



Youth for Environmental Action Program Overview

[Website](#) and [2025-26 Student Application Form](#)

PURPOSE

Youth for Environmental Action (YEA) student leaders use their voices, passion and creativity to make schools and communities more environmentally sustainable. YEA leaders practice skills to collaborate with and influence adult decision makers and take meaningful action for the planet and their communities.

PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

YEA goals are to:

- Build community among students throughout Santa Cruz County by bringing together students from each high school in the county to work collectively on climate and environmental action
- Involve student perspectives in the creation of policies that minimize the environmental impact of educational organizations
- Support the development of leadership skills for students, especially those who have not participated in previous leadership opportunities
- Increase youth connection to nature and awareness of health benefits
- Support youth engagement in stewardship and youth-driven environmental action projects

These goals are achieved through:

- recruitment of leaders from each high school in the county with a commitment to equity;
- connecting students with adult mentors;
- using democratic processes and student-driven agendas;
- engaging in leadership development activities;
- building community through activities focused on students' shared commitment to the environment;
- and exposing students to local environmental organizations and related careers.

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION SUMMIT

The project culminates each year in a countywide event planned and led by YEA student leaders that encourages community building, learning and action with youth and adult stakeholders working together for environmental literacy, climate justice and environmental stewardship.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE AND DATES

There are two levels of participation in YEA:

→ Leadership Team:

- ◆ Meets after school **weekly in person on Wednesdays from 4:15-5:15pm** on Zoom.
- ◆ The group also meets for leadership workshops one **Saturday per month in person** from 11am - 3pm on the following dates alternating meeting in North and South County:
 - Gathering #1: October 4 Kick-off Event
 - Gathering #2: November 15
 - Gathering #3: December 13
 - Gathering #4: January 17

- Gathering #5: February 21
- Gathering #6: March 21
- Gathering #7: April 18
- Final Celebration: May 16

→ **Support Team**

- ◆ Meets with YEA leaders on campus - students decide on the schedule