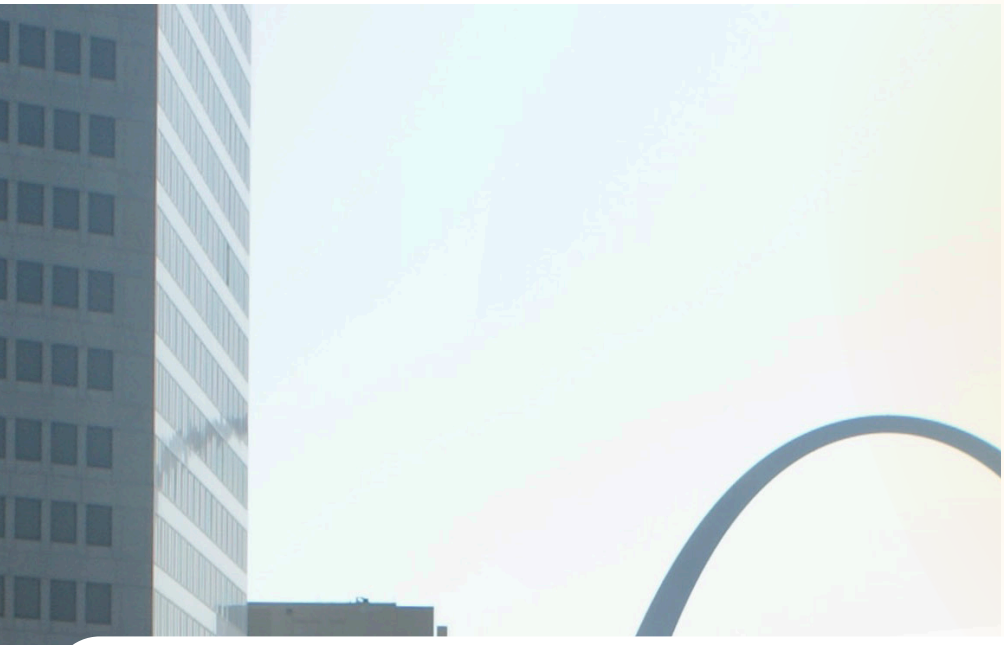
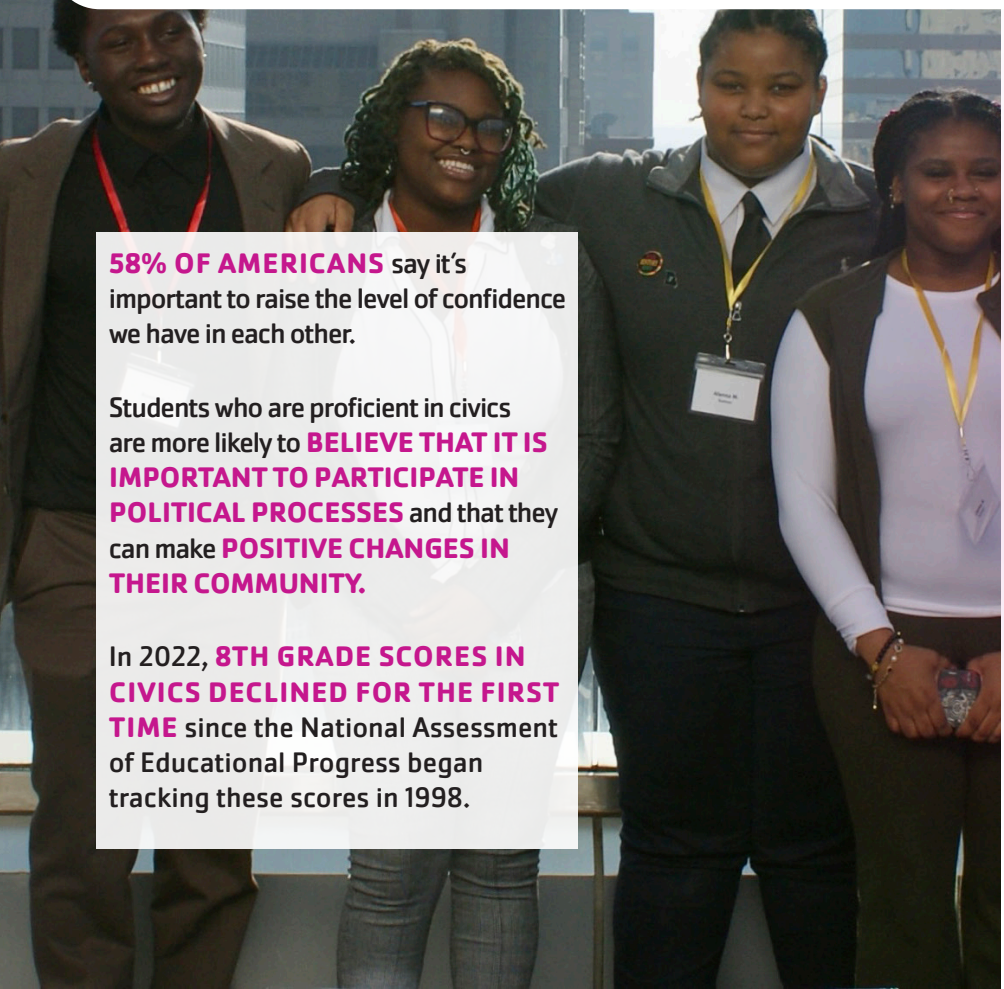
COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT
YMCA



The Y **for civics**



58% OF AMERICANS say it's important to raise the level of confidence we have in each other.

Students who are proficient in civics are more likely to **BELIEVE THAT IT IS IMPORTANT TO PARTICIPATE IN POLITICAL PROCESSES** and that they can make **POSITIVE CHANGES IN THEIR COMMUNITY.**

In 2022, **8TH GRADE SCORES IN CIVICS DECLINED FOR THE FIRST TIME** since the National Assessment of Educational Progress began tracking these scores in 1998.

Youth & Government

The YMCA has a long history of partnering with the community to make positive change. The first English language learning class in the United States was hosted by the Y. The Y was also one of the founders of the USO.

The Gateway Region Y continues this work today by showing teens how to turn their vision for the future into action. Our Youth and Government programs engage hundreds of teens from schools and Ys across our region. They learn how our government works, interact with elected officials and engage in service.



Youth & Government at **Community Development YMCA**

Dr. Dianna Sumner has volunteered to lead Youth & Government (YAG) at St. Louis Public Schools for 14 years. She started as a teacher at Carnahan High School with a delegation of 4 students. Her delegation grew quickly. By 2019 she had 40 teens including two students who presented their bill to Representative Steve Butz. Rep. Butz sponsored the bill sparking important awareness & debate about inequities in education funding. Dr. Sumner is now an Assistant Principal at Sumner High School. Through changes in schools, positions & even as she attended evening classes to earn her PhD, Dianna maintained her commitment to YAG. Every year, the Sumner delegation has won awards & had students selected for leadership positions at the state-wide and nation-wide conferences. Dr. Sumner is a great model for this high-quality work. In 2025, she was selected as the St. Louis Public Schools Supporting School Leader of the Year. When asked what she valued about YAG, Dr. Sumner responded, "Seeing my students grow in becoming advocates for themselves & for their community. It is such an amazing experience watching my students create a family-like culture within their own delegation where they support one another, are able to have difficult conversations and grow from them and become open-minded and willing to listen to peers they just met from other delegations. I believe the most valuable part of the YAG experience is learning how to overcome adversity & collaborate with students who come from different backgrounds." Sumner students see value in the program when it comes to graduating high school ready for the next step in their lives. Sumner alumni, Calvin Carson (Gateway Region Y Youth of the Year 2023), is an example of how YAG helps teens graduate ready for the next step in their lives. His grades improved significantly after starting Youth and Government in his junior year. Now Calvin uses his civic engagement skills in leadership at St. Louis Community College as an Executive Committee member on the Forest Park Campus.

$50
engages a high schooler in conversation with local elected officials about a current issue in a civic clinic.

$500
sends an 8th grader to Jefferson City to participate in the Missouri Youth & Government Convention.

$600
sends a high schooler to Springfield for Illinois Youth and Government.

YOU SEE TEENS EXPLORING DEMOCRACY, WE SEE A GENERATION READY TO LEAD.

Annual Campaign Goal: $58,000
Current Impact:
1,137 served annually through membership and programs.

Opportunity For All

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Join us as we create opportunity for all. Scan to give.