



Youth Ambassador of the Year Awards



What is a Youth Ambassador of the Year Award?

Youth Ambassador of the Year Awards honors the outstanding work of youth who have taken the lead in holding tobacco companies accountable for marketing to youth



How do I apply?

Talk with your local Reality Check Coordinator, visit the website(s) listed below to find the application.

Application Components



Application Deadline

Applications may be submitted electronically at any time but no later than midnight on Sunday, February 1, 2026. Applications will be submitted online at: www.RealityCheckofNY.com

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



New York State

Youth Ambassador of the Year Awards

SUGGESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN WRITING



- Share what you are doing with Reality Check and Tobacco Control in your community
- Celebrate the work you do
- Provide details and explanations

Each area below 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.

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



ADVOCACY

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



TAKING INITIATIVE & IMPACT OF ACTIVITIES

1. What suggestions or ideas have you provided that have been used by Reality Check?
2. How have you helped create or take the lead on a Reality Check event or activity?
3. What have you noticed in your community regarding tobacco and tobacco marketing, and what have you done to address the issue?
4. Give an example of a time you did something without your Reality Check coordinator asking you. Did it work? Explain.
5. 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.
6. Share a time when you felt you impacted someone's perspective on tobacco.



LEADERSHIP

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



CREATIVE THINKING AND PROBLEM SOLVING

1. Explain how you have used your creative thinking skills and talents to spread the Reality Check message.
2. 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! Show clips of you doing work in your community, with Reality Check
- Use video & photo footage of your Reality Check experiences to help tell your Reality Check story.
- Ask 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.

