



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Students from Across the Region to Gather for 2026 Green River Youth Summit

**OWENSBORO, Ky.** — More than **200 middle and high school students from across the Green River region** will gather this week for a day focused on leadership, collaboration, and preparing for the future during the **2026 Green River Youth Summit**, hosted by the Green River Workforce Development Board.

The event will take place **Thursday, March 12, from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Owensboro Community and Technical College** and will bring together students from schools throughout the seven-county Green River Area Development District. The Youth Summit will feature interactive leadership sessions led by community leaders, business professionals, and educators, giving students the opportunity to explore ideas, learn leadership skills, and connect with peers from other schools and communities.

“Investing in our young people today helps shape the future of our communities and workforce,” said **Alisha Smith, GRADD Workforce Development Youth Coordinator**. “The Youth Summit gives students the opportunity to learn from community leaders, explore career pathways, and discover how their voices and ideas can make a real difference in the places they live.”

Organizers say the Summit is designed to accomplish several goals for participating students:

1. **Empower Youth:** Give young people a platform to voice their opinions, concerns, and ideas about issues that affect them, allowing them to take ownership of their future and become active participants in decision-making processes.
2. **Provide Education and Awareness:** Offer valuable knowledge, skills, and resources on a variety of topics such as leadership, climate change, social justice, health, technology, education, and career development.
3. **Encourage Networking and Collaboration:** Foster a sense of community and solidarity among youth from different cultural, ethnic, and geographical

backgrounds. This helps build relationships, exchange ideas, and collaborate on common causes or projects.

4. **Inspire Leadership:** Inspire youth to take leadership roles in their communities and beyond by providing them with tools, experiences, and mentors that can guide their personal growth and help them become future leaders.
5. **Promote Social Change:** Use the Summit as a platform for promoting social justice, equity, and change by empowering youth to be advocates for causes they are passionate about, whether it's in their local communities or on a global scale.

Schools across the region were invited to send up to 25 students per middle or high school, along with faculty representatives, creating a diverse group of participants from a variety of academic, cultural, and economic backgrounds.

By bringing together students from multiple communities, organizers hope the Summit will help young people develop leadership skills, build meaningful connections, and gain new perspectives on opportunities available to them in the Green River region.

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*The Green River Area Development District (GRADD) is a regional planning agency and council of governments serving the communities of Daviess, Hancock, Henderson, McLean, Ohio, Union, and Webster counties. GRADD offers assistance in the fields of aging, health, and social services; community and economic development; transportation planning; and workforce development. Our mission is to afford local governments and citizens a regional forum to identify issues and opportunities, and to provide leadership in planning and implementing programs to improve the quality of life in our district.*

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