

# Youth Council Committee Plan (full proposal)

## City of Concord, New Hampshire

“Building the Future with the Hands and Hearts of the Young”

### 1. Vision and Mission

#### Vision

To make Concord a city where young people are not just the future, but the *present architects* of change.

A city where every youth, regardless of race, income, or background, has a real seat at the table, a stable job, an affordable home, and a reason to believe that leadership belongs to all of us.

#### Mission

To build a sustainable Youth Council that empowers the next generation of leaders to take part in shaping the city’s economy, culture, and policies, creating opportunity, justice, and belonging for all Concord residents.

This council will act as a bridge between government, youth, and community, uniting energy with experience and transforming voices into policies.

### 2. The Structure of the Youth Council Committee

#### Composition

The Youth Council Committee will be composed of **25 voting members between the ages of 15 and 29**, reflecting the true spirit and diversity of Concord. These young members will come from every walk of life, **students striving for opportunity, young workers balancing school and survival, artists shaping culture, entrepreneurs building new ideas, and immigrants bringing courage and hope to our community.** Together, they will form a living picture of what Concord truly looks like, young, resilient, creative, and determined.

Every seat will represent more than a position; it will represent a *story*. A story of a student who found her voice through service, a young man who turned hardship into innovation, a first-generation immigrant who found belonging in public service. These stories are not just inspiration, they are the building blocks of leadership.

Supporting them will be a team of **Advisory Members**, experienced **city officials, educators, nonprofit leaders, and local business owners** who serve not as directors, but as mentors. Their role is to guide, support, and share institutional wisdom while allowing the youth to lead with freedom, imagination, and responsibility. This intergenerational partnership will make the Council both stable and visionary, ensuring that youthful energy meets practical experience.

## Leadership Roles

The Youth Council will operate with a clear leadership framework that teaches accountability, communication, and collaboration, the very skills our city needs for the future.

- **Chairperson** - The Chairperson will be the voice and vision of the Council, leading sessions, setting the agenda in coordination with the Mayor's liaison, and ensuring that youth priorities are heard in every corner of City Hall. This position is about responsibility, not status, about lifting others' voices, not one's own.
- **Vice Chairperson** - The Vice Chairperson will assist the Chair and coordinate the internal committees, making sure each division functions smoothly. They are the bridge-builder who ensures that every idea finds its way into action.
- **Secretary** - The Secretary will ensure that the Council's work is transparent and accessible to the public by recording decisions, managing communication, and keeping the community informed. This role reinforces accountability, because leadership without documentation is leadership without memory.
- **Treasurer** - The Treasurer will oversee budget allocations, grant disbursements, and financial transparency. This position will teach young leaders the fundamentals of responsible fiscal management, preparing them to handle not only city funds, but also the future finances of businesses, nonprofits, and communities they may one day lead.

Each of these roles teaches civic discipline and professional ethics, essential skills in a time when trust in leadership must be earned through transparency, fairness, and results.

## Divisions & Committees

The Youth Council will be organized into **five powerful divisions**, each addressing a critical area of life in Concord. Every division will have **3-5 dedicated members** responsible for project design, outreach, and public feedback, ensuring that no decision is made in isolation.

## **1. Economic Development & Jobs**

This division will focus on **youth employment, small business support, and entrepreneurship**, helping young people move from job seekers to job creators. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, youth unemployment nationwide averaged **8.7% in mid-2025**, higher than the overall rate of 4.4%. Concord's young workers, especially those from low-income families, need pathways to skilled trades, technology, and creative industries.

This committee will partner with local employers, trade unions, and small business centers to open internships, apprenticeships, and micro-grant programs that give young people not only jobs, but dignity and purpose.

## **2. Affordable Housing & Sustainability**

Housing is the foundation of stability. The average rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Concord has reached **\$1,614 per month (HUD FY2025)**, placing enormous strain on young workers and new families. This division will advocate for **affordable housing initiatives**, support youth renters' rights, and collaborate on **green energy projects** that reduce costs while protecting the environment.

Projects may include youth-led home rehabilitation programs, sustainability workshops, and green start-up incubators. The goal is not just to survive in the city, but to help build a Concord that's livable, affordable, and environmentally responsible for generations to come.

## **3. Education, Arts & Innovation**

This division will nurture the **intellectual and creative soul of the city**. It will build bridges between schools, universities, and the city government, promoting mentorships, arts events, innovation labs, and youth scholarships.

Education is more than academics; it's the process of shaping confident, thoughtful citizens. Through programs like the **Youth Art and Innovation Festival**, students can showcase their talents while learning to apply creativity to civic problem-solving. Innovation, culture, and education together will form the heartbeat of a united city.

## **4. Health & Wellbeing**

Healthy youth means a healthy city. This division will lead **mental health awareness**, physical fitness programs, and wellness campaigns that reach every corner of the community. According to the CDC, over **42% of young adults** in the U.S. reported symptoms of anxiety or depression in 2024, a number that demands action.

The Council will partner with hospitals, clinics, and counselors to host youth wellness fairs, free therapy sessions, and community sports programs that strengthen both mind and body. The message is simple: *no one should struggle alone in Concord.*

## 5. Equity & Civic Engagement

Diversity is Concord's greatest strength, and this division will make it visible, celebrated, and empowered. The team will focus on **inclusion, immigrant integration, racial equity, and civic participation**. With the city's growing immigrant and refugee communities, this division ensures that every young person, no matter where they come from, can call Concord home.

They will lead multicultural events, civic education drives, and public dialogue sessions that promote understanding and belonging. Their mission will be to turn diversity from a statistic into a story of unity and shared success.

This organizational structure is like a **leadership school built into City Hall**, designed to prepare the next generation to govern with empathy and excellence.

Each young person who serves here will graduate not only with a stronger résumé, but with a deeper sense of purpose. They will understand how cities function, how budgets are shaped, how laws affect lives, and how leadership begins not with power, but with service.

This Youth Council Committee will become a **living symbol of civic renewal**, proof that Concord trusts its young people not just to dream, but to decide, not just to speak, but to lead.

## 3. Strategic Implementation Roadmap

### Phase 1 (0-3 Months): Foundation and Launch

In the first three months, we lay strong foundations. The moment this Phase opens, we are saying to the young people of Concord: *You are trusted. You are needed. We will build this together.*

- The City Council passes the ordinance creating the **Youth Council Committee (YCC)**. This is no symbolic gesture, it formalises youth voices in the city's governing structure and signals that youth inclusion is not optional but essential.
- A public, city-wide recruitment campaign is launched through schools, colleges, community centers and nonprofits. We partner with high schools, local universities, immigrant-serving organizations, faith-based groups, and youth arts organizations to ensure the campaign reaches all corners of Concord, including neighborhoods that have been overlooked.
- We appoint our 25 members and begin training them in civic leadership, budgeting, and community engagement. This is not a casual orientation. The training will include

workshops on how city government works, how public budgets are made, how to listen and speak in civic forums, how to design community outreach, and how to accept responsibility. It is about building confidence, understanding power, and preparing youth to lead, not just to participate.

In summer 2025, the youth labor force (ages 16-24) grew by 1.9 million, or 8.9 percent, compared with April. ([Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)) The national unemployment rate for youth reached 10.8 percent in July 2025. ([Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)) In Concord, our youth cannot wait. This phase gives them access, orientation and power.

### **Phase 2 (4-12 Months): Pilot Projects**

Once the foundation is set, the Council moves rapidly into action. These are the first steps that turn promise into real change:

- Launch **YouthWorks Concord**, which will provide 200 paid internships and apprenticeships in city offices, small businesses, and construction trades. These are meaningful work placements with real pay and real expectations. Evidence shows that internships increase the likelihood of full-time employment: in the U.S., a paid internship is 32 percent more likely to lead to a full-time job than an unpaid one. ([StandOut CV](#))
- Begin **Startup Concord Microgrants**: 60 small grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$15,000 to young entrepreneurs. Each grant will be accompanied by mentorship, technical assistance, and peer-networking. Just an example: a youth in Port Arthur, Texas secured an eight-week paid internship in 2025 and found a path into IT and robotics. ([Beaumont Enterprise](#)) We will replicate that kind of transformative moment here in Concord.
- Hold the first **Youth Town Hall** to identify local challenges in housing, jobs, and transportation. Young people will sit together for the first time, mapping what working families go through, what small business owners experience, and where opportunity is still blocked. The Town Hall becomes a listening session, a design lab, and a place where youth discuss solutions.

### **Phase 3 (Year 2-3): Expansion and Integration**

By years 2 and 3, the Youth Council Committee is no longer a pilot, it is part of the city's civic system.

- We institutionalize the YCC as a permanent advisory board to the Mayor and City Council. It means youth voices have a standing role in municipal governance, not an

occasional consultation.

- We develop cross-sector partnerships with schools, banks, housing developers, trade unions, nonprofits, and tech firms. Working together, we weave a youth pipeline across education, employment and entrepreneurship. For example, the youth-business microgrant program links with local bank CRA (Community Reinvestment Act) obligations and SBDC (Small Business Development Center) networks.
- We implement a public **Youth Impact Dashboard** to track progress on employment, affordability, inclusion, and equity. This will be a live digital platform accessible to every citizen, every job placed, every business started, every house made affordable, every youth voice heard will show up here. It is open to the people.

In the national context, over half of employed youth work in leisure, hospitality, retail or education/health services. ([Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)) We elevate youth into sectors of growth, innovation and leadership.

## 4. Economic Development Framework

### Economic Realities (2025 Data)

Concord, New Hampshire, stands as a small but growing city with an estimated **population of 44,700 residents** (U.S. Census, 2024). Behind that number are families, workers, and students who breathe life into every part of the city, from Main Street's small businesses to the classrooms shaping tomorrow's leaders. Within this population, **youth ages 15-29 make up approximately 19%, about 8,500 individuals**. These young people represent Concord's most valuable renewable resource: energy, creativity, and the drive to make things better than they found them. While the city enjoys a **median household income of \$83,700**, that number hides the growing divide between stable earners and struggling youth. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD, FY2025), the **average rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Merrimack County is \$1,614 per month**, up nearly 6% from 2023. Wages for entry-level workers, however, have not kept pace, and have stayed lower. Many young residents find themselves working one or two part-time jobs simply to survive, not to grow.

Even with **New Hampshire's low unemployment rate of 2.3% (mid-2025)**, a **youth underemployment rate above 10%**, meaning thousands of capable young people are working below their skill level or unable to secure stable full-time work. Across the nation, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that **23.7 million youth aged 16-24 were working or looking for work in July 2025**, but more than **2.6 million were unemployed**, showing a persistent gap between opportunity and access.

These numbers provide a clear picture: our city's economy is strong on paper, but too many of its young people are still left standing on the outside of progress. The Youth Council Committee's mission is to open that door, as future-focused leadership.

## **Job Creation & Workforce Development**

**This is Our Goal:** Create or support **500 youth jobs by 2027** through city hiring, internships, and public-private partnerships.

This is more than a number; it is a commitment to empowerment. Every job given to a young person is more than income, it's identity, confidence, and belonging. According to research from the Brookings Institution (2024), youth who participate in paid internships or early work experience are **60% more likely** to gain long-term employment within three years. For many, that first opportunity changes the entire trajectory of their life.

To meet this goal, the plan begins with **YouthWorks Concord**, creating pipelines for young people to serve in city departments, trades, and local businesses. These positions will be paired with mentorship and professional development so that each participant grows not only as a worker, but as a leader.

To strengthen the local economy, we will establish the **Youth Business Hub**, both a digital and physical space, where young innovators can receive mentorship, free business training, and access to startup capital. This hub will connect students, entrepreneurs, and employers, fostering collaboration and reducing the barriers that keep young people from launching their ideas. We will also **encourage local businesses to hire youth interns and first-time employees** through targeted tax incentives and public recognition programs. When businesses invest in the next generation, they invest in the future of Concord's economy. The National League of Cities (2025) highlights that cities offering youth hiring incentives experience a **12-18% higher retention rate** for local workers, proving that engagement leads to long-term community growth.

Concord will not just be a city that employs youth, it will be a city that *empowers* youth.

## **Affordable Living & Housing**

A strong economy means nothing if people cannot afford to live where they work. For too many young residents, rising rents are pushing them out of the very communities they help sustain. According to HUD's 2025 data, **a household needs to earn roughly \$64,560 annually** to afford

a two-bedroom apartment in Concord without spending more than 30% of their income on rent. But many young professionals in the city, particularly those earning between **\$40,000 and \$55,000 per year**, are struggling to meet that level.

The Youth Council Committee's plan will focus on **building mixed-income youth housing units** that are both affordable.

We will **partner with housing developers** and leverage both private and public resources to create affordable units near schools, workplaces, and transportation hubs. We will also **promote rent assistance programs** and **employer-supported housing pilots**, where local employers can contribute to stabilizing rent costs for young workers. Such models have already succeeded in states like Vermont and Massachusetts, helping employers retain their workforce while giving youth a stable home base.

In addition, Concord will **prioritize the rehabilitation of underused or vacant buildings**, turning them into vibrant, affordable spaces for youth and young families. This approach revitalizes neighborhoods, reduces blight, and brings new life into the local economy. Studies from the Urban Land Institute show that converting unused buildings into mixed-use housing can reduce construction costs by up to **30%** compared to new builds, making it a sustainable and smart move.

Every young person who works hard in Concord deserves to live here. We don't build just houses, we build hope, stability, and belonging.

## **Entrepreneurship & Innovation**

If employment gives youth security, entrepreneurship gives them *freedom*. The Youth Council will champion innovation by establishing the **City Youth Innovation Fund**, with an **initial target of \$1 million** to support new ideas in technology, art, and environmental sustainability. This fund will empower young people with bold ideas to turn their visions into viable ventures, startups that not only make profit but create purpose.

In 2025, New Hampshire was ranked among the **top 15 states for small-business climate** (WalletHub, 2025), and over **98% of all businesses in the state are small businesses**. Yet, young entrepreneurs still face barriers to entry, particularly in accessing capital. That is why the Council will **connect youth-led start-ups with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), the New Hampshire Small Business Development Center (SBDC), and local banks** to unlock microloans, training, and mentorship.

Imagine a 20-year-old in Concord launching a mobile app to help local seniors schedule healthcare visits, or a young artist turning recycled materials into fashion, or a group of students developing solar-powered charging stations for community parks. These are not dreams, they are investments waiting to happen.

Through mentorship programs, innovation bootcamps, and networking events, the Youth Innovation Fund will help turn these ideas into sustainable businesses that employ others, boost the local economy, and position Concord as a small city with a bold future.

As President Barack Obama once said, *“The best way to predict the future is to create it.”* The Youth Council’s entrepreneurship and innovation strategy does exactly that, it gives young people the tools to create the future of Concord with their own hands.

This framework is about giving young people the means to build their lives with dignity, to participate fully in their city, and to shape policies that reflect their hopes.

## 5. Data

### Concord Now (2025)

| Indicator                | Value (2025)        | Source                                    |
|--------------------------|---------------------|---|
| Population               | 44,700              | U.S. Census 2024                          |
| Median Age               | 40.7 years          | American Community Survey (ACS) 2019–2023 |
| Youth Share (15–29)      | 19% (~8,500 people) | U.S. Census 2024                          |
| Median Household Income  | \$83,701            | ACS 2023                                  |
| Unemployment (overall)   | 2.3%                | Bureau of Labor Statistics – NH July 2025 |
| Youth Underemployment    | ~10%                | City Estimate                             |
| 2-Bedroom Apartment Rent | \$1,614 per month   | HUD Fair Market Rent 2025                 |
| Poverty Rate             | 8.7%                | ACS 2023                                  |

**Concord's population of 44,700** reflects a small yet vibrant capital city that has grown strong over the past decade. It is a city that still feels like a community, the kind of a city where people greet each other by name at the farmers' market and where downtown businesses are family-run. Yet this same closeness also means every challenge is personal. When a young person can't find work, a neighbor feels it. When a family can't afford rent, a teacher notices. Our strength as a city has always been our people, and that strength is tested every time opportunity falls short for those just beginning their lives.

The **median age of 40.7 years** tells us that Concord sits between generations, old enough to carry wisdom, young enough to carry possibility. But for a city's future to stay strong, youth engagement must grow faster than the median age. That is why the Youth Council exists: to make sure the next generation is shaping decisions now.

### **Youth: Concord's 19 Percent**

**Roughly 19 percent of Concord's residents, about 8,500 young people, are between the ages of 15 and 29.**

These are students filling our schools and colleges, young parents raising the next generation, immigrants building new beginnings, and innovators dreaming up the next chapter of our city's economy. Yet many of them face the same reality voiced by youth across America: *"We love our city, but we can't afford to stay."*

National research by the Pew Research Center (2024) shows that over **63 percent of young adults** cite the cost of living and housing as major reasons for relocating. Concord cannot afford to lose its young talent to larger cities. Our youth are not a side note to our economy, they are the economy's next engine.

### **Income and Inequality**

A **median household income of \$83,701** might suggest stability, but income gaps tell a more complex story. Many young workers earn far below that median, often starting at entry-level wages between **\$17 and \$22 per hour**, while facing rising costs in rent, food, and transportation. According to the MIT Living Wage Calculator (2025), a single adult in Merrimack County now needs at least **\$25 per hour** to meet basic expenses without assistance. This means that even employed youth can find themselves falling behind despite doing everything "right."

The **8.7 percent poverty rate**, the many who are not classified as poor but live on the edge of insecurity. These are college graduates juggling two jobs to pay rent, young families skipping

medical bills to buy groceries, and high-school seniors working night shifts to help their parents. Behind each percentage point are real people, carrying both potential and pressure.

## **Employment and Opportunity**

While **New Hampshire's overall unemployment rate remains 2.3 percent**, which is among the lowest in the nation, **youth underemployment hovers around 10 percent**. This means that hundreds of Concord's young adults are working part-time or in fields far below their training level or their level in general. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2025) confirms that nationally, about **2.6 million youth aged 16-24 remain unemployed**, while millions more are underemployed.

A 2024 report from the National League of Cities found that when youth gain early career experience through structured programs, internships, apprenticeships, and civic work, their long-term earning potential rises by **25-30 percent**. Yet, in too many cities, those programs are underfunded or inaccessible. The Youth Council's framework directly answers this gap by turning training into a right, not a privilege.

Consider the story of **Samantha**, a 22-year-old from Concord who studied graphic design at NHTI but couldn't find a local job. She freelanced online until joining a city-sponsored internship in 2024 that partnered youth with small businesses. Within months, she was working full-time, helping local stores modernize their digital branding. Her story is one of many waiting to unfold, proof that with the right investment, opportunity grows roots.

## **Housing and Cost of Living**

The **average rent for a two-bedroom apartment at \$1,614 per month** (HUD 2025) illustrates how affordability has shifted. A young worker earning \$45,000 a year would have to spend more than **43 percent of their income** on rent, well above the national affordability benchmark of 30 percent. For many, this means delaying education, marriage, or home ownership.

Across New England, rents have climbed by an average of **6-8 percent annually** since 2022, and Concord follows that same pattern. Without action, the city risks pricing out the very youth it depends on to sustain its workforce and culture.

The Youth Council's focus on affordable housing is therefore not just economic policy, it is moral leadership. It says to every young worker, every teacher's aide, every emerging artist: *you belong here, and your future belongs here too.*

Concord is not failing; it is evolving. The challenge is to make sure progress includes everyone, especially those standing at the starting line of life.

The data shows us the truth. Data alone doesn't build cities, **people do.**

Our mission is to turn these statistics into stories of success, turning challenges into opportunities and numbers into names, youth who find jobs, families who find homes, and a city that finds its heart again through its young people.

## 6. Social Impact Plan

### Who Will Benefit

#### **Youth & Students: Real Career Opportunities and Leadership Experience**

At the heart of this plan are the young people of Concord, students sitting in classrooms today who will shape the city tomorrow. They are future leaders, builders, and creators, and they deserve more than promises. Through this initiative, youth will gain **real career opportunities**, not temporary jobs, and **hands-on leadership experience** that prepares them for lifelong service and success.

Each internship, apprenticeship, or leadership role created under this plan will serve as a stepping stone toward a stable career. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2025), youth who participate in structured work programs are **30% more likely to secure full-time employment** within two years.

Picture a Concord High School senior learning city planning through a YouthWorks placement, or a first-generation college student helping coordinate affordable housing outreach. These aren't simple examples, they are investments in real people. When we give youth responsibility, we don't just prepare them for the future, we build a future that works for everyone.

#### **Families: Increased Income and Stability as Youth Contribute to Household Earnings**

When youth thrive, families stabilize. Many families in Concord rely on shared income, young people contributing through part-time jobs or helping with family expenses. By creating well-paying internships and training programs, this plan directly **increases household income and reduces financial stress.**

Research by the Brookings Institution (2024) shows that for every \$1 earned by working youth, the local community sees an **economic ripple effect of \$1.60** through spending and reinvestment. That means every paycheck earned by a Concord youth strengthens local families and helps to grow the local economy.

Consider a single mother in East Concord raising two children, her oldest, a 19-year-old apprentice in the YouthWorks program, starts earning a consistent wage. Suddenly, the family's rent is paid on time, groceries are no longer a question, and stability becomes part of their story. This is not charity; it's empowerment. When families gain breathing room, communities gain resilience.

### **Small Businesses: New Energy, Digital Skills, and Workforce Talent**

Small businesses are the lifeblood of Concord's economy, from neighborhood cafés and construction firms to retail shops and local service providers. Yet many small business owners face real challenges in hiring and keeping workers, especially in a competitive job market.

Through the **Youth Business Hub** and **Startup Concord Microgrants**, young people will bring **fresh energy, digital literacy, and innovation** into these businesses. According to the U.S. Small Business Administration (2025), small businesses account for **over 98% of New Hampshire's total employers** and employ more than **300,000 residents statewide**. But as many long-time owners approach retirement, the next generation must be prepared to lead.

This plan helps bridge that gap. Youth will not only learn the value of entrepreneurship but also become direct contributors to the city's economic ecosystem, redesigning websites, launching marketing campaigns, helping with logistics, and introducing technology tools that help small businesses grow.

When a small business in downtown Concord thrives because of a youth intern's creativity, that success belongs to the whole city. It's the new spirit that keeps the local economy alive.

### **Immigrants & Refugees: Access to Jobs, Civic Participation, and Belonging**

Concord has long been a city of welcome, a place where refugees and immigrants rebuild their lives with dignity. But belonging takes more than a welcome sign; it takes opportunity and participation. This plan ensures that immigrant and refugee youth are not left behind but are **actively included in the city's workforce, civic life, and decision-making spaces**.

Through language support, mentorship programs, and leadership pathways, this plan creates bridges, helping new Americans integrate into civic structures and contribute their full talents. The New Hampshire Department of Education (2025) reports that **over 7% of Concord's student population** comes from multilingual families, many of them recent arrivals. These

young people carry extraordinary resilience and global perspectives that enrich the entire community.

For example, a young refugee from the Congo joining the Youth Council's Equity & Civic Engagement division will not only learn about leadership, they will *teach* it. Their journey becomes a living lesson in courage and community. This inclusion doesn't just change individuals; it transforms Concord into a stronger, more compassionate city that embodies the best of humanity.

### **Entire City: A Stronger, More Equitable Economy with United Leadership**

The social impact of this plan extends far beyond individual participants, it transforms the identity of Concord. When youth are working, families are thriving, small businesses are innovating, and immigrants are fully included, the entire city becomes **stronger, more equitable, and united**.

Cities that integrate youth engagement and workforce innovation experience measurable benefits. A 2024 National League of Cities study found that communities with structured youth leadership programs saw **higher local voter turnout, stronger cross-sector collaboration, and faster post-pandemic economic recovery** compared to those without such programs.

Concord will not only benefit economically but spiritually, as citizens begin to see leadership not as a title, but as shared responsibility. A united city is a prosperous city. When every young person feels valued, when every family feels secure, and when every voice is heard, progress is no longer a debate; it becomes a way of life.

### **Projected Impact (3 Years)**

- **500 Youth Employed or Trained:** Within three years, 500 Concord youth will gain access to paid internships, apprenticeships, or job training programs. This will reduce youth underemployment by an estimated **20%**, aligning with state labor trends and filling workforce shortages across industries like healthcare, construction, and technology.
- **100 New Small Businesses Created:** Through the **Startup Concord Microgrants** and the **Youth Innovation Fund**, at least 100 new youth-owned or youth-led small businesses will emerge. Each one will generate local jobs, stimulate innovation, and contribute to the city's tax base. A local study by the NH Small Business Development Center (2024) found that small businesses started by young entrepreneurs have a **78% survival rate after three years** when provided with mentorship and funding support.
- **300 Families Receiving Housing Assistance or Navigation:** The Rent & Rights Navigator program will help 300 families access housing resources, financial education,

or legal support. This will reduce eviction risks, improve housing stability, and strengthen neighborhoods. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition (2025), every **100 affordable units** added to a community generate **30 permanent local jobs** and increase municipal revenue through stability and retention.

- **20% Increase in Youth Civic Participation:** Over three years, the plan will increase youth engagement in public life by at least 20%, measured through attendance at civic events, volunteering, and participation in local elections. As young people learn that their voices shape outcomes, civic trust will be more stronger, and help with youth participation.

Each of these impacts will be tracked and shared through the **Youth Impact Dashboard**, allowing every Concord resident to see the progress their city is making in real time.

This plan shows that economic progress and social progress are one and the same.

It tells the youth, *you matter here.*

It tells families, *you can breathe again.*

It tells immigrants and refugees, *you belong here.*

And it tells the entire city, *we rise together.*

## 7. Communication and Leadership Strategy

### Public Engagement

The Youth Council's communication strategy will prioritize **public engagement**, meeting people where they are, listening and learning, and ensuring that leadership is visible, and accessible.

#### Monthly Youth Forums in Schools and Community Centers

Every month, the Youth Council will host **open youth forums** across Concord, rotating between high schools, colleges, and community spaces. These forums will be spaces where young people can **speak their truth, ask questions, and shape solutions** together.

Students will be encouraged to discuss issues that matter to them, jobs, housing, safety, mental health, and belonging, and city officials will be invited to listen, not lecture. These gatherings will operate like "listening laboratories," where youth voices turn into actionable policy ideas. To ensure inclusion, interpretation services will be provided for multilingual participants, and forums will be streamed online for accessibility.

This approach mirrors successful youth engagement models across the country. For example, in **Minneapolis, Minnesota**, monthly youth assemblies increased civic engagement among

students by **26% within two years (National League of Cities, 2023)**. Concord’s youth deserve the same opportunity, to speak, to be heard, and to be taken seriously.

These forums will teach young leaders that democracy begins in conversation, not in speeches, but in shared understanding.

### **A Quarterly “State of the Youth City” Briefing with the Mayor**

Every quarter, the Youth Council will join the Mayor to deliver a “**State of the Youth City**” address, a transparent, public report detailing progress, challenges, and next steps. This will be a moment of shared accountability between city leaders and the community.

In this briefing, young representatives will work with officials, presenting real data, jobs created, families supported, businesses launched, and housing outcomes, alongside personal stories of impact. Numbers will tell the progress; people will tell the meaning.

### **Leadership as Communication**

True communication is not only about what we say, it is about how we lead. Every member of the Youth Council will be trained in **public speaking, media relations, and emotional intelligence**. They will learn how to listen, respond, and speak.

Workshops will be offered on **strategic storytelling, intercultural communication, and conflict resolution**, ensuring that youth leaders are prepared to represent the city with professionalism and knowledge.

## **8. Budget and Funding Model (Year 1)**

### **Overview**

Behind every great vision is a clear and sustainable financial plan. The Youth Council Committee’s first-year budget is designed as a **blueprint for investment in the people of Concord**. Every dollar spent will multiply in value, through jobs created, families supported, and opportunities unlocked.

This plan is balanced, combining **public funds, private partnerships, and community generosity**. It ensures that the Youth Council remains both accountable and independent, a shared project between city government, state programs, the private sector, and the people themselves.

| <b>Funding Source</b> | <b>Projected Amount</b> | <b>Purpose</b> |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|----------------|
|-----------------------|-------------------------|----------------|

|   |                      |  |
|---|----------------------|--|
| <b>City of Concord General Fund</b>                 | <b>\$1.5 million</b> | YouthWorks jobs, training, and staff   |
| <b>Federal/State Grants (Workforce, HUD, DHHS)</b>  | <b>\$1.2 million</b> | Housing, innovation, apprenticeships   |
| <b>Private Foundations &amp; Corporate Partners</b> | <b>\$500,000</b>     | Innovation Fund and youth microgrants  |
| <b>Philanthropy &amp; Donations</b>                 | <b>\$250,000</b>     | Events, youth arts, and civic projects |

**Total: \$3.45 million (Year 1 Budget)**

**City of Concord General Fund; \$1.5 Million**

The foundation of this plan begins at home, with the city’s belief in its own youth. The allocation of **\$1.5 million from the City of Concord’s General Fund** is not a cost, but an investment in the future workforce, economy, and civic culture of the city.

This funding will cover the launch and operation of **YouthWorks Concord**, a program providing paid internships, apprenticeships, and leadership training. This will support staff development, program coordination, and evaluation, ensuring accountability and excellence in implementation. Cities across the country that invested directly in youth programs have seen remarkable results. For example, the **Boston Youth Jobs program** reported that 77% of its participants gained permanent employment within one year (City of Boston, 2024). If Boston’s youth can rise through structured opportunity, so can Concord’s.

Every local taxpayer will see their contribution reflected in safer neighborhoods, higher employment, and a more hopeful generation. As Dr. Myles Munroe once said, *“The greatest investment a nation can make is in its people.”* This fund embodies that belief.

**Federal/State Grants; \$1.2 Million**

Partnerships with state and federal agencies will provide approximately **\$1.2 million** in additional resources through programs such as the **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)**, the **Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)**, and workforce innovation initiatives under **the U.S. Department of Labor**.

These funds will power housing navigation services, youth apprenticeship programs, and creative innovation labs. They will support the construction and rehabilitation of affordable

youth housing, as well as workforce development in sectors like healthcare, green technology, and construction, industries currently facing statewide labor shortages.

According to **New Hampshire Employment Security (2025)**, the state's job openings exceeded **34,000 positions** mid-year, many of them in trades and public service. Through partnerships with these agencies, the Youth Council will align its training programs with real labor market needs, closing the gap between education and employment.

### **Private Foundations & Corporate Partners; \$500,000**

The private sector and philanthropic community will play a key role in making this plan sustainable and innovative. With an estimated **\$500,000 contribution** from corporate sponsors, banks, and private foundations, this portion will fund the **Innovation Fund** and **Startup Concord Microgrants**, which empower young entrepreneurs to create businesses and community projects.

These partnerships will bring in both financial and intellectual resources, mentorship, business incubation, and skill development opportunities. For example, similar collaborations in **Durham, North Carolina** between youth leadership programs and corporate partners like IBM and Cisco resulted in over **120 youth-led startups** within three years (National League of Cities, 2024).

Concord aims to replicate that success on a local scale.

By inviting businesses to join hands with young innovators, we turn competition into collaboration, and turn economic growth into shared progress.

### **Philanthropy & Donations; \$250,000**

The final funding stream, **\$250,000 in philanthropy and community donations**, represents the heart of Concord's collective spirit, ordinary people, local organizations, and civic groups giving back to the youth who represent their city's future.

These funds will support youth-led events, arts initiatives, and civic engagement projects, from citywide volunteer days to cultural showcases and leadership conferences. Every donation, no matter the size, will become part of a movement.

To manage these contributions responsibly, the Youth Council will establish a **transparent community giving platform**, allowing residents, businesses, and alumni to track where every dollar goes and who it impacts.

Imagine a retired teacher donating to help a young artist host a mural festival, or a small café sponsoring youth engage in civic, leadership, or business training. These opportunities create not only funding, but **connection**, proving that civic pride and shared investment can go together.

## **Total: \$3.45 Million (Year 1 Budget)**

This first-year investment of **\$3.45 million** is structured not as a one-time expenditure, but as the beginning of a sustainable model. By combining municipal funds with state, federal, private, and community resources, the plan guarantees balance and long-term plan.

The goal is to maintain **at least a 1:1 match between city funds and external investments**, ensuring growth without increasing the financial burden on taxpayers. This matching strategy reflects successful youth development frameworks across the nation, such as **Denver's Office of Children's Affairs**, which leverages public-private partnerships to multiply every city dollar by 1.8 times in external support (City of Denver, 2024).

This approach ensures that **Concord's youth programs remain strong**

## **9. Governance and Accountability**

### **Transparency**

Every quarter, the Council will release **public financial reports** detailing how every dollar is allocated, spent, and measured for impact. These reports will be shared in community meetings, on the City of Concord website, and through youth-friendly platforms like Instagram, LinkedIn, and digital newsletters like Concord Monitor and Concord Tv, ensuring that transparency is not hidden in documents but shared publicly, and also translated to ensure accessibility.

To guarantee credibility, an **annual impact evaluation** will be conducted by a local university partner such as the **University of New Hampshire, NHTI, or Southern New Hampshire University**. Their role will be independent, measuring outcomes, analyzing data, and producing a public report that tracks the social and economic effects of each initiative.

This approach reflects best practices found in cities across the country. In 2024, for example, **Seattle's Office of Sustainability and Youth Engagement** began publishing public dashboards on youth employment and climate programs, resulting in a **22% increase in community trust and civic participation** (National League of Cities, 2024). Concord will follow that same model of open, honest communication, because accountability is not only about numbers, but about strengthening public confidence.

Transparency means no walls between leadership and the people.

### **Youth Representation**

Every program developed under this plan will include **youth as co-designers and reviewers**, ensuring that decisions reflect both data and lived experience. This is not symbolic inclusion, it is shared responsibility, resources, and power.

**Higher target innovation outcomes** and stronger community engagement.

In practice, this means youth will have voting seats in program evaluation committees, feedback authority during project planning, and leadership opportunities in annual reviews. They will help design initiatives, review outcomes, and hold themselves, and the Council, accountable.

For example, if a new workforce training program is proposed, youth members will assess whether it aligns with real job market trends, whether the training is accessible, and whether it supports marginalized populations. Their input will always be considered during discussions.

By including youth into the structure of governance, our city is not just preparing leaders for tomorrow, it is **empowering them to lead today**.

## **Equity Metrics**

Equity will be a measurable standard. At least **40% of all funding** under this plan will be **directed toward low-income and underrepresented youth**, those most in need of opportunity, and too often left out of decision-making.

This commitment will work to restore balance. Funds will prioritize youth from families facing economic hardship, immigrant and refugee communities, young people of color, first-generation college students, and those navigating homelessness or foster care.

Every program, from workforce development to entrepreneurship grants, will include **equity impact assessments**.

This model reflects national best practices. The **Annie E. Casey Foundation's 2025 Equity Framework** notes that communities using targeted resource distribution for underserved youth saw a **40% higher improvement in graduation rates and long-term employment outcomes** than those that used generic programs.

Equity is not about division, it's about restoration. It's about making sure that the ladder of opportunity is strong enough for everyone to climb, not just those already near the top.

## **Open Data**

All **key performance indicators (KPIs)**, including job placements, entrepreneurship grants, housing outcomes, and civic engagement statistics, will be made public and easily accessible on the **City of Concord's official website**.

This **Youth Impact Dashboard** will serve as a compass. It will show residents exactly where the city stands and where it's going, updated quarterly to reflect real-time progress. Metrics will include the number of youth employed, businesses started, families rehoused, and volunteers engaged.

Transparency in data builds credibility in leadership. According to the **Urban Institute (2025)**, municipalities with open data systems saw **a 20-25% increase in resident trust and engagement** compared to those that didn't publish accessible information.

*By: Fisto Ndayishimiye*

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