

# Plan for the Restructuring and Enhancement of the San Antonio Youth Commission Recruitment and Attendance Policies

## Introduction

The purpose of this document, with each article to be approved by a quorum of the San Antonio Youth Commission is to serve as a comprehensive plan for improving the organization and presence of the Commission. This plan operates based on two main goals, the first being *to restructure the youth commission in such a way that encourages responsibility and participation among its members in order to maximize SAYC's impact on the community of San Antonio's youth* and *to engage the community by raising awareness of and participation in the San Antonio Youth Commission.*

## Background

The San Antonio Youth Commission purports to “respond to current situations affecting young persons, and to develop solutions for problems to be presented by the Mayor and City Council Members. The Youth Commission will further work toward unifying the youth of San Antonio into a positive force for the good of the community” (City Ordinance 74024). Since its creation, SAYC has been a force for change in the San Antonio community; however, there is a need for change if it wishes to continue to accomplish this purpose. Currently, the commission is suffering from a lack of attendance, a lack of member participation outside of meetings, and a lack of presence in the community. These themes run throughout, and the remainder of this document will take the form of a list of problems and their respective solutions to be implemented after the approval of this document. SAYC has been and will continue to be a voice for San Antonio's youth, and the framework presented herein will provide the structure with which the San Antonio Youth Commission can maximize its potential.

## Proposed Changes

*After approval, these changes will become effective immediately in the San Antonio Youth Commission.*

### **1. Appointment Process**

**The San Antonio Youth Commission needs a more intensive appointment and recruitment process.** The appointment process must be structured in a way so as to cultivate the most dedicated and capable members of the San Antonio Youth Commission. It is for this reason that the following improvements to the SAYC recruitment process are outlined:

- a. Efforts at recruitment must be intensified and vacancies must be filled.** The San Antonio Youth Commission currently lacks visibility, as further addressed in item no. 6 of “Procedural Changes.” This lack of visibility means that fewer youth in the community choose to apply. In order to attract more youth to the San Antonio Youth Commission in order to encourage greater involvement, the community must be informed. The San Antonio Youth Commission must therefore increase its efforts to boost the knowledge of the Commission in schools by contacting school leadership and distributing information throughout the respective districts of San Antonio. This will increase community engagement and allow members of the Commission to get to know their constituents. The following are recruitment efforts to be enacted with the approval of this document, to be implemented as standing, repeated policies of the Commission:
  - i. SAYC will contact the principals of schools in districts where there are vacancies and provide them with informational materials to be distributed in those schools along with announcements, etc. in order to raise awareness of vacancies and recruit new members.
  - ii. The Chair of the San Antonio Youth Commission will draft a letter to be sent to members of the City Council and/or the mayor informing them of any vacancies that may be present in their district/Mayoral appointments and requesting that they make efforts towards appointing Commissioners.

- iii. The San Antonio Youth Commission will maintain social media accounts to increase awareness of the activities of the Commission and attract potential members.

- b. The San Antonio Youth Commission will assume a greater role in the interview process.** Currently, candidates to the San Antonio Youth Commission are required to complete an interview with their district Councilperson or, in the case of mayoral appointees, the Mayor of San Antonio. The San Antonio Youth Commission requests greater oversight of this process and, for this reason, seeks to participate in the interview process. The Chair of the San Antonio Youth Commission or the Vice-Chair in the case of the absence of the Chair, will attend the interview between the Councilperson and prepare questions to ask the potential candidate. The Chair or Vice-Chair will have no role in the final decision to appoint the prospective candidate to the San Antonio Youth Commission, but it is the belief of the San Antonio Youth Commission that by allowing for the Chair or Vice-Chair to ask questions of the candidate the Commission, Councilperson, and the candidate will be better able to orient the candidate's place in relation to the San Antonio Youth Commission. In the case that a member of SAYC leadership cannot attend, a separate interview will be scheduled between the candidate and the officer and the results will be reported to the appropriate Councilperson for consideration. The following action items are thus required:
- i. SAYC will contact Councilpersons in order to request that they help implement the new interview policy.
  - ii. SAYC will develop a list of questions to be asked at the interviews, subject to evaluation, suggestion, and approval by a quorum.

**Note:** The final decision of whether or not to appoint a candidate to the San Antonio Youth Commission rests wholly in the Councilperson. The Chair or Vice-Chair of SAYC is simply meant to provide the perspective of a member of the Commission during the interview in order to more holistically assess the ability of the candidate to be a Commission member. SAYC assumes no responsibility for the appointment itself.

## **2. Member Introduction to the Commission**

**The San Antonio Youth Commission improperly introduces its members to the Commission and has failed to outline members' responsibilities.** This creates a dissonance between the member's actions and the purposes and expectations of the Commission. It is for this reason that the following changes to the introduction procedure are made:

- a. A notice of the year's first meeting will be sent two weeks in advance to all members, including those in the process of being appointed.** In order to ensure that each member of the Commission is involved with the Commission from the start, it is paramount that all members attend the first meeting. Members must be given advance notice and they are expected to attend the first meeting. If they are unable to attend, they must prepare an explanation of why they are absent, to be sent to the SAYC Leadership and sponsors. Members that are absent from the first meeting will be sent the minutes of the meeting as well as an update on any work they need to do.
- b. The first meeting of each year will have a set procedure whereby members learn more about the commitment the Commission requires.**
- c. Officers will be elected at the first meeting.\*** The officers of the San Antonio Youth Commission assume a vital role in the Commission's activity and procedure. It is for this reason that the offices of Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary will be decided at the first meeting. Selecting officers at the first meeting enables the Commission to expedite procedural matters at the beginning of the year.

\*Pending quorum.

## **3. Attendance**

**The San Antonio Youth Commission suffers from a severe lack of attendance.** Meeting attendance falls consistently below quorum and efforts to offer transportation and contact members have been largely ineffective. It is for that reason that the following changes are made:

- a. **Members are only allowed to miss two consecutive meetings OR three non-consecutive meetings per year.** Exceptions will be made for extraneous circumstances such as illness or family emergencies. Currently, a member must miss three consecutive meetings to be removed from the Commission. Attending one meeting every third month allows for members to remain on the Commission without consequence. Commission members are public servants; they must be held to a certain standard of attendance which the current attendance policies do not uphold. Lowering the level of leniency on persistent absence is one way to ensure the commitment of Youth Commission members to their positions and improve meeting attendance.
- b. **The attendance policy, with the above mentioned exceptions for illness and emergencies, must be strictly enforced.** Commission members make a commitment from the moment they decide to apply to attend meetings and be an active member of the Commission. If they persistently demonstrate that they are unable to fulfill this commitment, then it is only fair that the according policy and consequences be enforced.
- c. **Transportation will be offered to those who require it.** The San Antonio Youth Commission is an equitable organization, and it recognizes that with the diverse array of members, situations may arise in which a member is unable to access transportation to the Commission meetings. It is for this reason that transportation services will be provided to those who need them. Members willing to provide transportation for other members will mark on the **Attendance Form** that they are willing to do so and will provide the list of districts that they are willing to transport members from. Members who will need transportation will mark on the form what district they will need transportation from as well indicating that they will communicate two days in advance if they need transportation to a meeting. In this way the commission can promote equitable access to meetings and maintain attendance and member accountability.
- d. **Attendance records will be made readily available to the members of the San Antonio Youth Commission.** Sponsors will continue to keep attendance records for each meeting and event on a spreadsheet that will be posted on a SAYC Google Drive shared to all members of the Commission. Making the attendance records publicly available

encourages transparency and accountability. Sponsors will note whether or not an absence is excused or unexcused, the details of which will be outlined in the next section.

- e. **If a member misses a meeting, they must follow procedure.** With the exception of immediate emergencies, a member must communicate to a sponsor two days in advance that they will not be able to attend a meeting that they committed to in the **Attendance Form**. For an absence to be excused, the member must provide some sort of note, email, etc. from a doctor or a family member. If an absence is excused, it will be noted in attendance records. Members that are absent will receive minutes and updates but are responsible for contacting the sponsors and leadership in order to arrange to make up for anything missed at the meeting or clarify questions.
- f. **Every three months and at the end of the year members shall be reviewed for attendance.** If a member has exceeded the amount of acceptable absences, they will be subject to a review from the SAYC Leadership and Sponsors that will observe their attendance record, excused vs. unexcused absences, and a statement prepared by that member explaining their poor attendance. The SAYC sponsors will then reach a final decision on whether or not to terminate the violating member's membership with a holistic evaluation of the circumstances.

### ***Media Presence***