.

- ☐ Visit each school in your legislative district.
- ☐ Connect with youth in community spaces like teen centers, community centers, and libraries.
- ☐ Offer frequent, youth-centered town-hall opportunities to build relationships with youth over time.

2. Use surveys.

- ☐ Develop youth-focused surveys to get testimony from youth on legislation. Include anonymous options.

3. Assess impact.

- ☐ Require youth impact statements on legislation directly impacting youth. This includes bills about education systems, adoption, foster care, housing, immigration, healthcare, and more.

4. Practice transparency and keep records.

- ☐ Keep and publicize a record of how youth voice has shaped legislation.
- ☐ Include records of when and why youth recommendations aren't implemented.
- ☐ Help youth understand the legislative process by using plain language and clear instructions on how to provide testimony.

Everyone is the expert of their own life, including youth.

When youth have a seat at the table, we can build a Vermont where all people can live their life authentically and with dignity.