# DESE logoUSSYP logo2025-2026 United States Senate Youth Program

**Student Application Form - Massachusetts**

## SCHOOL INFORMATION

Public high school Independent (e.g., private high school) Other (please specify):

Click or tap here to enter text.

Name of school district: Click or tap here to enter text.

Name of high school: Click or tap here to enter text.

School phone: Click or tap here to enter text.

School’s mailing address: Click or tap here to enter text.

Principal’s name, email, and phone: Click or tap here to enter text.

***Note: Per program requirements, students must be attending high school for the entire school year in the state (Massachusetts) where at least one parent/legal guardian currently resides. If the student is*** [***unaccompanied***](https://nche.ed.gov/supporting-the-education-of-unaccompanied-students-experiencing-homelessness-2/) ***or*** [***emancipated***](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-law-about-emancipation-of-minors#massachusetts-laws)***, please contact Juin Liu (***[***Yi-Juin.Liu@mass.gov***](mailto:Yi-Juin.Liu@mass.gov)***). Home-schooled students must be approved by DESE to apply; please email Juin Liu with your request.***

## 2a. STUDENT APPLICANT INFORMATION

Student’s first and last name (if different from legal name): Click or tap here to enter text.

Student’s pronouns (optional): Click or tap here to enter text.

Student’s legal full name: Click or tap here to enter text.

Student’s home address: Click or tap here to enter text.

Student’s mailing address (if different from above): Click or tap here to enter text.

Email: Click or tap here to enter text.

Preferred phone number: Click or tap here to enter text.

Cell phone number (if applicable): Click or tap here to enter text.

Alternate phone number: Click or tap here to enter text.

Birthdate: Click or tap here to enter text.

Age: Click or tap here to enter text.

Grade: Click or tap here to enter text.

Gender: Click or tap here to enter text.

## *Note: Applicants must be U.S. citizens or have legal permanent residency at the time of application.*

YES, I am a U.S. citizen or a legal permanent resident in possession of my official Green Card at the time of this application.

## 2b. Mark the ELECTED/APPOINTED office you now hold for the entire 2025-2026 school year in one of the following student government, civic, or educational organizations.

Student Body President Class President

Student Body Vice President Class Vice President

Student Body Secretary Class Secretary

Student Body Treasurer Class Treasurer

Student Council Representative

National Honor Society Officer, including discipline-based Honor Societies

Commander or Squadron Leader of JROTC

Student representative elected or appointed (appointed by a panel, commission or board) to a local, district, regional or state-level civic, service and/or educational organization, where the student holds a high-level, year-round leadership position representing a constituency and/or providing service to others. Such positions will be subject to approval by DESE. Provide additional details below:

Name of position: Click or tap here to enter text.

Name of organization: Click or tap here to enter text.

What do you do to serve your community and support your constituency in this position:

Click or tap here to enter text.

## *The positions listed below DO NOT qualify the student for the program:*

* *Attendance or officer position at Boys/Girls Nation or State, or Junior State conferences*
* *General member of a National Honor Society (serving as an elected officer is acceptable)*
* *Member or leader of the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts or a sports team (Commander or Squadron Leader of JROTC WILL qualify)*
* *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.*

## 2c. Other leadership activities and community engagement

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Additional leadership activities** | **Roles and Responsibilities** | **Timeframe** | **Frequency of Participation**  **(e.g., 2xs/week, 1x/year)** |
| Past involvement in student government/leadership | Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Additional school leadership activities and achievements | Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Relevant leadership activities and achievements in the community outside of school | Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Other relevant community service engagement outside of school | Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. |

## 3a. PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN INFORMATION (at least one parent/guardian is required to reside in Massachusetts)

Parent/Legal Guardian 1 full name with prefix. Phone, email, and home/mailing address:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Parent/Legal Guardian 2 full name with prefix. Phone, email, and home/mailing address:

Click or tap here to enter text.

## 3b.Parent/legal guardian confirmation and signature

Parents or guardians must sign below to approve of you going to Washington, D.C., **(March 7 – 14, 2026)** to attend the United States Senate Youth Program under the conditions set forth in the rules and regulations of the USSYP program brochure you’ll find by clicking [2026 USSYP Brochure](https://ussenateyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/2026-USSYP-Official-Brochure.pdf).

**REQUIRED Parent/legal guardian confirmation (check the box below)**

As the parent/legal guardian, I understand that in order for my child to serve as a Massachusetts delegate at Washington Week, my child is required to attend the entire week of events. I approve of my child’s participation in the delegate selection process, and if chosen, their participation in Washington Week to take place March 7-14, 2026.

**REQUIRED Parent/legal guardian signature(s):**

1st Parent's/Guardian's name: Click or tap here to enter text.

1st Parent's/Guardian's signature and date (REQUIRED): Click or tap here to enter text.

Sole guardian yes/no? Click or tap here to enter text.

2nd Parent's/Guardian's name: Click or tap here to enter text.

2nd Parent's/Guardian's signature and date: Click or tap here to enter text.

***NOTE: If the student is*** [***unaccompanied***](https://nche.ed.gov/supporting-the-education-of-unaccompanied-students-experiencing-homelessness-2/) ***or*** [***emancipated***](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-law-about-emancipation-of-minors#massachusetts-laws)***, please contact Juin Liu (***[***Yi-Juin.Liu@mass.gov***](mailto:Yi-Juin.Liu@mass.gov)***).***

## 4. Student Essays

In addition to completing the application and obtaining parent/legal guardian signature(s), each applicant must submit two (2) essays on the topics listed below – one topic (*Essay 1*) is required; the other topic must be one of the four options provided under *Essay 2*. Essays will be judged on original content, use of primary sources and/or data to support the assertions, and writing conventions, ***including citation of sources***. Include your name and school in the header of the document.

Each essay should not exceed 800 words, single- or double-spaced, using 12-point size font (Arial, Calibri, Aptos, or Times New Roman).

**NOTE: This work must be your original content**

Essays allow us to hear your voice and get to know your character, strengths, and qualities that shape who you are as a student leader and as an individual. As a result, your responses to the essay prompts must be your original work with your unique perspectives and voice.

**Note regarding use of artificial intelligence (AI):**

AI ***cannot*** be used to:

* Copy/paste from an AI generator (or any text or work from another author)
* Use AI-generated content for your essays
* Translate an essay published in another language

AI ***can*** be used to:

* Review grammar and spelling once you’ve completed your essays
* Research primary sources to support your unique perspective or assertions
* Generate questions to help with the brainstorming process

**Attestation**

I affirm that all work not cited to its original author/creator is entirely my own original effort, free from plagiarism, and *no AI content is in the essays.* I have not used AI in the writing of these essays or received unauthorized assistance not otherwise permitted as an approved reasonable accommodation for a disability. I understand that failure to comply may result in the disqualification of my application.

**Student Signature and Date:**

Click or tap here to enter text.

**Essay 1 (REQUIRED TOPIC):** Local governments make decisions that affect schools, public safety, housing, transportation, and more. Yet they often receive less attention than federal or state government. In what ways can local governments better engage their communities, and how can residents—especially young people—participate more effectively in shaping local policy? Reflecting on your own community (city or town), how are locally elected officials engaging the residents, making decisions, and advocating for changes that benefit your community?

**Essay 2: (REQUIRED: Select** and respond to **ONE** of the following prompts)

1. In an era of increasing political polarization, how can members of Congress work across the aisle to advance legislation for the public good? What historical examples illustrate effective bipartisan collaboration, and what structural or cultural changes might encourage more of it today?
2. Elected officials are responsible for representing all constituents, including those who did not vote for them and those from different racial, economic, or cultural backgrounds. How should representatives balance the views of their electoral base with the needs and perspectives of the broader public? What approaches can strengthen inclusive and effective representation?
3. The Electoral College has been a cornerstone of presidential elections since the Constitution was ratified. Supporters argue it amplifies the voices of rural voters that might otherwise be overshadowed, but critics argue it undermines the principle of “one person, one vote.” Do you think the Electoral College is still a relevant and fair system of voting for the 21st century, and should the system be reformed, abolished, or preserved? Why or why not?
4. Some policymakers and civic groups argue that because 16-year-olds can work and pay taxes, they should be allowed to vote in local and even national elections. Others believe 16-year-olds lack the maturity or experience to vote responsibly. Considering the legal, constitutional, and democratic arguments for and against changing the voting age, do you think the voting age should be lowered? Why or why not?