

Hampton Recognized for Innovative City Leadership for Children and Families



A new report by the National League of Cities (NLC), *The State of City Leadership for Children and Families in 2009*, recognized Hampton for its cutting-edge Youth Civic Engagement initiative. The report is being released during the 2009 National Summit on Your City's Families.

Even as cities grapple with the worst budget outlook in decades, mayors and other municipal leaders have maintained a strong commitment to children, youth and their families. The report describes local innovations and trends in education, early childhood success, afterschool, youth in transition, youth violence prevention, community wellness, youth civic engagement, family economic success, and local "infrastructure" – such as cross-agency planning entities, data sharing efforts and creative financing mechanisms – to support children and families.

For nearly 20 years, Hampton's Coalition for Youth and Alternatives Inc., have worked to offer numerous pathways toward youth civic engagement, from volunteer opportunities and advisory positions to leadership roles on

city boards, commissions, and departments. In addition to sponsoring a strong youth commission, Hampton involves more than 100 youth who work, intern or volunteer with the city.

"Children, youth and families have been at the top of our city's agenda for a very long time," said Mayor Molly Joseph Ward. "We believe that our efforts to engage our young people help us make better decisions about how to serve them and their families. We believe our investment in them makes our city a better place."

The report provides a snapshot of the progress cities have made as the nation's largest network of public policy "laboratories" and the potential for future action as municipal leaders identify and share promising approaches in these areas.

The National League of Cities is the nation's oldest and largest organization devoted to strengthening and promoting cities as centers of opportunity, leadership and governance.