

Manchester Youth Service Bureau

63 Linden Street - Manchester, CT 06040

The Manchester Youth Service Bureau provides programs for youth ages 0-21 and their families who live in or attend school in Manchester. Our programs foster intellectual, personal, and emotional growth in supportive environments. Through positive experiences and encouragement, participants build self-confidence, self-awareness, and essential life skills such as planning, organization, and problem-solving, while also improving behaviors, attitudes, and relationships.

Youth programs play a vital role in development. They create lasting positive impacts by helping young people connect with their community, build meaningful relationships with caring adults, support academic achievement, and reduce the risk of juvenile delinquency.

Our programs and services focus on six core areas:

- Early Childhood Services
- Teen Center & Outreach
- Life Skills
- Employment & Vocational Support
- Diversion
- Community Service

DID YOU KNOW?

In addition to providing a wide range of programs and supports for Manchester youth and their families, our dedicated staff can also connect young people to additional community resources when needed.

Phone: (860) 647-5213

Fax: (860) 647-5253

www.manchesterct.gov/ysb



@YouthSvc

CONSIDER BECOMING A COMMUNITY PARTNER

Youth programs are vital to the healthy development of young people. They foster community connections, encourage relationships with caring adults, support academic achievement, and help prevent juvenile delinquency.

The Manchester Youth Service Bureau is able to provide a wide range of services to youth and families by working in close partnership with town departments, community organizations, state agencies, and others. Our collaborations are supported through programs and grants such as:

- Manchester School Readiness Council
- School Readiness Grant
- Equity Learning Grant
- Local Interagency Service Team (LIST)
- Change Collaborative of Manchester
- Manchester Vernon Prevention Partnership (MVPP)

If you are interested in becoming a community partner, please contact the Youth Service Bureau at (860) 647-5213.

Early Childhood Programs

Cradle to Crayons

Cradle to Crayons is a preschool playgroup for children age 2-5 that supports the development of skills that will promote success in and out of preschool and kindergarten. Activities include circle time, art, fine motor, gross motor, pre-math and pre-writing skill building. Children will have the opportunity to both engage in socialization and free play with other children as well as structured activities at their own pace.

Family Camp

A summer program offering a variety of fun, engaging, and educational family excursions. Each trip requires registration and has limited space. Participants may sign up for one or multiple excursions.

My Baby & Me

This program is for new caretakers and their children (approximately newborn to 18 months). This group is to establish a community of parents of young children and provide early socialization opportunities for their infants.

My Toddler & Me

This drop-in group supports toddlers as they explore new social opportunities and deeper play with peers. A relaxed environment encourages connection and fun.

Play & Learn Programs

Our Play & Learn programs are parent-child classes designed to support early learning through play, exploration, and connection. Each session introduces a seasonal or themed focus—such as body awareness, animals, nature, or imaginative adventures—paired with songs, rhymes, movement, circle time, stories, crafts, and developmentally appropriate activities.

These groups encourage rich vocabulary, social interaction, and hands-on discovery, all within a welcoming environment where caregivers and children learn and grow together. Caregivers should be prepared to actively participate alongside their little learners, helping to create meaningful shared experiences.

Preschool Drop-In Play

This semi-structured group offers children a chance to enjoy story time, songs, arts and crafts, and gross motor play. Children participate at their own pace. Registration is not required, but cancellation notices are only shared via text—email Caitlin at cmcnamara@manchesterct.gov to join the list.

Children Learn Through Experience

Children grow through every experience, including the environments where they live and play. While learning is lifelong, early childhood is the most influential stage in shaping development.

Early Childhood and Sense of Self

Early childhood is when children begin to develop a “sense of self” and form the attitudes and values that will guide them. Parents and caregivers, as children’s first teachers, play a vital role in fostering this sense of identity and in teaching how to interact with others, manage frustrations, and overcome challenges.

The Importance of Social Development

Social development is closely connected to all areas of a child’s growth. Introducing opportunities for socialization at an early age helps set the foundation for positive relationships and healthy development. With this in mind, the Youth Service Bureau offers a variety of programs designed for parents and caregivers to engage in meaningful activities with children ages 5 and under.

In-School Programs

FACTS (In- School Program - Manchester High School)

Sometimes we forget that most youth DON'T drink alcohol or use other drugs. FACTS is a substance use prevention program for young people that gives you the tools to stay sober, helps you learn healthy stress-management strategies, allows you to grow as a leader, all while exploring your community, traveling to conferences, and hanging out with friends. Please call Samantha Bell at (860) 647-5260, or email sbell@manchesterct.gov for more information or to register. Ages: 14-18

Girls Circle (In- School Program - Bennet Academy)

Girls Circle is an evidence-based support program for 6th grade girls to assist during their transitional years. The primary focus is to build confidence, provide support, help build relationships and provide positive youth development to girls. The facilitator will provide assistance to girls in learning how to grow up as a young woman in today's society in a fun and caring environment. Please call Tasha Weston at (860) 647-5215, or email tweston@manchesterct.gov for more information or to register.

Girls Circle (In- School Program - Manchester Middle Academy)

Girls Circle is an evidence-based support program for 7th and 8th grade girls to assist during their transitional years. The primary focus is to build confidence, provide support, help build relationships and provide positive youth development to girls. The facilitator will provide assistance to girls in learning how to grow up as a young woman in today's society in a fun and caring environment. Please call Tasha Weston at (860) 647-5215, or email tweston@manchesterct.gov for more information, or to register.

Voices (In- School Program - Bentley Academy)

Voices is an evidence-based program that was created to address the unique needs of adolescent girls and young women ages 14-18. Please call Sheridan Douglass at (860) 647-5216, or email sdouglass@manchesterct.gov for more information, or to register.

Youth and Teen Programs

Boys Week

A week-long enrichment program that addresses issues young men face through fun and challenging activities, discussion, and guest speakers. Nonstop action and fun!

Employment Program

The employment program is designed to engage and help youth age 16-21 in Manchester with career exploration and job readiness skills. After successfully completing the session, youth will have a completed a cover letter and resume which will allow them to properly apply for future jobs and have a better understanding of employment competency skills. If youth successfully complete the program, a stipend will be awarded. Please contact Sheridan Douglass at (860) 647-5216, or sdouglass@manchesterct.gov for more information.

Girls Circle

This program is designed for young women age 10-16. Girls Circle is an evidence-based program for girls (separated into age specific groups), that explores what it means to be a girl and navigate growing up as a young woman in today's society. The program allows for the exchange of ideas and discussion about their experiences and hopes for the future through creative, fun, and interactive activities. By design this program fosters confidence, self-esteem, and assists girls in creating authentic connections with peers and adult women in their community.

Girls Week

A program where girls are invited to make friends, talk about important issues, and gain confidence through creative activities and inspiring trips. A great time to be expressive and be inspired!

Home Alone Safety Class

Home Alone Safety for Kids is a unique class for youth ages 8 to 13 years old who may be left home alone. This interactive workshop will cover safety concerns parents and guardians have when their children are by themselves.

Youth & Teen Programs

Our programs are designed to help young people grow in leadership, self-reliance, social skills, and communication. They build self-esteem, foster responsibility, encourage camaraderie, and support the achievement of important life skills. Beyond recreation, these experiences prepare youth to thrive in school, at home, and in the community.

Program Schedule

Please note that not all classes, events, and programs run year-round. Some opportunities are seasonal, while others are offered during school breaks or summer months. Be sure to check schedules in advance.

Eligibility & Registration

Unless otherwise noted, program participants must be Manchester residents. Proof of residency and a permission slip are required at the time of registration. Non-residents may register only for programs that specifically indicate an NR (Non-Resident Fee).

Why It Matters

Youth and teen programs provide more than activities—they create safe, supportive spaces where young people can explore their interests, discover new talents, and build meaningful connections with peers and mentors. These opportunities empower youth to grow into confident, capable individuals ready to contribute positively to their community.

Youth and Teen Programs (Continued)

Journey-Art & Nature

Journey is a service learning program with an emphasis on environmental education, leadership, and woodworking training. Projects focus on giving back to the community, while building relationships and learning important life skills.

Journey-Build a Book

Increase nature awareness and knowledge and provide community service, social interaction, and skill development in art, wood working and research. Participants will write & illustrate story elements created during the group.

Manchester Restorative Diversion Collaborative

Referrals for this program come directly from the Police Department. The purpose of the Manchester Restorative Diversion Collaborative (MRDC) is to divert Manchester youth between the ages of 10-18 from the juvenile justice system and assist with the implementation of restorative practices that promote healing for the youth involved and the Manchester community.

MRDC is dedicated to helping youth take accountability for their actions through a community-based approach that focuses on building relationships, repairing harm, and reducing recidivism.

Diversion Program Coordinator: Kellie Gauvin
Diversion Case Manager: Tasha Weston

Packed with Purpose

Description: Packed with Purpose is a 10-week journey that empowers young men ages 14-18 to explore identity, build confidence, develop emotional intelligence, and contribute to their community through hands-on dog training and meaningful acts of service. Blending active learning, viral discussion topics, and real-world impact, this program builds a brotherhood of purpose-driven youth committed to leaving a legacy.

Red Cross Babysitting Certification Class

In this class, participants ages 12-18 will learn the skills necessary to safely and responsibly care for children and infants. Participants will develop leadership skills; learn how to develop a babysitting business; keep themselves and others safe; and learn basic first aid & CPR. To Register please call (860) 647-5262 or email ksheridan@manchesterct.gov

Role Players' Guild

Youth age 12-17 can join our after-school role playing game club as an adventurer or take on the mantle of game master and build the world that your friends will explore! New and experienced players are welcome. Learn as you play!

Studies show that engaging in role playing games significantly increases young people's academic performance and socioemotional development. This program is great for creative writers, artists, actors, dreamers, and more! All adventures are age-appropriate, safe and inclusive.

Sibshop

This program is designed for youth age 7-15. Every Sibshop meeting starts with dinner, and always includes a lot of fun, goofy games, and opportunities for heartfelt conversations between kids who share the pleasures and special challenges of having a sibling with special needs. Sibshop meets monthly at the Youth Service Bureau on the first Friday of the month. Please call Samantha Bell (860) 647-5260 or email sbell@manchesterct.gov for more information or to register.

Youth and Teen Programs (Continued)

Summer Youth Employment & Learning Program (SYELP)

SYELP is a partnership between Capital Workforce Partners, Capital Region Education Council, and the Town of Manchester for youth ages 15-18 years old to develop the employability and entrepreneurial skills necessary to enter the workforce. This summer program participates in workforce training followed by paid summer internship. (Program is dependent on State funding).

Teen Center

The Teen Center is designed for Manchester students age 12-18. The Teen Center offers a place for youth to come together and socialize with their peers in a structured and supervised environment. Students can play video games, pool, foos ball, board games, surf the internet, or participate in a variety of other creative, fun, and interactive activities.

True You

Youth ages 12-14 will spend a week learning about who THEY are. They'll be doing lots of fun activities and fieldtrips where they'll learn more about themselves, how to handle the stress life throws at them, and how they can make a positive impact on the world around them.

Urban Expedition

This program is designed for Manchester youth age 11-14. Enjoy a week of exploring Manchester and other local sights. Youth will be exposed to a range of positive activities, community events, and other cultural and recreational happenings in a group setting.

Youth and Police Excursions

This community engagement program provides high school youth with the opportunity to form positive relationships with local police officers while participating in team-building activities and community service projects. It's a great way to get involved, give back, and foster meaningful connections.

Youth Commission

Commission members must reside in Manchester; and be enrolled in, or entering grades 9 through 12. This diverse group of youth collaborates with local government in an effort to create open communication in the decision making process, making it possible to strengthen the community through the voice of youth. Applications are collected year round and selections are made each spring.

****Up to 4 members under the age of 19 enrolled in Manchester Community College (MCC) are eligible to serve on the Commission if they are able to serve a minimum of 2 years, unless joining as a senior or MCC student.**

**Are you
ready to
join our
mailing
list?**

If you'd like to join our mailing list, please let us know if you'd like to receive our emails by using this QR Code



We'll be happy to add you the list and update you when new events come up.

Please be sure to continue to check our website and Facebook for regularly scheduled programs!