

2026

NATIONAL YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM: NATIONAL SECURITY

*Sample Schedule: Washington, D.C.**

Day One: Welcome to the Fields of National Security and Foreign Affairs

Registration

Orientation and Introduction to Student Groups

Students will learn about the variety of opportunities available to them through speakers in the fields of cyber, defense, diplomacy, and intelligence. They will explore the key components of establishing a national security strategy and process how their leadership style would affect the implementation of a national security strategy.

Group Meetings

- Students meet like-minded peers from around the country
- Introduction to National Security

Day Two: Our Nation's Security

Keynote Speaker: Jonna Mendez

Jonna, former Chief of Disguise for the CIA, shares her career journey and the various roles she served in while with the CIA. She describes her experience living under cover on her several tours in Europe, Asia, and Russia and how she applies her expertise as a consultant to the U.S. Intelligence community to this day.

Group Meetings

- National Security Strategy Lessons

Focus on Careers

- Launching a Professional Network

Group Meetings

- National Security Strategy Lessons: Analyzing the 2021 Colonial Pipeline Hack

Diplomacy Plenary

- Speaking event with Representative from U.S. Department of State

Day Three: Day of Exploration

Defense and Intelligence Site Experiences

Students will receive a firsthand view of the institutions that safeguard and shape our country through exclusive visits to some of the most influential sites in the nation's capital.

- U.S. Department of State
- The Pentagon
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security

**Site experiences may vary by program session.*

City Exploration Experience

- Old Town Alexandria

Group Meetings

- Introduction to National Security Crisis Simulation
- Student's Presidential Election for Simulation

Day Four: National Security in Action

National Security Crisis Simulation

Students will participate in the National Security Crisis Simulation, where they will collaborate and strategize with their peers to resolve true-to-life major national and international crises.

Students will need to manage competing interests and collaborate with their peers to meet true-to-life security challenges. Students will draw upon skills such as communication, critical thinking, persuasion and responsible decision-making as they work with their peers.

(over, please)

Day Five: Day of Reflection and Remembrance

Keynote Speaker

- Challenges and Opportunities: The Human Impact of National Security - The Wounded Warrior Project

Arlington National Cemetery

- Changing of the Guard at the Tomb of the Unknowns
- Wreath-Laying Ceremony
- Kennedy Gravesites

The National Mall

- Visit to a Smithsonian Institution Museum

Tributes to Valor and Sacrifice: Tour of Our Nation's Memorials

- Lincoln Memorial
- Vietnam Veterans Memorial
- Korean War Veterans Memorial
- National WWII Memorial

Day Six: Day of Intelligence

Group Meetings

- Leadership & National Security
- Defining National Security Strategy

Intelligence Speaking Event

Experts in the field of intelligence will answer student's questions and share insight on careers and opportunities of this in-demand field.

Day Seven: Day of Defense

National Security Crisis Simulation

Students will continue their participation in the National Security Crisis Simulation, where they will collaborate and strategize with their peers to resolve true-to-life major national and international crises.

Defense Speaking Event

Hear from experts in the field of defense who will answer student's questions and share insight on careers and opportunities of this in-demand field.

Group Meetings

- Gain important insights and debrief career experiences in a group activity.

Day Eight: Looking Forward

Forum Debrief

Closing Ceremony: Path to New Beginnings

Departures

**This sample schedule is provided as an example of the overall quality and scope of the experience offered. We are continuously evaluating all aspects of the program and incorporating the most up-to-date health and safety standards. The 2026 specific schedule, locations, and details may be modified.*