



The City of Palatka Youth Ambassador Program

INTRODUCTION

The City of Palatka Youth Ambassador Program (PYA) is a diverse group of students who reside in the City of Palatka. Students will have the opportunity to partner with the offices of the Mayor, City Commissioners, City Manager, City Clerk, and directors of the various City departments.

The goal of the PYA Program is to foster open and positive communication between city government and the youth of our community. Students serve as liaisons and discuss youth-related issues that impact the school and community, while learning about municipal government. As such, the Youth Ambassadors will be tasked with developing and implementing education and awareness programs designed to create safer communities. Ideally, the Youth Ambassadors will utilize a variety of methods to focus on topics that affect young people today such as drug and gang education, anti-bullying campaigns, underage drinking and driving, and gun violence. In addition, the students will attend city commission meetings, shadow city departments, volunteer at city events, and assist with community service projects to benefit other organizations.

The group may attend events such as the annual State League of Cities Conference as Youth Delegates and State Legislative session as representatives of the City of Palatka.

The PYA Program will help bridge the gap between youth and city government. In addition, the Youth Ambassadors will be offered insight and guidance from city leaders should they choose to follow a career path in the field of public service.

VISION

To encourage active citizenship and community involvement from the public service leaders of tomorrow.

MISSION

- To create safer communities through the development and implementation of education and awareness programs surrounding issues affecting today's youth
- To provide a path of honest, meaningful, and reciprocal communication between the caring youth of the City of Palatka and the City's leaders
- To provide youth with an understanding of the inner-workings of municipal government
- To cultivate a sense of civic responsibility and public service
- To provide a safe and constructive learning environment
- To encourage and develop effective leadership skills

- To provide real world opportunities for active community service in the City of Palatka
- To acknowledge the civic involvement and contributions of the youth of the City of Palatka
- To learn and seek feedback from our youth regarding contemporary issues affecting the positive development of the youth of the City of Palatka

ORGANIZATION

- The PYA Program will be comprised of 9 students who reside in the City of Palatka
- Students must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0 and maintain satisfactory conduct in school to participate.
 - It is the Student's Principal's responsibility to advise the City of any disqualification of students
- Students participating in the program shall be between 9th and 12th grade. Students are encouraged to apply in the summer after 8th grade.
- Students should aspire to assist the City in its growth and desire to become a more dynamic and innovative City.
- Students must be involved in research projects and community service initiatives.
- Students should be eager to represent their peers to the Mayor, City Commission, City Manager, City Clerk, and other City leaders.
- The initial program shall be for 2 school years, however the program may be extended after the first 2 years.

MEMBER SELECTION

- Applications will be sent to each High School Principal and Putnam County School District leaders.
 - A letter of recommendation from a school administrator, guidance counsellor, or other faculty member must accompany the student's completed application.
- The finalists will be interviewed by a Commissioner, City's HR Director and City Clerk
- Students and parents/guardians must sign travel, medical and photograph authorization forms.
- If more than 9 students apply, the remaining students will be able to attend the Youth Ambassador functions as "general body members".

YOUTH AMBASSADOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Attend orientation
- Attend two (2) City Commission meetings per calendar year
- Attend PYA group meetings
- The City will provide 1 polo shirt and 1 sweater/blazer with insignia for the program to each Student, which the Student must wear at all City Commission meetings and PYA functions and activities.
- Palatka Youth Ambassadors will be tasked with developing and implementing education and awareness programs designed to create safer communities
- Participate in research projects, community service programs, sub-committees, and other city/community events and/or meetings upon request

- At all events PYAs must wear the Youth Ambassador Program's approved insignia
- Prepare reports and make presentations to the Mayor and City Staff on PYA's activities
- Hold public youth meetings to gather input from constituents
- Coordinate with local and national youth organizations as necessary
- Serve as a role model to other youth
- Educate other youth on municipal government
- Show proper respect and exhibit orderly conduct at all meetings and events
- Establish goals, work plans, and budgets to address youth concerns
- Identify issues affecting the City of Palatka
- Advise the Mayor, Commission, and other City leaders on policy issues related to youth concerns
- Provide resources for youth-oriented programs and projects
- Promote public awareness of the strengths and abilities of the City's youth
- Connect teens to services
- Assist the City with the planning of youth activities
- Participate in Florida League of Cities Annual Conference and activities
- Participate in the City's annual "Government week" events

CURRICULUM

- City history, organizational structure, and administration processes
- Municipal policy and budget development
- Public/Private partnerships
- Leadership and productivity improvement
- Municipal Charter and Code of Ordinances
- Leadership development
- Public speaking
- Resume building
- Financial literacy
- City functionality
- Effective Communication

ACTIVITIES

- PYAs will utilize a variety of methods to focus on topics that affect young people today such as drug and gang education, anti-bullying campaigns, underage drinking and driving, and gun violence.
- Create a public service announcement to coincide with Red Ribbon Week which is an alcohol, tobacco and other drug and violence prevention awareness campaign observed annually in October each year in the United States.
- Leadership activities which will provide hands-on leadership development and training, with special emphasis on highlighting the inner workings of municipal government.
- Annual Research Project focusing on a relevant topic, exploring relevant conceptual research and policy issues.
- “Inside Government” facilities tours and presentations – PYAs will tour various City departments and facilities, and receive information about their functions and operations.
- Service events – PYAs will participate in various events, held by the City and community organizations, which provide assistance and give back to the community (i.e. Christmas festival, ribbon cuttings, parades, speeches/ceremonies, etc.).
- Mandatory attendance at select City Commission Meetings
- “Business Leaders Partnership/Networking Mixer” – A meeting where City officials and business leaders can meet to relate youth concerns, learn about the relationship between the City and its businesses, and exchange community betterment ideas.
- FLC Youth Video Competition or any other FLC special activities
- Palatka Youth Ambassadors shall be given preference for the City’s Summer paid internships