



The Youth Ambassador of the Year Award, sponsored by Reality Check of New York State, honors the outstanding work of youth who have taken the lead in holding the tobacco industry accountable for marketing to youth. These young activists are fighting to protect their peers and their communities from the dangers of tobacco use through public education efforts, peer-to-peer training, and outreach to policymakers. Many have worked to improve communities at the local and state level by limiting tobacco industry access to youth, and protecting youth from exposure to tobacco marketing and imagery – all to make New York State a healthier place to live, learn, work and play. Their work inspires and motivates other young people to do the same.

REALITY CHECK OF NEW YORK STATE WILL HONOR

One statewide winner

Four regional winners

(Capital, Central, Western, and MARO)

The State and Regional winners will receive awards and be provided the opportunity to have an active role and voice in local, regional, and state youth programs and initiatives. Youth Ambassador of the Year may also have the opportunity to participate in regional, state, and national level conferences, programs, and events to promote tobacco prevention.

APPLICATION DEADLINE

Applications may be submitted electronically at any time, but no later than midnight on Sunday, December 1, 2024. Applications will be submitted online at: www.RealityCheckofNY.com.

Please Note: Applicants must use a google account to submit applications.

JUDGING CRITERIA AND PROCESS

A panel of judges will select finalists in each award category. All entries are judged using a common rubric. State and Regional Awards will be announced on February 12, 2025.

WHY APPLY?

As a Reality Check member, your hard work with communities to protect your peers from tobacco marketing should come with recognition and appreciation. Reality Check does not exist without your hard work and perseverance. Youth Ambassador of the Year Awards recognize the hard work and the crucial role that you play in taking down Big Tobacco and making our communities safer and healthier places.

YAYA winners gain:

Recognition at Legislative Education Day in Albany on February 12, 2025 and at local recognition events in your area. Winners will receive awards and the recognition of your local elected officials and Reality Check program leaders.

YAYAs have the opportunity to work with the Reality Check program throughout the year as a spokesperson, a youth board member, and a Reality Check ambassador. It is 'challenge-by-choice' and you will be able to participate at the level of your interest and availability.

A strong resume booster for college and job applications.



APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- ★ 4 written statements
- ★ 1-3 minute video statement
- ★ Reference from your counselor
- ★ Current digital headshot of applicant
- ★ Completed digital application form (example below)



WRITTEN STATEMENTS

Each application will submit a series of written statements (up to 750 words each) describing their experience in each of these areas:

- Advocacy
- Taking Initiative & Impact of Activities
- Leadership
- Creative Thinking and Problem Solving

VIDEO STATEMENT

Each application will submit a 1-3-minute video compilation capturing their Reality Check experience. Please refer to the suggestions below when creating your video.

COORDINATOR REFERENCE

Each applicant will submit a letter of reference from their program coordinator with the application. In 250 words or less, the coordinator should explain why they believe the application should receive the award.



SUGGESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN WRITING

We want to hear what you are doing with Reality Check and Tobacco Control in your community. Use the suggestions below to build your written statements. Each area focuses on specific skills that you have as a youth advocate. Use the suggestions below to brainstorm with your coordinator or advisor how YOU demonstrate advocacy, initiative, and leadership in your local efforts. Celebrate the work you do. Provide details and explanations.

Written statements should be **up to 750 words each** and should provide examples of your work and experience in the following areas:

1. ADVOCACY

- What have you done to advocate for Reality Check or Tobacco Control in your community?
- Share your experience working with elected officials and/or the media to promote Reality Check and the work you do at the local level.
- What have you learned from your successes and failures?

2. TAKING INITIATIVE & IMPACT OF ACTIVITIES

- What suggestions or ideas have you provided that have been used by Reality Check?
- How have you helped create or take the lead on a Reality Check event or activity?
- What have you noticed in your community regarding tobacco and tobacco marketing, and what have you done to address the issue?
- Give an example of a time you did something without your Reality Check coordinator asking you. Did it work? Explain.
- Share results and outcomes from an activity or event you were involved in. It can be from one of the events or activities already discussed.
- Share a time when you felt you impacted someone's perspective on tobacco.

3. LEADERSHIP

- How have you involved other youth in Reality Check?
- How have you mobilized your community members to work with you?
- Describe the qualities you see in yourself that make you a leader?

4. CREATIVE THINKING AND PROBLEM SOLVING

- Explain how you have used your creative thinking skills and talents to spread the Reality Check message.
- Explain how you have used your problem-solving skills to address issues regarding tobacco in your community or with your Reality Check team.

SUGGESTIONS TO CONSIDER IN YOUR VIDEO



- Remember, the people who are watching this video do not know you.
 - Make sure to share your name and where you live (include town and county and school district)
 - Tell us a little about yourself. Who are you outside of Reality Check?
 - Share with us why you are involved in Reality Check. Why is Reality Check important to you?
- Share with us what you'd like to do as a youth ambassador.
- Use some of your statements from your essays in your video.
- We want to see you in action!
 - Use video and photo footage of your Reality Check experiences to help tell your Reality Check story.
 - Ask your coordinators, teachers, parents, and supportive community members to be a part of your video!
- Show us who you are – feel free to be creative.
- Coordinators are a great resource for you.
 - Ask your coordinator for help you are stuck or don't know how to get started.
 - Pay attention to background noise and the background where you are filming.
- Videos **MUST** be a minimum of 1 minute and a maximum of 3 minutes to be scored.

APPLICATION INFORMATION



Name: _____

Age: _____

Street: _____ Apt #: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone #: (_____) _____ - _____ Cell #: (_____) _____ - _____

Email Address: _____

Name of School: _____

Year in school as of September 2023: _____ County you live in: _____

Region you are applying from: Western / Central / Capital / MARO

Number of years involved in tobacco control: _____

PARENT OR GUARDIAN CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: _____

Phone #: (_____) _____ - _____

Email Address: _____

Street: _____ Apt#: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

I grant permission for(YOUTH'S NAME): _____

To appear in person or voice, video, or photographic presentation for radio, television, websites, or print media reports and/or media campaign(s) resulting from participation in the Youth Ambassador of the Year program.

Participant Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____