

# Aurora Youth Council Application

The Aurora Youth Council is a group of active Aurora teens who have an interest in local issues and want to share their ideas with city government representatives, to build community among Aurora youth through council sponsored projects and want to use their youth council experience for their respective personal and professional development.

In order to apply for the Aurora Youth Council, you must meet the following criteria:

\*Live in the city of Aurora

\*Be of high school age (9th through 12th grades)

\*Attend either of the following high schools: West Aurora, East Aurora, Metea Valley, Waubensee Valley, Illinois Science and Math Academy or an Aurora based private school.

Email address \*

████████████████████

Name \*

First and last name

Katherine Lopez

Age \*

██

Date of Birth \*

MM DD YYYY

██ / ██ / ████

Home Address \*

[REDACTED]

Zip Code \*

[REDACTED]

Home Phone

[REDACTED]

Mobile Phone Number \*

[REDACTED]

High School \*

- West Aurora
- East Aurora
- Metea Valley
- Waubonsee Valley
- Illinois Math and Science Academy
- Option 6
- Other: .....

## Aldermanic District

If you do not know your Aldermanic District, please leave blank.

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### Why do you want to join the Aurora Youth Council? \*

One of the best ways to solve issues is to provide institutional support. By being part of the Aurora Youth Council, I would be able to both provide support within my own community and communicate with my City Leadership to advocate for the community issues that need their support. Growing up in both East and West Aurora, I have first hand experience with the differences in community between the two, despite being part of the same town. In my experience, the West side of Aurora tends to have more wealthier and privileged people which translates to the educational disparities of youth across Aurora. Thus, programs and events held by the City of Aurora are needed to be held in order to provide solutions to the problems. However, there is a disconnect between adults and students because adults do not have the first hand experience as to what students are feeling. So, I want to offer my knowledge as insight to fill in the gaps created by the disconnect between adults and youth. Additionally, the opportunity to offer insight as to what the prevalent problems for youth are is important to me because there are several issues that I want to tackle- recognition and support for mental health, cultural awareness of differing identities whether it be ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc., and availability of programs that dismantle disparities created because of economical struggles. In the past three years, three IMSA alumni have taken their own lives. Yet, no one talks about the day-to-day struggles these students faced, such as difficulties finding motivation and a decrease in social activity. Identities are the number one factor in how people interact with others, and policies are constantly trying to be passed to be more accepting of differing identities. I want to take action in helping create discussions and events where something can be done about these issues because being a bystander will never resolve anything.

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Name one issue you care deeply about. \*

As a first generation woman, social justice is something that resonates deeply with me. So, I want to tackle social justice issues such as poverty and access to education. I constantly find blatant disparities between myself and others around me. My parents have given me the best opportunities they could, but that does not change the fact that I am Mexican, a female, bilingual, and discriminated against because of it. A person of color can achieve higher education, but will find themselves ostracized because they are one of a few colored students. For me, I am one of less than 20 students of color in a class of more than 200 students at IMSA. I have heard that the only reason I got accepted was to “fill a quota” and that is a situation that lots of colored people face as they move into higher education. Often, the disparity of economical and educational resources available, such as tutors and afterschool programs geared to helping students understand material, causes less privileged students to fall short of their potential because they cannot afford such programs. Instead, these students will often have to work to help their family and as a result, do not test as well because their focus is split between school and providing financial support for their family. The added stress of finance means that they cannot afford tutors or special classes, such as those geared towards helping students achieve better scores on standardized tests, and often will not attend expensive universities that offer the best education. Thus, wealth and privilege often dictates the differences in success for people, which needs to be changed by implementing events that help combat these differences, such as providing opportunities for people that normally do not have them. For example, free SAT programs could be given to students who struggle financially. Additionally, tutoring programs given by volunteers could be offered as an after school program. The earliest possible would be best because differences in educational opportunities starts young and leads into disparities as people grow older. Thus, by creating these programs for people when they are young, their education will not suffer as many gaps.

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How did you hear about the Aurora Youth Council \*

- School
- Newspaper
- Social Media
- Flyer
- Friend
- Other: E-mail .....

Which social media sites do you use? \*

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Snapchat
- LinkedIn
- Other: .....

Submit your resume to [InnovateAurora@aurora-il.org](mailto:InnovateAurora@aurora-il.org) with Aurora Youth Council in the Subject Line. Applications are due September 30, 2017.



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