PARENT & GUARDIAN GUIDE

GAB Youth Civic Leadership & Community Action Lab

From Ideas to Community Impact.

Ages 13–17 · Indian River County, Florida
12 Saturdays · Free to participants · Nonpartisan

A program of GAB Community Institute Corp.
A Florida nonprofit, 501(c)(3) public charity
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WELCOME

Leadership isn’t only something you study. It’s something you practice.

This guide explains what your teen will do over twelve Saturdays, how a typical session runs, the responsibilities youth take on, the safety expectations adults uphold, and how to take the next step.

Participants work in small teams to investigate a community need, design a realistic project, build a budget, present and defend their proposal, and take part in a structured, nonpartisan selection process. Selected projects are carried out with adult oversight, measured honestly and reflected on.

AT A GLANCE

Who	Youth ages 13–17
Where	Vero Beach / Indian River County, Florida
When	12 Saturday sessions
Cohort	About 12 youth (maximum 15)
Cost	Free to participants
Approach	Hands-on, nonpartisan civic leadership

THE CYCLE

Learn → Design → Debate → Vote → Plan → Act → Measure → Reflect

Cohort dates, schedules and enrollment materials are confirmed before participation begins. Enrollment is limited and not guaranteed.

A TYPICAL SATURDAY

Less lecture. More doing.

Most planning sessions are approximately two hours. Community Action Days may require a longer block depending on the selected project.

10 min	**Arrive & Connect**	Check-in, attendance and a short opening prompt.
20 min	**Learn One Practical Concept**	A focused mini-lesson.
40 min	**Team Lab**	Teams apply the concept to the active community project.
10 min	**Break**	
30 min	**Build, Practice or Present**	A tangible deliverable: proposal, budget, pitch, implementation plan or impact report.
10 min	**Commit & Close**	Clarify responsibilities and next steps.

THE 12-WEEK CURRICULUM

12 Saturdays. From a community need to real action.

Every session moves the work forward. Each Saturday ends with something tangible — a map, a proposal, a budget, a plan or a report — that the next session builds on.

01

Understanding Community Needs & Leadership

Start by understanding the community before trying to change it.

Participants begin by exploring what a community is and what service-oriented leadership looks like in practice.

They learn to distinguish a community need from a proposed solution and examine the people, organizations, assets, and challenges that exist around them.

Through a community-mapping exercise, participants identify issues they believe deserve attention without immediately deciding how those issues should be solved. The group then begins forming balanced teams around shared areas of interest.

BY THE END OF THE SESSION

- Community Needs Map
- Shortlist of 2–3 issues per team
- Team roster
- Team working agreement

02

Designing a Community Project

A good intention becomes a project only when the details begin to work.

Teams select a community need and begin turning it into a realistic project proposal.

Participants learn how to identify who would benefit, define an objective, outline activities, estimate the resources required, build a basic budget, identify potential partners, consider permissions, recognize possible risks, and decide how success could be measured.

Questions every team must answer

- What are we trying to accomplish?
- Why does it matter?
- Who benefits?
- Where will it happen?
- What needs to happen first?
- What will it cost?
- What could go wrong?
- How will we know whether it worked?

BY THE END OF THE SESSION

- Draft Community Project Proposal
- Draft budget
- Preliminary risk and permission list

03

Proposal Development & Pitch Preparation

A strong project also needs a clear case for why it should move forward.

Teams refine their project proposals and prepare to present them to the cohort. Participants practice clear public speaking, evidence-based reasoning, respectful disagreement, answering questions, and explaining an idea concisely.

Each team conducts practice pitches and receives feedback before finalizing its proposal.

The goal is not simply to “sell” an idea. Participants must demonstrate that they understand the community need, the proposed response, the resources involved, and the practical challenges of implementation.

BY THE END OF THE SESSION

- Final written proposal
- Five-minute project pitch
- Pitch materials or presentation
- Q&A; preparation
- Speaking roles

04

Community Project Assembly & Selection

Ideas are presented, questioned, evaluated, and decided through a transparent process.

Each team formally presents its proposal and responds to questions from the group. Participants evaluate proposals using published criteria such as community benefit, potential impact, feasibility, inclusion, and responsible use of resources.

Projects must also pass an adult feasibility review covering safety, permissions, budget, timing, organizational capacity, and other practical requirements. Only feasible projects move forward for selection.

Participants then take part in a structured, nonpartisan decision-making process to determine which eligible projects the cohort will implement. After selection, the competition ends. The entire cohort becomes one implementation team.

BY THE END OF THE SESSION

- Completed presentations
- Project scoring
- Voting record
- Selection decision

– Staff feasibility approval for selected projects

05

Project One — Implementation Planning

The selected idea now has to survive contact with the real world.

The cohort converts the first selected proposal into an operational plan. Participants break the project into specific tasks, responsibilities, deadlines, materials, purchases, community contacts, permissions, logistics, and success measures.

Youth leadership roles may include project coordination, operations, budgeting and resources, community outreach, communications, safety and logistics, and impact measurement.

Youth help build and understand the project budget, but adults retain responsibility for financial transactions, purchasing, transportation controls, permissions, and safety-sensitive decisions. Before the Action Day, staff conduct a formal readiness review.

BY THE END OF THE SESSION

– Implementation Plan
– Youth role assignments
– Approved project budget
– Purchase and materials list
– Safety and logistics checklist
– Action Day plan

06

COMMUNITY ACTION DAY 01

The first project leaves the planning room.

Participants help carry out the first youth-selected community project under adult supervision.

The day begins with participant and adult check-in, a safety briefing, confirmation of roles, and review of the emergency plan. Youth then perform their assigned project responsibilities while approved adults retain control of financial transactions, vehicles, permissions, tools, and other safety-sensitive matters.

Throughout the activity, the team documents what was accomplished and collects the project-specific information that will later be used to measure results. Possible documentation may include attendance, project outputs, approved photographs, materials used, and other indicators relevant to the selected project.

The exact format, location, activities, and duration of each Community Action Day depend on the youth-selected project and required safety, permission, and operational approvals.

THE RESULT

- A completed community activity
- Project documentation
- Output data
- Attendance records
- Financial documentation
- Incident documentation if required

07

Project One — Measurement & Impact Report

Completing an activity is not the same as understanding its impact.

Participants return to the original plan and compare expectations with what actually happened. The cohort reviews project outputs, actual spending, unexpected challenges, changes made during implementation, and lessons learned.

Participants also learn the importance of financial reconciliation and honest reporting.

The goal is not to make every project appear perfect. The goal is to understand what happened and what could be improved.

BY THE END OF THE SESSION

- Community Impact Report One
- Budget reconciliation
- Project results
- Lessons-learned log

08

Guided Leadership Review

The project is reviewed — and so is the way the team worked together.

Participants reflect on communication, responsibility, disagreement, decision-making, teamwork, stewardship, and execution during the first project cycle. The group identifies what worked well and where improvement is needed.

Participants are also asked to consider their own contribution and leadership habits.

Leadership responsibilities are then rotated so additional participants can experience meaningful responsibility during the second project cycle.

BY THE END OF THE SESSION

- Mid-cycle reflection
- Leadership lessons
- Personal areas for improvement
- Role rotation plan

09

Project Two — Implementation Planning

The second project begins with something the first project did not have: experience.

The cohort prepares the second selected project using the same disciplined planning process, but participants are

expected to apply lessons from Project One. New leadership roles allow different youth to take responsibility.

Teams revisit budget, logistics, permissions, safety, materials, communications, and impact measures.

Participants must also explain what they are doing differently from the first project and why.

BY THE END OF THE SESSION

- Project Two Implementation Plan
- Updated youth roles
- Approved budget
- Safety and logistics plan
- Action Day checklist

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COMMUNITY ACTION DAY 02

Experience becomes greater responsibility.

Participants implement the second selected community project under the same adult safety and operational framework used during the first Action Day.

The difference is experience. Youth are encouraged to demonstrate stronger preparation, clearer communication, improved teamwork, and greater independence within the responsibilities they are prepared and authorized to handle.

The team again documents outputs, participation, project activity, and other information required for the final evaluation.

THE RESULT

- Second completed community activity
- Project documentation
- Output data
- Attendance records
- Financial records
- Incident documentation if required

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Project Two — Measurement & Impact Report

The question is no longer only “What happened?” It is also “Did we improve?”

Participants measure the results of Project Two and compare what happened with the original objectives.

The cohort prepares its second Community Impact Report and examines the project alongside the first implementation experience.

Participants look for evidence of improvement in planning, responsibility, teamwork, communication, adaptability, and execution.

BY THE END OF THE SESSION

- Community Impact Report Two
- Budget reconciliation
- Comparison with Project One
- Comparative lessons learned

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Final Review, Presentations & Recognition

The final week turns twelve Saturdays of work into lessons participants can carry forward.

Participants complete the program’s final assessment and reflect on how their confidence, communication, teamwork, planning, budgeting, problem-solving, and community engagement developed throughout the cohort.

Teams present the projects they completed, explain what happened, and share what they learned. Participants are asked to identify both successful decisions and areas where they would approach a future project differently.

Completion and participation are recognized, and the cohort closes by looking at ways young people can continue

participating in service, leadership, volunteering, and future community initiatives.

BY THE END OF THE PROGRAM

- Final presentations
- Post-program assessment
- Participant reflection
- Certificate of completion
- Cohort evaluation summary

YOUTH ROLES

Youth lead the work. Adults remain responsible.

Participants take on defined roles, which rotate between the two project cycles so more youth experience meaningful responsibility. Adults retain responsibility for financial transactions, purchasing, transportation, permissions and safety-sensitive decisions.

Youth Project Lead

Helps coordinate the team and keep decisions and responsibilities organized.

Deputy / Operations

Supports task completion and day-of-project operations.

Budget & Resources

Helps develop the project budget, identify donated resources, and prepare purchase requests for adult approval.

Community Outreach

Helps prepare approved communication with potential partners, volunteers, or community contacts.

Communications

Helps explain the project through presentations, approved messaging, signage, and documentation.

Safety & Logistics

Works alongside adults to think through supplies, site flow, weather, protective equipment, transportation considerations, and check-in procedures.

Impact & Data

Helps determine what information should be collected to understand whether the project achieved its objective.

HOW PROJECTS ARE CHOSEN

Proposals are scored by participants against published criteria, and must pass an adult feasibility and safety review before selection:

- Community Need & Benefit — 25%
- Potential Impact — 25%
- Feasibility — 20%
- Inclusion & Community Value — 15%
- Responsible Use of Resources — 15%

SAFETY EXPECTATIONS

Built around youth voice. Operated with adult responsibility.

These are the standing practices families can expect. Safety plans and permissions are reviewed for each cohort and each off-site activity.

Guardian Consent

Written consent and emergency contacts are required before participation.

Adult Supervision

Approved adults guide sessions and supervise all program activities.

Check-In & Check-Out

Attendance and authorized release procedures support every session.

Background Screening

Adults with direct youth contact must meet program screening requirements.

Emergency Procedures

Each activity includes contacts, supplies, response roles and escalation steps.

Youth Privacy

Personal information is restricted; photos and media require applicable consent.

WHAT FAMILIES SHOULD KNOW

Transportation

Parents and guardians are expected to provide transportation to regular sessions and, when feasible, designated Action Day meeting points. Transportation is not provided unless a specific plan is confirmed.

Off-site activities

Every Action Day requires activity-specific planning, permissions, adult coverage, weather review, emergency information, supplies and a final staff go/no-go decision.

Family communications

Parents receive the cohort calendar, reminders and notice of off-site activities. Schedule changes and safety-relevant incidents affecting a participant are communicated promptly.

Mandatory reporting

Staff and volunteers follow applicable Florida reporting law and GABCI procedures when there is reasonable concern about a youth’s safety.

This is a community leadership initiative. It is not a licensed childcare program, an accredited academic or for-credit offering, or a government-endorsed program.

ENROLLMENT STEPS

How to get involved.

1 Join the Interest List

Complete the short online form at the program website. It asks only for parent/guardian contact details, your teen's age, city/ZIP, preferred language and Saturday availability — never medical or sensitive information.

2 Hear from our team

We contact you with information about upcoming cohorts, dates and next steps.

3 Ask your questions

Talk with us about the schedule, transportation, accessibility needs or anything else before you decide.

4 Complete the enrollment packet

When a cohort is confirmed, a parent or legal guardian completes the enrollment and consent materials, including emergency contacts, conduct expectations and media permissions.

5 Prepare for Week 1

Receive the cohort calendar, check-in and check-out procedures, and what to bring on the first Saturday.

Enrollment is limited and not guaranteed. Cohort sizes are kept small so every participant has a real role.

CONTACT

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