

#SaveSYEP Campaign

1. To join the effort and receive updates on the campaign, fill out this [short form](#).
2. Sign and share the petition: <https://bit.ly/saveSYEP>
3. Invite others to view and comment on this document: bit.ly/SYEPtoolkit

UPDATE: We have launched a new page on our website with a summary of our resources, links, and social media graphics. Check it out: <https://teenstakecharge.com/syep>

The city has [announced](#) that it will eliminate SYEP this summer. We are focused on a forceful response urging the administration to reconsider. Jumaane Williams and others have been vocal in calling for the Mayor to save SYEP. Let's keep it up and make sure they hear from those who will be impacted by this heartless cut.

Daily Action #1 — April 8: Tweet at, email, or Instagram message our ally Debi Rose, Chair of the Youth Services Committee on the City Council.

Email: drose@council.nyc.gov

IG + Twitter handle: @CMDDebiRose

Use #SaveSYEP and feel free to tag @TeensTakeCharge so we can like, retweet, etc.

Encourage her to fight back against this cut to SYEP! Tell her why SYEP is important, especially now. She needs to hear from us.

Daily Action #2 — April 9: Contact Speaker Corey Johnson to tell him what we want to be heard on this issue, and ask him to meet with young people, community leaders, and SYEP providers. We've got a pre-made Tweet ready to go. **Just click [here](#).**

You can also email him **SpeakerJohnson@council.nyc.gov** or message him on Instagram **@SpeakerCoreyJohnson**.

CONTEXT

This public health crisis has caused families across the city to enter a financial crisis. The Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) is an essential city service that provides paid summer jobs to 75,000 youth every year. Not only do those young people receive valuable job skills and work experience, they also receive a PAYCHECK. Given the tremendous financial strain on hundreds of thousands of low-income New York City families right now, we should be EXPANDING paid summer opportunities, EXPANDING ways to put cash directly into the hands of low-income families who are being hit the hardest by this pandemic.

Last year 151,000 young people applied for the program, meaning 76,000 were turned away due to lack of spots. In the richest city on earth, we should be able to provide a summer job to every young person who wants one. We are calling on Mayor de Blasio to **SAVE** SYEP so that every student who wants to participate in the program can.

But what about the COVID-19 crisis and social distancing measures?

This is the most common question we get. Based on conversations with CBO friends, we are confident that providers can rise to the challenge of providing meaningful remote opportunities for young people in the event that social distancing measures remain in effect in July and August. In fact, many have already prepared for that possibility.

In fact, if we need to keep up social distancing over the summer, then it will be important to engage young people in meaningful opportunities online where they can build skills, connect to other teens and adults, and earn income. Asking young people to stay indoors over the summer without anything meaningful to do is not good policy.

Should we really be complaining about these cuts during a financial crisis?

Yes! SYEP is an important economic stimulus. Not only are youth engaged in safe, pro-social, job readiness activities, but businesses benefit from an infusion of resourceful youth that support their business and enhance their productivity. This is going to be needed now more than ever, whether or not we still have social distancing.

It is important to note that when facing a fiscal crisis in 2009, NYC expanded SYEP as a way to get money to the families that needed it most, and to keep young people engaged. The expansion was supported with federal funds, but replacement of city funding only happened *after* those federal funds were allocated to the city. The city did not cut its own support until it already had the federal funds in hand. This current administration is cutting the program without any such replacement support.

Moreover, SYEP is the only program that is not just facing a budget cut, but being eliminated entirely. Budgets for other programs and agencies are generally being cut by a few percentage points.. NYC needs to find \$1.3 billion in cuts to a city budget of about \$95 billion in order to meet its new revenue projections. That's about a 1.5% total cut. But instead of cutting a little from everywhere, SYEP is facing a 100% cut.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Sample Tweets / Facebook Posts

In the richest city on earth, we should be able to provide a summer job to every young person who wants one! Join me in telling @NYCMayor to #SaveSYEP.
<https://change.org/expandSYEP>

Families around NYC are in financial crisis. A paid summer job for a young person helps the whole family. Join me in telling @NYCMayor to #SaveSYEP.
<https://change.org/expandSYEP>

If we can shift a 1.1 million student school system to remote learning in a week, we can offer meaningful remote summer jobs to a fraction of that number of young people 3 months from now. No excuses, @NYCMayor! We must #SaveSYEP.
<https://change.org/expandSYEP>

— Make your own tweet! Include Why SYEP matters to you and be sure to tag @NYCMayor and use #SaveSYEP

Instagram

Post on your Instagram story about what's happening so you can educate your friends. Tell them to DM you if they are interested in joining the fight and have them fill out this survey: **bit.ly/expandSYEP**

Share the link to the petition (**<https://bit.ly/SaveSYEP>**) in your bio and direct people to sign it!

Post a short video saying why SYEP matters to you / the community. Use #SaveSYEP, and if you tag @TeensTakeCharge and we'll share your post with our 3,200+ followers.

We have posted and will continue to post graphics from @TeensTakeCharge. You can access these images at **<https://teenstakecharge.com/syep>**.

HAVE YOU APPLIED FOR / PARTICIPATED IN SYEP?

Tell us about it! We'd love to use your testimonials as part of our advocacy. Simply fill out **[this short form](#)**.

CONTACTING POLITICIANS

Corey Johnson, speaker, NYCC
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Debi Rose, youth services chair, NYCC
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Daniel Dromm, finance committee chair, NYCC
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Mark Treyger, education chair, NYCC
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Jumaane Williams, public advocate
@JumaaneWilliams
<https://www.pubadvocate.nyc.gov/contact/>

Scott Stringer, comptroller
@NYCComptroller
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Rubén Díaz Jr., Bronx Borough president
@Ruben_Diaz_Jr

<http://bronxboropres.nyc.gov>

Eric Adams, Brooklyn Borough president
@BpEricAdams
<https://www.brooklyn-usa.org>

Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough president
@GaleABrewer
<https://www.manhattanbp.nyc.gov>

Sharon Lee, Queens Borough president
@QueensBP2020
<https://www.queensbp.org/contact/>

James Oddo, Staten Island Borough president
@HeyNowJO
<https://www.statenislandusa.com/bp-james-odd.html>

Brandon Cardet-Hernandez, Senior Education Advisor to Mayor de Blasio
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BCardetHernandez@cityhall.nyc.gov

SAMPLE EMAIL

Dear _____,

I hope you are well. My name is _____, and I am a student from [**neighborhood / borough**]. I'm writing to you with an urgent request to save the funding for the city's Summer Youth Employment Program.

You have been a big supporter of SYEP in the past, so there's no need to explain the importance of the program for young people like me. As we are dealing with a major public health crisis right now, we are also experiencing a serious financial crisis for [**families like mine / families across the city**]. That's why — even if SYEP has to shift to remote internships — we must preserve opportunities for students, especially from low-income families, to bring funds into their households.

[OPTIONAL -- add a few sentences of personal experience with SYEP. Were you planning to apply this summer? Have you done the program before? Have friends who have relied on the income?]

Will you please stand up for me and thousands of families across the city to tell Mayor de Blasio to save SYEP at this crucial time?

Thank you for your support. Let's get this done!

Sincerely,

WRITING AN OP-ED

Are you interested in writing an opinion piece about SYEP for a local news outlet? Contact sophie@teenstakecharge.com, and we'll be glad to work with you and connect you to our media contacts.

Here are our general op-ed writing tips:

1. Identify your Purpose: why are you writing this op-ed? Are you sharing your personal story? Advocating for a specific policy? Educating the public? Your purpose will affect the format of your piece and, while writing, you should return to your purpose to refocus and inspire you.
2. Identify your Argument: What do you plan to argue, and how? How is your argument different from what's out there currently? What new angle or perspective are you adding to the debate?

A good op-ed needs the three S's:

- Story** (your personal experience or the experience of someone you know)
- Statistics** (hard facts & numbers that describe the problem or what's at stake)
- Solution** (what change do we want to see? can be policies or call to action for readers)

In the next sections, we break down those three subsections.

Story:

The personal story section of your op-ed is extremely important because it illustrates the direct impact of the issue on you and other students. People don't just see statistics, they see a real person who is being negatively affected by the policies.

Statistics:

While personal stories are extremely impactful, people in power also need to see clear evidence that what you are saying is true. The statistics you choose to include in your piece will vary depending on your focus. It is much harder for our opponents to argue with detailed and supported facts. You can find statistics in a variety of places, but here are some databases, research projects, etc to get you started:

[The Numbers and Offerings of SYEP](#) from the NYC Department of Youth and Community Development

[Fewer Out-of-School and Out-of-Work Young Adults, As Warning Signs Emerge](#) by Lazar Treschan and Irene Lew

[Universal Summer Jobs for NYC Youth Proposal](#) by Lazar Treschan

[Testimony on SYEP](#) by Lazar Treschan

[Paid Summer Internships for Every Young Person](#) by David R. Jones

[A Summer Jobs Program for the 21st Century](#) by David R. Jones

[Testimony on SYEP](#) by Irene Lew

Solution/Call to Action:

After you have convinced your readers that SYEP is an essential program that must be protected, you need to make a call to action, a powerful final message to inspire them to take action or support specific policies. For the #ProtectSYEP Action, you can either call on public leaders to protect the program, or call on your readers to take action and join you. Make sure to highlight the petition!

ABOUT TEENS TAKE CHARGE

Teens Take Charge is a student-led organization fighting for educational equity in New York City. Our Education Unscreened campaign calls for a host of policy changes to address school segregation, including an expansion of work-based learning opportunities, which narrow some of the gaps that segregation creates. Learn more at teenstakecharge.com.

Questions? Ideas?

teenstakechargenyc@gmail.com