# **United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP) 2025-2026 USSYP - Massachusetts Eligibility and Application Guidelines**

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8. **Key Details:** The United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP) Washington Week will be held March 7-14, 2026. Two students from each state will be selected to attend the program and each will receive a $10,000 undergraduate college scholarship. Students may qualify to apply through leadership positions they currently hold per the USSYP official criteria for the current 2025-2026 academic year. All student leadership qualifying positions are subject to the judgement of DESE and will be verified and confirmed.
9. **Background:** The United States Senate Youth Program was created by Senate Resolution 324 in 1962 to nurture high school students’ interests in pursuing careers in public service. Its mission is to provide outstanding students with an in-depth view of the Senate and federal government “to increase young Americans’ understanding of the interrelationship of the three branches of government, the caliber and responsibilities of federally elected and appointed officials, and the vital importance of democratic decision making not only for America but for people around the world” ([United States Senate Youth Program](https://ussenateyouth.org/about_history/)). Since its inception, the Hearst Foundations have fully funded and administered the program with unanimous sponsorship from the Senate; no government funds are utilized.
10. **Eligibility Requirements:** To be considered for one of the two Massachusetts delegate positions, a student applicant must meet ***all*** of the following requirements:
* Is a high school junior or senior enrolled for the entire academic year (through spring 2026) in a Massachusetts high school. Home-schooled students must be approved by DESE to apply; please email Juin Liu: Yi-Juin.Liu@mass.gov.
* Lives in Massachusetts for the entire academic year (2025-2026); at least one of the parents/legal guardians must currently reside in Massachusetts.
* Serves in a qualified elected or appointed leadership position in which they are actively representing a constituency in organizations related to student government, education, public affairs, and/or community service.
* Can attend Washington Week (March 7-14, 2026) in its entirety, including fully block both arrival and departure travel days (March 7 and March 14, respectively).
* Has not been a delegate to Washington Week or received a USSYP scholarship.
* Is a U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident at the time of application.

**Qualifying leadership posts (see eligibility requirement #5 above) include, but are not limited to:**

* Student body president, vice president, secretary, or treasurer
* Class president, vice president, secretary, or treasurer
* Student Council representative
* A National Honor Society Officer (including discipline-based Honor Societies such as the National English and Social Studies Honor Societies that include service components)
* Student representative elected or appointed (by a panel, commission or board) to a local, state, regional, or national-level civic or educational organization approved by DESE, where the student holds a high-level year-round leadership position representing a constituency and/or providing service to others
* Commander or Squadron Leader of a JROTC

***NOTE:*** *Member or officer positions in academic clubs, educational competition programs/conferences or organizations designed primarily for the student’s development and enrichment do not qualify a student for USSYP.* ***Positions listed below are NOT considered “qualifying leadership posts:”***

* *Attendance or officer position at Boys/Girls Nation or State, or Junior State conferences*
* *Member of a National Honor Society*
* *Member or leader of the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, or a sports team*
* *An internship or job, or a founder or chairperson of a self-created group*
* *A participant, captain, or officer in Mock Trial, Debate Team, Model UN, or other academic club, mock legislature, conference or competition where the primary engagement is for individual educational benefit*
1. **Application Timeline for the 2025-2026 School Year**
* **September 5, 2025:** Program information, application, and instructions available
* **October 3, 2025:** **Deadline for completed applications to be sent via email to**:
	+ DESE: Achievement@mass.gov
	+ Applications must be received by 9:00 PM on October 3 in order to be considered
	+ Incomplete applications will not be considered
	+ See details below for the submission process
* **By October 24, 2025:** Finalists will be notified of advancement to the interview round
* **November 2025:** Reference checks and interviews will be conducted to inform the selection of two (2) primary delegates and two (2) alternate delegates
* **By the end of January 2026:** Two (2) primary delegates and two (2) alternate delegates will be notified and announced
* **March** **14-16, 2026:** Washington Week
1. **Application Submission Process**
2. Student applicants ask their school administrator and qualifying organization advisor or counselor to complete and sign the *2025-2026 USSYP Administrator Form* and send it to the student. Multiple forms may be submitted if the organization advisor is not a school employee (i.e., one form with the school administrator’s information and signature and one form with the non-school based advisor’s information and signature).
3. Student completes and signs the *2025-2026 USSYP Student Application Form – Massachusetts*, including obtaining parent/legal guardian signature(s) and writing two essays.
4. Student completes and signs *2025-2026 USSYP Statement Confirming Truth and Accuracy of Application Materials.*
5. Student ensures that all application materials are completed in their entirety with signatures as required.
6. Student emails the documents below (bullets *b* through *e*) to: Achievement@mass.gov
	1. Format of email:
		1. **Subject of the email:** 2025-2026 USSYP Application for [Student’s First Initial and Last Name; name of SCHOOL/DISTRICT] – for example: *2025-2026 USSYP Application for Y.Liu; Lewis HS/Lewisville PS*
		2. **Must copy the school administrator** on the submission email
		3. Title each of the attached documents (b through e) with the name of the document and the student's first initial and last name – for example: *2025-2026 USSYP Student Application Form - Y.Liu*
	2. *2025-2026 USSYP Student Application Form – Massachusetts*, including:
		1. Parent/legal guardian signature(s)
		2. Student signature attesting to the authenticity and originality of their submitted essay
		3. Two (2) essays
	3. *2025-2026 USSYP School Administrator Form(s)*, including required school leader and advisor signatures
	4. *2025-2026 USSYP Statement Confirming Truth and Accuracy of Application Materials*
	5. At least one (1) signed letter of support (with printed name and contact information for reference check) - summarizing the relationship to the student applicant, how long the person has known the student and in what capacity, and attesting to the student applicant’s character, leadership qualities, and personal attributes – from one of the following:
		1. School administrator
		2. Advisor to the relevant student organization or student body entity to which the student is appointed/elected
		3. Non-familial adult or community leader, mentor, or advisor
7. [**2025-2026 Massachusetts Application Materials**](https://www.doe.mass.edu/scholarships/senate/default.html)
* 2025-2026 USSYP Application Checklist
* 2025-2026 USSYP Student Application Form - Massachusetts
* 2025-2026 USSYP School Administrator Form
* 2025-2026 USSYP Statement Confirming Truth and Accuracy of Application Materials
1. **Additional USSYP Information:**
* For questions: Juin Liu, Yi-Juin.Liu@mass.gov
* Information available from The Hearst Foundations
	+ [2026-USSYP-Official-Brochure.pdf](https://ussenateyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/2026-USSYP-Official-Brochure.pdf)
	+ United States Senate Youth Program: <https://ussenateyouth.org/>