



Women Focus Canada Youth Civic Engagement Program (YCEP) 2025

Purpose

The Youth Civic Engagement Program (YCEP) empowers young women in Brampton and Peel Region with the knowledge and confidence to become informed, engaged, and impactful leaders in their communities.

This is vitally needed because young women are significantly less engaged in political life than other demographic groups in Canada.

YCEP is an initiative of Women Focus Canada, which seeks to end poverty by empowering women with the resources, advocacy, and community support they need to achieve economic independence and personal and professional growth.



Curriculum 2025 – Empowering Youth in Civic Engagement and Leadership

This year's program ran from April 22 through June 12 and was made up of 3 phrases: three virtual workshops, three group mentorship sessions, and a one-day hybrid Knowledge Exchange and Networking session at Brampton City Hall on Wednesday, May 21.

Key themes of this year's program included (see the full curriculum at the end of this report):

- 1) Careers in the Public Sector, Careers in Community Development / Services, & Civic Engagement
- 2) Understanding political systems, running for political office as a young woman, overcoming challenges
- 3) Leadership Skills, Communication Skills, Personal Branding, Networking & Professional Development.

Outcomes

Fifty-eight people participated in the program, 24 in person and 34 virtually.

Our young women participants reported significant increases in both knowledge and confidence to actively participate in political and civic life in their community.

- **Knowledge increases** included:
At least 80% of the participants reported leaving the program with a good or high level of understanding of
 - 1) How they can impact society through community involvement,
 - 2) The role of the public sector in society, and
 - 3) The steps involved in running for political office – including steps they could start now.
- **Confidence increases** included:
 - **Dealing with challenging emotions** in themselves and others – a key skill for navigating life in public service and community advocacy – 100% of participants reported feeling much more equipped to deal with these challenges.
 - **Organizing events and taking part in community projects** – the number of participants who said they felt confident / empowered more than doubled to 67%.
 - **Leading or organizing community initiatives** – the number of participants who said they felt confident / empowered to do this more than doubled from 33% to 78%. This was very meaningful since leadership was a key objective of the program.

Feedback – From our youth participants

“It’s been great to learn from some amazing speakers. It was really inspiring! This was a great opportunity that I believe many more people in high school & university should participate in.”



Participants in Tour of Brampton City Hall



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Catalysts for Change: Empowering Youth in Civic Engagement & Leadership

Capacity Building

Tuesday April 29 – Careers in Community Development / Services

- How to influence change locally
- Empowering women in community activism
- Careers pathway in community development/services

Tuesday May 6 – Careers in Public Sector

- Impact, importance and challenges of public sector work
- Exploring high demand career pathways in the public sector
- Empowering women in the public sector

Tuesday May 13 – Civic Engagement & Networking

- How to develop Emotional Intelligence
- Cultivating skills for effective advocacy, community involvement, and social impact
- Understanding civic roles, exploring different forms of participation

Brampton City Hall – Knowledge Exchange & Networking

Wednesday May 21 – Knowledge Exchange & Networking – Brampton City Hall - hybrid

- Running for political office as a young woman: Where to begin
- Strategies to overcome challenges as an aspiring young woman in politics
- See yourself at the table being a voice for the community
- Breaking barriers as a young woman in politics
- Intersectionality in politics: Representing diverse voices
- Empowerment through education: Understanding political systems
- The power of advocacy: How to lobby for change
- Panel Discussion – Our Stories: Journeys, Challenges, Pivots & Lessons
- YCEP Participant to Leader
- In it for the long run: Selfcare for a sustainable involvement

Mentorship Program (on next page)



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Catalysts for Change: Empowering Youth in Civic Engagement & Leadership

Mentorship Program

Thursday May 29 –

Civic Engagement, Political Careers / Awareness, Governance Structures

- Empowering youth in civic engagement & leadership
- Mastering conflict resolution & communication skill
- How to build a political career that shapes the society

Thursday June 5 – Leadership Skills, Communication Skills, Personal Branding

- How to step up your personal branding in 5 minutes
- Mastering communication & confidently expressing your opinions
- How to craft an effective elevator pitch

Thursday June 12 – Networking & Professional Development

- The importance of networking for career growth
- Effective Communication in Networking
- Ethics and Integrity in the Workplace