



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

CREATING THE NEXT GENERATION'S LEADERS

**LEADERS CLUB GUIDE
YMCA OF THE USA**



FEBRUARY 2018

CONTENTS

- INTRODUCTION 2**
- The Five Pillars 2
- What You'll Find in This Guide..... 3

- WHAT IS A LEADERS CLUB? 4**
- Benefits of a Leaders Club 5
- Starting a Leaders Club at Your Y..... 6

- PROGRAM FRAMEWORK AND STANDARDS 7**
- Teen Ownership..... 7
- Teen Recruitment..... 8
- A Club Constitution 9
- Regular Meetings and Attendance 9
- Leadership Development Activities 10
- Opportunities to Volunteer 11

- INVOLVING CAUSE-DRIVEN STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS 13**

- ENSURING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT 15**
- Protecting Teen Leaders' Safety and Well-Being 15
- Maintaining Child Protection Standards 16

- MEASURING IMPACT 17**
- Gathering Participant Data 17
- Evaluating Impact..... 17

- FINANCES AND SUSTAINABILITY 19**

- RESOURCES AND LINKS 20**

INTRODUCTION

The Y has a rich history of youth programming. Our focus on youth development—the social-emotional, cognitive, and physical processes that all youth uniquely experience from birth to career—helps children and teens learn, grow, and thrive. Leaders Clubs are part of this commitment.

Leaders Club is a year-long, YMCA-based leadership-development program for middle and high school teens. This program provides teens with extensive leadership training and volunteer opportunities that support YMCA programs and services to the community. In addition to teaching teens leadership through service, Leaders Clubs advisers

- introduce teens to all the work the Y does to strengthen community, and
- inspire and prepare teens to become future Y leaders.

Implementing the program as described in this guide supports positive cognitive, physical, and social-emotional growth for teens participating in Y programs. For more information on the fidelity and quality standards that apply to Leaders Clubs, visit the [Teens community](#) on Link.

THE FIVE PILLARS

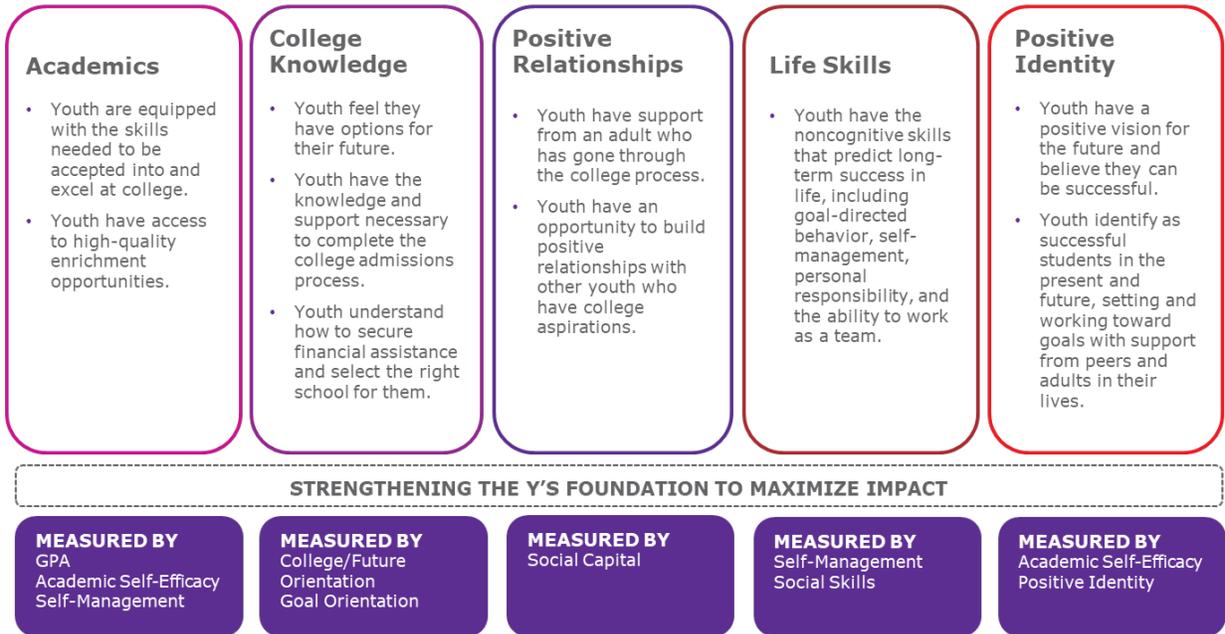
Like all YMCA teen programs, Leaders Clubs are grounded in the Five Pillars, elements proven to help teens from across multiple dimensions of diversity reach their full potential and ensure they are equipped for success during life after high school. This guide provides recommendations on how to implement the Five Pillars throughout Leaders Club activities (see the section “Leadership Development Activities” for details). The Five Pillars create an easy-to-understand framework for evaluating program impact, as explained in the later section “Evaluating Impact.”

THE FIVE PILLARS

DID YOU KNOW?

Leaders Clubs began as early as 1885 (at the New York City YMCA) to ensure programs had adequate supervision and alleviate the shortage of on-site directors. Today, Leaders Clubs continue to engage teens as life-long volunteers in various YMCA programs and community initiatives.

OUR ULTIMATE GOAL
We prepare youth for life beyond high school.



YMCA OF THE USA 101 N Wacker Drive, Chicago IL 60606 800 872 9622 ymca.net

Copyright © 2018 by YMCA of the USA. All rights reserved.

WHAT YOU'LL FIND IN THIS GUIDE

Informed by input from local Ys currently implementing Leaders Clubs and those running Leader Schools (week-long leadership retreat experiences), these guidelines share best practices to help Ys effectively implement the core components of the Leaders Club program, as well as resources, tools, and additional information to help you create and engage your own Leaders Club.

WHAT IS A LEADERS CLUB?

Leaders Club is a year-long, Y-based leadership development program for middle and high school teens with direction from YMCA staff advisers. Through Leaders Clubs, teens receive extensive leadership training and engage in a variety of volunteer opportunities that support Y programs and the community.

The **program's objectives** are

- to encourage a life-long spirit of service and volunteerism;
- to foster personal growth and character development;
- to enhance leadership skill development; and
- to help teens form positive relationships in a social club setting

LEADERS CLUBS AT A GLANCE

Adult-to-youth ratio	1 adult to every 12 teens*
Who is involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Middle- and high school teens• Y staff or volunteers serving as club advisers
Time commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 year• 4 hours meeting time + 4 hours service and leadership development time each month
Teen activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regular meetings• Leadership development experiences• Volunteer opportunities
Adviser responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure safety and well-being of teen members• Act as main point of contact for teens and their families• Oversee club activities

*For programs with 12 or fewer teens, best practice is to operate the program with additional adult supervision so that an adviser is not the only adult present.

BENEFITS OF A LEADERS CLUB

Volunteer leadership in YMCA programs is one of the exciting ways in which individuals grow and achieve their greatest potential. This is especially true for teens. Consider these findings:

- Teens currently volunteer twice as much as adults.¹
- Teens who engage in service are 50 percent less likely to engage in risky behavior.²
- Individuals with volunteer experience are 27 percent more likely to find employment than those without volunteer experience.³

Leaders Clubs foster a **sense of achievement and belonging** in teens by

- encouraging relationships that help teens grow into adults who are active, engaged, and thriving members of the community; and
- engaging teens as decision makers and active participants in Y programs and projects.

Leaders Clubs **benefit Ys** in a number of ways as well:

- Research shows that committed volunteers are more likely to continue to donate their time, talent, and treasure to the same cause in the future.⁴
- Having passionate volunteers also promotes long-term sustainability of Y programs and services.
- By introducing teens to the what the Y' does to strengthen community, Leaders Clubs inspire and prepare teens to become future YMCA staff, volunteers, members, and donors. In this way, Leaders Clubs fuel the sustainability of YMCA programs and services to the community for generations to come.

¹ Corporation for National and Community Service. (2005). Youth helping America: The role of social institutions in teen volunteering. Retrieved from www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/05_1130_LSA_YHA_SI_factsheet.pdf.

² Latham, L. (2003). Young volunteers: The benefits of community service (Fact Sheet-03-23). Retrieved from University of Nevada Cooperative Extension website: www.unce.unr.edu/publications/files/cd/2003/fs0323.pdf.

³ Spera, C., Ghertner, C., Nerino, A., & DiTommaso, A. (2013). *Volunteering as a pathway to employment: Does volunteering increase odds of finding a job for the out of work?* Retrieved from Corporation for National and Community Service, Office of Research and Evaluation website: www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/upload/employment_research_report.pdf

⁴ Fidelity Charitable. (2015). *Time and money: The role of volunteering in philanthropy*. Retrieved from www.fidelitycharitable.org/docs/volunteering-and-philanthropy.pdf

STARTING A LEADERS CLUB AT YOUR Y

The general process outlined in the following table briefly explains how to start a Leaders Club at your Y. The information in the right column tells you where you can find more detailed information and resources to help you perform these steps.

HOW TO START A LEADERS CLUB

Instructions	For More Information
1. Create a business case to support a Leaders Club at your Y.	"Finances and Sustainability" section
2. Select staff and/or volunteers to run the program.	"Involving Cause-Driven Staff and Volunteers" section
3. Set up the program framework.	"Program Framework and Standards" section
4. Create an environment that is safe and meets the Child Protection and Aquatic Safety membership qualification.	"Ensuring a Safe Environment" section
5. Recruit teens to participate.	"Program Framework and Standards" section
6. Be inclusive.	Diversity, Inclusion, and Global community on Link
7. Hold regular meetings in which teen leaders do the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Elect officers – Create a constitution or charter – Engage in personal development activities – Plan and perform service activities 	"Teen Ownership," "A Club Constitution," "Leadership Development Activities," and "Opportunities to Volunteer" sections
8. Evaluate the program.	"Measuring Impact" section

PROGRAM FRAMEWORK AND STANDARDS

Through Leaders Clubs, teens receive extensive leadership training and engage in a variety of volunteer opportunities that support Y programs and the community—experiences designed to help them develop into thriving adults who are active and engaged in their communities.

The framework and standards outlined in this section are critical to achieving the program’s objectives.

TEEN OWNERSHIP

An important aspect of Leaders Clubs—one that differentiates these clubs from other teen clubs—is that teen participants, referred to as *teen leaders*, take ownership. Teen leaders are responsible for

- suggesting and, where appropriate, leading activities in meetings; and
- generating ideas for and leading service projects.

CHARGING A PROGRAM FEE

Individuals are more likely to participate in an activity they have invested in. Therefore, we recommend charging teen leaders a nominal fee to participate in Leaders Club. This fee can be a separate program fee, or it can be included as part of a YMCA membership.

Provide accessible ways for teens who are not able to afford a fee or a membership to utilize financial assistance provided by the Y. Minimize as many steps as possible to accessing this aid, as some teens may forego participation in a Leaders Club if the application process requires sharing extensive personal information.

To ensure that the voices of all teen leaders are heard and considered, a group of three to five teens is elected by their peers to serve as officers of the Leaders Club or its advisory board. These elected officers take an active role in the planning for the Leaders Club program, and their responsibilities may include things like

- offering input and suggestions on club meeting agenda items;
- preparing social media, meeting minutes, and other club communication pieces; and
- recruiting new club members.

YMCA adult staff, referred to as *advisers*, work with the teen leaders in a supervisory capacity and are ultimately accountable for implementing and coordinating club-related meetings and service activities. Advisers are also responsible for ensuring teens' safety and overall well-being in all Leaders Club activities. For information on the qualifications required in Leaders Club advisers and their responsibilities, see the later section "Involving Cause-Driven Staff and Volunteers."

TEEN RECRUITMENT

Teen leaders are middle school and high school age youth who demonstrate a desire to learn, lead, and serve. Potential Leaders Club members can be found almost anywhere:

- They may be *tweens* (youth between the ages of 9 and 12) who have "graduated" from afterschool or camp programming.
- They may be teens involved in other Y programs, who show leadership potential.
- They may be friends or siblings of current Leaders Club members.
- They may be among the new YMCA family memberships.
- They may be students at nearby schools or members of other youth organizations.

As your Leaders Club grows, seek to ensure that your Leaders Club reflects the diversity in your community so that all teens who show leadership potential—regardless of ability, cultural background, ethnicity, faith, gender/gender identity, native tongue, or any other dimension of diversity—have access and feel welcome. Go to the Diversity, Inclusion, and Global community on Link for guidance.

Visit the [Brand Resource Center](#) (BRC) for images, templates, and ideas you can use to promote the Leaders Club in your Y's marketing collateral.

A CLUB CONSTITUTION

Teens are more likely to follow policies and procedures when they have had an active role in developing them. Therefore, teen leaders help create the Leaders Club constitution or charter. This practice enhances teen leaders buy-in on how the program operates and increases their willingness to accept and actively support Leaders Club policies.

A club constitution or charter may consist of the following:

- Purpose statement
- Membership standards
- Meeting format
- Committees and responsibilities

Effective club constitutions

- highlight the club's purpose;
- reflect the program's intentional focus on key life skills such as honoring commitments, showing dedication to a cause and peer group, and time-management;
- clearly define expectations that ensure all members are respectful to one another and feel valued as part of the group; and
- address how the club will work with members who are struggling to meet the time commitment required.

TIP

A simple, easy-to-understand charter or constitution is best, especially in the beginning. Club participants can always decide to expand or amend the constitution as the direction of the club evolves.

REGULAR MEETINGS AND ATTENDANCE

Leaders Clubs are typically year-long programs, and during this time, participants attend regular meetings. What constitutes "regular" depends on the needs of the group and the time of year. For example, formal weekly or biweekly meetings may be more appropriate during the school year, and more flexible program offerings, especially related to service projects, may be more appropriate in the summer.

The meeting schedules themselves may also vary, based on the needs of members. Ideally, clubs will host four hours of meeting time each month. How this time is divided depends on what works best for the teen leaders. For example, a club may meet one hour a week for four consecutive weeks, or it may meet two hours a week every other week.

TIP

For a quick guide on how to effectively run a Leaders Club meeting, check out this video from the Wang YMCA (Boston):

www.youtube.com/watch?v=YdsXgXz0dzo

Teen leaders are encouraged to participate regularly in club activities—that is, to attend at least half of the offered monthly meetings, as well as complete four hours of service each month. You can find more guidance on service projects in the later section “Opportunities to Volunteer in Service Projects.”

One of the most important life skills teens gain from joining a Leaders Club is understanding the value of commitment and dedication to a cause and peer group. Being able to meet the program’s time

requirements is important not only for growth and development of the individual members but also for the effective functioning of the group as a whole.

Teens who are not able to dedicate the required time each month to club meetings and service projects still have the opportunity to continue participating in the club but should work with the adviser to ensure they are able to contribute at a level consistent with the club’s constitution guidelines (see the preceding section for details).

Note: The club’s constitution can provide guidance on how members can complete hours. For example, perhaps outside “credits” count as leadership training in lieu of meetings, or maybe service hours are calculated in aggregate rather than month by month, enabling a member to perform more service hours one month and less another yet still achieve the total hours required.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

In addition to serving others through volunteering (see the next section), Leaders Clubs expose teen leaders to a variety of experiences that foster their own personal and leadership development. These kinds of activities can be incorporated into club meetings in a number of ways:

- Invite guest speakers to address certain topics, such as study tips, resume writing, and public speaking.
- Conduct life-skill workshops (on topics like money management, time management, organization, electronic and personal safety, etc.).
- Offer healthy lifestyle coaching (eating right, exercising, stress management, and mental health measures, for example).
- Hold college and career discussions.

- Explore current topics and issues.
- Help club members explore personal goal-setting.
- Make YMCA-specific trainings and certifications available.
- Invite club members to take personality profiles ([StrengthsFinder](#), [Myers-Briggs](#), [16Personalities](#), etc.), or find ways to support them in developing positive identity through sharing their personal stories and learning from each other through meaningful dialogue.

LEADERS SCHOOLS

A YMCA Leaders School (or Leaders Training School) is a week-long regional retreat where YMCA Teen Leaders Club members from a variety of YMCAs and states can connect and participate in elevated leadership and service opportunities.

Throughout the year, many Ys may also offer Leaders Rallies, which are a regional gathering of Leaders Clubs and a great opportunity for teens to connect with other clubs. Leaders Rallies usually last one to two days and include larger scale service projects and speakers, trainings, and workshops.

OPPORTUNITIES TO VOLUNTEER

An important component of Leaders Clubs involves engaging teen leaders in service opportunities in YMCA-sponsored programming and events. When selecting service projects, it is important that the selected initiatives align with existing YMCA programs and services, either within a YMCA branch or in partnership with community organizations. The table below provides examples of volunteer opportunities.

POTENTIAL VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Within Y Programs	Through Community Outreach
Teaching children basic water-safety skills (Aquatics)	Serving meals and snacks to youth through the Year-Round Food Program
Offering assistant coaching or helping youth develop specific sports-related skills (Youth Sports)	Assisting with community races, festivals, and other community events
Assisting with child care during Parents' Night Out and other special events (Child Care)	Assisting with programs offered in partner schools, houses of worship, libraries, and other community organizations

Within Y Programs	Through Community Outreach
Offering math or reading tutoring for afterschool programs (Afterschool)	Assisting with Safety Around Water instruction at community pool locations
Decorating and organizing membership announcement bulletin boards	Teaching technology or other skills to adult YMCA members or community participants
Peer tutoring	Peer tutoring

As club members discuss service activities, it is important to ensure that they consider all dimensions of diversity, including ability, economic circumstances, gender/gender identity, sexual orientation, race, and more.

Service projects usually take place outside of regular club meetings. To ensure that teen leaders can fulfill the service hour requirements, consider devoting time early in the year during regular club meetings to brainstorm and plan out the club’s service project ideas.

It is also important that advisers build and maintain relationships with Y staff to help them understand the benefit of utilizing teens as volunteers and encourage them to engage teen leaders. Doing so ensures that these service opportunities and the programs they support continue to grow and remain sustainable.

Teen leaders can volunteer in group service projects, individual service projects, or both. The most important aspect is that teens serve in a capacity that aligns with their interests, allows them to utilize their skills and talents, and benefits the YMCA.

REMEMBER

Before teens volunteer in a service area (Aquatics, Membership, etc.), be sure that the following occurs:

- Advisers confirm volunteer policies with their Y’s Human Resources (HR) department.
- Teen leaders complete required trainings or orientations, ideally provided by Y staff who oversee the program areas, so that they are able to follow best practices and safety and risk management standards.

INVOLVING CAUSE-DRIVEN STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Y youth programs put caring people in children's lives to nurture them along their journey to adulthood so that they can become active, thriving, and contributing members of society.

YMCA adult staff and volunteers, referred to as *advisers*, work with teen leaders in a supervisory capacity and are ultimately accountable for implementing and coordinating club-related meetings and service activities. Adviser responsibilities include the following:

- Serving as the main point of contact for teen leaders, their families, and other staff and volunteers who want to be involved in Leaders Club programming
- Arranging leadership development opportunities made available to teen leaders
- Overseeing club meetings, service projects, and other Leaders Club activities, and ensuring that the activities are consistent with the Y's mission and values, secure, and age appropriate
- Ensuring teens' safety and overall well-being in all Leaders Club activities (see the later section "Ensuring a Safe Environment" for details)
- Maintain healthy eating and physical activity (HEPA) standards during Leaders Club activities to ensure that teens are practicing healthy lifestyle choices (see the Healthy Eating and Physical Activity page on Link for details)

To maintain program consistency, having at least one adviser specifically dedicated to overseeing club meetings, service projects, and other Leaders Club activities is recommended. Additional adult advisers, staff, and volunteers are to be present for supervision purposes and can also assist with club activities, which becomes more important with larger clubs.

The following sections provide guidance on what to look for in potential advisers and trainings that are available to help advisers perform their role more effectively.

RECRUITING AND SELECTING ADVISERS

When looking for individuals to serve as Leaders Club advisers, recruit and select candidates who

- are dedicated to helping teens develop leadership skills, build relationships, and become active in their communities;
- are knowledgeable about youth and teen development (refer to the Youth Development Road Map, available on Link);

- are passionate about and representative of a variety of dimensions of diversity;
- are experienced with or able to build capacity for using evaluation for continuous improvement;
- possess strong group facilitation skills;
- demonstrate YMCA core values and embody the key Y attributes: determined, nurturing, genuine, hopeful, and welcoming; and
- have been screened according to the Y's child protection best practices.

The supervisor tools available with the Youth Development Companion, accessible in the Human Resources community on Link, can help you find the best individuals to fill this critical role.

Remember, be sure to take into account all dimensions of diversity (ethnicity, income level, special needs and abilities, etc.) as you select staff and volunteers for the adviser role.

TRAINING TO INCREASE ADVISERS' IMPACT

To be successful in the adviser role, advisers (as well as other YMCA staff and volunteers involved in supervising club activities) should receive basic training that reinforces the YMCA culture and Youth Development best practices. The following list includes several of the available training opportunities:

- [Introduction to the Y's Cause and Culture](#)
- [Principles of Youth Development](#)
- [Importance of Brain Development in the Life of a Child](#)
- [My Role in the Life of Youth](#)
- [Youth Relationships: Creating Positive Interactions](#)
- [Introduction to S.A.F.E](#)
- [Youth Choice: Overcoming Barriers](#)

In addition to the trainings listed above, it is important that advisers also complete required training in child protection and child abuse—mandated reporting.

ENSURING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

As a youth-serving organization, the Y is dedicated to making sure everyone has the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive. To meet that goal, the primary responsibility of all advisers, staff members, or volunteers involved with Leaders Clubs is to protect the safety and well-being of club participants.

Leaders Clubs meetings and activities can be held at the YMCA or at a partner organization, depending on the space and capacity of the host Y. Wherever the program is held, the environment must be psychologically and physically safe and secure, have appropriate staff-to-teen ratios, and facilitate positive interaction among teens, staff, and volunteers.

PROTECTING TEEN LEADERS' SAFETY AND WELL-BEING

An environment that fosters the well-being of teen leaders is one where all members

- are respectful to one another and feel valued (consider encouraging teens to include expectations regarding how to treat one another in the club's constitution);
- engage in responsible online behaviors (for information on electronics and personal safety, check out [Netsmartz](#)); and
- receive coaching on healthy lifestyles (eating right, staying active, managing stress, etc.).

Remember, a safe and positive environment promotes the program's key objectives: to foster teen leaders' personal growth and character development; to help them develop leadership skills and a spirit of service and volunteerism; and to enable them to form positive relationships in a social club setting.

TEENANGELS

Teenangels are teens (ages 13–18) who are trained in online safety and privacy and then teach these concepts to other youth, parents, and teachers.

Teaching online safety to other teens or younger children may be a community outreach opportunity that interests your Leaders Club members. Check out [Teenangels](#) for details.

MAINTAINING CHILD PROTECTION STANDARDS

Every adult involved with Leaders Club activities is to be

- certified in CPR and first aid;
- aware of local YMCA and program site safety and emergency procedures; and
- in compliance with the child safety practices for staff, which include
 - undergoing a criminal background check;
 - taking required trainings on preventing and responding to child abuse; and
 - understanding child abuse reporting policies.

CHILD PROTECTION RESOURCES

As specified by the new child safety membership qualification, member associations are to meet child abuse prevention safety practices specified by the National Board. For information, refer to these resources:

- For general child protection information and tips: [Praesidium](#)
- For information on compliance: Strategic Planning and Compliance community on Link

MEASURING IMPACT

Measuring impact and collecting data are critical components in any youth development program. It's how we prove we are making a difference and how we learn to improve every day. By intentionally tracking and evaluating the outcomes of Leaders Clubs participants, we are able to bolster successes, identify and address challenges, and build a business case for continued support of the program.

GATHERING PARTICIPANT DATA

Participant data such as demographics, attendance, and hours or types of involvement is very useful because it enables us to evaluate for whom the program is most effective and tailor Leaders Club activities to the unique needs of the teens participating.

This information helps ensure participants' safety and confirm that everyone is accounted for during club meetings and activities. It also is an important component in being able to secure potential grant funding and other resources. Consult with your YMCA's leadership to review your Y's demographic data collection and youth consent policies.

EVALUATING IMPACT

Using program evaluation tools and strategies such as stakeholder assessments (youth, parents and caregivers, staff, and volunteers) enables you to evaluate whether your Leaders Club is achieving the intended outcomes defined by the five pillars.

Here are some examples of how you might evaluate impact in each of the pillars:

- **Academics:** Collect and review teen leaders grades and grade point averages (GPAs) at different points throughout the year. This information can help guide activity planning, helping you identify, for example, whether students need subject-specific peer-tutoring or homework help time.
- **College Knowledge:** Track teen leaders high school graduation rates and have them report on plans after high school. You can also track whether they plan to take the SAT or ACT (standardized tests required by many U.S. colleges and universities); have filled out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or are applying for other scholarships or financial aid; which schools they are applying to, etc.
- **Positive Relationships:** Use validated social-emotional learning assessments or your own surveys, given at key junctures (upon joining Leaders Club and at regular intervals

over time, for example) or when teen leaders complete activities and programs related to relationship skills, to gauge impact in this area.

- **Life Skills:** Use validated social-emotional learning assessments or your own surveys, given at key junctures (upon joining Leaders Club and at regular intervals over time, for example) or when teen leaders complete activities or programs related to life skills, to gauge impact in this area.
- **Positive Identity:** Use assessments or surveys specific to the intended outcomes of the positive identity pillar to gauge impact in this area.

YMCA of the USA (Y-USA) has experience using several validated external evaluation tools that measure these concepts. Visit the Research Analytics and Insights community on [Link](#) to connect with moderators and peers across the Movement.

FINANCES AND SUSTAINABILITY

Success requires making a long-term commitment to sustaining programs through knowledge, time, volunteers, skills, financial contributions, in-kind services, advocacy, and community engagement. Healthy finances reflect a strong youth development experience and support your work in helping youth grow—physically, mentally, and socially—into engaged and active adults.

The suggestions listed here can help you finance and manage the Leaders Club program at your Y:

- **Build a business case.** As noted earlier, Leaders Clubs benefit both Ys and the teens who participate. As part of the program’s service component, teen leaders actively engage in Y programs and projects as volunteers. When creating a viable business case for a Leaders Club at your YMCA, you can highlight this information in two ways:
 - Create a cost-savings analysis that shows the impact of teen leader service hours in Y program areas. Having teen leaders volunteer in YMCA programs frees up program staff to further grow their programs.
 - Include teen leaders in your fundraising. As part of their service, teen leader volunteers can make annual campaign asks of YMCA parents and members with whom they interact. In fact, teen leaders may be even more effective because saying no to a teenager may be harder than saying no to a Y staff member!
- **Create a program budget.** Developing and managing a program budget helps your Leaders Club attain its goals.
- **Explore mini-grant opportunities.** [Youth Service America](#) (YSA) lists several mini-grant opportunities specifically for teen-led service projects.
- **Follow best practices for managing program finances and promoting sustainability.**
- **Build buy-in from YMCA staff at all levels.** An important part of ensuring the continuation of club service is for advisers and other Leaders Club staff and volunteers to build and maintain relationships with Y staff in membership and program departments (such as Child Care, Aquatics, Youth Sports, etc.). Doing so communicates the benefits of Leaders Clubs to program staff and senior leaders and helps ensure other departments continue to utilize teen leaders as volunteers in their programs in the future—actions that are key to the Leaders Club program’s sustainability.

RESOURCES AND LINKS

In addition to the Leaders Club page, which you can access in the Teens community on Link, a number of other useful resources are available:

- [Brand Resource Center](#): Images, templates, and ideas you can use to promote the Leaders Club in your Y's marketing collateral
- [Diversity, Inclusion, and Global community](#) on Link: Information and links to tools, resources, and webinars to help Ys ensure that all people, regardless of ability, age, cultural background, ethnicity, faith, gender, etc., have the opportunity to reach their full potential
- [Healthy Eating & Physical Activity page](#): HEPA standards, as well as other information, tools, and resources that help Ys offer healthy food choices and promote healthier lifestyles
- [Learning & Career Development Center](#) (LCDC): The web-based system that enables Y staff to access and manage eLearning opportunities, such as the following:
 - [Introduction to the Y's Cause and Culture](#)
 - [Principles of Youth Development](#)
 - [Importance of Brain Development in the Life of a Child](#)
 - [My Role in the Life of Youth](#)
 - [Youth Relationships: Creating Positive Interactions](#)
 - [Introduction to S.A.F.E](#)
 - [Youth Choice: Overcoming Barriers](#)
- [Netsmartz](#): A National Center for Missing & Exploited Children® (NCMEC) educational program that provides age-appropriate resources to teach youth how to be safe online
- [Teenangels](#): A program in which teen volunteers are trained in and then train other youth, parents, and teachers about online safety
- [YMCA Leaders Schools](#): Lists current Leaders School opportunities
- [Youth Development Companion](#): A collection of tools designed to help staff grow as youth development professionals
- [Youth Service America](#) (YSA): An organization dedicated to helping youth lead change through awareness, service, advocacy, and philanthropy

YMCA OF THE USA

101 N Wacker Drive, Chicago IL 60606

P 800 872 9622

link.ymca.net