

the future for our past.
h.p.y.c.
arizona heritage preservation youth council



Application and Program Guide 2026-2027



AZ SHPO
ARIZONA STATE PARKS AND TRAILS

Foreword

HPYC: Have a conversation with the past, about the future

Hello Students and Parents!

It is the State Historic Preservation Office's (SHPO) sincere pleasure to be a part of the launch of the inaugural Year of Arizona's Heritage Preservation Youth Council (HPYC). The Council, established and led by a dedicated group of high school students, is the outgrowth of our office's collaboration with the Preserve America Youth Summit, Arizona Historic Route 66 Association and the National Trust for Historic Preservation Hope Crew, to bring 35 students grades 8-12 together to learn about the history of the places and communities that are historically linked by their association with the "Mother Road". The event was a success and, desiring to learn more about Arizona's history and continue engaging in historic preservation activities, several students collaborated on a plan for a statewide Youth Council of student leaders that would work within their communities to identify and preserve the places that are important to our heritage.

In September of 2025, the Governor's Arizona 250 Commission unanimously voted to adopt the HPYC as an official initiative of the Commission. In 2026, the Council launched with eight students hailing from around the State. Councilmembers will hone their leadership skills through the development of messaging and service projects and assist the Commission in executing their vision for Arizona's semiquincentennial celebration.

The HPYC is student-organized and student-led and represents a unique opportunity to learn about the state's history, engage with policy-makers and ensure the future of the places that matter to Arizona.

We are looking forward to your application!



Kathryn Leonard

Arizona State Historic Preservation Officer

Mission Statement

The mission of the Council is to educate future leaders on the importance of historic preservation, empower young voices to actively protect and promote historic sites across the state, engage with government structures to provide youth-driven insights on preservation policies and initiatives.

Purpose

Arizona Youth Council members will serve as stewards of Arizona's cultural, historical and natural legacy. The nine-member council represents the voice of Arizona's youth and will lead projects that promote preservation and inspire their peers and communities to value heritage as a cornerstone of Arizona's future.

HPYC QUICK FACTS

Where does the Council meet? Council meetings are in-person with a remote option. Meeting locations will be determined based on where Councilmembers live. Events, site visits, work projects, and community engagement activities are in-person and may be located across Arizona.

What is the time commitment? 3-10 hours per month. This includes council meetings, work projects, site visits, and community outreach.

When do Council meetings happen? Council meetings happen monthly, on Saturday or Sunday.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

- Must be a current or rising 8th-12th grader, studying in Arizona
- Must be within the ages of 13-18 by the beginning of September 2026.
- Have demonstrated interest in history, cultural heritage, preservation, sustainability, civic engagement, or community leadership.
- Be able to commit to attending regular meetings and actively participating in Council activities.

PREFERRED REQUIREMENTS

- Prior leadership experience (student government, clubs, organizations, or community service).
- Prior experience with public speaking, fundraising, communications, and/or working with a team to organize events and projects
- Passion for advocacy, cultural storytelling, or innovative problem-solving

HPYC INFORMATION

TRAVEL REQUIREMENTS

Councilmembers will be expected to attend some in-person meetings, events, training sessions, workshops, and site visits throughout Arizona. Financial support for travel may be limited, and SHPO will help facilitate HPYC parents for carpooling opportunities.

What are the expected outcomes of participation in HPYC?

Responsibility Following through on commitments with reliability and accountability

Communication Effectively sharing ideas with each other and diverse audiences. Responding to communication promptly.

Teamwork Collaborating with peers and partners to achieve collective goals.

Leadership Inspiring others to value and protect Arizona's heritage.

Civic Engagement Actively participate in and contribute to local communities



HPYC INFORMATION

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- **Community Engagement** — Connecting students with grassroots preservation advocacy and local government programs
- **Heritage Education** — Learning professional preservation theory, skills, and practical decision-making
- **Advocacy and Partnerships** — Building connections with organizations, policymakers, and cultural leaders
- **Hands-on Preservation** — Participating in site visits, documentation, fieldwork, and service projects at historic places

EXAMPLE PROJECTS

Throughout their term, council members may:

Assist in planning and leading heritage-focused events.

Contribute to digital media campaigns promoting HPYC and preservation.

Participate in hands-on work and special projects.

Represent the interests of the council to local and state lawmakers.

Serve as ambassadors for Arizona's heritage in schools and communities.

Support collaborative initiatives with local and state heritage organizations.

Council Leadership Positions

POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

One of HPYC's core tenets is to develop future leaders. Students will nominate themselves or others during the first Council meeting and elect the following positions:

- **Chair**

1. Presides over meetings and sets agendas in collaboration with the Program Advisor.
2. Serves as the primary spokesperson for the Council.
3. Provides overall leadership, ensuring projects align with the Council's mission and goals.
4. Coordinates programming with AZ250 Commission & other boards/commissions as necessary.

- **Vice-Chair**

1. Assists the Chair in duties and assumes leadership in their absence.
2. Oversees committee work and supports coordination across Council initiatives.
3. Helps ensure all members are engaged and contributing.

- **Secretary**

1. Records and distributes meeting minutes and agendas.
2. Tracks attendance, member participation, and progress on tasks.
3. Manages Council communications, including internal updates.

Council Working Groups

Throughout the year, certain Council efforts may necessitate a smaller group of councilmembers to organize or spearhead the project. Working groups can consist of 3-6 councilmembers who have an interest or special skills for the project at hand.

Potential Working Group Themes

Communications and Social Media

Outreach and Education

Financial and Fundraising

Policy and Government

Working groups are not fixed and will change from project to project. All councilmembers will participate in at least one working group per year. Regardless of working groups, councilmembers are expected to collaborate to produce high-quality outcomes.



Training and Program Schedule



As a Council Member, you are **required** to take part in an **in-person full-day orientation** and Preservation Fundamentals training. This will likely be held in early-mid October.

In addition to this training, you are required to **attend monthly Council meetings**, which are held on Saturday or Sunday, and last 1-3 hours. Meetings will be held in-person, with a virtual option always available.

Sometimes monthly council meetings will be held at a project site; these times are likely half-day commitments to hold meetings and work on-location in conjunction .

Council **projects may be located around the State**. For these projects, every effort will be made to schedule on weekends or school breaks. Very occasionally, students may be asked to be excused from school, and SHPO will provide formal letters for school administrators.

Academic success is a priority for the HPYC; we commit to work with students to accommodate school priorities.

As we desire to achieve statewide participation in the Council, care will be made to maximize use of remote conferencing for Council and other meetings. However, **travel may be necessary** to attend special tours and events. The Council Advisor will work with parents and guardians to coordinate transportation.

Final meeting schedule will be provided to Council members at the orientation and training session.

All **HPYC projects are student-led**. During orientation, councilmembers will brainstorm historic sites to visit, hands-on projects to complete, and other work pertaining to their interests.

Apply to the Council!

All interested students must complete the official AZHPYC Member Application Form by 9/7/2026.

STEPS

1. **Read this entire program and application guide**, understand the roles and responsibilities of a Councilmember, and determine if you have the time to participate.
2. **Ask your parent or guardian** to read the guide, and if they are able to support your participation in the HPYC.
3. **Letters of Recommendation are optional.** If you choose to submit a letter of recommendation, ask your recommender as soon as possible. Recommenders can be a teacher, coach, faith leader, or other community figure who knows you well. Your recommender will email their letter to the HPYC Program Advisor Arianna Urban at aurban@azstateparks.gov with the subject line "HPYC Recommendation for (Your Name)."
4. Write your **cover letter**. Prompt: ***Why does preservation matter to you? what knowledge, skills, and abilities would you bring to the HPYC?*** Cover letters should be no more than one page, single-spaced, and written in your own voice. The HPYC application will ask you to attach your cover letter, as a PDF.
5. Prepare your **long-form application responses**. Long-form responses will be no less than 150 and no more than 250 words. Save these in a separate document so you can cut and paste them into the application form when asked. Prompts:
 - **What makes a good leader?**
 - **Tell us about a specific place (building, site, neighborhood) in your community that needs to be preserved. Why should people care about it?**
 - **How can preserving the past benefit the future?**
6. Complete the official AZHPYC Application Form and submit by 9/7/2026. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.

[CLICK HERE TO APPLY!](#)

Application Process

ALL APPLICATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY 9/7/2026

INTERVIEWS

Select applicants will be invited to participate in an interview. Interviews will be conducted virtually by a small panel of Council advisors, SHPO staff, and program partners. Interviews will be scheduled in conjunction with the applicant.

The interview will assess:

- Student's level of professionalism and maturity
- Student's enthusiasm for heritage preservation and civic engagement
- Student's ability to effectively communicate and convey the relevant experience and skills they believe will be an asset to the Council

Following interviews, the selection panel will review all applications and interviews. Results will be communicated via email within one week of the completion of all interviews.

Applicants will either be offered a seat on the Council, may be waitlisted and offered a seat if space becomes available, or informed they will not be a part of the 2026-2027 Council.





For questions regarding the program or application process, please contact:

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