

# ACTS

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# A CHANCE TO SERVE

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## What is ACTS?

“A Chance To Serve” (ACTS) is a community youth leadership program that places youth on local boards and committees after participating in a series of five day-long leadership training sessions. The program is a two year commitment for the participants. “Year 1” is comprised of their training sessions. “Year 2” unfolds as youth begin a year of service with a local board or organization. Purdue Extension Hamilton County partners with local community leaders to provide an opportunity for the youth to participate and be active members on boards and committees.

Each year freshmen from local high schools participate in sessions covering leadership topics such as communication and consensus building. At the end of the program participants are selected to serve on a board in their local community such as grant committees, school affiliations, youth assistance programs, Purdue Extension, food banks, and high school foundation boards.

## Five Day-Long Program Sessions

The sessions are hands-on, interactive activities that use the experiential learning model by having the youth engaged in experiencing new life skills and processing how they can apply the activity or skill to real life.

## Who am I?

On the first day the participants explore their own personal temperament with *Color Matrixx*. This allows the youth to recognize their strengths and the strengths of others. A program on youth and adult partnership helps participants think about what it will be like to serve on boards that have both youth and adults; and the different perspectives it brings to the table.


## How do I fit in?

Day two of the program consists of communication, philanthropy, servant leadership, team building, and leadership activities. This day is typically the first time youth have really thought about philanthropy and giving of their time, talents, and treasures to have an impact on others. This idea that everyone has something to give to their community sets the tone for upcoming sessions.

## What is a Community?

This day is designed for the youth to think about what makes up their community. It could be any institution, school, church, club, sport, neighborhood, etc., that has an influence on their life. The school principals are asked to serve on a panel designed to promote candid “Q & A.” Great dialogue happens on this day between the youth and school administration. Youth participate in a mock planning commission meeting to learn about land use and the role planning commissions and other governing bodies have in a growing community.

## When is it My Turn?

This session is dedicated to board development skills and how youth can have a part in the process. The sessions cover how boards work, working with other people, and how to get your voice heard. A panel of community board members that have youth serving on their board go over their board’s mission, how often they meet, and the expectations of their board members. Youth learn that each board varies on structure, activities, and role in the community. 

## **Where do we go from here?**

The final training day includes a bus tour through Hamilton County for the youth to learn about county history and see the future development that is having an effect on how the community will change. Hamilton County is the fastest growing county in Indiana and the 41st fastest in the Nation. This has a direct impact on schools and community resources.

## **Graduation Celebration**

Purdue Extension Hamilton County and the ACTS sponsors support a graduation banquet to launch our newest ACTS graduates off to a great start with their local boards and organizations. The evening event includes remarks from the Purdue Extension Staff and announcement of which board or committee the ACTS graduates will serve with. One speaker summarized the program this way, “We couldn’t possibly have told you everything you need to know, but you have enough knowledge to be dangerous — and enough knowledge to be an asset to the organizations you will be serving.”

## **Program Logistics**

### **Program Location**

The Spring program series is held at the Hamilton County 4-H Fairgrounds in Noblesville. The Fall program series is held at Beck’s Hybrids in Atlanta, Indiana.

### **Schools Participating**

The ACTS program is offered Spring and Fall. Spring participating schools include Hamilton Southeastern, Noblesville and Westfield high schools. Fall participating schools include Guerin Catholic, Hamilton Heights, and Sheridan schools.

### **Cost**

There is a \$50 program fee. Your school has elected to pay the fees for their students. Please take a moment to thank your administrators.

### **Meals**

Lunch and snacks will be provided at every session. Please notify the Purdue Extension Office of any dietary restrictions or allergies.

### **What to wear**

An ACTS shirt is provided for every participant to wear at each session.

### **Weather**

Weather sometimes plays a part in our program. If **any** of the three schools are on a **delay** that day of the program, we adjust our schedule and still have ACTS once the schools are in session the same day. If any of the three schools are **closed**, we cancel ACTS. We do not reschedule that day.

### **Transportation**

Each school has a different procedure of how students are transported to ACTS. Please check with the guidance counselor or school liaison for the ACTS program to verify how the school transports students to the sessions.