



St. Lawrence County Youth Bureau

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SLC Youth Bureau Launches *Lead '26* Youth Leadership Series

Canton, NY -The St. Lawrence County Youth Bureau is proud to announce the launch of *Lead '26*, a new youth leadership and civic engagement series designed to empower high school students across the county. The series kicks off this Sunday, January 11, 2026, with a special guest presentation by David Forsythe, Chair of the St. Lawrence County Board of Legislators.

Lead '26 is a multi-session leadership experience running from January through April. The program focuses on developing leadership skills, strengthening youth voice, and encouraging meaningful community engagement. Through interactive discussions, hands-on activities, and guest speakers, students will explore what it means to be an effective leader in their schools and communities.

At the opening session, Chair Forsythe will speak with students about youth leadership, civic responsibility, and community engagement, sharing insights on the importance of youth involvement in local government and public service.

"Youth voice matters now more than ever," said Alexa Backus Chase, Director of the St. Lawrence County Youth Bureau. "*Lead '26* gives young people an opportunity to explore leadership in a supportive, engaging environment and to see firsthand how they can make a positive impact in their communities. We are grateful to Chair Forsythe for helping us launch this important initiative."

Lead '26 is open to high school students from across St. Lawrence County and serves as an excellent introduction to leadership development for those interested in civic engagement, public speaking, and community service.

The first *Lead '26* session will take place this Sunday, January 11th at 3 pm, at the Human Services Building in Canton. Additional sessions will continue through April.

Students, in grades 9-12, interested in registering for *Lead '26* are encouraged to contact Alexa Chase at AChase@stlawco.gov . *Lead '26* is free to attend and is open to the first 25 registrants.

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