

Neighborhood Working Group Specialist – City of Boston Mayor’s Youth Council (MYC)



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About MYC

The Mayor’s Youth Council is a program for high school students facilitating participation in civic engagement

- Housed within the **Office of Youth Engagement and Advancement (OYEA)**
- **Students collaborate** with city officials, community organizations, and like-minded young people
- **86** high school **participants/members** in 2022-23 school year

Each member/student is both in one Committee and one Neighborhood Working Group (NWG)

- **Eight Committees** based on existing City of Boston departments + Youth Lead the Change
- **Six NWGs** comprising neighborhoods with roughly equal populations

Work Environment

100% in person; small office; new team/department (OYEA); very young team (19–25-year-olds)

- Team inhabited **brand new office space** – **learned to advocate for needs and resources** as team solidified and gained more insight into its role for MYC
- **Office** lacked kitchen space and appliances and had a less than constant water supply (this caused **dissatisfaction**)
- **Learned** firsthand **about the slowness of a bureaucracy** when issues arose for the team
 - Such as **access to water** and **onboarding times for payroll**
- Combination of **independent and teamwork**
 - Asked colleagues questions whenever needed
 - Clarified work responsibilities, processes, software, etc.
- **Learned through experience**
 - **Navigated** new software, systems, tasks, and hierarchies to complete tasks
- Check ins with teams – had **two weekly meetings**
 - Co-op team
 - Entire OYEA staff (6-8 people)

My Role – Neighborhood Working Group Specialist

- **Connect youth to city government and community organizations**
- **Facilitate** Committee and NWG **meetings**
 - **Ensure meetings progress** according to time allotted
 - **Provide insight** on how best to move forward with project **without taking** executive **control**
- **Oversee** everything to do with **Neighborhood Working Groups**
 - Order food for NWG meetings
 - Keep track of meeting attendance
 - Delegate and take on tasks assigned to co-ops based on each person’s workload
- Assist in developing, managing, and conducting **outreach and engagement initiatives for MYC** recruitment and events
- **Attend all MYC events and initiatives**
- **Assist** head coordinator **with** day-to-day **operations**
- **Attend two weekly meetings; discuss progress and next steps** for MYC operations



Relevant Courses

Some of my **classes intersected very well with this co-op:**

SOCL 2358 - Ethnography, Culture, and Municipalities through a Sociological Lens

- Helped **understand** various urban **dynamics**
 - Useful when **understanding effects of youth projects and the problems they aim to address**
 - Helped **navigate city government bureaucracy**

ANTH 2305 – Global Markets and Local Culture

- **Provided** valuable **context to issues** explored by various MYC groups, such as neoliberalism



Unique Opportunities

Completed MYC program outreach in neighborhoods

- **Biked** in different **neighborhoods** of Boston and **promoted MYC** application, and various Committee **and NWG events** through fliers and word of mouth
- Gained **deeper awareness** of **Boston’s diverse community** and businesses while potentially attracting more youth who could contribute to and benefit from MYC
- **Made valuable connections** with individuals especially interested in the program
- Completed 25 hours of “in neighborhood outreach”



Experiential Liberal Arts

My co-op encompassed all three components of the Experiential Liberal Arts.

Research

- Various MYC projects required me to **complete research** within archives, webpages, etc.

Education

- I facilitated a program allowing youth to engage in **experiential learning through civic engagement;**
- I learned the intricacies of managing a civic engagement program for youth in a city government undergoing major changes

Outreach

- I **promoted MYC** in small businesses throughout Boston;
- I **expanded** potential student **applicant pool;**
- I **exposed more youth** in Boston to the program

Special Projects

Worked on 4 successful NWG and 7 Committee projects

- NWG 5: **Wake Up the Earth – MYC** - staffed promoting table at Wake Up the Earth festival in Jamaica Plain
- Presided over **group’s planning meetings**
- Tracked group **event expenses**
- Communicated **event regulations;** updated emails to group
- **Offered feedback** on Wake Up the Earth Google **survey** used to gauge attendees’ opinions on neighborhood quality, gentrification, cleanliness, etc.
- **Aided with set up and staffing** of tabling event
- NWG 2: **Dot Fest** – mental health-focused game event at DotHouse Health’s Generation Next Academy Teen Center
 - Facilitated **planning meetings**
 - **Supervised communication** to Dorchester Liaison, Ross Cochran
 - **Supported communication** to DotHouse Health Teen Center Director, Dirk Bovell
 - **Completed outreach** for event in Dorchester; distributed fliers; interacted with constituents with “word of mouth”
 - **Helped NWG 2 staff event** at teen center – aid with setup and activities

Personal Reflection and Future Plans

I learned that

- **I work well in a collaborative environment,** especially when it comes to distributing tasks evenly with other co-ops
- I am **not afraid to ask for help**
- **I need to get better at suggesting new projects** or collaborations for myself when I have less to do
- **Repetitive tasks can cause me to lose focus/drive,** but **I get myself back on track** by reminding myself of benefit to MYC youth
- I found that **variety** in day-to-day work **and activity was a good way to remain motivated and engaged**

