

Next-Gen Civic Leadership Academy

The NextGen Civic Leadership Academy is a two-week civic summer academy that brings together 100 high school student leaders, chosen from an applicant pool of hundreds across 28+ countries. Participants will engage with high-profile speakers, collaborate with peers from around the world, and compete for a \$1,000 prize awarded to the most impactful project. This academy is a collaboration between two youth-led organizations: **PIVOT**, which brings a global perspective, compelling storytelling, and curriculum design, and **Virtutem Populo, Inc.**, which offers structure, strategy, and a focus on project-based learning. Together, we're creating more than just a polished program; we're providing students with a meaningful platform to develop, test, and refine real-world solutions.

Tracks:

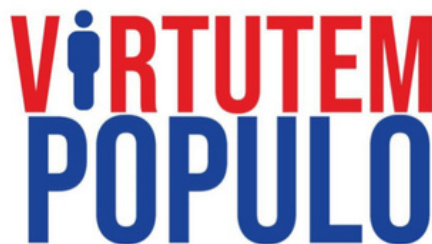
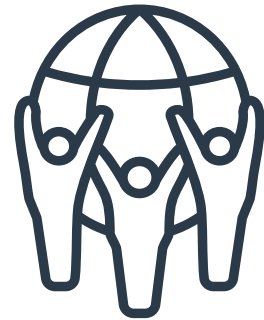
Advocacy: Led by experienced advocates and policy leaders, this track empowers students to influence institutions and advance equity. Through hands-on workshops and case studies, you'll learn to craft policy proposals, organize campaigns, and advocate effectively. You'll also research a youth issue of your choice, develop a literature review, and create a detailed advocacy plan to drive real-world change.

Innovation: Led by civic innovators and changemakers, this track empowers students to boldly rethink how policy can solve today's most pressing civic challenges. You'll explore the intersection of media, technology, and governance, diving into how bias forms, how institutions shape public trust, and how policy can be redesigned for greater equity, transparency, innovation, accountability, and participation.

About us:



PIVOT is a global think tank that combines civic writing and policy advocacy, operating through two core programs: PIVOT Voices, a platform where student writers share underrepresented civic stories while learning to avoid polarizing language, and the PIVOT Global Fellowship, where youth from around the world research key policy areas, publish briefs, meet with legislators, and launch community projects.



Virtutem Populo, based in Florida, USA, focuses on civic education and local government engagement, offering leadership programs like its Youth Governance Day Initiative and Economic Fellowship to help youth build real-world skills, connect with public officials, and create a more active civic space in their community. Together, PIVOT and VP champion informed, nonpartisan, youth-driven innovation in student voice and civic participation.



Overview and Expectations

1. Be Present

The Academy runs from **August 4th to August 14th**. The week of August 4th will mostly consist of speakers and workshops, while the week of August 11th will be mostly project and research-oriented. We expect availability **Monday–Friday from 9 AM to 2:30 PM EST (with a break in the middle)**. There may be additional, optional programming in the evening or on a Saturday. We know summer schedules can get chaotic, but we're asking for a full commitment during the two weeks of the program. That means being present at all sessions (with camera on), showing up to track-specific meetings, and letting us know ahead of time if something urgent comes up. You don't need to be perfect. You just need to be in it. Please email CivicsAcademy@virtutempopulo.net to ask for accommodations.

2. Be Engaged

This program works best when everyone's involved. You don't have to talk all the time, but we do expect you to stay focused, speak up in discussions, and contribute to your team's work. Even on the quieter days, your energy matters.

3. Respect the Space

You'll be working with students from all kinds of backgrounds, different states, countries, political views, and experiences. We want you to be open, kind, and willing to learn from people who see the world differently. That's the point.

4. Be a Good Teammate

Your team will be building something big together. That only works if everyone communicates clearly, follows through on tasks, and gives each other space to contribute. We don't expect you to know everything. We just ask that you stay curious, helpful, and honest about what you need.

5. Build Something Meaningful

At the end of the program, you'll pitch a real civic project to a panel of judges. We'll support you every step of the way, but this only works if you treat it seriously. That means putting in the effort, doing your part, and staying committed to your team's idea. It doesn't have to be perfect, but it should be real.

6. Represent Yourself

When you join the Academy, you're not just speaking for yourself. You're joining a global network of youth leaders and representing your school, your community, and the PIVOT and VP team. Keep that in mind in how you treat people, how you collaborate, and how you carry yourself during the program.

Week 1 Schedule (In EST)

Day 1

Orientation + Introductions

<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>
9:00–9:45am	Morning Orientation
9:45–10:30am	Workshop
10:30–11:30am	Speaker #1
11:30–12:30pm	Break
12:30–1:00pm	Workshop
1:00–2:00pm	Speaker #2
2:00–2:15pm	Reflections + Closing

Day 2

Policy in Action

<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>
9:00–9:45am	Morning Orientation
9:45–10:30am	Workshop
10:30–11:30am	Speaker #1
11:30–12:30pm	Break
12:30–1:00pm	Workshop
1:00–2:00pm	Speaker #2
2:00–2:15pm	Reflections + Closing

Day 3

Building

<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>
9:00–9:45am	Morning Orientation
9:45–10:30am	Workshop
10:30–11:30am	Speaker #1
11:30–12:30pm	Break
12:30–1:00pm	Workshop
1:00–2:00pm	Speaker #2
2:00–2:15pm	Reflections + Closing

Day 4

Media

<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>
9:00–9:45am	Morning Orientation
9:45–10:30am	Workshop
10:30–11:30am	Speaker #1
11:30–12:30pm	Break
12:30–1:00pm	Workshop
1:00–2:00pm	Speaker #2
2:00–2:15pm	Reflections + Closing

Day 5

Operations + Vision

<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>
9:00–9:45am	Morning Orientation
9:45–10:30am	Workshop
10:30–11:30am	Speaker #1
11:30–12:30pm	Break
12:30–1:00pm	Workshop
1:00–2:00pm	Speaker #2
2:00–2:15pm	Reflections + Closing



Speakers

Jaylen Smith

At just 18, Jaylen Smith was elected mayor of Earle, Arkansas, becoming one of the youngest mayors in U.S. history and the youngest Black mayor ever elected in the nation. Previously student-body and class president in high school, Jaylen campaigned on revitalizing his hometown, bringing in essential services, improving infrastructure, and enhancing public safety. He now attends Arkansas State University Mid-South online while continuing to lead community efforts.



Bassel Doueik

Bassel Doueik is a Lebanese geopolitical analyst and writer focused on Middle East conflicts, power politics, and regional security. He's known for breaking down complex issues, like the Israel–Hezbollah conflict and Iran's influence, into accessible commentary, and regularly contributes to public discourse through writing and media.



Bob McCormick

Bob McCormick is Director of the Atlanta Institute for Diplomatic Leadership and a longtime educator in international affairs and civil discourse. He's taught for over 20 years at Georgia Tech's Sam Nunn School and has worked with institutions like NATO and the George C. Marshall European Center. His work centers on preparing young leaders for global challenges through diplomacy, conflict resolution, and cross-cultural understanding.



Ian Johnson

Ian Johnson is a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, author, and researcher who has spent over 35 years reporting on China's evolving identity, faith, and politics. Renowned for his in-depth grassroots coverage, Johnson's work has earned him top honors including a solo Pulitzer Prize, Stanford's Shorenstein Prize, a Nieman Fellowship at Harvard, and grants from the NEH, Open Society Foundations, and the Silvers Foundation. His reporting explores how China navigates its past while shaping its future.



Speakers

Reese Wong

Reese Wong is a Hong Kong-born social entrepreneur and speaker who founded ISSIA HK, the city's largest youth-led nonprofit mobilizing hundreds of students across 80+ schools. Recognized as a World Economic Forum Global Shaper and Diana Award winner, he has delivered over 100 talks worldwide on leadership and social innovation. Reese recently graduated from LSE with a degree in International Studies, and continues to lead multiple initiatives focused on youth empowerment.



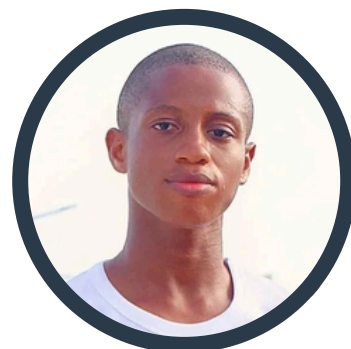
Akanshya Gurung

Akanshya Gurung is a youth advocate and communications leader dedicated to amplifying young voices in global policy and development. She currently serves as a Senior Associate at Chemonics UK, focusing on youth engagement and international development. Previously, she was Head of Communications at the Future Leaders Network, where she led initiatives like the Youth 7 Summit to empower youth participation in G7 policymaking.



Tariq Lawal

Tariq Lawal is a Nigerian creative and changemaker dedicated to social, environmental, and digital wellness. As Director of Creative Media & Communications at the LOG OFF Movement, he leads efforts to promote healthier social media habits among youth. His work has been recognized by UNICEF, The New York Times, and the United Nations, and he has received honors including the Diana Award and designation as a UNICEF Young Influencer.



Zev Shapiro

Zev Shapiro is the founder of TurnUp Activism, a leading youth-led civic tech nonprofit focused on increasing voter turnout and political engagement among young people. A Harvard graduate and longtime political organizer, Shapiro launched the TurnUp app to help youth find events, register to vote, and mobilize around causes. Under his leadership, TurnUp has trained thousands of organizers and reached millions of users across the U.S.



Partner Organizations

Allstate

Allstate is a leading U.S. insurance company offering a wide range of products, including auto, home, renters, and life insurance, as well as retirement and investment solutions. Founded in 1931 as a subsidiary of Sears, Roebuck & Co., Allstate became an independent publicly traded company in 1995. Headquartered in Northbrook, Illinois, Allstate operates through a network of exclusive agents and digital platforms, serving millions of customers across the United States. The company is known for its commitment to customer service and its iconic slogan, "You're in Good Hands."



AllSides

AllSides is a public benefit corporation focused on promoting balanced news and civil discourse. Founded in 2012, it is known for its Media Bias Chart™, which rates the political leanings of thousands of news sources to help users identify bias and see different perspectives. AllSides offers tools and resources to media organizations, schools, and nonprofits to encourage critical thinking and reduce polarization, aiming to foster informed and respectful public dialogue.



iCivics

iCivics is a nonpartisan 501(c)(3) organization founded in 2009 by U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor to promote civic education and engagement among young people. The organization provides free, interactive resources—including educational games, lesson plans, and curricula—to help students understand the principles of government, law, and civic responsibility. iCivics aims to inspire a passion for civic life and learning, empowering students to become informed and active participants in their communities and democracy.



Final Products

1. Friendships

We believe the people you attend this summit with will become lifelong friends and partners in your civic journeys.



2. Mentorship

After the program concludes, those who perform well and exhibit a strong interest in their research and learning from our speakers may be selected for a mentorship program.



3. Funding

\$1,000 total will be provided to the winners of our pitch competition. This money will be designated for use towards the implementation of your proposed project, and will come with support and mentorship from the PIVOT and VP team.



Stay in Touch

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