

IOLTA Supports Youth Government Program

Among the IOLTA funding priorities is support for law related education programs that serve the public. Since 1985, one of the important civic education programs receiving support in this category is the Idaho YMCA Youth in Government Program. In 2017, IOLTA funds provided assistance for 8 students to attend the Youth in Government state session, ensuring participation from students outside the Treasure Valley. (Read More)

Each spring, high school students from all over Idaho gather at the Idaho State Capitol in Boise for the annual YMCA Youth in Government Program. The purpose of this program is to provide a platform for youth to gain a better understanding of the principles and methods of government and discover how, through firsthand experience, to make changes for the betterment of Idaho. Students participate in hands-on experiences in legislative, judicial, and journalism roles, introducing and passing legislation or hearing and deciding court cases.

In 2017, 250 teens from 12 Idaho high schools participated in the program. Four regional conferences and a state session gave participants a chance to lobby, defend and pass bills. According to Idaho Supreme Court Justice Joel Horton, who sits on the statewide Youth in Government committee, the program allows students to “become more knowledgeable citizens, better equipped to help guide the future of our state and nation while they have fun learning.”

For many students, this experience has a positive influence on their education. The 2017 Youth Governor, Rhone Grajcar from Capitol High School, said of his experience: “I think the biggest impact this has had on me was dispelling a common distrust and stigma around government. During my time at the Idaho State Capitol, I found a wide array of people who shared one thing in common: a genuine desire to help people and improve our state.”

In his grant report, Codi Cronin, YMCA Youth in Government Program Director said that “IOLTA funds have enabled the program to continue to provide a high quality experience for all students involved, allowing the YMCA to deliver vital civics education programming.”

As a program that seeks to inspire youth to develop integrity and social responsibility, Youth in Government encourages Idaho students to explore important issues faced by our communities. The Idaho Law Foundation’s IOLTA Grant Program is proud to provide continued support for this worthwhile endeavor.