

Ogdensburg Free Academy

Proposal for Establishment of Reality Check Program

Prepared by Morgan Arquette, Seaway Valley Prevention Council- Reality Check Coordinator

Introduction

This proposal is submitted to request approval for the establishment of the Reality Check Program at Ogdensburg Free Academy for the 2026-2027 school year.

Advisors

Reality Check Program Coordinator: Morgan Arquette, Seaway Valley Prevention Council
Ogdensburg Free Academy School Liaison: Gregory Hooper

Purpose of the Club

The purpose of this club is to provide opportunities for students to become community leaders. Reality Check is a youth-led movement in New York State that empowers young people to expose the manipulative and deceptive marketing tactics of the tobacco industry. Students will gain public speaking and leadership skills, while building their resume with volunteer hours and the potential to be awarded and recognized for holding the tobacco industry accountable for marketing to youth.

Intended Participants

The Reality Check Program is open to any student ages 13-18 in New York State.

Meeting Frequency

Reality Check participants will meet weekly/bi-weekly, after school or during lunch/free periods. Meetings will not impact the student's academic schedule.

Meeting Location

Reality Check meetings will take place in OFA Room 330 or the cafeteria, depending on availability.

Cost

Because Seaway Valley Prevention Council is a non-profit organization, this program is free of cost to the school. Any travel, meals, lodging, events, and activities are covered through our Advancing Tobacco Free Communities Grant through New York State's Department of Health.

Fundraising

There will be no need for fundraising.

Proposed Activities

Students will

- ❖ Attend weekly/bi-weekly meetings
- ❖ Educate and engage the community to raise awareness of the negative impacts of the tobacco industry
 - Radio, video, commercial, and social media
 - Tabling and community events
- ❖ Write **Letters to the Editor** to raise awareness of marketing and accessibility of tobacco products near schools
- ❖ Have the opportunity to be awarded the **Youth Ambassador of the Year Award (YAYA)** sponsored by New York State's Reality Check Program
- ❖ Plan and participate in tobacco-free community events like Movie Nights, Rock-N-Skate, and Seaway Festival Parade
- ❖ Travel to **Legislative Education Day** in Albany, NY to educate key decision makers on how tobacco is marketed toward youth and influences their community
- ❖ Attend the **Annual Youth Summit** to meet Reality Check youth from across NYS

NYS Reality Check Website: <https://tobaccofreenys.org/our-focus/reality-check/>