

Creating a Youth Advisory Council: A Guide for Museums

Setting up a Youth Advisory Council is one of many meaningful ways museums can drive engagement with younger audiences. This is a high-level overview of what the process could look like for your museum.

01 Planning: Getting Ready

The first step is to figure out why the museum needs a Youth Advisory Council and what it might look like. Things to think about in this stage include:

- What's the goal of having a Youth Advisory Council?
- How many people should be in the council and what will their roles be?
- How will the council fit into the wider museum structure?
- Who will be managing the Council? Who will be interacting with the Council?

02 Recruitment: Finding the Right People

Next, it's time to find some enthusiastic young people to join the Council. It's really important to make sure the group is diverse and represents different points of view. In this stage, it's important to think about the following:

- Sketch out a plan for getting in touch with potential members. This might involve talking to local schools, non-profits, or youth groups.
- Decide on what makes someone a good fit for the Council and how to choose who gets in.
- Review applications and pick the council members, making sure to keep diversity in mind.

03 Orientation: Getting Everyone On Board

Once the Council members are picked, they need to understand what they've signed up for. This is where they learn about the museum and how they can contribute. Key tasks in this stage include:

- Organize sessions to show the new members the ropes, like museum tours and meetings with staff.
- Provide the resources and training the Council members might need to do their jobs.
- Make sure the new members get to meet the key people in the museum.

04 Implementation: Kicking Things Off

With the Council ready to go, it's time to launch the work! Regular meetings and a few initial projects can get things moving. Here's what needs to be done at this stage:

- Organize regular Council meetings and make sure they're running smoothly. Think about co-creating a charter with the council to make sure everyone is on the same page!
- Help Council members get started on their first projects or initiatives. Creating templates and guides can make things much easier!
- Keep the lines of communication open between the Council and the rest of the museum. Make sure they know who the museum point-person is and how and when they might best connect.

05 Evaluation: Checking In and Improving

Finally, it's important to keep an eye on how things are going. Regular check-ins and feedback can help the Council keep improving and doing great work. Key tasks for this stage are:

- Decide on how to measure the Council's impact and put these measures into action.
- Collect feedback from Council members and others.
- Make adjustments based on the feedback to keep making the Council better.

Setting up a Youth Advisory Council is a great step towards making museums more inclusive and fun for younger audiences. Use this guide as a starting point to the conversation with your team as you think about what a Council could look like at your institution.