

Recording Non-Voting Youth Member Opinions October 2011

The purpose of this handout is to give County Extension Councils a guide for recording youth opinions during meetings, when adult members vote, and how to determine whether a motion passes or fails.

Youth can serve on County Extension Councils to learn what is going on in their communities and contribute to discussions and decisions councils make. According to Missouri State Statute, youth under age 18 are not allowed to have a binding vote on council matters. However, they are encouraged to voice ideas and opinions which may influence the votes of adult council members.

How to record youth opinions at County Extension Council meetings:

- Make sure all council members understand the difference between youth “opinions” and adult “votes.” Help council members refer to these as such to avoid confusion for all involved.
- Encourage young people to participate in all council discussions. For motions made before the full council, record youth opinions separate from adult votes, as shown in the example below.
- Only count adult votes (not youth opinions) to decide whether the motion carries or fails.
- (In committee meetings or on motions not before the full council, youth can exercise a full vote that can be counted, since the decision will later come before the full council).
- Avoid confusing or counting youth opinions as adult votes, as this would be in violation of Missouri State Statutes for County Extension Councils.

Motion to be voted on:				
Adult Votes		Youth Opinions		Motion Passes or Fails:
Yes:	No:	Yes:	No:	

Examples:

	Adult Votes	Youth Opinions
Yes	7	3
No	5	0
Motion Passes		

	Adult Votes	Youth Opinions
Yes	5	3
No	7	0
Motion Fails		

	Adult Votes	Youth Opinions
Yes	5	0
No	7	3
Motion Fails		

Please note: These rules apply only to County Extension Councils. Missouri state law otherwise allows youth under age 18 to serve on boards and councils, and contains no restriction on full voting membership. Youth and adults can be given an equal vote on other non-profit boards. (No minimum age for directors specified. MO. REV. STAT. 355.130. Incorporators must be 18 or older. MO. REV. STAT. 355.040.)

Source: Fletcher, Adam, Michael Arnold, Jenny Sazama, and Karen S. Young. *15 Points: Successfully Involving Youth in Decision Making*. Somerville, MA: Youth on Board, 2006.