

Office of Human Rights Youth Human Rights Ambassador Program 2026 – 2027 APPLICATION



About:

The DC Office of Human Rights (OHR) has a unique opportunity for DC high school students to serve as Youth Human Rights Ambassadors. The 2026-2027 Youth Human Rights Ambassador cohort will work alongside OHR staff and will have a unique opportunity to be actively involved in and learn about human rights in the local government and having their voices heard about issues affecting DC youth. These individuals will be tasked with the following:

- Discuss and understand laws, rights and issues that affect youth while learning the tools on how to present and promote dialogue to other youth and adults throughout all eight wards.
- Create and implement programming with the goal of engaging and educating District youth and residents throughout all eight wards inspired by the DC Human Rights Act of 1977, civil rights laws, and other issues that may be of concern to DC youth. This programming will be designed by the cohort, with guidance from OHR and can take many shapes (*e.g.*, panel or community discussions, social media campaigns, etc) – make it your project!

Eligibility Requirements:

To serve as a Youth Human Rights Ambassador, youth must meet the following requirements:

- Applicants must be currently enrolled in a District of Columbia high School or be a resident of Washington, DC.
- Student must be a rising 10th, 11th, or 12th grade student.
- Able to attend Youth Human Rights Ambassador training (date/time TBA)
- Able to attend Youth Human Rights Ambassador meetings twice a month
 - One meeting is held virtually
 - One meeting is held in person on a Thursday from 5:00pm – 6:30pm at the Metropolitan Square Building, 655 15th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005
- Attend or participate in at least two OHR sponsored events.
- Contribute to the cohort's projects and programming.

What we're looking for:

- Passionate and motivated by human and civil rights issues that impact youth.
- Desire to be an active participant in all events, activities, and meetings sponsored by the Office of Human Rights and the Youth Human Rights Ambassador Program.
- Be a responsible leader and act with integrity throughout your term as a Youth Human Rights Ambassador.
- Be able to work well with others in a group.
- Willing to learn, grow, and share their knowledge and experience about human rights laws and processes in DC government.

Benefits:

- Elevate your resume by actively engaging in the development and execution of a variety of projects and outreach events.
- Opportunity to develop essential leadership skills in roles such as President, Vice President, Secretary, and more.
- Access to mentorship and educational opportunities provided by senior leadership at the Office of Human Rights, including, but not limited to: OHR Director, Associate Directors, Lawyers, Program Managers, and more.
- Recognition at the annual OHR and Commission Human Rights Awards Ceremony.
- Letter of recommendation from Office of Human Rights staff.

Application Process:

All applicants to the Youth Human Rights Ambassador Program must apply using the attached application. Application materials include:

- Completed application.
- Letter of Recommendation from a non-family member.
- Written Parental permission.

Application should be emailed to ernest.shepard@dc.gov by June 1st, 2026. All applications will be reviewed and select candidates will be contacted for a final interview by June 15th, 2026.

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First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Age: _____ Birth Date: _____ Pronouns: _____

What school will you attend this fall? _____

Grade level for the 2026-2027 school year: _____

Home Phone: _____ Mobile Phone: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

How did you hear about the Youth Human Rights Ambassador Program?

Provide a list of activities (school-related or otherwise) that you are currently involved in.

Provide a list of your time commitments for the upcoming school year. This includes jobs, sports teams, extra-curriculars, volunteer work, etc. Please include dates and times or each activity.

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Essay Questions
(250 word limit for each)

Why do you want to join the OHR Youth Human Rights Ambassador Program?

What is a current civil or human rights issue or an issue that impacts youth in DC that is of concern to you? Provide an example of a creative way to address and bring awareness to this issue in your school or community.

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The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be instrumental to later success. Talk about a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?

All applicants are required to obtain a letter of recommendation. Please ensure that your letter of recommendation is submitted along with your application.

Applications are due by Friday, June 1st at 5:00pm

Applications should be submitted to Ernest Shepard at ernest.shepard@dc.gov. Admissions will be made on a rolling basis. Incomplete or illegible applications will not be considered.

For any questions, please contact Ernest Shepard at ernest.shepard@dc.gov or 202.519.3333