



Unleashing the leadership potential of Illinois youth

School Rep Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is Illinois Leadership Seminars (ILS)?

A: Illinois Leadership Seminars is a non-profit, 100% volunteer organization with one mission: to unleash the leadership potential of Illinois youth. We accomplish this mission in two major ways. First, we provide students all over the state with an opportunity to attend a free leadership seminar. Second, after a student has gone through one of our programs, they have the option to stay involved with our Alumni Association. The Alumni Association provides our students with an active, nationwide network of successful leaders to rely on for support with everything from advice on how to run a high school pep rally to college applications and job interviews.

Your student leader has been selected to go through phase one of our program by attending our free, three-day leadership seminar.

Q: Why should I nominate a student from my school for the Illinois Leadership Seminar (ILS)?

A: For over 30 years we have been unleashing the leadership potential of Illinois youth. ILS is an opportunity for students to be around other outstanding leaders their own age. Sometimes, students are nervous about attending a seminar where they don't know anyone, but to us, that's the best part! ILS is a fresh start. There's no pressure from a student's peers to be anything or conform to any mold. That's just one of the many unique things about ILS. Students get to explore their own leadership potential away from their home comfort zone.

Our message to students is simple. "No matter your gender, your ethnicity, your religion, your socioeconomic background, no matter where you come from... you (yes YOU!) can be a leader."

Counselors all over the state love sending students to ILS not only for the rave reviews they receive upon the student's return but because they see a REAL change in the students they have nominated after attending our program. It's an awesome feeling to know that YOU helped a young person find confidence in their own leadership abilities, and we are eternally grateful to our outstanding counselors who send us extraordinary students year after year.

Q: When and where is the Seminar?

A: The 2019 seminar runs from June 14, 15, and 16 (Friday, Saturday, and Sunday) at North Park University in Chicago, IL on the north side. This is a three-day, overnight event. Students must attend the entire seminar.

Address:
North Park University
3225 West Foster Avenue
Chicago, IL 60625

The campus is accessible from I-90, I-94, and several forms of public transportation. [Click here](#) for map of the campus.

[Illinois Leadership Seminars \(ILS\)](#)

ILS is a Member of the [National Society for Youth Leadership \(NSYL\)](#)

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Q: How do I select a student to attend?

A: We leave the choice of who to pick for our seminar, and how to pick them entirely up to the counselor, so long as the student selected is currently in their **sophomore** year of high school (they will attend ILS during the summer between their sophomore and junior year). Counselors utilize a variety of different selection methods including essay contests, faculty vote, and if one student stands out right away, it's perfectly acceptable to hand pick a student without a formal evaluation. Sometimes it is even helpful to have students who have attended our seminar in the past recommend a sophomore. After all, they have been through the program and know what we are looking for. Past leaders have excelled academically, in athletics, in co-curricular activities, or in community service. Despite the fact that our seminar attracts high caliber students, we're not necessarily looking for students with the perfect leadership resume. Leadership **potential** is the common denominator at ILS, and sometimes the students who get the most out of our seminar have that leadership potential hidden down a little bit deeper than their peers. Please look for an exceptional student who you believe represents the potential of your student body.

Q: Can I nominate a freshman, junior or senior?

A: Only current sophomores can be nominated for our seminar. Therefore, they will attend seminar in June between their sophomore and junior years. We feel that the transition from underclassmen to upperclassmen is an underrated transition and the perfect time to reach young student leaders.

Q: After I have selected a student, how do I nominate them?

A: Download and print our student nomination form. Please give this form to your selected student and explain that they have been chosen to represent your school at ILS. This form instructs students to go to our website and read through our Seminar tab and the Student FAQs. Guardians are also encouraged to read through our Guardian FAQs. Each FAQ has information geared towards a specific audience; much like this FAQ is geared towards counselors. After each student has read through all the information on the Seminar tab and their FAQs and has discussed attending ILS 2019 with their guardian(s), they are instructed to fill out the bottom of the form accurately and turn it back in to you so you can nominate them online.

Do not open our online nomination form until the student has completed this paper form on their own and you have it with you. We understand that most schools have a data base of student contact information that you can pull from when nominating a student. However, we need the student to verify that their information is up to date and accurate, especially their email address and phone number. Many students now have school issued email addresses, but we insist on having email addresses for both our students and their guardians that are frequently checked since email will be our primary means of communication with our nominated students and parents into the summer. Be sure your student has their nomination form filled out completely and accurately before you begin nomination.

After you have read through this entire page, you can use the link at the top of the page to complete your nomination. Instructions on how to nominate your student is provided in your individualized nomination email. All the school contacts in our system will receive the nomination email when we officially open nomination. If you are interested in nominating but are not sure if you are our main contact for your school or your contact information has changed, please contact our Recruitment Director, Samantha Kiluk, at recruitment@illinoisleadershipseminars.org. We will promptly send you all the information you need.



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Q: How are open seminar spots filled?

A: ILS is filled on a first come, first served basis. Students will still have a deadline to complete their registration after they have been nominated. We have room for 115 students at our seminar. Nomination instruction emails will be sent out to all counselors in our system. We expect to be full in one month. Our seminar is very popular, and a lot of schools want to send students to ILS. To be safe, we recommend you begin your school's selection process now, especially if your school has an essay contest or another form of selection that may take longer. Nomination will be closed as soon as 100 schools have nominated a student, no exceptions. We encourage you to submit your nomination before Spring Break.

If seminar is full by the time you have selected your student, you can email our Recruitment Director and request a spot on the waiting list. If a spot opens up later, we will contact you and allow you to nominate your student. Please do this if we are full! Our nomination numbers are completely dependent on finances and if fundraising goes better than expected, our Corporate Board may authorize us to invite more students. Also, some nominated students may not complete their registration online by their deadline. In that case, we will also draw from schools on our waiting list to fill their spots. Your school cannot be selected in these situations if you do not email us and request a spot on the waiting list.

Q: What happens after I have nominated a student?

A: Once a student has been nominated, it is the student's responsibility to sit down with their parents and/or legal guardians at home to register for our seminar. Students will receive a personalized email with instructions on how to register online for our seminar. These emails will be sent out within one week of their nomination being received.

All information obtained during the registration process will remain confidential. Registering for our seminar should take your student no longer than ten minutes if they complete it with their parents.

Spots are given on a first come first serve basis so filling out registration in a timely manner is the only way to guarantee your student's spot at Seminar.

Please follow up with your student and make sure they have registered for ILS. We really appreciate all you do, and while it is not your responsibility to register the student, sometimes students forget and a little nudge never hurt. We don't want your school's spot at ILS forfeited because a student forgot to register on time.

Q: What about selecting and nominating an alternate, how does that work?

A: Nominating an alternate student in the event your primary selection cannot attend is a good idea, but it is optional. Remember, only one sophomore student from each high school is eligible to attend ILS. We would only reach out to the alternate student if the primary student can no longer attend seminar. We will set a "reply by" date for each alternate on a case by case basis depending on how close we are to seminar. If they do not respond to us in time, we will offer that spot to a school on the waiting list.

Follow the same process (with the nomination form) for your alternate student, but be sure to inform them that they are the alternate and will only be attending if your primary student is unable to attend. You will be able to nominate your primary and alternate student at the same time using our online nomination form.

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Q: How is the seminar structured? What is on the agenda for the weekend?

A: Students are pre-divided into groups of 8-10 leaders. The group is led by one adult Senior Coach who is assisted by two Junior Coaches, student alumni of the seminar. During the weekend students will have an opportunity to interact with other students from all groups. As for the actual content and schedule, we are purposefully vague. We have found that our leaders have a better experience if they don't know what is coming next. If you have specific questions, you can contact our Recruitment Director, Samantha Kiluk, at recruitment@illinoisleadershipseminars.org. We challenge our students to share their own thoughts and ideas about issues facing their schools, their communities, and our world. The program is not designed to teach students what to think, or even how to think, but rather to emphasize the importance of critical thinking skills in leadership roles.

Q: May I nominate more than one student?

A: We only allow each high school to send one student to our seminar each year. This ensures that we have a diverse group of students from all over the state, and that we are able to offer the seminar to a larger number of high schools. We have found that students are also more willing to explore their own leadership potential if they don't know any other students prior to attending. You may nominate an alternate in case your primary student cannot attend.

Q: Does my student have to stay for the entire seminar?

A: Yes, your student must be at North Park University from Check-In early Friday morning until the Closing Ceremony on Sunday afternoon. We cannot allow students to arrive late, leave and come back, or leave early for any reason. Sponsors have paid for each student to attend ILS in its entirety, and we ask that each student honor that sponsorship by fully committing to the weekend. Additionally, our programming is designed to foster student growth through the weekend by building upon itself, so missing pieces would create an incomplete experience.

We recognize that while a majority of schools are finished with the semester and on summer break, some schools in Illinois are still in session or taking finals during our seminar. We understand the conflict; however, we ask that students reschedule their final(s) and/or get an excused absence for Friday, June 14, the first day of our seminar.

Q: I am not the person who should be receiving your emails...

A: Please forward the information on to someone who would be best to pick an outstanding high school sophomore from your school for a free leadership seminar. Please let us know who the correct contact should be by emailing our Recruitment Director, Samantha Kiluk at recruitment@illinoisleadershipseminars.org or indicating in the online nomination form and we will update our system accordingly. Normally, school counselors are responsible for selecting and nominating our students because they are exposed to the widest variety of students, but we have teachers and administrators who nominate students as well.

Q: What if I don't have student who wants to attend?

A: Please look again! Often, students need an extra nudge to commit to stepping out of their comfort zone. Other students may be unsure of what the program entails, worried that they don't know anyone else attending, etc. If you don't have a volunteer for ILS, select a student who you think would benefit. Let them know it is an honor to be chosen! Have past ILS alumni talk to the students, encourage them, and please let us know if you have any additional questions!

And if you're still unsure about sending a student, connect with us on [Facebook](#) to get a glimpse of who we are for yourself.