



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

NATIONAL ISSUES FORUM

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YOUR STEPS IN NATIONAL ISSUES FORUM

YOUR MISSION

To increase awareness of national concerns and issues; increase understanding of the Federal Government and its relation to state, national, and international matters; and propose policy solutions to address these concerns.

THINGS YOU WILL DO IN NATIONAL ISSUES FORUM

- Research and author a proposal
- Meet all deadlines
- Be aware and informed of legislative rules and procedures
- Attend the LAUNCH training session in the fall
- Adhere to the Code of Conduct
- Present your proposal at Youth in Government and work to get it passed
- Debate and defend your proposal

The National Issues Forum (NIF) provides delegates with the opportunity to research, write and advocate for a proposal of their choosing, with a focus on high-level debate – a unique experience within the YMCA Center for Youth Voice conferences. The National Issues Forum provides a complement to the Model Assembly program by extending the focus of the issues debated by participants beyond the borders of Minnesota.

This guide is designed to provide delegates and advisors with information on the National Issues Forum program and to describe a delegate's responsibilities.

WHAT IS NATIONAL ISSUES FORUM?

Structure of National Issues Forum

The National Issues Forum is a body of Youth in Government delegates who seek to address policy issues of national and international importance. Ideas presented in the National Issues Forum will tackle issues that should be handled at the Federal or international policy level. Delegates write and debate proposals, which are broad ideas for change rather than detail-oriented bills that are debated in the legislature.

The Forum is structure in a 3-tiered system of progressively larger committees:

- **First Committee** – Here each delegate presents a proposal and each proposal is debated.
- **Second Committee** – Here, only proposals that move on are debated, but all delegates have the opportunity to debate them.
- **General Assembly** – Only the highest-ranked proposals move on to GA, but all delegates have the opportunity to debate them. Proposals are voted on pass/fail.

Scoring

In 1st and 2nd committees, proposals are scored via ranking sheets to determine which proposals move forward for debate. There are 5 categories by which proposals are ranked: national/international relevance, debatability, creativity, feasibility, evidence of research. In each scoring category, a low score is a good score; a high score is a poor score. Authors may not rank their own proposal; committee chairs & presiding officers may not rank any proposals.

Procedure:

- Chair or clerk will hand out one ballot to each of the members of the committee
- Ranking should be done **quickly**; delegates total their score at the bottom
- Chair or clerk will collect ballots to be counted and scored

There will be no ballots in General Assembly—proposals that make it that far will be voted on pass/fail.

Proposal Hierarchy

All member proposals will be heard in each first committee; of those, only 7 proposals will move on from each first committee. 10 proposals will be heard in each second committee; of those, only 6 proposals will move on from each second committee. A total of 12 proposals will be heard in General Assembly; each of the 12 final proposals will be voted as **adopted** or **not adopted**. There are NO bills debated in the National Issues Forum, only proposals. Bills are debated in the legislature.

Parliamentary Procedure

Even though NIF is not a legislative body in state government, it still follows the norms set forth in parliamentary procedure, which you will need to become familiar with. Setting a framework for conversation and debate ensures each proposal has an equal chance at being heard in a respectful

manner. Don't panic! It sounds complicated, but it's actually just a fancy way of having a conversation – and we'll teach you all you need to know!

Any time you are in your program area (in First and Second Committees and General Assembly), you will need to use this form of parliamentary procedure to run the meeting. It plays a major role in keeping meetings on an efficient track, using language and a format that is familiar to everyone. Because of that, it's your responsibility to know it well and use it.

For the most part, the officers and chairs will lead the meetings and tell everyone what to do. However, since you are an active participant, you will need to know how to get involved! Below are some common actions that you may want to do, or that you might see take place during the meeting.

Moving your proposal

- When the Chair asks if an author is present, you say "I MOVE MY PROPOSAL"
- If you do not move your proposal, it cannot yet be debated
- Before speaking, you must state your last name and delegation

Getting recognized to speak during debate

- Delegates will be called by their last name or delegation who are raising their placards
- If recognized during Non-Debatable Technical Questions (NDBQs), you must state your name and delegation and then ask your non-debatable question
 - A non-debatable question seeks to clarify facts about each proposal
 - You may only ask one NDBQ per recognition during this time
- During CON-PRO debate, you must speak in alignment with the intent during which you are recognized. If the Chair announces a "PRO speech" and you are recognized, you must speak in favor of that proposal. Debate on a proposal must end with a CON-speaker.

Yielding time to summation

- Only the proposal author and PRO-speakers may yield to the author's summation
- The right to yield must be granted by the Chair before the author or pro-speaker begins talking for the first time, or before any other motion during their time: "I RESERVE THE RIGHT TO YIELD ANY REMAINING TIME TO (MY/THE AUTHOR'S) CLOSING SPEECH"
- The Chair and or Clerk is responsible for recording the yielded time and adding it to the author's summation time allotment

When recognized by the Chair, state your name and delegation. Then, you may conduct **up to two** of the following actions:

- **Speak**
Make your con or pro argument on the proposal. You do not need to reserve this right once you've been recognized.
- **Ask Questions**
Example: "Will the author yield to a question/series of questions?"
- **Yield to another delegate**
Example: "I reserve the right to yield my remaining time to Delegate Smith"
You must state this BEFORE you begin speaking or asking questions.
- **Yield to author's closing**
Example: "I reserve the right to yield my remaining time to the author's closing statement."
You must state this BEFORE you begin speaking or asking questions.

NOTE: you may NOT yield time to another delegate *AND* yield to the author's closing statement

Responding to the officers

Delegates may be called out of order by the Chair for

- Inappropriate language
- Not using their placard
- Failure to follow procedure (not stating name and delegation, debatable NBDQs, speaking con on a pro speech or vice versa)
- Referring to a delegate (or officer) directly or by name

If you are called out of order, take your seat unless the Chair tells you otherwise

Motions in committee

The only motions you may make are:

- Motion to recess for ___ minutes.
- Motion to adjourn.

If the Chair recognizes you, you may say "I move to ____." and another delegate must second your motion for it to be recognized and voted on.

NOTE: delegates may not motion to end debate, due to the con-pro debate cycle.

WRITING YOUR PROPOSAL

Each delegate participating in the National Issues Forum is required to write a proposal. Proposals focus on solutions to problems and issues of importance to our nation. They may be national or international in scope. The most important part of writing a proposal is that you choose a topic that is meaningful to you. The strength of commitment you feel toward your proposal will undoubtedly influence your overall experience in the Model Assembly. Whether your interests lie in the environment, business, education, or social programs, your proposal should be about something that you believe in.

Writing a proposal is simple if you know a few secrets. The next few pages will reveal some of those secrets. A GREAT BILL IS THE RESULT OF SIX SIMPLE STEPS:

- STEP 1:** Choose a Topic
- STEP 2:** Research It
- STEP 3:** Fill Out Topic Analysis Form
- STEP 4:** Write First Draft and Get Feedback
- STEP 5:** Write Final Draft and Send In
- STEP 6:** Debate It

Step 1 – Choose a topic

You should have some level of passion about the topic when you select it. This can be because you genuinely care about the outcome of the topic, or because you think it is so important that it must be discussed – even if you don't agree with the topic itself and hate the possible outcome. Love the outcome or loathe the outcome – they are the same. Feeling ambivalent about the outcome is dangerous. It will affect your thinking and the depth you go to in your research.

Best way to think of a proposal topic:

- Start with a common problem → propose a unique solution
Take a "sharp turn" on the way to the unique solution to increase interest

Worst ways to think of proposal topics:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • Unique problem → unique solution | Why? → can be hard to understand |
| • Important problem → common solution | Why? → others may also do this |
| • Common problem → common solution | Why? → skip for more exciting |

Why are these worst? Because nearly all of them will make an audience more likely to move on to other proposals, at the expense of yours. You will need to make people care about your topic enough to listen to why you want to talk about it.

SOURCES OF CURRENT ISSUES:

- One of the simplest and most accessible sources of current information is the newspaper. Whether it's the hometown daily or the *New York Times*, a newspaper can give you a good idea of what issues are on peoples' minds right now.
- See what is trending on your favorite social media platform. There are many causes that leverage social media as a platform to boost their voice, so there is a wide variety of topics represented there.
- Ask around! Your friends, family, teachers, librarians and peers all have things that matter to them. See if any of their thoughts line up and would be a good proposal idea.
- Consider any condition, which exists in your school, family, community, nation, or world. Then propose a solution to end the problem or resolve the issue. It's that simple!



Below is a list of only A FEW topics you could do. Delegates can (and should) choose topics not on this list.

- | | |
|---|--|
| America's participation in trade agreements | Direct election of the President/Abolish Electoral College |
| Banning tobacco products (cultivation, manufacturing, sale, import/export of) | Domestic spying prohibition without warrant/Domestic Surveillance |
| Campaign finance reform | Tax release requirements for public officials |
| Chemical castration for child offenders | Election Day voter registration |
| Creating a carbon tax | English proficiency exams for non-English speaking legalized immigrants in grades K-12 |
| Criminalizing/decriminalizing abortion | Ethanol production and utilization |
| Cuban-American relations | Flag defamation |
| Drafting U.S. prison inmates to serve in the U.S. Military | Funding for high schools based on dropout rates |
| Debt ceiling regulation | High school graduation requirements |
| Equal Rights Amendment | HIV testing in high schools |
| Federal funding for Welfare | Required service in the military |
| Federal funding of mass transportation and highway construction | Immigration policies and reform |
| Female registration with the U.S. Selective Service | Mandatory voting/7-Day voting period |
| Fighting terrorism and terroristic threats | National Port security |
| Firearms/Second amendment | Observance of race and gender-based history months |
| Free trade of pharmaceutical products/prescription drugs | Parent/Guardian presence required for interrogation of mentally disabled |
| Funding for prevention and rehabilitation programs for underage drinkers | Cybersecurity methods and technology |
| Addressing climate change | Piracy, on water |
| The Kyoto Protocol | Printing pertinent identifying numbers on insurance cards |
| Grace period for adoption | Recognize Hamas and the Palestinian Government |
| Gun violence | Refugee treatment and resettlement policies |
| Hate Crime legislation | Renewable energy technology and funding |
| Indecency fines levied by the FCC on broadcast television | Rights of American forces detainees |
| Israeli/Palestinian peace talks and foreign relations | School safety |
| Mandatory minimum sentences | Setting a protocol for Federal School Funding based on student performance |
| No Child Left Behind Act | Solvency of Social Security |
| Oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge | Stem Cell Research |
| Option of parole for federal crimes/offenses | Trigger Locks on firearms |
| Organ transplants for incarcerated federal, state, and county prisoners | U.S. Humanitarian Aid to African nations |
| Pharmacist distribution of medicine prescribed by a medical doctor | U.S. Nuclear Arsenal Disarmament/Nuclear non-proliferation treaty |
| Presidential power to call for a referendum | United Nations as primary agent for war on terrorism |
| Presumed consent for organ donation | Voting rights, disenfranchisement |
| Affirmative Action in college Admissions | |
| Artificial Insemination database | |
| Deportation of illegal aliens | |

There are many research resources available to you via the internet, your school library, teachers, or local library. Many delegates begin their proposal writing process by reading current periodicals (such as *Newsweek* or *US News & World Report*) or newspapers (*LA Times*, *New York Times*, *Washington Post*) in order to get ideas of current national and international issues.

When considering a topic, keep three things in mind – (1) national or international importance, (2) debatability and (3) “cutting edgeness” of topic. The National Issues Forum is debate-oriented, so you should write your proposal with that in mind. You may have a fantastic policy idea, but if it is universally acceptable, it will be passed over in favor of proposals that will have good discussion. In this sense, proposals are much different than bills.

Step 2 – Research & develop your topic

Now that you have the beginnings of an idea, you need to do some looking around to be able to develop it fully. If you only have a general topic, you may want help coming up with a more specific application. Some things that might help are:

- Media sources- State or national newspapers, internet, TV news, radio, issue advocacy websites
- Thinking of things that have personally affected you or someone you know.
- Discussions with local leaders, teachers, family and friends.

Spend some quality time in research. Know what you are saying and all the possible outcomes. Talk to your teachers, librarians, your Youth in Government advisors, your peers. Research and input (thinking through the angles) will help you a lot. You need to be excited and confident about your proposal to be successful and to give it the most exposure at the conference.

You should have some statistics, some facts, and even some informed testimonies by people who are well informed. The more facts you can find now, the better your proposal will be and the easier it will be to address Con speakers during debate. People who have done their work write the best proposals.

Step 3 – Analyze your topic

Use these analysis points to see if your proposal is checking all the boxes.



1. Why is this proposal necessary? Why is it important?
2. Is this in conflict with the Federal Constitution or Federal Law?
3. Do other countries do this?
4. Has this been tried before in the United States?
5. Who will this proposal affect?
6. Who might be against this and why?
7. Is this a responsibility of government or could it be taken care of in another way?

Step 4 – Write a first draft & get feedback

Writing a National Issues Forum Proposal will be simple if you have done your research. Proposals should not be more than one page (typed) and consist of four sections. The proposal format is designed to allow for creativity and persuasive argumentation. Proposals are a written idea, not rigid legislation. Every proposal has four sections. The four sections include: Title, Major Areas to be Affected, Justification, and Proposal for Action. All proposals must follow this format and be approved by delegation directors before submission. See the Sample Proposals at the end of this section for some examples.

Title or Purpose:

WRITE THIS SECTION LAST

Briefly state the basic action of your proposal. This should be one clear sentence (maybe two), telling what your proposal will do.

Proposal for Action:

WRITE THIS SECTION FIRST

This is where you state the goal and objective of your proposal. What are the details – what people/institutions will take specific action on your topic. This is also the place where you list out what those **specific** actions are. Remember you are not writing legislation but a broad proposal intended to be debated – focus is on the *topic*, not the details. One or two well-constructed paragraphs will do.

Major Areas to be Affected:

WRITE THIS SECTION SECOND

Tell what people, places or institutions your proposal will affect. This should be brief – a few words to one sentence. Don't go into how these areas will be affected, just tell **which** areas.

Justification:

WRITE THIS SECTION THIRD

In paragraph form, tell why there is a need for your proposal. Include clear and concise information that will make a compelling case for your issue – statistics, quotes, etc., but *don't overdo it*. You only want to provide the basics of your justification – the bulk of your research will come out in your oral presentation and in debate. You can provide your justification in one or two short paragraphs but remember that *less is more*. The points you make in the Justification section should be your most brilliant and best-reasoned illustrations.

TIPS TO MAKE YOUR PROPOSAL SPECTACULAR

- Language. Use respectful language reflecting YMCA values.
- Singular Terms. Use singular terms, such as he, she, the delegate, applicant, etc. Avoid plurals where possible – they can confuse people.
- Be careful with pronoun usage. Two or more “he’s” in one sentence can get confusing.
- Watch for others your proposal may apply to. If you use the term “cities,” make sure you don’t also want it to apply to towns, counties or school districts.
- Don’t use words that avoid commitment (ex., use “will” rather than “would”, “could” or “might”).
- Don’t use the first person (ex., refer to “the nation” rather than “our nation”).
- Your proposal cannot exceed two pages (conference requirement) but really shouldn’t be longer than ONE PAGE, for clarity and conciseness.
- Your proposal should serve as discussion about issues rather than a statement of policy.

Step 5 – Write final draft & submit online

After you've passed your proposal around for feedback and made any necessary changes, you should write your final draft.

Once you write your final draft, you will use your assigned template on Regy. The template will have a variety of text boxes. Copy the content, section-by-section, from your text document and paste it into each corresponding text box.



Regy has the capabilities for back-and-forth editing. It is possible for a proposal to be reviewed by your Delegation Director and you may be given instructions/conditions to fulfill before the proposal can be submitted to the State Office for publication in the Session Book.

Make sure you get your proposal submitted before the posted deadline, so your Delegation Director can review and make suggestions for final improvements. Plan ahead in case of technical difficulties.



IF YOU DO NOT 'FINALIZE' YOUR PROPOSAL AND SEND IT TO YOUR DELEGATION DIRECTOR, IT WILL NOT BE PRINTED IN THE SESSION BOOK.

Please take care that you fully complete the process.

It is strongly encouraged that you bring a printed and digital version of your proposal with you to Youth in Government, just in case something goes wrong.

Step 6 – Final research & debate

Even though you have finished writing your proposal, your work is not over! Just because your proposal looks good doesn't mean it is going to pass. You must convince your fellow NIF delegates at Model Assembly that your topic is worth talking about. You gotta know your stuff!

To prepare for your presentation, here are a few things you can do before Model Assembly:

- Interview a city councilperson, schoolboard member, senator, representative, lawyer, or somebody with experience in public policy who can help with the final preparation of the proposal and in organizing debate concerning it.
- Ask these people to attend a meeting of your delegation to critique and comment on the proposals of all the delegates.
- Seek out opposing views on the subject and take notes.

Ask your delegation for time to debate your idea to fine-tune it and make it **MAGNIFICENT!** Usually, most delegations will have time set aside for this, but you may need to talk to your Delegation Director or Chair.

When you debate the topic, keep a few things in mind:

- You are looking for weak points in your proposal, so be open for arguments against it.
- Deliberating it with your peers can help you clean up any last messy sections.
- Write down areas that you may need to address as you go along.

Sample Proposals

YMCA CENTER FOR YOUTH VOICE NATIONAL ISSUES FORUM PROPOSAL

PROPOSAL #: 100

AUTHOR: John Doe

DELEGATION: International Falls YMCA

TITLE:

To move the Capital of the United States of America from Washington, District of Columbia, to St. Paul, Minnesota

MAJOR AREAS TO BE AFFECTED:

US Federal government, Minnesota state government, federal government staff and employees, state and local infrastructure, US citizens, and citizens living in the united states

JUSTIFICATION:

The United States Capital is the center of the country. Washington, D.C. is nowhere near the center of the United States and is prone to extreme weather catastrophes. Although the likelihood tropical storms directly impacting Washington, D.C. is relatively low, it is even lower in Minnesota because of its geographical location. Minnesota is also a tectonically inactive state and the likelihood of an earthquake taking place is extremely low. According to U.S. News and World Reports, Minnesota is ranked 20th for best overall economic stability, 7th for best overall healthcare, 13th for best public education, and 2nd for best quality of life. Moving the Capital of the United States to Minnesota would mean that the center of the nation is one of the best states, based on statistics. The D.C. population as of 2017 is 693,972. The American Community Survey estimates that the population density as of 2013 is 10,528 people per square mile, whereas in Minnesota, the population density is about 68 people per square mile. With a large population density, limited space, and rising housing costs, it does not make sense to have the Capital of the United States of America to be in Washington, D.C.

PROPOSAL FOR ACTION:

Create a third city in Minnesota near the Twin Cities to be the Capital of the United States, creating the triple cities, if you will. There will be a general election to name this new city. All working government officials and agencies will be stationed in the new Capital. All federal government buildings will be rebuilt in the new Capital. The current federal government buildings in Washington DC will instead be converted into local government buildings. The new capital city will abide by Minnesota state laws. All historic landmarks and historic sites will remain in their current locations. Washington DC will remain as a separate district and will not join any its neighboring states.

YMCA CENTER FOR YOUTH VOICE NATIONAL ISSUES FORUM PROPOSAL

PROPOSAL #: 101

AUTHOR: Tony the Tiger

DELEGATION: Sugarland

TITLE:

To abolish the use of animals as political party mascots in the United States.

MAJOR AREAS TO BE AFFECTED:

The Republican and Democrat parties and all their State-run counterparts, The Modern Whig Party, the Prohibition Party, any other national or state political party that uses an animal mascot, and party members of these various organizations.

JUSTIFICATION:

In 2008, the Xcel Energy Center in St. Paul, Minnesota was host to the largest political party convention in United States history, the Republican National Convention. That same year, Denver Colorado hosted another large political gathering, the Democratic National Convention. These events were attended by hundreds of thousands of people, who used countless number of flyers, stickers and various other decorations and materials that used depictions of defenseless animals. When these events ended, thousands of injured and neglected animals were recovered from the floors of the stadiums.

These animals, such as the "Republican Elephant" and the "Democrat Donkey" are often stacked in piles waist high, until they can be distributed to party members at various events and meetings. They are put on stickers and banners, often hung at dangerous heights for extended periods. In addition, other less regulated national political parties, like the Modern Whig Party, that uses an Owl mascot, and the Prohibition Party, that uses a Camel – may be using these animals in other ways that are adverse to the health of the animal. Elephants and Donkeys deserve the same humane and ethical treatment that a human mascot would, whether they be in print form or in other forms of media.

PROPOSAL FOR ACTION:

Animals in the United States that are used as political party mascots shall immediately be given ethical and humane treatment by their users. These animals will be allowed frequent and fulfilling periods of relaxation to reduce stress and ensure longevity. Any noncompliance or continued abuse will be illegal.

Political parties will immediately begin a gradual decline in the frequency of use of animal logos. Any use of animals as political party mascots in the United States will become illegal following the next federal election.

PRESENTING YOUR PROPOSAL

In the National Issues Forum, every author presents their proposal and has the opportunity to comment on other proposals throughout the conference. At LAUNCH and Model Assembly, you will be offered training on how to present your proposal, however some key details are listed below:

- Delegates will have 2 minutes during the first committee to present their opening introduction speech to the committee.
- Your 2 minutes are for supporting your proposal and presenting additional evidence. Do not restate or read your written proposal. Delegates may write and read their opening introduction.
- You will have the opportunity to yield a portion of your presentation time to debatable/substantive questions. There is also a scheduled 2-minute question period for non-debatable, technical questions only.
- You will be allowed a 2-minute summation.

RANKING PROCEDURES AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

As part of the proposal advancement process, every proposal is ranked after it is heard in forum. There are five criteria where proposals are ranked from best to worst on a scale of 1 to 4 (1 = best score in category, 4 = worst score in category). It is to your benefit to consider the ranking criteria when preparing your proposal. All proposals are evaluated and ranked based upon the following criteria:

Evidence of Research - Is there research cited? Is it evident that the author has the facts to support the proposal and gives a well-prepared presentation? The ideal presentation would be both informative and well supported.

Debatability - Is there ample room for argumentation on the proposal? Does it spark emotional or logistical debate? Ideally proposals will encourage intense and energetic debate on both sides of the issue presented.

Feasibility - Did the proposal author describe a practical way of enforcing or implementing the action to be taken? The ideal presentation will detail methods for implementing the suggested policy changes.

National/International Relevance - Is the issue of national or international importance? Determining the relevance of a particular issue is subjective. This criterion is partially intended to downgrade proposals that are not national or international in scope (i.e. issues that are purely local or state).

Creativity - Does this proposal present a new or creative way of looking at an issue? The ideal proposal will be both creative and practical in the way in that they address the issue at hand.

NOTE: For a more detailed breakdown of scoring, please reference the “**Rules & Procedure**” section.

RULES & PROCEDURES

Structure

1) Presiding Officer

- a) The Presiding Officer is elected the prior year by the members of the National Issues Forum. A Presiding Officer is expected to select all appointed officials and attend training sessions to prepare for Youth in Government. The Presiding Officer will serve as chair of General Assembly.

2) Appointed Officials

- a) Four Committee Chairs will be selected by the Presiding Officer to serve as chairs of First and Second Committee and Committee Clerks during General Assembly.
- b) One Administrator will be selected by the Presiding Officer to track and monitor the movement and progression of proposals throughout the conference.
- c) One Press Secretary will be selected by the Presiding Officer to represent the National Issues Forum in the conference media.
- d) Appointed officers are required to attend training sessions identified by the Presiding Officer.

3) Members

- a) Members of the National Issues Forum must be registered participants in the Model Assembly conference. Membership is open to students in grades 10 to 12.
- b) Members are expected to attend Fall LAUNCH Training in advance of the conference.

4) Proposals

- a) A proposal may not be introduced until it has been reviewed by the Center for Youth Voice State Office and is in compliance with the Center for Youth Voice Code of Conduct. Proposals should consider a topic of national or international importance and will be assigned to a committee by the officers.
- b) Proposals will be evaluated on Ranking Ballots by members in the First and Second Committees
 - i) Each member of the Forum may submit one completed Ranking Ballot per proposal per committee.
 - ii) Members are required to complete a Ranking Ballot by indicating a total score as designated. Failure to note a total score may result in nullification of an individual Ranking Ballot.
 - iii) Ranking Ballots are used to rank each proposal by the following criteria:
 - (1) National or International Importance
 - 1 = Highly important and relevant national or international issue.
 - 2 = Important national or international issue, less relevant.
 - 3 = Somewhat important, not as relevant, national or international issue.
 - 4 = Not relevant national or international issue (i.e., presents a state or local issue)

(2) Evidence of Research

- 1 = Goes beyond necessary preparation required to provide informative and supported facts, statistics, and has a thorough understanding of the proposal topic and its ramifications.
- 2 = Provides a high-level (in quantity, quality or both) of research and preparation.
- 3 = Provides evidence of research and preparation.
- 4 = Does not provide evidence of research or preparation.

(3) Feasibility

- 1 = The author has described in detail a practical and feasible way of implementation.
- 2 = The proposal appears possible under the guidelines presented.
- 3 = The action to be taken has potential and author provides some information on implementation.
- 4 = The proposal faces serious obstacles in implementation and author does not address concerns.

(4) Creativity

- 1 = Presents a unique concept that is both original and is creative in its approach to that topic.
- 2 = Creative approach to an interesting topic or plan of implementation: or proposes a creative idea with a conventional solution.
- 3 = Suggests creativity in the proposal's design, but is not unique or a new concept.
- 4 = Is not creative in idea or approach.

(5) Debatability

- 1 = Proposal sparks intense and energetic debate on both sides of the issue.
- 2 = Proposal creates interesting debate on both sides of the issue.
- 3 = Creates debate on both sides of issue, but not equally (one side offers more debate).
- 4 = Proposal creates little or no debate.

Debate Timing

1) First Committee

a) Proposal Timing – Proposals should be heard in the following manner:

- 2 minute introduction speech by author/sponsor
- 2 minutes of non-debatable technical questions from the committee
- 2 minutes of testimony from lobbyists and/or cabinet members (optional)
- 5 minutes con/pro debate (1 minute each, must begin and end with a con speech)
- 2 minute closing speech by author
- 1 minute for ranking by committee members

b) Yielding Time

- i) During the author's opening speech, the author may yield time to the Chair, or to questions, at any point. After 1 minute, the author may yield remaining time to your closing.
- ii) During con/pro debate, a speaker may yield time at any point to the chair or to questions. After the use of 30 seconds, a speaker may yield remaining time to the author's closing summation.

- iii) During the author's opening speech, the committee chair may give 1 rap given to indicate 1 minute is left, 2 raps will be given to indicate 30 seconds are left.

2) Second Committee

- c) Proposal Timing – Proposals should be heard in the following manner:
 - 2 minute introduction speech by author
 - 2 minutes of non-debatable technical questions from the committee
 - 5 minutes con/pro debate (1 minute each, must begin and end with a con speech)
 - 2 minute closing speech by author
 - 1 minute for ranking by committee members
- d) Yielding Time
 - i) During the author's opening speech, the author may yield time to the Chair, or to questions, at any point. After 1 minute, the author may yield remaining time to your closing.
 - ii) During con/pro debate, a speaker may yield time at any point to the chair or to questions. After the use of 30 seconds, a speaker may yield remaining time to the author's closing summation.
 - iii) During the author's opening speech, the committee chair may give 1 rap given to indicate 1 minute is left, 2 raps will be given to indicate 30 seconds are left.

3) General Assembly (GA)

- e) Proposal Timing- Proposals should be heard in the following manner:
 - 3 minute opening speech by author/sponsor
 - 4 minutes of questions run by the Presiding Officer
 - 8 minutes of con/pro debate (2 minute limit per speaker)
 - 2 minute closing speech by author/sponsor
 - Standing Vote - Pass/Fail
- f) Yielding Time
 - i) For an Author: An author may yield time to the Chair at any point. After 2 minutes an author may yield time to their summation speech.
 - ii) For a Speaker During Debate: A speaker may yield their time to the Chair at any point. The speaker may yield to the author's summation speech or another National Issues Forum delegate.
 - iii) To Another Delegate During Debate: In order to yield time to another speaker, the speaker who is recognized must tell the Presiding Officer that they will be yielding time to delegate "Smith" before making a statement or asking questions. Example: "I reserve the right to yield the remainder of my time to delegate 'Smith.'"
 - iv) Clarifications: A speaker is limited to two actions: they may ask questions of the author and yield to the author's summation, or make a statement and yield to another delegate, but not more than two actions in one speech. A delegate who has been yielded time from another delegate can only take one action (i.e. ask questions of the author or speak).
 - v) During the author's speech: The presider may give 1 rap given to indicate 1 minute is left, 2 raps may be given to indicate 30 seconds are left.

4) Amendments and Other Motions

g) Amendments

i) First Committee

- (1) Amendments may be made only by the author of the proposal.
- (2) Amendments must be made before the proposal is considered in First Committee.
- (3) The author must supply each delegate with a copy of the amendment if it is 10 words or more.
- (4) Amendment forms are available to authors after consulting with their First Committee Chair

ii) Second Committee

- (1) Amendments may be made only by the author of the proposal.
- (2) Amendments to proposals that move on to the Second Committee level must be proposed by the author to the Committee Chair made after the proposal has been heard and ranked in First Committee but before the proposal has a hearing in Second Committee.
- (3) The author must bring a copy of the amendment to the Committee Chair for review to ensure it is germane and does not alter the intent of the proposal.
- (4) If the amendment is considered germane by the Committee Chair, the author may offer the amendment during the presentation of their proposal. It must be voted on by the Second Committee and must pass by a majority vote. If the amendment is more than 10 words, the author must provide a hard copy for each committee member prior to the vote.

iii) General Assembly

- (1) Amendments are not permitted in General Assembly.

h) Motions to Recess or Adjourn:

- i) Any member of the National Issues Forum may make a motion to recess or adjourn if recognized by the chair. The motion may be vote on at the discretion of the chair and requires a second by another delegate and a voice vote.

Committees

1) First Committee

- a) Appointed Officers will preside over First Committee.
- b) Proposals heard in First Committee will be scored on Ranking Ballots provided. Each member may submit one Ranking Ballot per proposal.
- c) The first seven proposals with the highest scores in each First Committee will move on to be debated in Second Committee.
- d) First Committee will take place Thursday and Friday morning of the conference.
- e) Lobbyists and cabinet members are permitted to give up to one minute of testimony per individual proposal during First Committee.

2) Second Committee

- a) Appointed Officers will preside over Second Committee and serve as Committee Clerks.
- b) Proposals heard in Second Committee will be scored on Ranking Ballots provided. Each member may submit one Ranking Ballot per proposal.

- c) The first six proposals with the highest scores from each Second Committee will move on to General Assembly.
- d) Second Committee will take place Friday and Saturday morning of the conference.

3) General Assembly

- a) The Presiding Officer will preside over the General Assembly.
- b) Appointed Officers will rotate as committee clerks for the Presiding Officer.
- c) Proposals heard in General Assembly will be voted upon by the members of the Assembly. Each member has one vote per proposal.
- d) The General Assembly docket will be organized in order of rank with the highest-ranking proposal from Second Committee presenting first.
- e) Proposals that pass in the NIF General Assembly will be signed and sealed by the Presiding Officer as the final order of business on Sunday.

4) Special Circumstances

- a) Ties in Ballot Ranking: In the case of a tie to two decimal points in the average ballot score, both proposals will move forward.
- b) Combining Proposals: If two proposals inadvertently have identical topics and are in the same committee, they may combine their proposal on the agreement of the involved parties and at the discretion of the Presiding Officer. Combining proposals is discouraged, delegates should make every effort to present a unique idea to the National Issues Forum.

Debate Language

When I am recognized to speak during non-debatable technical questions, what do I say?

Presiding Chair: "The Chair recognizes delegate Lindquist."

You: "Thank you, Sam Lindquist, Burnslake Park Delegation."

You: [Ask your non-debatable, fact-based question.]

(This is a period of quick, back-to-back questions to gain more insight into the author's proposal. Debatable, opinion-based questions will be called out of order.)

When I am recognized to speak during con-pro debate, what do I say?

Presiding Chair: "The Chair recognizes delegate Lindquist."

You: "Thank you, Sam Lindquist, Burnslake Park Delegation. [Speak for the allotted amount of time.] I yield my time to the chair."

(Ensure you are raising your placard to speak on the side of the issue you want to promote. Pro-speakers should speak in favor of the proposal; Con-speakers should share concerns or speak against the proposal.)

How do I ask a question or series of questions during con-pro debate?

Presiding Chair: "The Chair recognizes delegate Lindquist."

You: "Thank you, Sam Lindquist, Burnslake Park Delegation. Will the author yield to a question/series of questions?"

Presiding Chair: [To the author] "Will the author yield?"

Author: "Yes/No."

Presiding Chair: "You have one minute."

How do I speak and ask a question?

(You must ask the person you are questioning first, and then make a statement.)

Presiding Chair: "The Chair recognizes delegate Lindquist."

You: "Thank you, Sam Lindquist, Burnslake Park Delegation. Will the author yield to a question/series of questions? And I reserve my right to speak afterwards."

Presiding Chair: [To the author] "Will the author yield?"

Author: "Yes/No."

Presiding Chair: "You have one minute."

(If they say yes, you may proceed with questions, and then a statement. If they say no, you may still make just a statement.)

Recognition

The National Issues Forum Presiding Officer, Committee Chairs, and National Issues Forum Award selection committee will recognize exceptional participation by delegates of the National Issues Forum. Recognition for such participation will take place upon completion of the General Assembly Session, prior to the Closing Joint Convention of the Youth in Government conference.

Passed Proposals

Upon completion of debate in General Assembly, the Presiding Officer will jointly recognize those proposals and authors that have been passed by the voting members of the General Assembly and notarize the passed proposals.

Outstanding Statesperson Award

The Outstanding Statesperson Award is given to a delegate who exemplifies the traits most revered in the National Issues Forum. An individual receiving this award is well-spoken in committee, maintains decorum and upholds the Code of Conduct, facilitates lively debate, presents opinions professionally, is attentive to the flow of discussion, and gives other delegates due respect in and out of debate. This award may be presented to multiple delegates of the Forum if warranted.

Outstanding Proposal Award

The Outstanding Proposal Award is given to the author of a proposal that best demonstrates the intent of the National Issues Forum. This award is selected for closely meeting the five criteria of ranking, being National Importance, Evidence of Research, Feasibility, Creativity, and Debatability. An author earning this award is also recognized for their presentation of their idea, and for demonstrating the best example of proposal writing all delegates should aspire to. This award may be presented to multiple delegates of the Forum if warranted.

NEXT YEAR

Before you pack up the bills and put the Rules & Procedures into storage, you should think about next year and what you might want to do.

If you really enjoyed getting proposals passed...

You may want to consider being a Lobbyist.

A lobbyist is the person behind the scenes who pushes the legislative process. You probably had some experience with them in committees this year, and hopefully you got to talk to your own teammates. Lobbyists represent clients, and they try and get certain bills to pass or fail depending on how it affects their client's interests. You can use all your debating and negotiating skills to convince legislators to think your way one-on-one, or you can organize campaigns about legislation to reach whole groups. Your primary focus is still legislation and you also get to use your debating skills. If you like networking, have a cause you believe in passionately, and love to convince others to join your cause, being a lobbyist might be right for you. Note: Lobbyists are appointed, so don't forget to fill out your application!

If you liked talking about issues, but you're interested in debating local issues...

You may want to consider being in the Legislature

Legislators are the people who are in the forefront of the legislative process. They represent the people of the state and try to come up with ways that the government can serve them better—they make, change or get rid of laws. You get a chance to come up with your own good ideas for legislation and use your debating skills to get your bills passed. Your primary focus is legislation, but you also get to speak and debate in groups on the floor of the house and in committee. If you like coming up with new ideas for Minnesota, enjoy debating and speaking in public, and want to improve our society, then being a legislator may be right for you!

If you like the debating part of being a legislator...

You may want to consider being in the Court Program.

The Court program gives you a lot of time to debate (our fancy word for arguing!). As an attorney, you represent one side of a case and try to convince a panel of judges that your arguments are better than the other side's. If you become a judge, you get to listen to the arguments of others and poke holes in them with your piercingly intelligent questions. It's all about the debate!

If you loved being a part of Youth in Government...

You may want to become an Elected Officer or Appointed Official

YOUTH OFFICERS – Grades 9 – 12

Officers for the program are elected by participants in each program area at Youth in Government, to take office at the conclusion of the conference and complete their leadership the following January. Youth Officers preside in the program areas during YIG.

APPOINTED OFFICIALS – Grades 9 – 12

Shortly after Youth in Government, the newly elected Youth Officers appoint delegates to assist in the leadership of their program area. Some appointed positions include: Floor Leaders, Committee Chairs, Administrators, Press Secretaries, and Presiding Judges/Justices.