



Division on Civil Rights' 2023-2024 Youth Ambassador Program



The [New Jersey Division on Civil Rights](#) (DCR) invites young people (13-19 years old) with a passion for civil rights to apply to the 2023-24 Youth Ambassador Program. The Youth Ambassador Program empowers the next generation to work to eliminate bias and discrimination in their communities. DCR offers Youth Ambassadors mentorship, education, and leadership opportunities to encourage students to act as community change agents through education on the Law Against Discrimination.

Program Purpose

Youth Ambassadors participate in civil rights-related conversations, learn to amplify their voices, serve as a community liaison to DCR, and develop a rich understanding of civil rights. Youth ambassadors will be divided into small groups and together identify a topic related to the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination, about which they will create a podcast as a culmination of their participation in the program. A DCR Community Relations Specialist will facilitate the meetings and teach Youth Ambassadors the necessary skills to take their podcast project from a concept to finish product.

Youth Ambassador Project Requirements

Youth ambassadors will learn critical skills for developing their podcasts, as detailed in the timeline below. Youth ambassadors will be taught to use free podcast editing programs such as Audacity and GarageBand. No experience using podcast software is required.

Each youth ambassador must contribute to the group podcast project and participate in the final presentation. Ambassadors will work as a group and decide on a cohesive theme for their podcast. Each youth ambassador is responsible for individually creating a podcast episode, around 5 minutes in length, that will create a cohesive series.

Podcasts will not be shared publicly without formal approval from the New Jersey Office of the Attorney General. The podcasts will be used internally and shared at our last meeting, a project showcase to the Department Law and Public Safety employees, students and legal guardians only.

Ambassador Selection Criteria

The New Jersey Division on Civil Rights Youth Ambassador Program is open to all New Jersey youth, ages 13 to 19, interested in exploring civil rights issues. Up to 50 youth ambassadors will be admitted into the program, based upon the following criteria:

- Interest in civil rights;
- Passion for making a positive change on a community level;
- Interest in personal and leadership development; and
- Availability to attend bi-monthly Monday evening (6:00 pm) meetings.

Program Outcomes

By participating in this program, youth ambassadors will:

- Gain a foundational understanding of the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination.
- Develop a strong sense of civic responsibility, awareness of civil rights, and leadership skills to take on new challenges.
- Develop an understanding of how to facilitate a discussion, participate in research, and productively work as a part of a team.
- Develop the confidence and skills to effectively communicate their ideas and collaborate with diverse groups of peers to achieve optimal project outcomes.
- Learn about college scholarships, internship opportunities, career development programs, and mentoring opportunities.

Timeline

Each student who participates in the Youth Ambassador Program must be part of the program for at least one academic year (October through June). Monthly meetings will last 60-90 minutes, depending on the topic. All monthly meetings and workshops will be held virtually via Zoom.

Meeting Descriptions

Monday, October 2

Welcome & Orientation

Orientation to the program and icebreaker for youth ambassadors.

Monday, October 16

LAD Overview

This month's meeting will introduce ambassadors to the NJ Law Against Discrimination.

Monday, October 30

Introduction to Podcasts

This month's meeting will introduce ambassadors to podcasts and the way they are used to spread messages. A focus on podcasts used as activism and expose people to different topics. Also, introduction to group podcast projects.

Monday, November 13

Project Development

This month's meeting, ambassadors will begin to think about their project topics and break into groups.

Monday, December 4

Introduction to Implicit Bias (Education and Training Unit provided training)

This month's meeting will introduce ambassadors to the concept of implicit bias and discuss strategies on how to address it effectively.

Monday, December 18

Project Development

At this month's meeting, ambassadors will have the space to work on their group project. Ambassadors will pick the topic and theme of their podcast. Ambassadors will also be introduced to group-led discussions.

Monday, January 8

The Mechanics of Podcasting

In this month's meeting, ambassadors will learn about how to create a podcast. This meeting will go over podcast programs, and they will learn how to edit.

Monday, January 22

Project Development: Vision Board

During this meeting, ambassadors will create a vision board for their podcast. They will identify the structure and flow of their podcast. They will also identify what they want to record and create a schedule.

Monday, February 5

Podcast Editing

Ambassadors will use this space to work on their projects and troubleshoot any editing problems they run into.

Monday, February 26

Introduction to Mediation

This month's meeting will introduce ambassadors to the concept of mediation. This introduction will shift the focus from understanding the individual to understanding their role as a community member.

Monday, March 18

Preparation for Student Led Discussions & Podcasts

In this month's meeting, ambassadors will work on their group podcasts and prepare for their student-led discussions.

Monday, March April 1

Social Media & Activism

This month's meeting will introduce ambassadors to the importance of social media and its ability to foster activism, exposing students to key social media skills and how to effectively use them to advocate for themselves and their passions.

Monday, April 15

Student Led Civil Rights Discussion

Two groups will lead the discussion for tonight's meeting based on a topic of their choice. If time permits, ambassadors will work on their group podcasts.

Monday, April 29

Student Led Civil Rights Discussion

Two groups will lead the discussion for tonight's meeting based on a topic of their choice. If time permits, ambassadors will work on their group podcasts.

Monday, May 13

Project Development: Finalizing Podcast

Ambassadors will work on their podcasts as a group for the last time. This meeting will allow group members to finalize their podcasts and decide on any changes before the podcasts are submitted next meeting.

Monday, June 3

Conversation with DCR Interns

Podcasts are due by the end of the day.

This month's meeting will allow ambassadors to speak with current and former DCR interns about their experiences. This conversation aims to connect and network with the interns and prepare ambassadors to begin thinking about how best to access internship, job, and career opportunities.

Monday, June 17

Podcast Showcase

DCR ambassadors will showcase their podcasts and have a final debrief about the work they have been doing over the year.

Application Process

- Interested applicants and their parent/legal guardian, if a minor, must complete the [Youth Ambassador Application form](#).
- Youth Ambassador Applications must be submitted by Friday, September 15, 2023.
- Students who are admitted to the program will be notified on Friday, September 22, 2023.

Ambassador Responsibilities

- Attend bi-monthly meetings. Students can only miss 2 meetings over the course of the program.
- Participate in and promote DCR's programs.

Parent/Legal Guardian Responsibilities

- Stay up to date on the program and the meeting days.

Centralized Communication Methods

DCR youth ambassadors and their parents/legal guardians will receive monthly emails with upcoming activities, meetings, and workshop links.

About the New Jersey Division on Civil Rights

The New Jersey Division on Civil Rights is the state agency charged with enforcing the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination ("LAD"), the first state civil rights statute to go into effect in the country. The LAD protects all people in New Jersey from discrimination and bias-based harassment in employment, housing, and places of public accommodation based on actual or perceived race, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, and other protected characteristics. DCR also enforces the New Jersey Family Leave Act (NJFLA) and the Fair Chance in Housing Act (FCHA).

The mission of DCR is to prevent, eliminate and remedy discrimination and bias-based harassment in employment, housing, and places of public accommodation throughout New Jersey. DCR's vision is a New Jersey free from discrimination and bias, where all people are treated with equal dignity and equal respect and have access to equal opportunity.