



2026 GOVERNMENT-IN-ACTION YOUTH TOUR INFORMATIONAL PACKET

TCEC is sponsoring four high school students on the Government-in-Action Youth Tour as part of our commitment to supporting the growth and development of young people in our communities. Join nearly 2,000 students from across the nation to explore our nation's capital, meet legislators, and experience democracy firsthand.

Important Dates

- **Application opens:** November 10, 2025
- **Application deadline:** January 30, 2026, at 5:00 PM
- **Interviews:** February 16-19, 2026 (4-7 PM, if selected)
- **Participants announced:** March 2026
- **Pre-trip meeting:** May 2026
- **Tour dates:** June 14-22, 2026

Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible, you must:

- Be a current 10th or 11th grade student
- Have parents/guardians who are active TCEC members
- Be available for all dates listed above

Note: Immediate family members of TCEC Leadership Team are not eligible.

About the Youth Tour

Senator Lyndon B. Johnson initiated the Government-in-Action Youth Tour in 1957 so young people in rural America could "see what the flag stands for and represents." In 1965, Texas Electric Cooperatives organized the first official Texas Youth Tour. Over 55 years later, the Youth Tour stands true to Johnson's dream and the cooperative spirit.

Learn more at www.texasyouthtour.com/about-youth-tour

What You'll Experience

- **National monuments and memorials:** Lincoln Memorial, Washington Monument, Jefferson Memorial, Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Korean War Veterans Memorial, Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial
- **Capitol Hill:** U.S. Capitol tours and meetings with your Congressional representatives
- **Smithsonian Museums:** National Museum of American History, National Air and Space Museum, and more
- **Arlington National Cemetery:** Witness the Changing of the Guard
- **Educational sessions:** Learn about government, cooperatives, and leadership
- **Social events:** Connect with nearly 2,000 students from across the nation

Tour Schedule

- **Sunday, June 14:** Arrival and registration at Hilton Austin Airport (9515 Hotel Dr, Austin, TX)
- **Monday, June 15:** Fly to Washington, D.C.
- **June 15-20:** Washington, D.C. activities
- **Sunday, June 21:** Fly back to Austin and final activities
- **Monday, June 22:** Departure by 10:00 a.m.

Lodging & Rooming

Austin (June 14): Hilton Austin Airport - four participants per room

Washington, D.C. (June 15-20): Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center (201 Waterfront St, National Harbor, MD 20745) - two participants per room

Important: Roommates are pre-assigned. Students cannot request specific roommates.

What's Covered

All travel, lodging, and meal expenses are covered by TCEC. TCEC staff and/or designated chaperones will accompany the group throughout the tour.

Application Requirements

Submit your complete application by **January 30, 2026, at 5:00 PM**. All materials must be received by this deadline.

1. Online Application Form

Visit tcectexas.com and complete the online form, including:

- Basic personal and high school information
- TCEC account information
- Family information
- Leadership experience and community involvement

2. Required File Uploads

Upload these files when submitting your application:

- **Official transcript:** Must show school seal/signature (PDF preferred)
- **Professional headshot:** High-resolution, suitable for publicity (JPEG preferred)
- **Essay:** 500-word maximum (type in form or upload as PDF)
- **Activities resume:** Community service, leadership roles, work experience, honors, and extracurriculars (PDF)

File naming: Use FirstName_LastName_Document_2026 (Example: Sarah_Martinez_Transcript_2026)

3. Two Letters of Recommendation

Recommenders must submit letters directly (not through you) by **January 30, 2026, at 5:00 PM**.

Recommenders: Teachers, counselors, coaches, employers, or community leaders (non-family members)

Email to: communications@tcectexas.com with subject line: Youth Tour Recommendation

Mail to: TCEC Youth Tour Program, Attention: Communications Department, 600 NW Parkway Street, Azle, TX 76020

4. Interview (If selected)

Advancing applicants will participate in a 15-minute interview with the TCEC Youth Tour Committee.

- **When:** February 16-19, 2026 (4:00-7:00 PM)
- **Format:** In-person or virtual (details provided to selected applicants)

Interview tips: Be prepared to discuss your essay, demonstrate understanding of cooperative values, share why the Youth Tour matters to you, and be yourself.

Essay Guidelines

Choose ONE prompt. Maximum 500 words. Your essay should demonstrate TCEC's 10 Essential Attributes: Collaborative, Humble, Resilient, Engaged, Trustworthy, Empathetic, Responsible, Reliable, Communicative, and Coachable.

Option 1: Cooperative Values in Action

Describe a time when you demonstrated collaborative and responsible leadership to help your school, team, or community achieve something important while being mindful of resources. How do cooperative values align with your future goals?

Option 2: Reliability and Trust

Describe a situation where others were counting on you to deliver something important, even when facing challenges. How did you demonstrate reliability and resilience? How will you apply these qualities in your career?

Option 3: Safety and Service

Tell us about a time when you identified a potential problem or risk in your school or community and took action to address it. How did your empathetic and communicative approach create positive change?

Option 4: Efficient Resource Management

Describe a project where you had to work within limited resources (budget, time, materials, or people) to achieve a meaningful goal. How did you demonstrate humility, collaboration, and creative problem-solving?

Option 5: Member-Owner Mindset

Describe a time when you actively listened to different perspectives in your community and worked to find solutions that benefited everyone. How did you balance various viewpoints while staying focused on the common good?

Option 6: Powering Tomorrow's Communities

What challenge do you see facing your generation that will require long-term commitment and community-focused approach? How have you already begun developing skills to address this challenge? Describe how you embody the cooperative spirit.

Writing Tips

- **Use specific examples:** Concrete details, not general statements
- **Show personal growth:** How experiences shaped your perspective
- **Connect to cooperative values:** Link experiences to TCEC's mission
- **Express enthusiasm:** Convey genuine excitement about Youth Tour
- **Proofread carefully:** Check for errors and have someone review

Selection Process

An independent third-party organization evaluates all applications to ensure fair and unbiased selection. TCEC will sponsor 4 students on the 2026 Government-in-Action Youth Tour.

Selection criteria: Academic standing, community involvement, leadership experience, essay quality, letters of recommendation, and interview performance (if applicable).

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I apply if I'm a freshman or senior?

No. The program is exclusively for students in 10th or 11th grade at the time of application (January 2026). However, you can be entering or in your senior year during the June tour.

Can I apply if I'm homeschooled?

Yes! You must meet the grade and residency requirements and provide an official transcript.

Can I save my application and finish it later?

No. The online application must be completed in one session. We recommend preparing your materials in advance.

What should I wear on Capitol Hill Day?

Participants must wear khaki slacks or khaki skirts. TCEC will provide a navy polo shirt. You'll receive complete packing information at the pre-trip meeting.

What if I need to make changes after submitting?

Contact Communications@tcectexas.com immediately. Depending on timing, changes may or may not be possible.

What if I have technical issues?

Contact Communications@tcectexas.com for support. Don't wait until the deadline!

Application Checklist

Before You Apply

- ☐ Written maximum 500-word essay
- ☐ Official high school transcript (PDF)
- ☐ Professional headshot photo (JPEG or PNG)
- ☐ Activities resume (PDF)
- ☐ Identified two recommenders
- ☐ Confirmed availability for all key dates

After You Submit

- ☐ Save confirmation email
- ☐ Remind recommenders about deadline
- ☐ Keep copies of all materials
- ☐ Monitor email for interview notifications

Ready to Apply?

Visit tcectexas.com to begin your application!

Deadline: January 30, 2026, at 5:00 PM

Contact Information

- **Email:** communications@tcectexas.com
- **Website:** tcectexas.com
- **Youth Tour info:** www.texasyouthtour.com/about-youth-tour

Response time: Allow 1-2 business days for email responses. Contact early if you have questions or technical issues.