



Young Marines

***Strengthening the lives of America's youth
since 1959***

Be Part of the Legacy!

STARTING A UNIT

Who We Are

Recruiting Adult Volunteers

Source Meeting Location

Planning Phase

Chartering

Prepare For Training

Recruiting, Retention & Sustainability



MISSION

The mission of the Young Marines is to positively impact America's future by providing quality youth development programs for boys and girls that nurture and develop its members into responsible citizens who enjoy and promote a healthy, drug-free lifestyle.

We remain dedicated to our legacy to continue to be the premier youth drug demand reduction organization in America.

WHO WE ARE

Since our early beginnings, we have strived to provide a structured and disciplined environment for those youngsters who will eventually make up the nucleus of your organization. Our approach is a tried method that has been so successful that other countries have adopted our mission, goals and objectives, and guiding principles. And we do it the old fashion way, with firmness, fairness, dignity, and compassion.

Our Young Marines have become so engaged in the activities of their communities that the communities have come to expect that they can count on their Young Marines wherever and whenever they need help. Similarly, we are there to lend encouragement and support to that element of our society that is most vulnerable, our youth.

You will likely make a lasting impact on the lives of those Young Marines that you have the chance to lead and mentor.

The National Headquarters staff is at your disposal to lend any and all assistance we can to make your jobs just a little bit easier. We will offer periodic training opportunities online, in your area, and at the annual Adult Leaders Conference. Once chartered, we have many resources available to you on our web site, YoungMarines.org, including the Adult Volunteer Manual.

The rewards will be numerous and will likely be reflected in the eyes of those with whom you have had a positive impact.



CORE OBJECTIVES:

- **Advocating a healthy drug-free lifestyle through education**
- **Instilling honesty, fairness, courage, respect, loyalty, dependability, and patriotism**
- **Stimulating interest and respect for academic achievement and American history**
- **Promoting physical fitness**

The Young Marines do a wide variety of activities. The list keeps expanding as new ideas form:

- **Close Order Drill (marching)**
- **Camping**
- **Class Work (knowledge)**
- **Field Trips**
- **Physical Training (PT)**
- **Team Building Exercises**
- **Fundraising**
- **Parades**
- **National Adventures**
- **Leadership Schools**
- **CPR/First Aid Certification**
- **Color Guards**
- **Community Service**
- **Veterans Appreciation**
- **Public Speaking**
- **Peer Mentorship**
- **Red Ribbon Week**
- **Ceremonies**



We teach drug prevention education primarily focused around gateway drugs.

We teach discipline, respect, history, patriotism, teamwork, leadership, land navigation, pride, self-esteem, camping skills, and responsibility.

WHAT WE BELIEVE IN:

- Respecting parents, teachers, elders, ourselves, and others
- Community Service
- Staying away from drugs and drug abuse
- Leading by Example
- Teamwork
- Physical Fitness
- Positive Mentorship
- Pride in Appearance
- Self-Discipline
- Academic Achievement
- Our Country
- “Yes Sir” and “Yes Ma’am”



WHAT WE ARE *NOT*:

- *Not* recruiting for the military
- *Not* a place to live out the “Glory Days” of your military past
- *Not* “In Your Face”
- *Not* a “Scared Straight” program
- *Not* a baby-sitting service
- *Not* a Boys and Girls Club
- *Not* a Rambo Outfit (no warfare or tactics)
- *Not* a residential program
- *Not* a summer camp
- *No* Profanity

RECRUITING ADULT VOLUNTEERS

At least three (3) registered Adult Volunteers (AV) are needed to start a unit. Every AV must register with Headquarters Young Marines and complete an annual background check. Four primary AV billets must be filled. These billets are:

- Unit Commander (UC) - elected position, minimum 25 years old, preferably a U.S. Marine in good standing (active, reserve, or veteran). A waiver may be requested if a Marine is not available. The UC sets the example, plans ahead, and stays involved.**
- Executive Officer (XO) - elected position, minimum 25 years old, good execution skills, motivated, dedicated, good planning skills, takes command in UC's absence.**
- Adjutant—Appointed by the UC, maintains Young Marines Database records, must have good organizational, computer, and communication skills.**
- Financial Manager—Appointed by the UC, must not live with, be related to, or in a relationship with the UC, maintains the bookkeeping in the Young Marines Database.**

A sufficient number of volunteers must be recruited to handle the training and supervision of your Young Marines. The “rule of thumb” is to have at least 1 AV for every 10 Young Marines. At least one Adult Volunteer must be a female.

AVs complete several training courses online in Young Marines University (YMU). These include the Adult Volunteer Manual Test, Mandatory Reporter Training, and Risk Management. Other training opportunities include:

- Adult Leaders Conference (ALC) in May – This is an annual conference where adults from all over the U.S. (about 400) come to one place for a few days of training and fun. The last night is a Black-Tie banquet to announce the National Young Marine of the Year.**
- Unit Management Course (UMC) – The UMC events move to different cities each year. There is usually one per division (region) annually. These are small events (20 to 90 people) who spend a Saturday session in training.**
- Leadership Academy for Volunteer Adults (LAVA) – LAVA is intended for new Adult Volunteers with little military background to teach them the basic skills needed to perform training .**

WHERE WE MEET

There must be an adequate facility to host your unit meetings. The facility must offer a safe, clean and hospitable atmosphere for your youngsters and adult volunteers. Young Marines units meet in a variety of locations. While planning to start a unit, contact these types of organizations in your area:

- **VFW**
- **American Legion**
- **Marine Corps League**
- **Military Reserve Center**
- **Military Base**
- **Police Department**
- **Schools**
- **Churches**
- **Elks Lodge**
- **Municipal Center**

Some things to consider when selecting your training location:

- **Access to restroom facilities**
- **Shelter from inclement weather**
- **Classroom space or other area to be used for classes**
- **Paved parking lot or other suitable area for close order drill**
- **Space for weekly physical fitness and bi-annual physical fitness tests**
- **Gathering space for ceremonies and graduations**
- **Preferably offered at no cost to the unit**



PLANNING

The key to any successful venture is planning. Start regularly meeting with your potential AV staff as soon as possible. Keep minutes of each meeting as you start to assign tasks and make decisions. Here are a few topics of discussion prior to chartering.

- **Training schedule.** What days will the unit meet and how often? Will it be every week on a weeknight? Do you have a place that will allow weekends? How many hours? Will drill meetings be every week or every other week?
- **Recruiting more Adult Volunteers.** Where to advertise? Who to target? AVs come from all backgrounds and all walks of life. Look for military veterans, law enforcement, EMS, school teachers, parents, etc.
- **Curriculum.** Familiarize yourself with the Recruit Guidebook and Basic Guidebook. Plan your training around specific subjects and the availability of subject matter experts.
- **Physical Fitness.** The Adult Volunteers set the example. Consider starting each meeting with a group workout.
- **Gear and Uniforms.** What additional gear and uniform items will the unit provide? Each new member receives the following from Headquarters:
 - **Young Marine Recruits:** Recruit Guidebook, camouflage cover (hat).
 - **Young Marine Privates:** Basic Guidebook, YM T-shirt, web belt, buckle, boot bands, shoulder patch, unit arch, and Young Marines web tape.
 - **Adult Volunteer:** Black polo shirt
- **Cost:** What will the unit charge new members? The current annual registration fee is \$50.00. Unit may charge an additional enrollment fee to cover gear costs.



UNIT APPLICATION & CHARTERING PROCEDURE

Familiarize yourself with the program by visiting the YoungMarines.org website and social media pages.

The Start A Unit interest form is submitted online at:

<https://YoungMarines.org/public/page/StartAUnit>

The information is received by Headquarters Young Marines (HQYM) and the Division Commander, who will contact the acting Unit Commander for more information.

HQYM will send the acting Unit Commander access to begin the application process.

Each Young Marines Unit Application includes:

- New Unit Application submitted by the acting Unit Commander**
- At least three (3) Adult Volunteers submitted by the acting Unit Commander and applications completed online by the applicants.**
- Things to keep in mind with AV applications:**
 - Military Veterans and Inactive Reserve must provide a copy of their DD214 Member-4 or Service form containing the Character of Service information.**
 - Active Duty Military and Active Reserve must include a Statement of Service from their current command.**
 - Character References cannot be a family member or current Young Marines Adult Volunteer.**
 - Character references should be as descriptive as possible.**

Once all applications are completed and the Unit Application submitted, Headquarters will send each AV applicant the link to complete their background check.

Download and print the Unit By-Laws and Youth Protection Policy and review them with your volunteers.

Once chartered, the Unit Commander will open a bank account. There must be at least two Unit signatories and one Headquarters signatory. Signatories cannot be related to or living with the Unit Commander.

Familiarize yourself with all the manuals available on the website, including the Commanders Manual, Financial Manager Manual, Training Officers Manual, Adjutants Manual, and Awards Manual.

After receiving your charter

You will receive an administrative package containing guidebooks, brochures, and other resources. You will gain access to the unit's Young Marines Database System (ymdbs). Familiarize yourself with the ymdbs. Decide who will have access to your unit's information and add them as an Authorized User. For more information see the Adjutant's Manual.

Once you have received your unit's charter you can now set up your unit's checking account. Deciding who will be authorized signatures on the account is an important decision. You should select unit staff that can be available to verify disbursements and sign checks for the timely processing of payments. You need two people from your unit as signatures and one from National Headquarters. The two people you select from your unit cannot be related and cannot be the Finance Manager. Send the signature card to National Headquarters to obtain a national staff signature. For more information see the Unit Financial Management Manual.

Begin to prepare you and your staff for recruiting Young Marines by planning your first Recruit Training. See the Training Officer's Manual .

Locate Young Marines Units near you and arrange to visit them. Meet the Unit Commanders and staff to learn from their experience and get ideas.

***Thank you in advance
for your interest and
time in helping to
"Strengthen the lives of
America's Youth."***



UNIFORMS

The official Young Marines Uniform is the woodland camouflage uniform. This can be purchased at local military surplus stores or at Vanguardmil.com. The program is transitioning to the digital woodland pattern by October 1, 2026.

The official Adult Volunteer Uniform is khaki pants with a black staff T-shirt or black polo shirt with black belt.



RECRUIT TRAINING

Recruit Training is 26 hours minimum to complete required objectives. They will learn Young Marines history, rank structure, close order drill, customs and courtesies, teamwork, jargon, physical fitness, healthy eating, dangers of drugs and drug abuse, General Orders, and Young Marines Obligation

YOUNG MARINES OBLIGATION

From this day forward, I sincerely promise, I will set an example for all other youth to follow and I shall never do anything that would bring disgrace or dishonor upon my God, my country and its flag, my parents, myself or the Young Marines. These I will honor and respect in a manner that will reflect credit upon them and myself. Semper Fidelis.



YOUNG MARINES CORE VALUES

Every United States Marine upholds the core values of Honor, Courage and Commitment. These values give the Marines their strength, regulate their behavior, and bond them together into a force like no other, capable of overcoming every obstacle and meeting any challenge. The Young Marines' Core Values are Discipline, Leadership and Teamwork. Like the Marines, these values are the ties that bind our members throughout their time in the Young Marines and well beyond.

ADULT VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

The Young Marines have a policy that physical force and verbal abuse are prohibited, and defamatory remarks will never be used in the presence of Young Marines and Young Marine Recruits.

Physical Force: Physical force is the physical touching, holding or striking of another with any object for the purpose of restraining and/or inflicting pain. Physical force shall never be used to instruct, correct, or discipline Young Marines or Young Marine Recruits. However, a minimum of physical force may be used under these conditions:

- a. To Break up a physical altercation,
- b. To protect others, and
- c. To protect yourself.

Verbal Abuse: Verbal abuse is a direct or indirect expression by word of mouth, written communication, body language, or physical gesture from one person to another with expressed purpose to threaten, demean, denigrate, belittle, or harass. The use of profanity is considered a form of verbal abuse and shall never be used in the presence of Young Marines or Young Marine Recruits.

Defamatory Remarks: Defamatory remarks are generally offensive and intended to purposely disparage targeted individuals and groups of a racial, religious, social, political, and ethnic nature.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- The health, welfare, and safety of the Young Marines are paramount.
- We value our volunteers and will provide them with the tools they need to succeed.
- We will never forget that this program is for our youth. We will uphold the Marine Corps' core values of Honor, Courage, and Commitment as well as the Young Marines' core values of Discipline, Leadership, and Teamwork.
- We pledge to the parents to serve as positive role models to their children.
- We get by giving.



RECRUITING, RETENTION & SUSTAINABILITY

Three keys to a successful Young Marines Unit are recruiting, retention, and sustainability.



Recruiting Youth: The youth are at the very center of everything we do in the Young Marines. So how can you bring them in the door? Get the word out in the community by leveraging technology, local media resources, social media, and good old word of mouth. Talk about it everywhere

you go and keep a few brochures or business cards handy. Host an open house or a Parent Information Night. Have a laptop or tablet there for on the spot applications.

Retaining Members: Growth is the goal of every Young Marines Unit. One of the best way to grow is to retain the members you already have. So, how do you prevent high turnover of Young Marines and Adult Volunteers?

- Make it FUN!
- Keep Young Marines engaged by providing training that is challenging and creative with a clear path toward promotions and awards.
- Keep Adult Volunteers engaged by utilizing their personal strengths and interests. Attend periodic training opportunities to enhance skills and network with other volunteers. And have some fun to prevent burn-out.
- Open and consistent communicate with Adult Volunteers, Young Marines, and parents.



Succession Plan: Secure the Unit's legacy by preparing for an eventual change of command. Cross training volunteers in multiple billets can help ease the burden during busy times and will help the unit better transition as volunteers leave the program. The Unit Commander, Executive Officer, Adjutant, Financial Manager, and Training Officer billets should always be preparing someone to assume their position. And remember to HAVE FUN!

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

Once a new Unit is chartered, there are many resources available to them on the YoungMarines.org website or the Library located in the Young Marines Database System.

- **Fully integrated record keeping in the Young Marines Database System (YMDBS)**
- **Lesson plans and slideshows**
- **Manuals**
- **Guidebooks**
- **Esprit Magazine**
- **Forms & Documents Library**
- **A free and customizable website**
- **Online application system for new Young Marines and Adult Volunteers**
- **A web email tool**
- **Training videos and tutorials for Adult Volunteers**
- **Training videos and tutorials for Young Marines**
- **Member portals to track personal achievements and update personal information**
- **Parent Portal to track Young Marine achievements and update personal information**
- **Online Annual Re-registration**
- **Access to online learning courses**
- **Branding and Marketing assistance**
- **Special Event Registration**
- **Drug Demand Reduction resources**
- **Each Unit receives a Microsoft 365 account which includes Teams, Outlook, SharePoint, OneDrive, and more.**



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Strengthening the lives of America's youth



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