

Association of New York State Youth Bureaus

The Cornerstone of New York's Youth Development!



2026 Annual Youth Leadership Forum

ITINERARY February 2nd & 3rd, 2026

Meeting Room 6, Concourse, Empire State Plaza, Albany

Monday, February 2nd

11:30am - 12:30pm

Registration & Boxed Lunch

12:30 - 12:45pm

Welcoming & Opening Remarks

Frank Williams, Jr., Executive Director, City of White Plains Youth Bureau

Jackie Negri, Executive Director, Association of NYS Youth Bureaus

Al Articolo, Chief Hospitality Officer, City Mission of Schenectady

Seth Franco, Director of Discipleship, City Mission of Schenectady

12:45 - 2:00pm

Keynote Presentation

Leadership as a Verb: Communication, Teamwork and Action

Jeremy D. Butler, Chief Innovation Officer, ICAN

2:15 - 3:15pm

Workshop Session I

1) Treat College Like Trade School

2) The Power of Positive Peer Pressure: Teens helping teens

3) The Leadership Lab

4) It's Real: Teens & Mental Health

3:25 - 4:15pm

Workshop Session II

1) Treat College Like Trade School

2) The Power of Positive Peer Pressure: Teens helping teens

3) The Leadership Lab

4) It's Real: Teens & Mental Health

4:15pm

Depart for Hotel

5:00 - 5:45pm

Check in Rooms

6:00 - 7:00pm

Dinner at Hilton Garden Inn Troy

235 Hoosick St, Troy, NY 12180

6:30 - 9:30pm

Evening Activities

9:30pm

Youth report to their rooms

11:00pm

Lights out

Tuesday, February 3rd

6:30 - 8:30am

Breakfast at Hotel

Breakfast is included at your hotel if staying at the Hilton Garden Inn Troy or the Best Western Troy

8:30am

Depart for Capitol

9:00am - 12:00pm

Individual Appointments with State Reps

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About the Keynote:

Leadership as a Verb: Communication, Teamwork and Action

Meeting Room 6

Leadership isn't a title—it's a verb. This session invites students to rethink leadership as a set of choices they can make right now—how they show up, how they communicate, and how they bring people together around what matters. With a blend of high energy, real talk, and meaningful reflection, students will strengthen the skills that fuel teamwork and civic-minded action, and leave feeling equipped to turn their values into impact.

Jeremy D. Butler, Chief Innovation Officer, ICAN

About the Sessions:

Treat College Like Trade School

Meeting Room 2

One college per month closes in America. Does a 4-year college education, especially in the private sector, make sense anymore? Since the summer of 2020, students have been reevaluating the importance of pursuing bachelor's degree programs in academic areas unrelated to STEM. Furthermore, as technology progresses, skilled trade programs that grant graduates with "raw" hands-on skills that cannot be replaced by artificial intelligence (A.I.) have increased in popularity. Essentially, students and families need to take a more practical approach to the college selection process; an approach that is both career driven and economically realistic.

Anthony Rooney, Founder of College Client

The Leadership Lab

Meeting Room 6

Leadership is something you practice—not something you wait to be given. In this fast-paced, experiential session, students will work in teams through interactive challenges and guided reflection designed to strengthen communication, collaboration, and group decision-making. Through engaging activities and meaningful debriefs, students will explore how trust is built, how teams get unstuck, and how everyday choices shape influence. Students will leave with practical insights they can apply immediately in groups, clubs, and leadership settings.

Jeremy D. Butler, Chief Innovation Officer, ICAN

The Power of Positive Peer Pressure: Teens helping teens

Meeting Room 3

Youth, teen and peer courts are diversion programs that utilize the power of positive peer pressure to help hold young people accountable for their actions in a positive, constructive way through peer-led diversion hearings. Based on the principles of restorative justice, these programs benefit both the young offenders and the youth volunteers through civic engagement. This presentation will showcase how youth courts across the state employ different strategies to help young people and divert their cases from the juvenile justice system.

Katrina Charland

It's Real: Teens & Mental Health

Meeting Room 4

The AFSP-produced film It's Real: College Students and Mental Health is designed to raise awareness about mental health issues commonly experienced by students, and is intended to be used as part of a school's educational program to encourage help-seeking.

By featuring real stories and experiences, It's Real conveys that depression and other mental health conditions are real illnesses that can be managed through specific treatments and interventions. It encourages students to be mindful of the state of their mental health, to acknowledge and recognize when they are struggling, and to take steps to seek help.

Dan Egan, Board Chair, AFSP's Capital Region NY Chapter