



64th ANNUAL UNITED STATES SENATE YOUTH PROGRAM

Sponsored by the Hearst Foundations

2025-2026 Colorado Application

**Applications Due:** **Thursday, October 16, 2025, by 4:00 pm**

**Note:** The following paper version of the application is intended only as a reference document for instructions and application planning purposes. This is a comprehensive document; there is information in this document not available in the online application.

**To Access the Application:**

Each interested applicant is asked to submit their name and contact information via [Smartsheet](https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/630638ffd6a34213b9a337cc6b82cebb) form.

Once contact information is submitted, applicants will receive login instructions. This will allow applicants to visit the application and save their work before submitting.

Applications will be submitted online through [CDE’s GAINS application system](https://colorado.egrantsmanagement.com). Applicants must complete the brief form above for login information.

# INTRODUCTION

The United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP), established in 1962 by U.S. Senate Resolution, is a unique educational experience for outstanding high school students interested in pursuing careers in public service. The USSYP brings the highest-level officials from each branch of government to meet with this outstanding group of young leaders—two

high school juniors or seniors from each of the fifty states, the District of Columbia and the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA)— for an intensive week-long education and leadership program to be held in Washington, D.C. The 2026 program will occur **March 7-14, 2026**. The program is merit based and highly competitive. Each student will also receive a $10,000 undergraduate college scholarship with encouragement to pursue coursework in history and political science. The program has been fully funded since inception by The Hearst Foundations as an enduring commitment to preparing young people for civic leadership in our participatory democracy.

# THE PROGRAM

Delegates will hear policy addresses by senators, cabinet members, officials of the Departments of State and Defense, leaders of other federal agencies and senior members of the national media. Delegates also traditionally participate in a meeting with a justice of the U.S. Supreme Court and the president of the United States. Most speaking events include in-depth question and answer sessions.

The Heart Foundations will pay all expenses for Washington Week including transportation, hotel, and meals. The Department of Defense (DoD) annually provides a team of competitively selected men and women officers to serve as mentors and chaperones for the student delegates. A registered nurse, licensed physician, and professional security team are in place at all times throughout the week.

# ELIGIBILITY

Qualified high school juniors or seniors must show demonstrated leadership by servicing in elected or appointed positions in which they are actively representing a constituency in organizations related to student government, education, public affairs, and community service. They must be actively serving in qualified leadership positions, enrolled in high school, and living in the state that they will represent for the entire 2025-2026 academic year.

Alternate delegates will be selected as replacements if a primary delegate is unable to participate in Washington Week. **Attendance during the entire Washington Week program is required to receive the financial scholarship;** appropriate disposition of scholarship funds will be determined by the program director if a primary delegate is unable to attend the program due to emergency circumstances.

Selection will be based on the student’s outstanding abilities and demonstrated qualities of leadership in an elected or appointed student office for the entire 2025-2026 school year. **The primary purposes of the qualifying leadership position must be representation of a constituency and service to others.** A student who graduates high school at the close of the fall 2024 semester/quarter is not eligible to apply for the program, and students other than DoDEA delegates must be residing in one state of primary residence in the U.S. during the entire 2025-2026 academic year to participate.

1. Any high school junior or senior student is eligible for the program provided they have not previously been a delegate to Washington Week and has not received a USSYP scholarship.

**The student must hold a high-level leadership position in any one of the following student government, civic or educational organizations during the entire 2025-2026 academic year:**

1. Student Body president, vice president, secretary, or treasurer
2. Class president, vice president, secretary, or treasurer
3. Student Council representative
4. A National Honor Society officer (including discipline-based Honor Societies such as the National English and Social Studies Honor Societies that include service components)
5. Student representative elected or appointed (appointed by a panel, commission, or board) to a local, district, regional or state-level civic, service and/or educational organization approved by the state selection administrator, where the student holds a position of representation to a constituency providing service to others.
6. **Participation or holding an officer position in academic clubs, educational competition programs/conferences, or organizations designed primarily for the student’s personal development do not qualify a student for the USSYP, although many students who qualify participate in these activities. The positions listed below DO NOT qualify the student for the program:**
7. Attendance or officer position at Boys/Girls Nation or State summer conference;
8. Member of a National Honor Society (serving as an elected officer for the organization for the entire school year is acceptable);
9. Member or leader of the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts or JROTC;
10. A founder or chairperson of a self-created group; and
11. A participant, captain or officer in Mock Trial, Debate Team, Model UN or other academic club, mock legislature, conference, or competition where the primary engagement is for individual educational enrichment.
12. **RESIDENCY: Each student must be a legal permanent resident or citizen of the United States at the time of application.** Students must be enrolled for the entire academic year in a public or independent high school located in the state in which at least one of their parents or guardians currently resides. Home-educated students must be approved by their state department of education to apply.

Exceptions to the residency requirement will only be made in the following cases:

1. Students from DoDEA overseas will represent the state of which the parents/guardians are U.S. legal voting residents. Students attending DoD schools in the U.S. or students enrolled through U.S. military bases in local schools must be residing in the state in which their school is located for the entire academic year.
2. Students may reside in a state other than the state in which they attend school if they are enrolled in the only designated public high school available to them in a school district that crosses contiguous state borders through legal interstate agreement. Student in these schools shall make application to the program through the state where the high school is located and shall represent that state if selected.

# OFFICIAL PROGRAM RULES

1. **All delegates must agree to fully block both arrival and departure travel days to participate in Washington Week.**
2. **NO TOURS OR TRIPS WILL BE PERMITTED BY INDIVIDUAL DELEGATES WHILE TRAVELING TO OR FROM WASHINGTON, D.C., OR WHILE IN WASHINGTON, D.C. THIS POLICY INCLUDES ANY OTHER OUTSIDE ACTIVITY, CONFERENCE, SCHOLARSHIP COMPETITION OR EVENT OF ANOTHER ORGANIZATION THAT IS CONDUCTED IN WASHINGTON, D.C., OR THE SURROUNDING AREA DURING THE TIME FRAME OF THE USSYP WASHINGTON WEEK, AND INCLUDES ANY OUTSIDE APPOINTMENT OR EVENT DURING THE PROGRAM WEEK.**

All travel provided by The Hearst Foundations is round-trip only and scheduled within the time frames listed below. ALL TIMES EASTERN TIME:

* **Arrival in Washington, D.C.: Saturday, March 7, 2026, between 6:00 AM and 5:00 PM**
* **Departure from Washington, D.C.: Saturday, March 14, 2026, between 5:00 AM and 9:00 AM**
1. The chief state school officer from each state, the District of Columbia and Department of Defense Education Activity must submit in writing to The Hearst Foundations by **December 1, 2025**, the names of their two delegates and alternates. Upon confirmation of qualifications, the program requires each delegate to submit a statement of participation, a code of conduct agreement and medical release to be signed by students and parents/legal guardians. All program rules apply to the group as a whole, defined as minors.
2. **Code of Conduct:** Delegates will be the guests of the United States Senate and The Hearst Foundations throughout the program and are required to conduct themselves with civility, dignity, and professionalism. Debate and discussion are actively encouraged in an environment of tolerance, respect, and inclusion. Students selected to the program are serving as at-large public representatives of their states, communities, and schools, and attend the program to learn from the speakers and from one another. Students are prohibited from engaging in independent outreach on behalf of the program, and from lobbying, petitioning, protest or overt political activism during Washington Week. Cyberbullying and bullying of any kind will not be tolerated. Delegates must comply with all program health and safety policies.
3. It will be the responsibility of the parents/legal guardians to transport (at their expense) each delegate to the nearest commercial airport or train station that provides round trip travel to Washington, D.C. from their hometown. **All itineraries will be designed for the least amount of travel time and most direct routing.**
4. No arrangements for individual religious practices or services other than dietary guidelines will be made during Washington Week. Parents are not allowed to chaperone their child, and roommates are designated by the program. This policy will be strictly observed from the time the student delegates arrive at the Washington area airports, train station and program site until they return home.
5. The program does not allow any individual or group athletic activities outside of the hotel facility.
6. Failure to abide by rules and requirements of the program will result in dismissal from the program and forfeiture of the $10,000 scholarship award. Rules related to the USSYP and scholarship award shall be construed, interpreted, and applied by The Hearst Foundations, whose action and determination shall be final and binding.

# SCHOLARSHIP

The Hearst Foundations believe it is in the public interest to encourage these outstanding young people to continue their educational development. The $10,000 undergraduate college scholarship award is subject to the conditions and requirements specified below. Additional detailed scholarship information will be provided to the delegates after Washington Week. Certificates representing the award will be presented to the delegates during their visit to

Washington, D.C., often personally signed by their senators.

# SCHOLARSHIP RULES

* 1. **The $10,000 college scholarship and attendance at the Washington Week program are one, inseparable award.** Delegates must attend all in-person meetings during Washington Week in accordance with program rules and policies in order to receive the financial scholarship.
	2. **The USSYP scholarship is designated for undergraduate college study only** at an accredited United States college or university. All students are encouraged to include history, political science, or related subjects in their undergraduate program.
	3. The $10,000 scholarship is designated for the specified student’s education expense and must be used within four years after enrollment. Funds are paid directly to the college or university in the student’s behalf. No funds may be given directly to a student. The scholarship will be issued in either one payment of $10,000 or increments of $5,000 or $2,500.
	4. Students attending military academies (U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force and U.S. Coast Guard) may draw the USSYP scholarship per the guidelines to purchase required military uniforms, books, computer equipment and other educational materials.
	5. A student will automatically forfeit eligibility for a scholarship award by failure to abide by all rules and requirements pertaining to the program and the scholarship or in the event of misconduct as a delegate to the United States Senate Youth Program.

# COLORADO SELECTION PROCESS

A selection committee will review all qualified applications and select up to eight top candidates, who will be asked to participate in a virtual personal interview. The committee will select two primary delegates, and a first and second alternate. Alternates will be selected as replacements in the event a primary delegate is for any reason unable to participate in the program’s Washington Week.

Selection will be based, in part, on the students' outstanding abilities and demonstrated qualities of leadership in an elected or appointed position representing a constituency during the entire 2025-2026 school year.

The following are desired qualities in candidates:

* Leadership and public speaking ability;
* High scholastic standing and demonstrated ability to achieve;
* Community and public service involvement;
* Participation in a wide selection of activities on and off campus; and
* Adequate social skills to participate in a large and dynamic group with relative ease.

In addition to outstanding leadership abilities and a strong commitment to volunteer work, the USSYP student delegates demonstrate high academic achievement. They continue to excel and develop impressive qualities that are often directed toward public service.

Following the review of submitted applications, the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) will schedule interviews with the top candidates during the week of November 10, 2025. In the event of a tie, the finalists will be asked to complete a qualifying examination, prior to Friday, November 7, 2025. Based upon final application and interview process scores, CDE will submit the names of Colorado’s two delegates and two alternates to the Hearst Foundations. Upon completion of the delegate and alternate selection process, the Hearst Foundations will contact the individuals directly providing information regarding the scholarships and the Washington Week program. All applicants will receive notification on the status of their applications by **Friday, December 5, 2025**.

# APPLICATION SUBMISSION PROCESS

|  |
| --- |
| **Applications Due:** **Thursday, October 16, 2025, by 4:00 pm****Submit your application at:**<https://colorado.egrantsmanagement.com>  |

# REQUIRED ELEMENTS

The sections outlined below **must be completed**:

**Section I:** **Student and School District Information**

**Section II:** **School, Parent/Guardian, and Student Signatures**

**Section III:** **Written Application Essays**

**Section IV: Video Presentation**

**Section V:** **Letters of Recommendation**

# APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

**Section I: Student and School District Information**

Enter the information requested in this section directly in the online application.

**Section II: School, Parent/Guardian, and Student Signatures**

Ensure the form contains signatures from the guidance counselor official, principal, parent/guardian, and student signature.

Save a copy of the completed form by naming your file in this format: LastName\_Signatures.

Upload in the “Application Uploads” section of the online application.

**Section III: Written Application Essays**

1. **Submit a personal essay describing each of the following elements as they pertain to you:**

Current elected student position held and all past involvement in student government/leadership;

Activities and achievements that demonstrate leadership in school and community that specifically support your desire to serve as your USSYP State delegate;

Involvement in community service initiatives or programs outside of school;

How your participation in USSYP will enhance your understanding and interest in the political and governmental process of the United States; and

Share ways in which you think being chosen for the U.S. Senate Youth Program will help you explore some of the most important questions you have at present about the challenges facing the country.

2. **Submit a persuasive essay researched and written on a topic of social significance related to a contemporary state, national, or world event.** Select a topic important to you, take a stand, relate its importance to you, and defend your position. The essay will be judged on organization, ideas and content, evidence of personalization, and writing conventions ***including citation of sources***. Note: citations should be included following each essay and should not be longer than an additional page.

**Required format:**

Limit responses to 750 words or less per essay.

Make sure to have someone proofread your essays and application for omissions and errors.

**Section IV: Video Presentation**

**Note: Public speaking is a core component of the USSYP. Each student applicant should prepare a short video presentation, no more than 3 minutes in length, as part of the 2026 application, to be judged for eloquence, vocabulary, originality, organization of presentation, knowledge of any material or content presented, clarity of artwork (charts, graphs, slides if used) and overall presentation.**

**Instructions:**

Please submit a video presentation of no more than 3 minutes in length on this topic:

Imagine that you are a newly elected Senator from Colorado. Describe who you are, why you are proud to represent Colorado.

Tell us the personal characteristics you feel will make you an effective leader in Washington.

Note what legislative initiatives you will champion and why they are important to you and your constituents.

Please note any historical leadership figures you would like to emulate.

**Submission:**

* + - You may use the platform that works best for you (YouTube, Vimeo, recorded from a device and shared via Google folder link, etc.).
		- Important: please ensure that your video link is not set to “Private” and can be accessed by application reviewers.
		- Provide the link to access your presentation in the space provided in the online application form.

**Section V: Letters of Recommendation**

* **Each student must submit two letters of support and recommendation from:**
	+ The high school principal, **and**
	+ An adult advisor to the organization or student body entity that they represent.
* Recommendations should be attached as separate pages, in letter format, **should confirm the student’s leadership position, their leadership qualities and personal attributes.**
* Save your recommendations in Word or PDF and name your file in this format: LastName\_Recommendation1 or 2.

Upload in the “Application Uploads” section of the online application.

# ADDITIONAL APPLICATION INFORMATION

* Pages containing signatures should be scanned and included as part of the file uploads. Contact us at CompetitiveGrants@cde.state.co.us if you encounter any technical issues with compiling, converting to PDF, or submitting your materials.
* **DO NOT** send academic records with your completed application.
* In case of a tie, the finalists must complete a qualifying examination, prior to Friday, November 7, 2025.
* If a discovery of plagiarism is made known or brought to the attention of the Colorado Department of Education during a current award competition, then at the discretion of the department, the department has the right to remove the application from consideration.
	+ - We realize AI (artificial intelligence) tools are widely used and can be helpful when used responsibly. If you utilize an AI tool to assist with your application development, please ensure your written responses contain your own original thoughts, ideas, and voice in responding to the application prompts. Please also ensure appropriate citation is used when referencing, summarizing or paraphrasing the work of others.
* Do not send applications to the United States Senate Youth Program as this will disqualify the application.

**64th ANNUAL UNITED STATES SENATE YOUTH PROGRAM**

**2025-2026 Colorado Student Application**

**Applications Due: Thursday, October 16, 2025, by 4:00 pm**

**\*\*Below is the Information you will be asked to complete in your online application. You may find it helpful to use this document to plan and compile your responses.**

# SECTION I: STUDENT AND SCHOOL DISTRICT INFORMATION

**Student Information**

Student Full Name: [First, Middle, Last]

Date of Birth: [Month/Day/Year]

Student Preferred Name:

Student Gender: [Male, Female or Other]

Student Home Phone:

Student Cell Phone:

Student E-mail Address:

Mailing Address: [Street, City, State, Zip]

Congressional District:

Full Name of 1st Parent/Guardian:

Parent/Guardian Phone:

Parent/Guardian E-mail:

Parent/Guardian Mailing Address: [Street, City, State, Zip]

Full Name of 2nd Parent/Guardian:

Parent/Guardian Phone:

Parent/Guardian E-mail:

Parent/Guardian Mailing Address: [Street, City, State, Zip]

Student’s Current Year in High School: [Junior or Senior]

Expected Graduation: [Month/Year]

**Student Residency**

*Per the U.S. Senate Youth Program rules, Students must have U.S. citizenship or legal permanent residence status to apply to the U.S. Senate Youth Program. Due to security clearance requirements, students not in possession of the Green Card at the time of application are ineligible to apply for this program.*

YES I am a U.S. citizen

NO I am not a U.S. citizen, but I am a permanent resident in possession of my official Green Card at the time of this application. Having applied for a Green Card, but not in possession, means you cannot apply for USSYP.

*Per the United States Senate Youth Program rules, the student is enrolled for the entire academic year in a public or independent high school located in the state in which at least one of their parents or guardians is a current resident.* [YES/NO]

**School and District Information**

High School Name:

School District:

School Address: [Street, City, State, Zip]

School Phone:

School Type: [Public School/Private School]

Principal Name:

Principal E-mail Address:

**Qualifying Leadership Position**

Mark the ELECTED/APPOINTED office you now hold for the entire 2025-2026 school year in one of the following student government, civic, or educational organizations:

☐ Student Body President ☐ Class President

☐ Student Body Vice President ☐ Class Vice President

☐ Student Body Secretary ☐ Class Secretary

☐ Student Body Treasurer ☐ Class Treasurer

☐ Student Council Representative

☐ Officer in a National Honor Society chapter

☐ Student representative elected or appointed (appointed by a panel, commission or board) to a local, district, regional or state-level civic, service and/or educational organization whose primary purpose is public/community service and constituent representation. Such positions will be subject to approval by the state selection administrator.

What is your qualifying position if not student body or Honor Society officer:

**What do you do to serve your community and support your constituency year-round in this position:**

[Limit 100 words].

**Provide a brief paragraph listing your leadership positions and academic honors, including community service, other extracurricular pursuits, and general plans for college and career in order of importance.** Note: If selected as a delegate or alternate, this brief paragraph will be submitted with your participation information. [Limit 200 words]

# SECTION II: SCHOOL, PARENT/GUARDIAN, AND STUDENT SIGNATURES

**Upload your SCHOOL, PARENT/GUARDIAN, AND STUDENT SIGNATURES form in Word or PDF in your** [**online application**](https://colorado.egrantsmanagement.com)**.** Additional copies of this form may be used to obtain the information/signatures. Please make sure to name your file in this format: LastName\_Signatures.

**TO BE COMPLETED BY STUDENT’S SCHOOL GUIDANCE DEPARTMENT and SCHOOL PRINCIPAL**

**Last Semester GPA** [Spring 2025]**:**

**Cumulative GPA** [HS Career]**:**

**Number of Students in Student’s Graduation Class:**

**Class Rank** [if applicable]**:**

**What is the student’s rank in scholastic standing of their class?**

[ ]  **Upper 1%**

[ ]  **Upper 5 %**

[ ]  **Upper 10 %**

[ ]  **Upper 15%**

[ ]  **Upper 25 %**

**Student’s ELECTED /APPOINTED office for the 2025-2026 School Year:**

**SCHOOL’S GUIDANCE DEPARTMENT SIGNATURE**

*I certify that all student academic and USSYP-qualifying leadership position information listed in this application is correct.*

**Name of Guidance Official:**

**Signature of Guidance Official:**

**Date (MM/DD/YY):**

**SCHOOL PRINCIPAL SIGNATURE**

*In addition to my letter of recommendation, I verify this student is holding the leadership position noted above and is endorsed to represent our school and state if chosen:*

**Name of School Principal:**

**Signature of School Principal:**

**Date (MM/DD/YY):**

**PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE**

*Parents or guardians must sign below to approve for the student to go to Washington, D.C. for a week to attend the United States Senate Youth Program under the conditions set forth in the*[***rules and regulations of the program brochure***](https://ussenateyouth.org/selection_process_brochure/)*.*

**1st Parent/Guardian Signature and Date:**

**2nd Parent/Guardian Signature and Date:**

[if applicable]

**STUDENT SIGNATURE**

*I certify that I have carefully read the United States Senate Youth qualifications and program rules; that all the information in this application is correct; and that I do not currently have a scheduling conflict; and I understand complete attendance at the Washington Week program is required to receive the scholarship.*

**Student Signature:**

**64th ANNUAL UNITED STATES SENATE YOUTH PROGRAM**

**2025-2026 Colorado Student Application**

# SECTION III: WRITTEN APPLICATION ESSAYS

1. **Submit a personal essay describing each of the following elements as they pertain to you:**

Current elected student position held and all past involvement in student government/leadership;

Activities and achievements that demonstrate leadership in school and community that specifically support your desire to serve as your USSYP State delegate;

Involvement in community service initiatives or programs outside of school;

How your participation in USSYP will enhance your understanding and interest in the political and governmental process of the United States; and

Share ways in which you think being chosen for the U.S. Senate Youth Program will help you explore some of the most important questions you have at present about the challenges facing the country.

2. **Submit a persuasive essay researched and written on a topic of social significance related to a contemporary state, national, or world event.** Select a topic important to you, take a stand, relate its importance to you, and defend your position. The essay will be judged on organization, ideas and content, evidence of personalization, and writing conventions ***including citation of sources***. Note: citations should be included following each essay and should not be longer than an additional page.

**Required format:**

Limit responses to **750 words or less** per essay. Points will not only be awarded for how well the applicant addresses the question, but also for grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

Make sure to have someone proofread your essays and application for omissions and errors.

# SECTION IV: VIDEO PRESENTATION

Note: Public speaking is a core component of the USSYP. Each student applicant should prepare a short video presentation, no more than 3 minutes in length, as part of the 2026 application, to be judged for public speaking skill, vocabulary, originality, organization of presentation, knowledge of any material or content presented, clarity of artwork (charts, graphs, slides if used) and overall presentation.

**Instructions**

Please submit a video presentation of **no more than 3 minutes in length** on this topic:

Imagine that you are a newly elected Senator from Colorado. Describe who you are, why you are proud to represent the state of Colorado.

Tell us the personal characteristics you feel will make you an effective leader in Washington.

Note what legislative initiatives you will champion and why they are important to you and your constituents.

Please note any historical leadership figures you would like to emulate.

**Submission**

* + - You may use the platform that works best for you (YouTube, Vimeo, recorded from a device and shared via Google folder link, etc.).
		- Important: please ensure that your video link is not set to “Private” and can be accessed by application reviewers.
		- Provide the link to access your presentation in the space provided in the online application.

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**2025-2026 Colorado Student Application**

# SECTION V: LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION – SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Recommendation should be attached as a separate page, in letter format, and **should confirm the student’s leadership position, their leadership qualities and personal attributes.**

\*This recommendation should be from the **applicant’s high school principal**.

Upload your SCHOOL PRINCIPAL recommendation form in Word or PDF in your online application. Please make sure to name your file in this format: LastName\_Recommendation1.

**Reference Name:**

**Title:**

**Telephone:**

**E-mail Address:**

**Reference Signature:**

**Date:**

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# SECTION V: LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION – ADULT REPRESENTATIVE

Recommendation should be attached as a separate page, in letter format, and **should confirm the student’s leadership position, their leadership qualities and personal attributes.**

\*This recommendation should be an **adult advisor to the organization or student body entity that they represen**t.

Upload your Adult Representative recommendation form in Word or PDF in your online application. Please make sure to name your file in this format: LastName\_Recommendation2.

**Reference Name:**

**Title:**

**Telephone:**

**E-mail Address:**

**Reference Signature:**

**Date:**

**64th ANNUAL UNITED STATES SENATE YOUTH PROGRAM**

**2025-2026 Colorado Student Application**

# APPLICATION CHECKLIST

For use as a reference; **do not include** with your application.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. Does your application package include:
 | **Yes** | **No** |
|  **Section II:** Student Application Form with **all** signatures |[ ] [ ]
|  **Section III:** Written Application Essays |[ ] [ ]
|  **Section IV:** Video Presentation Link |[ ] [ ]
|  **Section V:** Recommendations:* + - School Principal
		- Adult Representative
 |[ ] [ ]
| 1. Has someone else **proofread** your application for clarity, grammar, spelling, and typos?
 |[ ] [ ]
| 1. Did you name each file to be uploaded in the specified format listed at the top of each attachment (i.e., LastName\_Recommendation1, etc.)?
 |[ ] [ ]
| 1. Did you ensure your video link is not set to “Private” so it can be accessed by application reviewers?
 |[ ] [ ]

|  |
| --- |
| **Submit all application materials through the** [**online application form**](https://colorado.egrantsmanagement.com/)by **Thursday, October 16, 2025, by 4:00 pm** |

**64th ANNUAL UNITED STATES SENATE YOUTH PROGRAM**

**2025-2026 Colorado Student Application**

**Evaluation Rubric**

CDE Use Only – Reviewers will use the following Evaluation Rubric to assess submitted applications.

**Student Name:**

**Reviewer Name:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Section III:**  | **Written Application Essays** |  |
|  | **Essay 1** | /15 |
|  | **Essay 2** | /15 |
| **Section IV:**  | **Video Presentation** | /20 |
| **Section V:** | **Overall Application** | /10 |
|  | **Total** | **/60** |

**General Comments:**

# APPLICATION EVALUATION CRITERIA

**Section III: Written Application Essays** [30 Points]

The reviewer will assess the overall content and mechanics of the student's essays. The responses should demonstrate both excellence in written communication as well as the student’s passion on political and civic matters.

**Essay 1**

**Submit a personal essay describing each of the following elements as they pertain to you:**

Current elected student position held and all past involvement in student government/leadership;

Activities and achievements that demonstrate leadership in school and community that specifically support your desire to serve as your USSYP State delegate;

Involvement in community service initiatives or programs outside of school;

How your participation in USSYP will enhance your understanding and interest in the political and governmental process of the United States; and

Share ways in which you think being chosen for the U.S. Senate Youth Program will help you explore some of the most important questions you have at present about the challenges facing the country.

**Select one score:**

**0** – Response was inconsistent or did not address essay prompt.

**5** – Response was limited or provided unclear discussion of elements within the essay prompt. Demonstrates little to no consistency and/or provides little support of ideas. Uses sentences that are unclear. Contains multiple errors in usage of words, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

**10** – Response addressed some but not all of the elements within the essay prompt. Provides consistency in ideas but minimal supportive detail and explanation included. Uses correct and complete sentences that are varied in structure and length. Demonstrates mostly correct word usage, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

**15** – Response clearly and thoroughly addressed all elements within the essay prompt. Exemplifies consistency in development of ideas, also thoughtfully supports ideas will detail and explanation. Effectively uses coherent and complete sentences that are varied in structure and length. Correctly and effectively uses words and incorporates correct spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

**Essay 2**

**Submit a persuasive essay researched and written on a topic of social significance related to a contemporary state, national, or world event.** Select a topic important to you, take a stand, relate its importance to you, and defend your position. The essay will be judged on organization, ideas and content, evidence of personalization, and writing conventions ***including citation of sources***.

**Select one score:**

**0** – Response was inconsistent or did not address essay prompt.

**5** – Response was limited or provided unclear discussion of elements within the essay prompt. Demonstrates little to no consistency and/or provides little support of ideas. Uses sentences that are unclear. Contains multiple errors in usage of words, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

**10** – Response addressed some but not all of the elements within the essay prompt. Provides consistency in ideas but minimal supportive detail and explanation included. Uses correct and complete sentences that are varied in structure and length. Demonstrates mostly correct word usage, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

**15** – Response clearly and thoroughly addressed all elements within the essay prompt. Exemplifies consistency in development of ideas, also thoughtfully supports ideas will detail and explanation. Effectively uses coherent and complete sentences that are varied in structure and length. Correctly and effectively uses words and incorporates correct spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

**Section IV: Student Video Presentation** [20 Points]

Public speaking is a core component of the USSYP. Each student applicant should prepare a short video presentation, no more than 3 minutes in length, as part of the 2025 application, to be judged for public speaking skill, vocabulary, originality, organization of presentation, knowledge of any material or content presented, clarity of artwork (charts, graphs, slides if used) and overall presentation.

**Video Presentation Prompt:**

* **Imagine that you are a newly elected Senator from Colorado. Describe who you are and why you are proud to represent the state of Colorado.**
	+ Tell us the personal characteristics you feel will make you an effective leader in Washington.
	+ Note what legislative initiatives you will champion and why they are important to you and your constituents.
	+ Please note any historical leadership figures you would like to emulate.

**Select one score:**

**0** – Did not include link to video presentation.

**6** – Response was limited or unclear discussion of elements within the video presentation prompt. Lacks clear connection to presentation prompt and/or did not confidently address presentation prompt.

**13** – Response addressed some but not all of the elements within the video presentation prompt. Establishes purpose and demonstrates confidence throughout presentation. Mostly conveys knowledge of and passion for political and social issues.

**20** – Response clearly and thoroughly addressed all elements within the video presentation prompt. Clearly establishes, maintains, and communicates purpose throughout the presentation. Exemplifies strong presentation skills, eloquence, and confidence. Clearly conveys knowledge of and passion for political and social issues.

**Section V: Overall Application** [10 Points]

Reviewers are asked to create a holistic score for the overall application including essay responses, video response, and letters of recommendation. Reviewers are also asked to pay special attention to student eligibility, support of student candidacy, and student's achievements.

**Select one score:**

0 – Overall application was inconsistent or overlooked/omitted required information. Application may not have indicated eligible elected or appointed office for the entire 2025-2026 school year.

4 – While there may be compelling moments in this application, the evidence is not consistent. The student may have used the same example for multiple responses, or the application provided little evidence of student’s accomplishments.

7 – While the essays may not be perfect, this student is undoubtedly inspired by public service. There is consistent evidence of the student’s accomplishments, and the recommendations support their constituency.

10 – Clear and compelling evidence supports the student’s outstanding abilities and demonstrated qualities of leadership in their elected or appointed student office for the entire 2025-2026 school year. This student has demonstrated they are passionate about service to others and pursuing a career in public service. The student’s references clearly support their constituency and provide strong evidence of student's accomplishments.