

Rotary District 6980

Youth Services Handbook

Section 6

District 6980 Rotary Youth Leadership Academy (RYLA)¹

Article 1 Purpose²

District 6980 Rotary Youth Leadership Academy (RYLA) is an intensive training program that brings together youth and young adults to further develop character and leadership skills and learn about Rotary. The District 6980 RYLA program is conducted in a five-day, off-site camp environment.

RYLA offers Rotarians an opportunity to be mentors and personally participate in developing qualities of leadership, good citizenship, and personal and professional development in the young people of their communities. In turn, RYLA can bring new energy to the district, inspire ideas for service, increase support of community service projects, and develop future Rotarians.

Participants are nominated by local Rotary clubs, which often cover all expenses. For these young adults, this recognition offers the opportunity to build self-confidence and self-awareness through learning sessions and activities which promote teamwork, communication, and reflection. They also gain exposure to a variety of issues and people, meet active community leaders, and learn valuable information and career skills.

Article 2 Objectives

The objectives of the District 6980 RYLA program are as follows:

- To demonstrate Rotary's respect and concern for youth.
- To encourage and assist selected youth leaders and potential leaders in responsible and effective voluntary youth leadership by providing them with a valuable training experience.
- To encourage continued and stronger leadership of youth by youth.
- To publicly recognize the high qualities of many young people who are rendering service to their communities as youth leaders.

Article 3 Organization

3.010. RYLA Committee Chair Duties and Responsibilities

3.020. RYLA Committee Activities

The District 6980 RYLA program is part of the District 6980 Youth Services Committee and, as such, is under the leadership of the youth services chair and district governor. The district

¹ In District 6980, the Rotary International Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) program is referred to as the District 6980 Rotary Youth Leadership Academy. We believe that this term more accurately describes our program and our goals and objectives.

² *Rotary International Code of Policies (COP)*, October 2019, Article 41.080., Rotary Youth Leadership Awards, pp. 289 - 290.

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governor appoints a District 6980 RYLA Committee Chair based on the recommendation of the district youth services chair.

3.010. *RYLA Committee Chair Duties and Responsibilities*

The duties and responsibilities of the RYLA chair include the following:

- Ensuring the safety and security of our youth at all times.
- Preparing the RYLA budget items as requested by the youth services chair.
- Chairing the RYLA committee meetings.
- Preparing agendas for RYLA committee meetings.
- Serving as the RYLA liaison among the district and club leadership teams.
- Promoting RYLA throughout the district, in the clubs, and in the schools.
- Recruiting and retaining RYLA committee members.
- Representing the district at RYLA seminars.
- Serving on the District Youth Protection Administration Committee as requested.
- Assisting in the implementation of RYLA policies, RYLA committee decisions, and decisions of the District Youth Protection Administration Committee.
- Making recommendations to the youth services committee chair for annual appointments to the District 6980 RYLA Committee.
- Advising the youth services chair of the resignation or termination of any committee members during the Rotary year and the appointment of new or replacement members.
- Making recommendations to the RYLA committee regarding new programs, policies, or initiatives for consideration and approval.
- Assigning specific duties to individual committee members as appropriate.
- Coordinating with clubs for the number of students attending RYLA and payment of fees.
- Taking required action on student problems as required or requested.
- Assisting in implementing decisions made by the District Youth Protection Administration Committee as required.

3.020. *RYLA Committee Involvement and Activities*

Service on the RYLA committee involves a great deal of interaction with young adults and a wide range of actions to be accomplished and activities to be coordinated. Some of those actions and activities are outlined below:

- Developing programs.
- Providing promotion and publicity venues.
- Providing logistical support.
- Coordinating camp activities.
- Selecting RYLA organizers and counselors.

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- Conducting education and training programs.
- Selecting participants based on recommendations from the clubs.
- Preparing pre-event correspondence and on-site registration.
- Developing the budget, tracking revenues and expenditures, coordinating accounts payable, and managing vendor relationships.
- Overseeing accommodations and meals.
- Establishing connections with schools and youth groups.
- Publicizing the RYLA to the local media.
- Assuring the well-being of attendees during the program.
- Leading small groups of participants during the program.
- Conducting recreational, team-building, and social activities.

Article 4 RYLA Participants

In developing youth leaders, the intent is to identify and develop leadership skills, primarily in high school sophomores and juniors. These students return to their school and Interact clubs with an understanding of and appreciation for the object of Rotary and apply the skills learned through the RYLA programs to make their schools and organizations function successfully and contribute to their schools and communities. Exceptions to the grade range for selected students may be recommended to the youth services chair for action.

Selection criteria for RYLA participants include the following:

- Demonstrated leadership experience or potential.
- A cooperative nature and willingness to participate in a group.
- An awareness of current events and international issues.
- Strong communication skills.
- Good performance in school or work.
- Enthusiasm for sharing newfound skills with others.
- Proven dedication to community service.

Article 5 Budget and Funding

RYLA is self-supporting in that the clubs pay the costs of the participants they sponsor including any program or facility costs. The RYLA chair presents the annual RYLA budget to the youth services chair for consolidation in the youth services' budget for submission and approval of the district governor and the district finance committee.

Costs associated with the RYLA program include the following areas:

- Printing and distribution of promotional and application materials
- Rental of program venue and any associated costs

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- Equipment and supplies (e.g., speaker system, projector, microphone, computer, photocopier, telephone, postage, Rotary and RYLA informational materials, recreational equipment)
- Meals or catering services
- Insurance as required
- Honorariums to guest speakers and entertainers
- Transportation for organizers and guest speakers
- RYLA merchandise (e.g., certificates, flags, banners, pins, T-shirts, hats, bags)
- Incidental expenses (e.g., binders, pens, name tags)

Securing support or funds from individuals, businesses, foundations, or even nonprofit or nongovernmental organizations can help keep expenses down without passing the cost on to the participants or their sponsoring Rotary clubs. Using the Rotary District 6980 Youth Services 501(c)(3) Foundation as a resource for sponsorship donations is encouraged to help offset RYLA costs. Additionally, local businesses may be able to offer monetary contributions or in-kind donations of labor, supplies, or equipment.

Article 6 RYLA Core Curriculum

The RYLA core curriculum supports the Object of Rotary – to encourage and foster the ideal of service and instill a lifelong dedication to service in young people. The district and clubs will engage in service activities that promote the development of ethical leadership, team-building, international understanding, good will, and peace.

The district RYLA core curriculum includes the following topics:

- The fundamentals of leadership.
- The ethics of positive leadership.
- The importance of communication skills in effective leadership.
- Techniques of problem solving and conflict management.
- The role of Rotary in the local community.
- The building of self-confidence and self-esteem.
- The elements of community and global citizenship.

Article 7 The Role of Rotary Clubs

The support and interest of individual clubs is a critical element in planning a successful RYLA at any level. Rotary clubs make the RYLA program successful. The clubs are responsible for selecting participants and funding their attendance. Clubs and the district introduce participants to Rotary ideals and values. Clubs are the primary contact point for most youth participants throughout their RYLA experience.

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Article 8 Activities for Rotarians Involved in RYLA

Rotarians may be involved in RYLA in the following ways:

- Inviting RYLA participants who may not have easy access to leadership development opportunities, including candidates from other organizations, including economically and socially disadvantaged youth with leadership potential to participate in district RYLA programs.
- Provide continuity to participants in RYLA events by including them in the development of future RYLA events and encouraging them to become involved as Rotary alumni.

For more detailed information concerning the District 6980 Rotary Leadership Academy (RYLA) refer to the *District 6980 Rotary Leadership Academy (RYLA) Operations Manual*.

For specific information about the Rotary International Youth Leadership Awards refer to the *Rotary International Code of Policies*, Article 41.080., [Rotary Youth Leadership Awards](#), pp. 289 – 290, and the Rotary International *Rotary Youth Leadership Awards Manual*, 694-EN (809).

Any comments, clarifications, or suggestions for improvement should be addressed to the **Rotary District 6980 District Youth Leadership Academy Committee Chair**.