



Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in the Youth Diplomats program! We look forward to learning about what inspires, motivates, and moves you to be a global citizen. Here is some general information to help you complete your application.

Eligibility

Gulf Coast Diplomacy invites students who will be high school freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors for the 2025-2026 academic year to apply for a place in the Youth Diplomats program. We accept applications from homeschooled students and public, private, and charter high school students. Twenty-four students from Northwest Florida will be invited to participate.

Applications are due May 12, 2025, and you will be notified of your status by May 15, 2025.

Cost

There is no fee to apply.

Tuition for June 2025 – April 2026 is \$120. Students unable to pay tuition are encouraged to apply for a needs-based waiver. Your tuition includes your participation in our Camp Global summer program. Tuition payments for students accepted into the program are due by **June 12, 2025**, and there is a link to pay on our website under the Youth Diplomats page.

Benefits

Youth Diplomats develop 21st-century skills, including critical thinking, collaboration, and media literacy, while strengthening their knowledge of global affairs. In the process, they discover college and career options and network with global experts. Youth Diplomats also participate in service projects with international visitors.

Students can also earn digital credentials aligned with the Open Badges standard and have access to an array of scholarships promoting international exchange and language proficiency. Participation in Youth Diplomats strengthens college applications as it illustrates curiosity and a commitment to intercultural communication.

Schedule

Youth Diplomats meet one Saturday a month (10:30 AM to 1:30 PM) from Aug 2025 to April 2026. The program includes two summer international youth exchange opportunities virtually (June) and in person (July).

The anticipated schedule is June 17-20 (online with Camp Global from 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM), July 14-18 (9 AM - 1 PM during the weekdays for Leadership Week), August 9, September 20, October 25, November 15, December 13, January 24, February 21, March 28, and April 18 (regular monthly meetings).

The Saturday meetings are reserved for learning opportunities categorized by workshops, volunteering, and collaborations to include interaction, whenever possible, with international exchange participants, both students and professionals. Youth Diplomats also have access to speeches, lectures, and networking events with visiting academics, government officials, and other leaders from the Northwest community and around the globe.

Norms & Expectations

Youth Diplomats is student-led & the Leadership Committee established the following guidelines.

Youth Diplomats will:

- Dress for success;
- Show respect for others by leaving their cell phones in their bags unless taking approved photographs for social media or blog posts;
- Always confirm with staff, before taking photos or screenshots, whether or not our international visitors have given media consent;
- Give timely RSVPs if unable to attend;
- Attend 7 of 9 meetings one Saturday per month, August 2025—April 2026;
- Attend either the June Camp Global sessions or the July IYLEP session (Attendance at both is encouraged.);
- Interact with visiting/online youth exchange groups;
- Take the initiative in contacting the Leadership Committee with questions or concerns;
- Come to sessions prepared to engage using the materials provided;
- Produce one blog post or social media post & be willing to help promote the program using #YouthDiplomats & #IAmDiplomacy;
- Share the Youth Diplomats application with others when it opens in early March;
- And in discussions will:
 - Be respectful;
 - Not interrupt;
 - Ask the *why*;
 - Analyze all sides; and
 - Share speaking time.

Mission of Gulf Coast Diplomacy

Gulf Coast Diplomacy is a non-partisan, nonprofit organization facilitating and strengthening connection, collaboration, and fellowship between the people of the Gulf Coast and the global community.

Instructions

Please submit this completed application to Jena Melançon, Gulf Coast Diplomacy founder & executive director, by **May 12, 2025, at 11:59 PM CDT as a PDF** via email: jena@gulfcoastdiplomacy.org.

Current Youth Diplomats who attended at least eight of the 2024/25 meetings do not need to reapply & should instead send an email expressing an interest in participating in the 2025/2026 program **on or before May 12, 2025**, with tuition due by June 16, 2025.

Application checklist:

_____ Application Form

_____ Answers to Three Questions

_____ Student/ Parent/Guardian Signatures

APPLICATION FORM

Please print clearly or type.

I. APPLICANT INFORMATION

NAME _____

AGE _____ GRADE _____ SCHOOL _____

Grade point average _____

HOME ADDRESS (street) _____

(city & zip code) _____

EMAIL – Do not use your school email, as you may not receive notification of acceptance to the program.

PHONE NUMBER _____ Circle the best way to contact you: text / phone / email

T-shirt Size: _____

- I plan to attend Camp Global virtually in June (June 17th - 20th)
(Circle one) YES or NO
- I plan to attend Leadership Week in-person in July (July 14th - 18th)
(Circle one) YES or NO
- I plan to attend the Cohort 9 virtual orientation on June 16th
(Circle one) YES or NO

6. Do you have a job, either unpaid or volunteer? If so, what are your responsibilities?

7. Have you had any experiences with other cultures? If so, please share.
Note: You do not have to travel abroad to be exposed to other cultures.

8. What is a SECRET TALENT you possess? (We promise not to tell!)

9. Is there anything else about yourself you would like us to know?

III. Please choose three of the four prompts below to answer, using the space provided. Make sure to note which prompt you are answering by writing its number inside the small box within each rectangle.

1. Why do you want to participate in the Youth Diplomats Program? What could you contribute to the program that no one else can?
2. What do you think it means to be a “global citizen”? Describe a global issue that you care about – or would like to learn about – and why?
3. What does the world need more of? Less of? How can you and other young people make it happen? How are you already making it happen? *Please think beyond the easy answers of the world needing more love and understanding and less hate.*
4. Where in the world would you like to get lost? What could you learn about the place, the people, and yourself? How would you use your experience to help others?

Prompt #

Prompt #

Prompt #

IV. PARENT OR GUARDIAN INFORMATION

PARENT OR GUARDIAN 1

NAME _____

EMAIL _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE NUMBER _____ Circle the best way to contact you: text / phone / email

PARENT OR GUARDIAN 2

NAME _____

EMAIL _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE NUMBER _____ Circle the best way to contact you: text / phone / email

V. SIGNATURES OF STUDENT / PARENT / GUARDIAN

I agree that all of the information in this application is true. I agree if selected, I will participate to the best of my abilities in the Youth Diplomats activities and requirements as outlined above.

STUDENT SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

STUDENT NAME (printed) _____

I agree that all of the information in this application is true. I give permission for my student to participate and will support him/her in meeting the program requirements as outlined above.

I would like to be considered for a need-based scholarship for my student's \$120 annual tuition.

FOR PARENTS of those under 18: Gulf Coast Diplomacy uses photography and video to document meetings and events. These images may be used in print publications, online publications, presentations, websites, and social media. By initialing here, you understand no royalty, fee, or other compensation shall become payable to you by reason of such use and you agree that Gulf Coast Diplomacy has your permission to use your or your child's photograph publicly.

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

Thank you for applying to the Youth Diplomats!